

Corndel Ltd

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.

Corndel Ltd (Corndel) was founded in 2016 as an independent learning provider. Leaders and managers work with national and international organisations. They also work with a subcontractor, Decoded Ltd, which provides data analyst standards apprenticeships programmes. Currently, there are around 980 adult apprentices following apprenticeships programmes in leadership and management, software developer, data analyst and project management at level 3, 4 and 5.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

- Leaders have high expectations of their staff and apprentices. Leaders' and managers' strategic vision for the company is aspirational. Leaders have planned their apprenticeships programmes to fully meet the funding requirements. Leaders regularly carry out thorough internal compliance audits to ensure that their apprentices receive high-quality and individualised on- and off-the-job training. For example, apprentices undertake additional units and attend workshops in response to their personal development needs, which enables them to gain specific skills and behaviours required for their job roles.
- Leaders ensure that Corndel staff are involved in the recruitment and selection of all apprentices prior to enrolment. As a result, a high proportion of apprentices complete their programmes successfully. The director of curriculum and the professional development experts (PDEs) organise learning and assessments successfully to meet the individual needs of apprentices and employers. They produce excellent resources that apprentices and employers appreciate greatly because they are closely linked to their job roles.
- Leaders have made significant progress with their employer engagement. They meet their employers' requirements flexibly and professionally, and they communicate extremely effectively with their employers. For example, where apprentices are at risk of falling behind, Corndel staff intervene swiftly and regularly discuss solutions with employers to enable apprentices to make the best progress that they can.

- Leaders and managers regularly review apprentices' skills development, and they routinely contact employers to make sure that apprentices make strong progress. For example, fundraising manager apprentices were able to select and order their units in line with their roles and responsibilities at specific points in the year, which enabled them to apply the skills that they developed precisely to their work.
- Leaders and PDEs ensure that employers and apprentices are fully prepared for the end-point assessment requirements. As a result, apprentices are ready and confident. Most apprentices have high aspirations for themselves and are applying themselves to achieve high grades. PDEs support apprentices very well to enable them to succeed.
- Leaders and managers effectively monitor apprentices' progress. They intervene quickly when apprentices fall behind with their work. As a result, leaders have reduced significantly the number of apprentices who may be at risk of not achieving within the time allocated to them.
- Leaders and managers monitor their subcontracted provision, Decoded Ltd, appropriately well. They review apprentices' progress regularly and hold subcontracted staff suitably to account. For example, operations managers challenge subcontracted staff to meet administrative deadlines. They also support them by providing good-quality training to enable them to meet the standards expected by Corndel staff. Most apprentices make good progress at Decoded Ltd, and they work for employers and in large international organisations, who value highly their contributions to their businesses.
- Leaders' self-assessments and quality improvement planning is not yet fit for purpose. Although leaders accurately identify strengths and weaknesses, they do not evaluate the quality of their provision well enough by using the key information that they have available to them. As a result, they do not pinpoint what needs to be improved, and are not able to gauge their progress against specific targets.
- Leaders' processes to judge the quality of training focus too narrowly on the performance of PDEs and not enough on the quality of learning and the progress that apprentices make. Leaders have recently revised their processes for observing PDEs, but this is yet to be established.
- Leaders do not ensure that PDEs undertake training and development to make sure that they gain up-to-date industry standards knowledge and skills. PDEs do not adequately record the training and development that they receive from Corndel staff. Leaders do not check whether PDEs apply any of the training that they have undertaken to their teaching methods and, consequently, a few PDEs lack skill in the craft of teaching during workshop sessions.
- Leaders provide governors with accurate and timely reports. Governors hold leaders to account effectively to challenge them to improve the quality of the provision. However, the core reports that governors receive lack key details, such as: the quality of teaching and learning; a detailed account of apprentices' progress in all subjects and levels; and the progress apprentices make in functional skills English and mathematics. As a result, leaders and governors are

unable to identify key trends or weaknesses, and this restricts their ability to provide additional scrutiny and challenge. For example, although most PDEs work very effectively to enhance apprentices' skills in English and mathematics, leaders' oversight is not rigorous enough to be able to strengthen areas of weakness.

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

- PDEs plan individualised sessions and reviews very effectively, taking account of the apprentices' starting points and previous learning so that they can make rapid progress. PDEs work exceedingly well with employers to inform them of apprentices' progress and to plan further learning and skills together where necessary.
- PDEs make excellent links to the workplace and, as a result, apprentices can apply their learning and skills at work to improve and bring value to their organisation. For example, software development apprentices accurately developed a holiday booking system using databases so successfully that employers are now introducing the booking system across the organisation.
- Regular and developmental feedback enables apprentices to make good progress throughout their programmes. PDEs make good use of technology to provide live feedback.
- Most PDEs check apprentices' understanding thoroughly and enable them to deepen their understanding and knowledge. PDEs use very successful methods to probe apprentices' knowledge, and consistently relate skills and knowledge back to their workplaces and job roles. As a result, apprentices are confident in their acquisition of new knowledge and understanding, and demonstrate the skills that they gain very well. For example, apprentices have a good understanding of different ways of managing teams and understanding of why their managers use different approaches.
- Employers value the high standards of apprentices' written and practical work. For example, apprentices working for an aerospace engineering company expertly developed strategies to reduce costs, and employers were so impressed that this is now being implemented across the organisation.
- PDEs effectively promote good literacy skills and improvements in apprentices' written English, including their presentation styles. The standards of apprentices' work are consequently high.
- Some aspects of provision are weaker. For example, the teaching on software engineering and data analyst programmes does not stretch all apprentices in their learning. Targets are set based on completion of units and assignments, rather than the quality of the work. Apprentices who complete their work quickly must wait for others to catch up, which slows their progress. The PDEs teaching data analyst and software developer apprenticeships do not effectively involve

employers to discuss the progress of apprentices' work. As a result, apprentices on these programmes are not always able to apply their new skills well in their workplaces.

- Apprentices have a very good understanding of fundamental British values and apply them regularly to their work and job roles. Apprentices can identify how and why their organisations operate using democracy, through examples such as freedom of speech. Apprentices develop a good understanding of the value of diversity within their organisations, for example through organisational welfare and the celebration of diversity at work.

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

- Effective arrangements are in place for safeguarding apprentices. Staff undergo appropriate vetting prior to employment with the company. Leaders' policies and procedures are well understood by staff and apprentices. Apprentices say that they feel safe and know to whom they should report any concerns.
- The designated safeguarding personnel record and monitor concerns effectively and follow up incidents to full resolution. They refer apprentices to external organisations if required and work closely with the local police, 'Prevent' coordinators and local charity organisations to enable apprentices to access external support should they require it. Leaders take the 'Prevent' duty seriously and, as a result, most apprentices have a good understanding of how to protect themselves and others from the potential dangers posed by radicalisation and extremism. However, a few apprentices following data analyst and software engineering programmes do not have any understanding of the 'Prevent' duty guidance, and PDEs do not discuss these topics with them.
- Apprentices have a good understanding of health and safety procedures at work, and always work safely, following health and safety guidelines.
- Although leaders recognise that apprentices do not have a good understanding of wider safeguarding topics, such as online safety, bullying and harassment, they do not adequately consider the local risks that apprentices may be exposed to.

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