

Gower College Swansea

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 2495062

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Inspection dates: 7–8 August 2019

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.

Gower College Swansea started to deliver apprenticeships in England in October 2017. Currently, there are 57 levy-funded apprentices. All apprentices are over 19 years of age. Twenty-five apprentices are on apprenticeship frameworks at level 2. Eighteen of these are on improving operational performance and seven are on facilities management. Thirty-one apprentices are studying at level 3. Six of these are on the management standard and 18 are on the facilities management standard. Seven apprentices are on the employment-related services framework. One apprentice is on the management standard at level 5. A subcontractor delivers approximately half of the apprenticeship programmes.

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers do not ensure that apprenticeship programmes comply with the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship programme. For example, they do not make sure that all apprentices receive their full entitlement of off-the-job training during working hours. Leaders and managers do not act swiftly enough to deal with identified weaknesses in the teaching of functional skills English and mathematics. As a result, too many apprentices make slow progress.

Leaders and managers do not involve apprentices' employers and workplace supervisors in the training and development of their employees. Consequently, apprentices do not benefit from enough carefully planned on-the-job learning. Leaders and managers do not have sufficient oversight of the progress apprentices make on their programme.

Leaders' self-assessment of the quality of provision is insufficiently evaluative. Leaders and managers set clear and measurable targets. However, they do not put interventions in place early enough to bring about rapid improvements. For example,

leaders and managers recognise where employers are not providing apprentices with the required off-the-job training, but they have failed to resolve this.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that line managers in the workplace are sufficiently involved in apprentices' progress reviews. They do not have enough information about apprentices' qualifications or the progress they make.

Leaders and managers have a clear rationale for how they plan the apprenticeship training programme. They collaborate effectively with employers to develop programmes that meet the needs of employers. However, too many apprentices are not being given the time they need by their employers to complete their apprenticeship studies.

Although leaders have put in place appropriate management boards to coordinate the subcontracted delivery of apprenticeships, this has not given them sufficient oversight of the progress apprentices make on their programmes.

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

Tutors do not take account of apprentices' starting points. They do not consider apprentices' previous qualifications and experience when planning learning. As a result, more confident and competent apprentices do not make the rapid progress of which they are capable.

Leaders and managers do not make sure that apprentices receive high-quality on- and off-the-job training. Apprentices' progress reviews are weak. Tutors do not give enough consideration to what apprentices need to do to improve their vocational knowledge, skills, understanding and behaviours.

Tutors do not give sufficiently detailed feedback to apprentices. The feedback does not help apprentices to understand what they need to do to achieve higher grades in their end-point assessment. Spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors in apprentices' work are not corrected routinely. As a result, apprentices continue to repeat the same mistakes.

The planning and delivery of training to develop apprentices' English and mathematical skills are poor. Leaders and managers have been slow to put in place the training and support apprentices need for their English and mathematics qualifications. Tutors do not place enough importance on apprentices developing their English and mathematical skills. As a result, apprentices are not clear about the English and mathematical knowledge and skills they need to develop during their apprenticeship programme. Apprentices who need to complete functional skills in English and mathematics do not receive the support they need to make progress.

Apprentices take on new responsibilities at work. For example, they manage contractors in the workplace and identify cost reductions. Many apprentices increase in confidence as a result of their training. For example, they demonstrate improvements in communication and problem solving.

Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices enrol on the correct programme at the most appropriate level. The large majority of apprentices stay on programme.

Apprentices benefit from well-qualified tutors who deliver theory and practical training that help apprentices relate what they learn to their job roles.

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

Leaders and managers do not ensure that safeguarding is a high priority. They do not ensure that all apprentices receive training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. As a result, too many apprentices do not have the information they need in order to keep themselves safe.

Leaders and managers have a detailed 'Prevent' duty action plan. However, they do not identify specific risks and threats in the regions where apprentices work. As a result, there is no training in place to help apprentices understand the risks that are local to their place of work.

All staff who work with apprentices receive appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks. Their suitability to work with apprentices is checked carefully to ensure that they are safe to work with their apprentices.

The designated safeguarding lead for the college's apprenticeships contract in England is suitably experienced and trained.

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