

Leadership in Action 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.

Leadership in Action is an independent learning provider. It operates mainly in the East and West Midlands, East of England and London regions. Currently, there are 80 apprentices, all following standards apprenticeships. These include team leader/manager level 3 and operations/departmental manager level 5 apprenticeships.

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 established a coherent programme of training and development that meets the requirements of apprenticeship programmes. They also make sure that the apprenticeship provision meets the standards of the Chartered Institute of Management.

Leaders employ extensive experience of management training to develop high-quality training programmes for a small number of different employers, who are well known to the provider. Careful work with these employers ensures that the programmes closely match their needs, and those of apprentices.

Leaders have recruited experienced and skilled tutors, who are able to match the requirements of apprenticeships to the specific needs of individual apprentices. Tutors use their expertise well to help most apprentices develop a range of relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Staff work hard to ensure that employers understand apprenticeship programmes and their role in the training programme. Employers' clear understanding of programmes helps them work with tutors to ensure that only those likely to benefit substantially from programmes are recruited. Apprentices receive thorough advice and guidance before they join programmes. This helps them to decide if it is appropriate for them.

All apprentices enhance their management skills, despite having been in their roles for some time. However, despite the conscientious efforts of employers and provider staff, a few simply consolidate what they already know rather than gain new knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Leaders work effectively with a local subcontractor to provide high-quality training in English and mathematics for apprentices who need to gain English and mathematics qualifications.

Leaders have secured the services of an external consultant to provide support and challenge. This consultant scrutinises and advises on a variety of aspects of provision and helps to ensure that leaders maintain the quality of provision.

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

Tutors use their experience well to plan and teach an effective programme of off-the-job training. This programme includes day-long workshops, one-to-one coaching and telephone support. In addition, employers release apprentices from work to complete a substantial amount of individual study each week.

Apprentices develop their understanding of management concepts and theories and their practical skills in such topics as managing conflict in the workplace, and resource and information management. Off-the-job training challenges apprentices to apply their new skills and knowledge in the workplace and enables them to contribute to improving systems and practices for their employer.

Staff work closely with employers to ensure that apprentices have opportunities to apply and develop their skills and knowledge through on-the-job activities. Apprentices benefit from good support from their line managers, who act as their mentors. Managers participate frequently in reviews of apprentices' progress. This helps them coordinate workplace learning with off-the-job activity. Their close involvement helps motivate apprentices to study hard.

Tutors assess apprentices' work thoroughly. They provide apprentices with helpful, detailed feedback. This helps apprentices understand how they can improve. Tutors ensure that apprentices understand the requirements of end-point assessments. They use a range of practice activities to help prepare apprentices for them.

Initial assessment for English and mathematics is not sufficiently comprehensive to ensure that apprentices who already have the required qualifications develop these skills further. Tutors do too little to develop apprentices' skills in these subjects in the context of their work roles. For example, they do not help apprentices further

develop their English writing skills to improve professional report presentation through the correct use of paragraphs, mini-headings and bullets.

Leaders have developed comprehensive quality assurance processes that staff use well to maintain and improve the quality of programmes. They make good use of observation of teaching and learning to identify the strengths and areas for development of individual tutors.

Tutors provide apprentices with good support throughout their programmes. Tutors are quick to identify apprentices who begin to fall behind or struggle. They swiftly provide extra help that enables them to catch up.

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

Leaders and managers place a high priority on safeguarding and the welfare of apprentices and staff. They have developed suitable safeguarding policies, which they implement. Tutors identify welfare concerns with apprentices swiftly and follow up with appropriate action and additional support, which they record well.

Apprentices are safe. They know how to raise concerns and with whom. Tutors provide them with thorough information about safeguarding during their induction.

The designated safeguarding lead and training staff are all appropriately trained and experienced in safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' duty. They receive frequent safeguarding updates.

Most apprentices have sound knowledge of radicalisation and extremism and how to keep themselves safe from these risks. However, leaders and managers do not do enough to ensure that apprentices understand better the potential risks and dangers in the context of their own industry sectors.

Leaders follow safer recruitment procedures when recruiting new staff. However, they have not yet developed formal procedures to ensure consistency of practice.

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