

Group Horizon Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of a series of monitoring visits to a sample of new apprenticeship training providers that are funded through the apprenticeship levy. Ofsted's intention to carry out monitoring visits to these new providers was first announced by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in November 2017. The focus of these visits is on the three themes set out below.

Group Horizon Limited was formed as an education consulting organisation in 2009. The managing director established the business with a focus on engineering, manufacturing and management. In 2017, the company began training apprentices funded through the apprenticeship levy for two very large utilities infrastructure companies. The company currently provides training for 97 apprentices at levels 2 and 3. A large majority are on standards-based apprenticeships in smart meter installations, with smaller numbers on standards-based apprenticeships in leadership and management, business improvement techniques and performing manufacturing operations.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

The standard of apprenticeship programmes is high. Leaders and managers ensure that employers and apprentices are fully aware of all the requirements of an apprenticeship. They work effectively to ensure that employers understand fully the on- and off-the-job training requirements of standards-based apprenticeships. Employers provide good support to their apprentices to enable them to complete their training. For example, apprentices working towards the completion of their smart meter installation programme receive significantly more off-the-job training than the minimum required, which enables them to gain new skills, knowledge and behaviours specific to their job role.

Leaders and managers employ specialist staff who are able to provide apprentices with the best opportunities to make good progress. However, managers are aware that records from teaching, learning and assessment observations identify a continuing need for a small proportion of staff to improve their teaching practice further.

Leaders and managers collaborate effectively with employers to ensure that apprentices are recruited with integrity. For example, they have worked closely with one employer to recruit suitable apprentices as part of a company-wide

redeployment programme. This ensures that apprentices are suitable for their new job role and are able to gain confidently the new skills required as part of the apprenticeship programme.

During regular progress meetings, leaders and managers monitor and review thoroughly the progress that apprentices make. They have access to up-to-date, accurate and detailed information about apprentices' progress, and are aware of the good progress of the large majority of apprentices.

Leaders' and managers' evaluation of the quality of their provision is largely accurate and identifies most of the areas for improvement. Leaders review their business improvement plan regularly. They make good use of it to hold managers and staff to account for their progress in improving the quality of the provision, the progress that apprentices make and the contribution that employers make to the apprenticeship programmes.

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

Leaders and managers have worked effectively with employers to put in place comprehensive learning programmes for apprentices that cover all aspects of their apprenticeship. Apprentices benefit from comprehensive information, advice and guidance about the demands of their proposed apprenticeship. Managers work very closely with employers to plan apprenticeship programmes that meet employers' business requirements and apprentices' development needs. In most instances, carefully compiled training and assessment plans identify apprentices' prior knowledge, skills and understanding. However, for a very few apprentices, the training plan does not identify fully the vocational skills that apprentices already have at the start of their programme.

As a consequence of carefully thought-out and planned programmes, most apprentices make good progress. They benefit from regular and well-planned technical sessions, mentoring at work and effective and appropriately scheduled pastoral support. Most apprentices achieve the milestones that their tutors plan and set with them. Apprentices enjoy their learning and are prepared appropriately for their final assessment.

Tutors provide effective support and training. As a result, apprentices make good progress in acquiring the vocational and practical skills that are required for their job role. For example, apprentices on the business improvement techniques programme become adept at monitoring, measuring and analysing information from proposed production improvements as part of a galvanising process. Apprentices improve their confidence, and develop new skills, behaviours and knowledge as part of their apprenticeship. For example, smart meter installation apprentices communicate very effectively with the public when visiting their homes, putting people at ease and

explaining the benefits of having a smart meter installed. Employers value apprentices' personal and vocational skills highly and recognise the benefits to them.

Leaders and managers make sure that apprentices are aware of the need to improve their English, mathematics and digital skills as part of the apprenticeship programme. Managers have recently revised the apprenticeship delivery plan to ensure that training in English and mathematics occurs earlier in the programme. Apprentices comment that this now enables them to use this new knowledge much better in their job roles. However, tutors do not guide apprentices routinely to help them improve the quality of their written work.

Leaders and managers have implemented an appropriate quality-assurance process to improve teaching, learning and assessment. However, managers' evaluation of the quality of teaching and training following observations of sessions focuses insufficiently on the progress that apprentices make and what they can now do as a result of their training.

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

Leaders and managers give safeguarding a high priority, and the arrangements in place are fit for purpose. All staff are trained and qualified appropriately for their job roles, and they complete regular mandatory updating. Safeguarding procedures are used effectively by staff to protect vulnerable apprentices. Managers seek advice and work effectively with external agencies, such as local authority designated safeguarding officers, when required.

Apprentices feel safe in their workplace. They have a good understanding of how to report any concerns. At their regular meetings with staff and their employers, they are confident in raising any safeguarding concerns or issues. Tutors and assessors check effectively on apprentices' well-being and safety when they visit them at work.

Leaders, managers, tutors and assessors provide apprentices with comprehensive information about the dangers associated with extremism and radicalisation during induction and at regular pastoral meetings. However, they do not fully reinforce these important issues with apprentices to develop their understanding further.

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