

# HTFT Partnership Limited

Monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 1278661

**Name of lead inspector:** Maxine Mayer, Ofsted Inspector

**Inspection date(s):** 24 to 25 July 2019

**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

**Address:** 12 The Pavilions  
Cranmore Drive  
Solihull  
West Midlands  
B90 4SB



## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

From October 2018, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision which began to be funded from April 2017 or after by ESFA and/or the apprenticeship levy. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the *Further education and skills inspection handbook*, especially the sections entitled 'Providers newly directly funded to deliver apprenticeship training provision' and 'Monitoring visits'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

HTFT Partnership Limited has held a contract to deliver apprenticeship courses since 2017. The company offers standards-based apprenticeships at levels 3 and 4 in accounting. At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 32 apprentices in learning, of whom six were aged 16 to 18 and the remainder were adults. The company also delivers apprenticeship programmes at level 7, which were not in scope for this monitoring visit.

### Themes

#### **How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?**

#### **Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers have successfully devised a clear and ambitious strategy for their apprenticeship provision that is responsive in meeting local and regional skills priorities. Leaders utilise their extensive knowledge of the accountancy industry to carefully devise a curriculum offer that meets employers' needs and the principles of an apprenticeship.

Apprentices benefit from highly skilled and professionally qualified trainers, most of whom are experienced accountants. Trainers use their expertise well in coaching and supporting apprentices' vocational skills development. Learning resources to support apprentices in their learning are of a high standard and readily accessible. As a result, most apprentices have passed the examination components of their apprenticeship at the first attempt.

Apprentices benefit from the routine inclusion of additional industry recognised qualifications in their programme, aiding their employability and effectiveness in the workplace. Retention of apprentices has much improved and is now good. Of those apprentices who have stayed for the duration of their programme, all have successfully achieved. Most current apprentices are on track to achieve their apprenticeship within the planned timescales.

Leaders give high priority to, and have successfully implemented, well-considered improvement actions to enhance the delivery and embedding of English and

mathematics support provided to apprentices. For example, managers provide apprentices with access to a range of online learning resources to address any identified essential skills gaps. However, not enough apprentices are accessing these resources to extend their literacy skills further. Managers have recognised this.

Senior leaders have not yet fully established sound independent governance arrangements to support and challenge senior leaders. However, plans are at an advanced stage to do so. While aspects of quality improvement are good, managers have not yet identified how to formalise the collection and analysis of apprentice and employer feedback or how to assess tutor performance accurately on an on-going basis.

**What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? Reasonable progress**

Most apprentices receive appropriate advice and guidance at the commencement of the programme and have a precise understanding of the demands and commitment to complete the course successfully. Managers ensure that initial and vocational skills assessments are used effectively to identify apprentices starting points and the specific skills and behaviours that need to be developed accurately. However, managers currently do not carry out an initial assessment for apprentices' digital skills needs.

Leaders and managers work closely with employers to ensure that all apprentices have appropriate training time to undertake and benefit from planned off-the-job learning. Managers have recently produced a proforma to track the off-the-job training and accurately record and track what new skills apprentices are developing and the impact these are having on an employer's business.

Apprentices routinely benefit from well-planned and organised training. As a result, they develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours that enhance their employability. For example, a level 3 accountancy apprentice successfully developed a more efficient way of processing payment transfers that improved organisational effectiveness. Apprentices have good access to a wealth of high-quality online learning resources which extend their knowledge and understanding. Apprentices routinely benefit from, and make assured progress due to, the frequent and high levels of support provided by their vocational tutors and workplace mentors.

Targets set during regular reviews are clear and detailed. Most workplace mentors contribute to planned reviews and ensure that work activities are relevant and stimulating in meeting apprentices' training needs. However, targets agreed are not always sufficiently specific, measurable or systematically followed up in subsequent reviews.

Many apprentices are aware of the progression opportunities open to them in their company and of the next course they can take. However, they do not have access to impartial careers advice.

**How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Reasonable progress**

Senior leaders have established a strong culture to safeguard and protect apprentices. Leaders meet regularly to review and update their safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty action plans. They have appointed a qualified and experienced designated lead on safeguarding.

Managers adhere closely to safer recruitment practices. They undertake disclosure and barring service checks on all staff to make sure of their suitability to work with apprentices. However, while leaders undertake appropriate pre-employment checks on all prospective employees, the recording relating to the take-up of employment references is too informal.

All staff have received training in identifying risks of radicalisation, bullying and harassment. Trainers reinforce well the importance of safeguarding and the arrangements to keep apprentices safe both at start of the apprenticeship and during regular workplace reviews of progress. Managers do not ensure high levels of vigilance when apprentices are learning online or using social media learning support.

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