

# Derwent Training Association

Monitoring visit report

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**Name of lead inspector:** Andrea Shepherd, Her Majesty's Inspector

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**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

**Address:** Hertford Way  
York Road Business Park  
Malton  
North Yorkshire  
YO17 6YG



## 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.

Derwent Training Association (DTA) is a private training provider that specialises in the delivery of engineering apprenticeships. It has a direct contract for the delivery of training for levy-paying employers. At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 82 apprentices on frameworks and standard-based programmes at levels 2, 3 and 5. Just over half of these apprentices are studying the level 3 engineering technician standard. The remaining apprentices are studying engineering manufacturing frameworks and standards.

### Themes

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

#### **Reasonable progress**

Leaders have a clear strategy to focus on the delivery of engineering apprenticeships in the local area. They develop effective partnerships to help them identify local needs and train apprentices to fill these skills gaps successfully. Employers benefit from the training that their apprentices receive.

Leaders take appropriate steps to meet the requirements of apprenticeship provision. They track off-the-job training well and respond quickly to provide extra classes so that apprentices can catch up if they fall behind with their classroom-based learning. Almost all apprentices meet their targets within planned timescales.

Leaders recruit apprentices with integrity. They carry out a range of checks before signing up an apprentice to test that they are suitable for the job role. As a result, all apprentices develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Leaders recruit trainers who have appropriate qualifications and experience. They provide trainers with many opportunities to enhance their technical knowledge through industry visits and links with similar providers. Trainers put this expertise to good use and provide apprentices with good technical support. Therefore, apprentices develop occupationally relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours, which they apply well in the workplace.

Leaders have sufficient oversight of the progress that apprentices make. They have recently introduced new systems to make this more robust. Leaders act quickly when apprentices need additional support. For example, they introduce more frequent reviews and set short-term targets for the very small number of apprentices who miss deadlines. Consequently, the vast majority of apprentices are making the progress expected of them.

Leaders have been too slow with actions to meet the needs of the small minority of apprentices who need functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics. As a result, there are a very small number of apprentices who have been waiting too long to sit their examinations in these subjects.

**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**

Trainers make good use of the information they have about the knowledge and skills that apprentices already have at the start of their programme. They use this to plan and deliver high-quality training so that apprentices can make rapid improvements. For example, apprentices quickly develop their hand and eye coordination, which helps them to become more productive in their job role.

Trainers and employers work together well to provide a coordinated programme of on- and off-the-job training. This helps apprentices to develop specific engineering skills. For example, apprentices can fabricate and weld large steel framed structures and operate high-calibre equipment to manufacture components for robotic arms.

Leaders and trainers make suitable arrangements for external assessment. They brief employers and prepare apprentices well to complete the tasks that are required to achieve the apprenticeship. All of the first cohort of apprentices studying the level 3 engineering technician standard are ready to take their first external assessment on time.

The resources that leaders provide in the training centre are appropriate. They meet the training needs of apprentices and support them to develop their knowledge and skills.

Trainers provide apprentices with useful feedback that helps them to extend their knowledge and develop practical skills. The vast majority of apprentices produce work of a high standard. However, trainers do not always provide helpful enough feedback on apprentices' written work. Too much feedback simply confirms achievement and does not identify what the apprentice could do to improve their work further. As a result, a small minority of the most able apprentices do not get support to make quicker progress.

Trainers do not provide enough assistance to apprentices so that they can develop their literacy skills. Trainers do not correct errors in written work and, therefore, apprentices often repeat mistakes with grammar, language and structure.

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

Leaders and managers are developing a culture of safeguarding and well-being within the provider. They regularly provide apprentices with relevant information about keeping themselves safe, such as online safety and the risks associated with gambling. Leaders have created designated 'safe spaces' where apprentices can go for help. Apprentices know how to stay safe in the workplace and in wider society. They all follow the safe working guidelines at the training centre.

Leaders implement comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures, including for the safe recruitment of staff. They effectively involve external agencies when needed.

Leaders and managers have a good level of awareness of local risks and have put this to good use in developing an appropriate 'Prevent' duty risk assessment.

All staff, including members of the board, have undertaken appropriate training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. For some, this extends beyond basic awareness to include topics such as mental health first aid.

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