

Azzurri Restaurants Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Type of provider: Employer

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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.

Azzurri Restaurants Limited is a branded restaurant operator in the UK casual dining market. It operates two restaurant brands with a total of 250 restaurants and 6,000 employees nationally. Its head office is in Camden, London. Azzurri Restaurants Limited became a prime contractor for apprenticeships in October 2017 and currently delivers the level 3 hospitality supervisor standard. There were 13 apprentices on programme at the time of the monitoring visit, all working within the ASK Italian restaurant brand. Azzurri Restaurants Limited subcontracts to HIT Training to deliver the functional skills qualifications for the apprenticeship.

Themes

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

Significant progress

Leaders and managers have designed a well-rounded hospitality apprenticeship that prepares apprentices very well for managerial positions within the company. Each apprentice follows a training plan mapped closely to the standard and tailored to take account of their starting points. Leaders have restricted growth in order to ensure high-quality coaching and support and this enables apprentices to make good progress and complete their studies successfully.

Managers and trainers have a sound understanding of the requirements of the apprenticeship programme. They ensure that all apprentices receive their entitlement to off-the-job training, for example through flexible shift rotas, and monitor the hours undertaken. Apprentices gain additional qualifications, including in food safety and health & safety. Arrangements for end-point assessment are in place and are effectively communicated to apprentices.

Senior leaders and managers have thorough oversight of the programme. They meet regularly to monitor each individual's progress and adjust their training plan accordingly to ensure that no one falls behind. Almost all apprentices remain on the programme and all those who have completed now have managerial positions within the company.

Senior leaders ensure a high-quality learning experience for apprentices. They have invested heavily in the programme, employing an experienced delivery team and building a comprehensive range of online resources that structure learning well. General managers are very supportive of the apprenticeship and value the skills that apprentices gain.

Managers carefully vet prospective apprentices to ensure that they only recruit those who will gain substantial new skills, knowledge and behaviours. As a result, apprentices have clear expectations of what they will learn and are highly motivated to succeed.

Arrangements to deliver English and mathematics qualifications via the subcontractor are effective. Managers receive monthly reports on apprentices' progress and liaise with coaches to monitor the frequency and duration of training.

Formal quality assurance arrangements, including improvement action plans and observations of training, are in development.

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

Apprentices develop substantial new skills and knowledge that enable them to be successful managers in the hospitality sector. They benefit from supportive managers and value the career opportunities that the apprenticeship provides.

Apprentices receive high-quality coaching and mentoring in the workplace. They learn through job shadowing, role play, team building and peer support and record these activities in personal development plans. This helps them quickly build the confidence to take on duty manager and assistant manager responsibilities such as banking and locking up.

Apprentices are fully trained in all aspects of the restaurant business, including food hygiene, computerised systems and operational duties such as stocktaking and budgeting. They undertake meaningful, well-planned off-the-job training that links closely to their personal training plan and is tracked well by the employer, apprentice and trainer. Apprentices practise new skills in the workplace gained from attending workshops and research into hospitality sector companies when producing business projects.

Trainers use their in-depth sector knowledge to support apprentices very well. They assess written and practical work frequently, providing constructive feedback and repeated practice that helps apprentices improve. A well-built online portfolio containing interactive learning resources and workbooks allows apprentices to learn at their own pace and monitor their progress towards completion.

Apprentices are clear on the components and grading of end-point assessment. Trainers support them to practice for these assessments; however, they do not consistently encourage all apprentices to aim for higher grades.

Apprentices develop their mathematical and English skills well. They demonstrate these skills in their daily work, for example handling customer complaints or managing stock control. The few apprentices that require formal qualifications in these subjects receive one-to-one or online support and make rapid progress, with most passing exams at the first attempt.

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

Leaders have a range of suitable policies and procedures, including in relation to the 'Prevent' duty, for staff and apprentices to keep themselves safe. Staff and apprentices know how to raise a concern. To date, no safeguarding concerns or disclosures have been formally reported.

The company provides an employee assistance programme to promote apprentices' well-being. This includes a helpline accessible at all times.

Apprentices complete initial training in safeguarding. The designated safeguarding lead has completed relevant training at an appropriate level. The company keeps central records of staff training.

Apprentices have a good understanding of food safety and health and safety in the workplace. They receive training in crisis management and are able to categorise and deal with potential risks, such as evacuation following a terrorist attack.

Apprentices have a basic awareness of how to protect themselves from radicalisation and extremism but are not sufficiently aware of contextual issues such as county lines in their local region.

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