

# Capella Associates Ltd

Monitoring visit report

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**Name of lead inspector:** Julie Gibson, Ofsted 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 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.

Capella Associates Ltd, established in 2005, is based in Worcestershire. The company specialises in quality and continuous improvement training. Capella Associates Ltd has offered directly delivered levy-funded apprenticeships since March 2018. It has 168 apprentices, funded through the employer levy, who follow standards-based programmes for improvement technicians, practitioners and specialists. Of these, 62 are on level 3, 94 are on level 4, and 12 are on level 5 programmes. Apprentices work in a range of businesses in the public and private sectors across England.

### Themes

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

#### **Significant progress**

Leaders have a very clearly defined purpose and strategy for their apprenticeship programmes. They are highly organised and plan carefully for apprentices' achievement. As a result, a very high proportion of apprentices achieve their qualifications on time and nearly half achieve a merit or distinction. Most subsequently move into specialist roles with their employers.

All programmes meet in full the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. Leaders work closely with employers to design programmes specifically to meet apprentices' aspirations and changing business needs. For example, assessors plan and deliver training and coaching sessions for apprentices who work on night shift production teams. Apprentices develop significant new skills, knowledge and behaviours. As a result, they enjoy greater responsibilities in their jobs. Employers are right to value this highly.

Leaders ensure that all trainers are well qualified and highly experienced in their roles. They invest in high-quality resources and equipment that enable apprentices to do very well.

All apprentices complete a comprehensive assessment of their prior knowledge and skills to ensure they are on the right programme. Assessors use this information to provide appropriate English and mathematics support and monitor progress. As a result, the vast majority of apprentices make at least the progress expected of them and a very high proportion pass their English and mathematics tests at the first attempt.

Leaders understand fully the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. They evaluate performance in all areas closely. They identify challenging targets, most of which they achieve. This ensures that standards improve rapidly. For example, leaders continue to improve how they assess and use apprentices' previous knowledge, skills and experiences to accelerate progress.

Governance and oversight arrangements are highly effective. Board advisers are independent and impartial. They scrutinise performance at frequent, well-planned and managed meetings. They challenge leaders to implement improvements.

**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 the skills, knowledge and behaviours to implement successful improvement projects. They use sophisticated tools and techniques to identify efficiencies in the workplace. For example, they have recently implemented a retail-based project about stock levels. This is estimated to save the business £5,000,000. Employers are highly supportive of the programme. Apprentices are right to value the skills they develop.

Leaders ensure that they organise and structure the apprenticeship well to meet the needs of apprentices and employers. For example, at the start of the apprenticeship apprentices and employers know the dates of all training and coaching sessions. As a result, employers are involved fully at meetings and support apprentices to complete their projects to high standards. All apprentices have a good understanding of end-point assessment and the grades they are working towards. They know what they need to do to improve.

Staff identify reliably what apprentices already know and can do. English and mathematics sessions take place at the start of the apprenticeship. This helps staff to deal promptly with any gaps in apprentices' skills and knowledge. Staff complete frequently an assessment of apprentices' capability to use a wide variety of tools and techniques. Consequently, apprentices understand their development and what they need to do to improve.

Assessors are skilful and deliver effective training. Apprentices enjoy this. Level 3 and 4 apprentices receive additional coaching from level 5 apprentices who develop their

coaching skills as part of their programme. All apprentices are right to value this highly.

Induction is thorough and informative. It provides apprentices with detailed information about their apprenticeship. This is enhanced during training, by bringing together apprentices from different businesses. As a result, apprentices share their experiences of implementing improvement projects and working in different sectors.

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

Leaders place a high priority on safeguarding apprentices. They keep comprehensive and highly organised records. Staff are trained appropriately and know what to do if they have concerns. Leaders ensure that employers understand their responsibilities for safeguarding before apprentices start. Staff diligently monitor and assess any risks in the workplace and check regularly that apprentices are safe. Where concerns are identified prompt action is taken.

Staff give apprentices timely and appropriate advice about how to stay safe, including from the dangers of extremism and radicalisation and online. Most apprentices know how to keep themselves safe. However, apprentices do not understand enough about local risks and priorities.

Staff discuss safeguarding at every team and board meeting. Leaders maintain a detailed log to record any safeguarding incidents. To date, there have been no issues.

Leaders carry out comprehensive background checks on staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with apprentices.

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