

Ginger Nut Media 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

This 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.

Ginger Nut Media Limited was formed in 2011, as a media services company. In 2015, it started providing government-funded training as a subcontractor. In May 2017, directors made the decision to become a prime contractor, delivering levy-funded apprenticeships, and trading as Ginger Nut Training. At the time of the visit, 98 levy-funded apprentices were on apprenticeship programmes.

About a third of the apprentices are on frameworks, with two thirds on standards-based apprenticeships. Apprentices are studying a range of programmes related to management, administration and digital skills. Apprentices work in both the public and private sectors. The majority are in public sector settings in either borough or county councils, or health and social care services. Apprentices range from young people just starting out in the workplace to older workers seeking to gain new skills and qualifications to progress in their careers. Ginger Nut Training does not use any subcontractors.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Directors are following an extremely well-thought-out strategy for developing the apprenticeship offer. They have focused well on ensuring that the provision grows at a manageable pace by staying within their capacity to deliver the programmes. Plans for growth are well considered and steady. Directors use their existing business links with employers extremely well to create and develop opportunities for staff to acquire new skills and complete apprenticeships.

Directors and staff are thorough in ensuring that the apprenticeship offer meets all relevant requirements. They work well with employers to ensure that they provide a suitable workplace for apprentices, including a strong focus on ensuring that apprentices receive the required 20% of work time devoted to off-the-job training. Directors have been very successful in recruiting staff with a range of qualifications and experience in delivering apprenticeships. Where needed, directors use contractors with specialist knowledge, such as delivery of information technology programmes. Staff receive regular performance reviews, based on apprentices'

progress, and a range of appropriate continuing professional development, which staff value highly.

Apprentices are on programmes that meet their needs and help them develop new skills and behaviours. However, staff have rightly identified that a few are in job roles that will make it difficult for them to develop all the skills and behaviours needed. Staff work well with employers to ensure that these learners get additional responsibilities to allow them to develop and practise the skills and behaviours required.

Many apprentices are on permanent contracts. However, a few are on fixed-term contracts that are not appropriate for apprentices on standards-based apprenticeships. Staff work well with employers to ensure that these contracts are extended where necessary to enable apprentices to complete their programme. Directors plan to revise their recruitment strategy to ensure that future apprentices are all on appropriate contracts.

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

Apprentices are developing new skills and behaviours that enhance their career prospects and have a positive impact on their organisations. Apprenticeship support tutors (tutors) and apprentices use electronic portfolios highly effectively to monitor apprentices' progress. Most apprentices are making at least expected progress.

Staff work closely with employers to coordinate apprenticeship training activities with workplace training, and record this well. Apprentices receive clear guidance about their programmes and how they will benefit them in the workplace.

Tutors and apprentices work well together to set and monitor clear targets and actions to complete. Staff hold monthly meetings to discuss the progress each apprentice is making. Apprentices understand well the progress they are making and what they need to do to complete their programmes.

Tutors use a range of activities to help apprentices develop their knowledge and skills. These include workshops, individual tutorials and guided assignments. However, directors acknowledge that the off-the-job training programme requires further development to ensure that all apprentices receive good-quality training. A very few apprentices reported that they did not get enough support to develop underpinning knowledge.

Tutors provide good support in the workplace. They develop good relationships with apprentices and visit them regularly in the workplace according to the needs of apprentices' shift patterns. Apprentices respect and value the work that tutors do. Employers also value the support provided by tutors. One employer noted that the assessor gave them as much support as she did the apprentice.

Directors have established suitable arrangements to develop apprentices' English, mathematical and information technology skills. Managers use screening and, where needed, diagnostic tests to identify apprentices' support needs. This support is generally provided by tutors. Directors have identified a service provider in the event that more specialist support is needed, but this has not yet been necessary. In a few cases, staff have not analysed apprentices' overall skill levels well enough at the start of the programme to plan their learning experience.

Quality improvement activities require further development. Directors rely too much on reports from external agencies to monitor the quality of the provision. Staff carry out a range of discrete activities, including observations of all aspects of the apprentices' programmes. These provide useful feedback for staff to improve. However, observations focus too much on what the teacher is doing and not on what the apprentice is learning. While directors have a good understanding of the specific weaknesses identified by inspectors and are working to deal with them, they do not have an overall strategy and an action plan for improvement.

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

Directors have focused well on ensuring that apprentices are safeguarded. Staff carry out detailed workplace checks, and review them at each visit. The designated safeguarding lead has received appropriate training. Staff have received training in safeguarding, and currently all staff working with apprentices have undergone Disclosure and Barring Service checks. Directors plan to carry out such checks on all staff. Directors have identified someone to carry out the role of deputy designated lead. However, the deputy designated lead has not yet received the training for designated leads.

Apprentices feel safe in the workplace. They know to whom they should report their concerns. Tutors are diligent in checking apprentices' safety in the workplace and discuss safeguarding with learners during visits. However, the apprentices' responses are not always recorded on the review documentation.

Most apprentices have a clear understanding of safeguarding. For example, one apprentice working directly with the public articulated well the dangers that children face and how to minimise the risks. However, a few have only a superficial understanding of how to keep themselves safe. Directors are aware that more work is needed on developing apprentices' understanding of safeguarding.

Apprentices have insufficient knowledge of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. The dangers are covered during induction but not developed further. Apprentices are equally unclear about British values. Directors are aware of this weakness and plan to provide a range of resources to help apprentices develop this knowledge and understanding. In addition, staff have started using scenario-based discussions to help develop and reinforce apprentices' understanding of these topics.

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