

UKFast.Net Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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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.

UKFast.Net Limited (UKFast) was formed in 1999. It provides managed hosting and dedicated server solutions to a wide range of businesses. UKFast started to receive public funding to deliver apprenticeship training in February 2018. It currently has 24 apprentices. All apprentices are working towards a standards-based programme at level 3. UKFast employs the apprentices.

Themes

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

Significant progress

Directors have implemented a highly successful strategy for their apprenticeship provision. The strategy has a strong focus on inspiring young people to take up a digital career. It aligns fully with the local and regional priorities for high-level digital skills. Directors are passionate about their apprenticeship provision and relentlessly promote a culture of high expectations.

Directors, leaders and managers have an accurate and detailed understanding of the quality of the apprenticeship. They identify accurately the strengths and the few areas for improvement. Directors receive detailed and informative reports. They use this information very effectively to improve the quality of the provision and challenge each other effectively.

Directors have a very good understanding of the curriculum. They have established strong links with stakeholders and use the significant contributions of stakeholders to plan skilfully a challenging curriculum. For example, directors introduced a new vendor qualification into the apprenticeship. Consequently, apprentices acquire a broad range of knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Senior leaders track the progress of apprentices accurately. Directors receive detailed information each day on apprentices' progress. Leaders quickly identify those apprentices who are at risk of falling behind. They take prompt action to support

apprentices to catch up. Consequently, almost all apprentices are on track to complete their apprenticeship by their planned end date.

Directors and leaders ensure that the programme meets the requirements for successful apprenticeship provision. All apprentices receive their full entitlement to on- and off-the-job training. As a result, apprentices make very good progress.

Senior leaders ensure that apprentices have a very secure understanding of the end-point assessment requirements. They prepare apprentices very thoroughly for their assessments. For example, apprentices complete a series of rigorous mock interviews. Leaders set ambitious target grades for each apprentice. As a result, most apprentices achieve distinction grades, with the remainder achieving merit.

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

Significant progress

Leaders and managers have developed a highly effective recruitment and selection process. This ensures that they place apprentices accurately onto the correct apprenticeship pathway.

Teachers identify accurately apprentices' existing knowledge, skills and behaviours at the beginning of their programme. They use this information skilfully to plan individualised learning that enables apprentices to develop substantial new vocationally specific knowledge, skills and behaviours. For example, apprentices develop controls that ensure better security of personal cloud storage. This development made a good contribution to UKFast's achievement of an International Standards Organisation kitemark. Apprentices give informative and confident presentations to external agencies on aspects of cyber security, including phishing and digital footprints.

Apprentices develop significantly their English, mathematical and digital knowledge and skills. For example, apprentices demonstrate high-level mathematical knowledge and skills when analysing customer data and applying logic and coding. They also demonstrate high levels of oral and written English when dealing with customers. The contributions that apprentices make to their workplace are valued greatly by UKFast.

Directors recruit staff carefully. They ensure they have the required specialist knowledge, skills and experience in their vocational areas. Teachers provide high-quality on- and off-the-job training. Apprentices make good use of a comprehensive range of learning materials and online support to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours. They receive excellent support from teachers, mentors and their managers. Teachers intervene swiftly when apprentices fall behind. Apprentices gain promotion and additional responsibilities.

Teachers review apprentices' progress regularly. They set relevant targets to improve apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours. Teachers make clear links between on- and off-the-job training, so that apprentices can see the relevance of theory to practice. Teachers give apprentices frequent and developmental feedback. As a result, apprentices produce work of a high standard.

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

Leaders and managers have put in place effective arrangements for safeguarding. They keep accurate records, which they monitor regularly. Leaders and managers have yet to establish a sufficiently wide range of contacts with safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty referral agencies.

The designated safeguarding lead and three deputies are suitably trained for their roles. Staff receive effective and regular safeguarding training. Apprentices have undertaken appropriate training on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Consequently, they can recognise and report safeguarding and safeguarding-related concerns confidently.

Apprentices have a good understanding of how to keep safe personally and in work. They have very good knowledge about keeping safe online, particularly about the importance of cyber security.

Managers ensure that suitable checks are in place when recruiting staff. All staff who have contact with apprentices have appropriate risk assessments through the Disclosure and Barring Service.

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