

# Deere Apprenticeships Ltd

Monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 1276263

**Name of lead inspector:** Gerard McGrath HMI

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**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider  
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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.

Deere Apprenticeships Ltd (Deere) started to deliver vocational training and apprenticeships in 2011. Deere began apprenticeships funded through the apprenticeship levy in 2017 and these were in scope for the monitoring visit. Deere currently delivers training for 91 apprentices at levels 2, 3 and 5. Apprentices are following programmes in health and social care, business management, team leading, administration, warehousing and distribution, and retail.

### Themes

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

#### **Reasonable progress**

Senior leaders and managers are very committed to providing a high standard of training for all apprentices. They have made good use of the findings of previous inspections of their prime contractors' provision to introduce improvements across their apprenticeship provision. For example, senior managers have introduced monthly caseload review meetings so that the checking of the delivery team's performance is more regular and systematic.

Senior managers have set and communicated a clear strategy to ensure that high-quality training supports the new apprenticeship standards. As a consequence, senior managers ensure that newly recruited tutors are suitably qualified and knowledgeable about their vocational areas and the requirements of apprenticeship programmes.

The senior management team will only work with employers who are able to deliver all aspects of the apprenticeship. For example, managers no longer work with employers who fail to meet all the apprenticeship requirements. Deere's staff undertake significant preparatory work with employers. As a result, apprentices are on the correct programme and the large majority of employers are involved effectively in the planning and delivery of apprentices' training. Managers make good use of service-level agreements to support their effective working relationships with employers. These agreements clearly outline and reinforce the responsibilities of all parties in the management and delivery of high-quality training.

Managers and employers have good working relationships and almost all employers have a good awareness of how they can help apprentices to succeed.

Senior leaders and managers have a good and realistic understanding of the provision's strengths and weaknesses. They make effective use of their existing quality-improvement arrangements to raise standards of training, learning and assessment. Experience of self-assessment, as a subcontractor to other prime providers, makes a valuable contribution to the senior management team's quality evaluations. However, senior managers have been slow to respond to a small number of weaknesses.

Tutors' recording of apprentices' participation in training has recently improved and is now good. The large majority of apprentices consistently receive their full entitlement to on- and off-the-job training. However, managers agree that they need to improve further their monitoring arrangements so they can intervene more quickly when they identify shortfalls in training attendance.

A board of directors provides effective support and challenge to senior managers. The board meets regularly and monitors apprentices' progress closely. Board members acknowledge the need to improve the independent scrutiny of their decision-making. They have recruited an additional non-executive member with extensive expertise in teaching, learning and assessment in further education and training to help them to judge their effectiveness.

Senior managers make good use of data to track and review apprentices' achievements. Managers identify areas for improvement accurately and implement effective remedial actions. For example, managers have identified the need to enhance the information system used to check apprentices' progress. They are refining the weighting given to the completion of different aspects of the apprenticeship. Improvements are at an early stage and therefore it is too soon to evaluate their impact.

**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' training ensures that they develop a wide range of new skills, knowledge and behaviours. This allows them to be more effective in their workplace. For example, management apprentices were able to demonstrate how they could apply their learning to communicate more successfully with different groups and individuals. Team-leading apprentices used their delegation skills to help colleagues adopt greater responsibility and carry out more complex tasks safely. Apprentices are more motivated in their work and achieve at a higher level.

Apprentices have a clear appreciation of how their training contributes to the attainment of personal career aspirations. At the start of their training, apprentices receive useful support to help them understand the available vocational options. However, managers recognise the need to increase the availability of independent careers information, advice and guidance throughout their programme.

Workplace tutors review apprentices' progress frequently. Apprentices comment favourably on the good pastoral and learning support that workplace tutors provide. Communication between workplace tutors and apprentices outside of planned workplace visits is good. Workplace tutors have established collaborative and productive partnerships with employers, who are usually involved appropriately in checking and supporting apprentices' progress. Apprentices make good use of the electronic portfolio to access their programme at a time and place that suits them. Workplace tutors schedule review and assessment visits adeptly to fit in with apprentices' employment shift patterns.

Workplace tutors use a good range of assessment methods to evaluate apprentices' competence and development. They provide swift responses to apprentices' queries and submission of completed work. Workplace tutors' feedback is generally detailed. It includes sufficient guidance to help apprentices to improve quickly within the agreed challenging time constraints.

Senior leaders keep apprentices and employers fully informed about the emerging requirements for end-point assessment. Apprentices have a clear appreciation of what the end-point assessment might entail and how their programme is preparing them for it. Apprentices' completed written work is of the required standard or better.

The good quality of on- and off-the-job training experienced by most apprentices effectively enhances their learning and development. Workplace tutors are vocationally well qualified and have a sound understanding of apprentices' job roles. This helps tutors to link taught theory with apprentices' workplace situations skilfully.

Workplace tutors assess apprentices' starting points in English and mathematics accurately. They make good use of this information to plan training that improves their English and mathematical knowledge and skills. Apprentices' occupational responsibilities effectively allow them to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required by their apprenticeship. Consequently, the majority of apprentices make the expected or better progress in achieving their planned learning goals.

Managers use well-established quality-assurance processes effectively to monitor and improve apprentices' learning experiences. Evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment through direct observation places adequate emphasis on judging their quality. Managers identify accurately the majority of key strengths and weaknesses in observed sessions. Improvement plans for observed tutors are effectively linked to

performance appraisals and the training they require to improve teaching and learning further.

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

Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Senior managers give a high priority to protecting all apprentices and staff from harm. Safeguarding policies and procedures, including those that inform safe recruitment and vetting of staff, are comprehensive and fit for purpose. Apprentices report that they feel safe during their training and develop a good understanding of safe working practices within their busy work settings. They have a good awareness of how to raise any concerns about their safety or welfare.

Leaders and managers have ensured that the designated safeguarding lead is qualified and competent to carry out the associated duties. Managers and tutors have a good understanding of their responsibilities and how to respond to safeguarding concerns. All staff undertake a wide range of relevant training.

Apprentices generally have a sufficient appreciation of fundamental British values. They have sufficient understanding of how to apply these values to their work and in their personal lives. Managers have recently strengthened the arrangements to raise apprentices' awareness of the 'Prevent' duty. However, not all apprentices are sufficiently aware of the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism.

Apprentices usually demonstrate an adequate understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet and social media.

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