

JRV Associates Limited

Monitoring visit report

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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 the Education and Skills Funding Agency 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 'Monitoring visits' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

JRV Associates specialises in leadership and management training. It gained a direct contract in July 2017 and recruited its first apprentices under the levy-funding arrangements in March 2018. The company presently works with four employers. Currently, 36 apprentices are enrolled at JRV Associates, all on standards-based apprenticeships. Apprentices are aged over 25 and work for employers within the engineering, business services and education sectors. Just over half of the apprentices are completing the level 5 operations department manager programme, the remaining apprentices are completing the level 3 team leader supervisor programme.

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 have selected appropriate standards for the apprentices recruited. They work well with employers to design and implement a curriculum that stimulates apprentices to learn more. They jointly plan carefully the content of the programmes so that they meet the needs of apprentices and employers. For example, they redesigned one programme to include additional mathematics and English classes for apprentices identified as speaking English as an additional language.

As a result of the joint planning, apprentices develop new and increased knowledge which they use well to improve the quality of their management skills and behaviours at work. For example, apprentices learn how to discuss and address performance-related issues with their staff effectively and confidently.

Leaders and managers have a broad understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the quality of education. The director meets monthly with staff to discuss quality and learning and uses the information from performance management and tracking

systems to hold staff to account for the quality of provision and progress made by apprentices towards achieving their curriculum goals.

Most employers know the requirements of the apprenticeship but do not ensure that all apprentices receive enough off-the-job time to enable them to complete all the learning and assessments. JRV Associates are improving but the progress made by a few apprentices is too slow.

During the first year, managers did not ensure that apprentices were fully aware of the requirements and demands of the apprenticeship programme. As a result, a few apprentices left the programme early. Managers now carefully assess and identify apprentices' suitability for the programme by taking account of their employment record, commitment to the company and personal circumstances.

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 teach a curriculum that is challenging and ambitious. Consequently, most apprentices gain substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours. Apprentices benefit from their training and use it well to help improve their team leadership and management skills. The collaborative off-the-job training days improve their confidence in their role and their effectiveness as teams.

Apprentices use their new knowledge and skills well. For example, they understand personality types to resolve tensions within their teams. Most apprentices benefit from timely assessment and feedback and the standard of work is appropriate for the programme. Tutors recognise new skills that apprentices demonstrate and provide them with clear improvement targets.

Many apprentices make good use of photographic and video evidence to retain key learning points. This helps them to recall knowledge gained in workshops. They make good links between the apprenticeship programme and the workplace. For example, for project management apprentices clearly describe projects they have undertaken and how they use their new learning to evaluate improvements to these. Apprentices critically analyse their strengths and areas to improve at work and this informs their future targets.

Apprentices quickly develop useful managerial techniques and tools to develop positive behaviours in their teams. Apprentices now manage underperformance meetings, supported by human resources staff who previously led the meetings.

Functional skills mathematics is taught well and, recently, nearly all apprentices successfully achieved their level 2 qualification. However, tutors do not plan to

ensure that apprentices' English and mathematics skills are continually developed so they improve to the highest possible levels.

Apprentices receive a wide range of good teaching, training and support from well-qualified, experienced tutors. However, tutors do not plan sufficient opportunities for apprentices to practise their skills, knowledge and understanding to help them prepare for their end-point assessment. Consequently, apprentices do not fully understand the requirements or feel prepared sufficiently well enough for this.

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

Managers have ensured that all the necessary policies and procedures are in place to safeguard apprentices. These are up to date and include the 'Prevent' duty risk assessment and action plan. Managers carry out all necessary checks to ensure that they appoint staff and associates who pose no risk to apprentices.

All staff are trained in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Apprentices receive good support for well-being and mental resilience, whenever it is needed. The designated safeguarding lead has links with local agencies to keep up to date with local concerns accurately.

Apprentices are safe and focus effectively on healthy and safe working practices. However, tutors do not plan and use opportunities in workshops to develop further apprentices' knowledge of safeguarding. As a result, most apprentices could not recall the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism and do not understand the implications for them as citizens and employees.

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