

Knights Training Academy Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

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

Established in 2009, Knights Training Academy Limited (KTA) provides a range of employment-focused qualifications. These include apprenticeships, 16 to 19 study programmes, national vocational qualifications, short courses in spectator safety and customer service, and assessor/verifier qualifications. KTA worked as a subcontractor with other training providers before securing a contract for levy-funded apprenticeship provision in 2017. At the time of the visit, 12 apprentices were on standards-based apprenticeships in customer service, and around 55 apprentices were on framework-based apprenticeships, also in customer service.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Managers ensure that apprenticeships meet Education and Skills Funding Agency and Institute for Apprenticeships requirements. Staff give clear information to employers and apprenticeship applicants about the demands and requirements of programmes. Recruitment procedures are appropriately rigorous, and staff make sure applicants have the qualifications and attributes they need for success on the programmes.

Managers put in place good induction arrangements to make sure new apprentices receive specific information about the work they must complete for their apprenticeship. Managers and assessors make sure that apprentices have a good understanding of the industries in which they do or might work. They discuss often with apprentices the opportunities for further learning and careers development after the apprenticeship. As a result, applicants are prepared fully for their apprenticeships. Apprentices make good progress from the start and develop new occupationally specific knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Managers keep close links with employers. They inform employers, for example, about new training opportunities and government policies. They make sure that employers are aware of the off-the-job learning requirements of standards-based apprenticeships. Assessors make sure that apprentices understand fully their entitlement to off-the-job learning time and receive their required hours for off-the-

job activities. They make sure that apprentices record the number of hours they spend on learning activities each week. The vast majority of assessors review these carefully with apprentices to make sure that apprentices are making good progress. Records kept by a minority of apprentices do not provide managers or assessors with enough detail about the activities and learning carried out during off-the-job training. This means that staff cannot check easily whether apprentices are carrying out the correct range of tasks at a proper level over a given period.

Managers and assessors make sure that apprentices understand the demands of the apprenticeship gateway and end-point assessment. Assessors do not always tell apprentices early enough in the programme whether they are working towards achievement at pass, merit or distinction level, where such bands feature in the relevant apprenticeship standard. As a result, a small minority of apprentices do not receive enough challenge to improve their work and aim at the highest levels of achievement.

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

Managers have put in place comprehensive and largely effective arrangements to make sure that provision is high quality. They carry out a wide range of monitoring, record-checking and observation activities. These cover all on- and off-the-job learning activities. Managers use the findings and outcomes of such activities constructively to support improvement. For example, managers use feedback following observations of training and learning activities as the basis for their frequent one-to-one discussions with assessors. Managers also use quality-monitoring information to give a focus to annual staff appraisals. In these discussions and appraisals, managers support staff fully to improve the services they provide for apprentices. Managers' observations of learning activities, however, need to focus more closely on the learning that apprentices undertake during each monthly review visit that assessors make to apprentices. In these observations, observers pay too much attention to processes and activities that take place during reviews rather than to learning that takes place and the development of apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Members of the board of governors have a good focus on and oversight of the quality of the provision. Managers provide board members with detailed reports on the quality of the provision at each of their quarterly meetings. Managers report in a good level of detail on ways that they can improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment for individuals and for the provision overall. Board members challenge and support leaders appropriately

Assessors give good support to their apprentices. They provide them with a good level of detailed comment on what they are doing well and what they need to improve. Assessors have extensive experience and knowledge of the apprenticeship

subject matter and the sector in which they are working. Information gathered about apprentices' starting points is accurate. Assessors use information about apprentices' earlier learning effectively to inform learning plans.

Although assessors agree targets with apprentices at progress reviews, the targets are not specific enough about the sort of knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices need to develop by their next review. Targets rarely make specific reference, for example, to English, mathematics and information and communication technology skills that apprentices need to develop and that will allow them to perform better in their workplaces.

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

Apprentices feel safe in their workplaces, and they know what to do and who to contact should they have any concerns. Assessors discuss safeguarding matters with apprentices often. They check carefully that employers safeguard apprentices' health and well-being. Staff make suitable checks of employers' premises and safeguarding procedures before they enrol applicants on to the programmes.

Senior managers and governors oversee safeguarding arrangements carefully. They review and improve arrangements quickly if any concerns emerge. Designated safeguarding officers are suitably qualified and knowledgeable about their roles. They give good support for staff. Managers provide frequent training for staff and nearly all staff hold qualifications in safeguarding at appropriate levels. Managers have good links to appropriate staff in the local authority where KTA is based. They make good use of information from local authority safeguarding officers to update company procedures and expectations. Links to regional 'Prevent' duty coordinators are underdeveloped, but managers are working hard to improve them.

Apprentices have a basic understanding of the dangers they might face from those who hold radical and extremist views. They know how to keep themselves safe from radicalisation in the workplace and online. Managers and assessors do not make sure that all apprentices have a confident understanding of potential extremist dangers beyond religious extremism. In reviews, for example, apprentices and assessors rarely talk about wider forms of extremism, such as political or campaigning extremism. Assessors are not using the recently introduced support materials to bring these topics to life in a memorable way which allows apprentices to broaden their understanding.

Apprentices understand British values and the vast majority can outline the ways that they model behaviours to reflect these values in the workplace. Most assessors make sure that they discuss relevant current affairs topics to broaden apprentices' understanding of such values during the programmes.

Managers work hard to increase diversity in the logistics and security industries. For example, they take part in campaigns to increase the number of women and girls

entering training for these sectors. Managers work closely with employers and take part in social media campaigns to advertise vacancies to under-represented groups. Managers have yet to achieve the challenging targets set for female enrolments in the relevant sectors, but they are making progress towards them.

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