

Reed Business School Ltd

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	1280299
Name of lead inspector:	Kathryn Rudd, Her Majesty's Inspector
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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.

Reed Business School Ltd (RBS) began providing directly funded apprenticeships in January 2018. Currently, there are 12 apprentices at Level 4. All are on standards-based apprenticeships in professional accounting. RBS does not subcontract any of the apprenticeship provision.

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 use their considerable experience and knowledge to develop training programmes which meet apprentices' and employers' needs. Their thorough planning contributes to the majority of apprentices making good progress on their programmes.

Leaders and managers systematically monitor eligibility requirements and apprentices' suitability. Where appropriate, they provide prospective apprentices with Level 3 online courses to check their skills and motivation.

Leaders work closely with employers to link work and off-the-job training. For example, they teach book-keeping skills first, which enables apprentices to work directly with clients early in their training. As a result, apprentices gain in confidence and add value to their employer's businesses.

Leaders and managers have recruited a highly skilled team of tutors and learning coaches. Apprentices are rightly positive about the expert teaching and support they receive.

Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices receive appropriate careers advice and guidance. Learning coaches support apprentices so they are prepared for their next steps.

Leaders and managers are appropriately self-critical and recognise their own strengths and areas for improvement. They have high aspirations for apprentices.

All apprentices complete monthly time-sheets which managers use to monitor off-the-job training. Managers talk through what individual apprentices will do to meet their training requirements if they are falling behind. However, managers do not yet predict what off-the-job training should have been completed at set points in the year, so it is difficult for them to assess whether apprentices are on track with their off-the-job training.

Leaders and managers monitor apprentices' progress and intervene if they are falling behind in their learning. Apprentices take tests between externally set examinations to check whether they are making expected progress. Leaders ensure that apprentices are prepared thoroughly for their end-point assessment. However, leaders do not always share information about progress with apprentices and employers.

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

Apprentices develop new and substantial accountancy knowledge, skills and behaviours that benefit their employers' business. They speak confidently about the new knowledge and skills they have learned. For example, an apprentice completed the end-of-year accounts for a charity and was proud to be associated with a local community success.

Learning coaches provide coaching and support that enable apprentices to achieve their targets and pass professional examinations towards their accounting qualification. As a result of this support, apprentices are self-motivated and enthusiastic.

The majority of apprentices make good progress from their starting points. Tutors and coaches sequence learning and assessment, so apprentices build the skills required to achieve in their final assessment. As a result, apprentices understand what they need to do to succeed.

Apprentices develop good knowledge and skills in mathematics which support them in their employment. Tutors and coaches support apprentices to extend their written skills. Apprentices receive clear feedback on the quality of their written work and the use of appropriate terminology. However, the quality of work apprentices submit for reviews is not of consistently high quality. Leaders have recognised this and are taking well-considered action to improve consistency of support for apprentices across the provision.

Apprentices gain from high quality off-the-job training. They recognise the value of learning specific knowledge on their block placements and of then putting it into practice when at work. For example, one apprentice had established a new payroll system in a business that had been struggling to pay staff accurately.

Apprentices' feedback is used routinely to improve their learning experience. After each block placement the senior leadership team reviews apprentices' feedback and actions any issues.

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

Leaders and managers ensure that safeguarding is effective. They have used external expertise to review the implementation and impact of safeguarding arrangements. As a result, they have improved the security of the school and residences by using and reinforcing key code entry and the monitoring of staff and apprentices wearing their identification badges.

Leaders and managers identify apprentices with vulnerabilities and support them to achieve on time.

The designated safeguarding lead and officers have been suitably trained. They liaise with tutors, coaches and facilities staff to ensure that apprentices are safeguarded, particularly during the residential training.

Apprentices feel safe and work safely. Apprentices know who to report to if they have a concern and feel confident that their feedback is used to improve their experience.

Leaders recruit well-qualified staff appropriately, ensure that they regularly complete training and are monitored effectively to ensure that apprentices are safeguarded.

The provider takes reasonable action to meet the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty. However, coaches do not routinely discuss safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty with apprentices in the workplace. Apprentices are not always clear how the dangers of radicalisation and extremism could apply to their clients.

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