

GTG Training 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 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.

GTG Training Limited started training in England from 2013. Since then, it has been a subcontractor to other training providers delivering apprenticeships in mostly the automotive sector. The provider registered to receive public funding for the first time in May 2017. The first levy-funded apprentices enrolled three months later. At the time of the inspection, there were 196 apprentices funded through the levy. Most apprentices follow standards-based apprenticeships in the automotive sector for a large national employer, most of the others work in the logistics and customer care sectors.

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

Leaders have a clear strategic plan to serve the needs of the motor vehicle and logistics industry. They have strong strategic relationships with employers to help them identify and train the specialist staff employers need for sustainable growth. One employer in the automotive sector employs most apprentices, with most others in logistics and customer service roles. Leaders recognise the key differences in the changes to the new apprenticeship standards and have made significant investment in senior and middle managers, trainers, and high-quality resources to meet the demands of the new provision. Leaders have worked hard to achieve a successful curriculum, but they have failed to recognise key weaknesses in the provision which are hindering apprentices' progress towards fulfilling their potential.

The planning of on-the-job training for automotive standards is incomplete. Workplace mentors do not have a sufficiently well-structured assessment plan so that all apprentices can make the progress expected. Also, managers do not ensure consistently that workplace mentors are sufficiently well trained and allocated enough time to undertake the role effectively. Managers plan on-the-job training for the logistics industry well.

Leaders plan most off-the-job training located at the provider's site well. However, the training delivered mostly in employers' workplaces is less well planned. For example, apprentices following customer service apprenticeships do not have enough

planned off-the-job training and therefore try to fit it in when their work becomes less busy. Also, leaders and managers have failed to train or recruit sufficiently well-qualified staff to help apprentices develop their English and mathematics skills. Apprentices do not receive any formal training in these subjects during their apprenticeship, except for one day before their functional skills examination. Consequently, too few apprentices achieve their English or mathematics qualifications. Apprentices who do not require functional skills qualifications do not receive formal training to extend these skills further.

Leaders have been too slow to ensure that they receive sufficiently detailed information about apprentices' progress. They have recently invested in an online e-portfolio for apprentices to upload their work and have developed new tracking spreadsheets to provide information about their progress. However, at the time of the visit, leaders were unable to use this information well enough to help them to improve performance. For example, leaders failed to use this information to assess and report on apprentices' performance during governors' and managers' meetings. Managers are unable to ensure that all apprentices receive the support necessary to achieve their potential.

Leaders have only recently introduced external governance arrangements, and these are yet to have a demonstrable impact. Those in the governance role have appropriate experience in business and local government, and one is a specialist 'Prevent' officer for the local authority. Leaders accept that the information that governors receive is not sufficiently detailed or helpful for the board to be effective and challenge them sufficiently to improve provision further.

Careers advice and guidance are not good enough. Too few apprentices know the careers opportunities available to them on completion of the programme.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that trainers plan apprentices' learning and assessment sufficiently well. Trainers do not consider prior learning and experience in planning apprentices' programmes, resulting in a few apprentices studying subjects that they have already completed. Most apprentices start their course at the most appropriate level. However, a few apprentices do not develop sufficient new skills from their training. For example, apprentices in light goods vehicle and customer service did not extend their work-related skills, because their training failed to challenge them enough.

When reviewing the quality of provision, leaders and managers do not assess trainers' ability to help apprentices make the progress that they should. Managers observe all trainers but fail to identify specific actions, so that trainers can improve their practice. Consequently, most trainers undertake the same professional

development, such as lesson planning, how to integrate English and mathematics, and understanding the Common Inspection Framework irrespective of their individual development needs. Leaders and managers do not evaluate whether trainers' professional development helps them to improve their training skills well enough, so that they can help apprentices make at least the progress expected of them.

Leaders and managers have been slow to establish English and mathematics provision. Apprentices do not receive sufficient support to develop their English and mathematics skills. Managers have recently reviewed the English and mathematics provision and identified key weaknesses, including insufficient planning and embedding of these skills in the curriculum. Managers have invested in additional trainers and learning resources to develop apprentices' English and mathematics skills, but they have yet to have a demonstrable impact.

Leaders and managers do not have an accurate view of apprentices' progress. Apprentices receive progress reviews routinely. However, most reviews fail to identify apprentices' progress against all aspects of their qualifications, set stretching targets or benefit from feedback from their employer. Consequently, standards-based apprentices do not know their target grade for them to achieve their potential. Managers and trainers do not monitor the appropriateness and effectiveness of interventions with apprentices falling behind with their work. Only a few apprentices received the support necessary to get back on track.

Most apprentices receive additional qualifications during their off-the-job training. Apprentices travel to the provider's site for one week, eight times per year, to receive most of their off-the-job training. During these sessions, they gain extra qualifications in health and safety, professional driving and in transport awareness. The small minority of apprentices who do not attend off-the-job training at the provider, do not gain these additional qualifications.

Trainers are well qualified and experienced in their vocational areas. Apprentices following automotive standards-based apprenticeships develop the expected practical skills with the support of employer mentors. However, their mentors are not yet familiar with assessing these standards in the workplace, including the use of an online e-portfolio to provide apprentices with timely feedback on their work. Trainers and mentors are not confident in assessing learning for standards-based apprentices, and this is hindering apprentices' progress.

Trainers assess adequately the learning needs of apprentices with additional needs. Apprentices receive additional time, readers and scribes to support them in planning for their end-point assessment.

Most apprentices value their employment and are enthusiastic employees within the workplace. They develop the practical skills and behaviours to work safely alongside their mentors. For example, apprentices learn to diagnose problems and become skilled at mechanical and electrical repair on a wide range of vehicles. A small minority of apprentices in automotive parts widen their knowledge by taking on extra responsibilities within the workplace. For example, a level 2 parts apprentice undertook level 3 activities, ordering and refunding automotive parts.

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

Senior leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are effective. They place a high priority on making sure that apprentices' working and training environments are safe. They have implemented appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures and review them routinely in management meetings. They have 10 trained designated safeguarding officers, with an additional 20 appropriately trained staff. Leaders have planned three safeguarding rotas, a 24-hour telephone helpline, the student services hub, and one for overnight stays at the local hotel, where apprentices stay while undertaking off-the-job training at the centre. These rotas ensure comprehensive support for apprentices. Managers have an extensive operational policy with the hotel to safeguard apprentices while on their premises.

Apprentices receive effective support. While at the centre, most apprentices can attend the student services hub and discuss any issues or concerns. This has been particularly beneficial for those who may be staying away from their families for the first time. Leaders monitor safeguarding concerns routinely and thoroughly. Managers deal swiftly with any incidents, including bullying. For example, a few apprentices received a warning and are now monitored closely because they failed to abide by a strict policy about using their own car.

Leaders have prioritised comprehensive training for their apprentices and staff in the 'Prevent' duty and ensure that they have a working knowledge of this to protect themselves. Leaders and apprentices benefit from the expertise of their governor, who is also a local authority 'Prevent' trainer. They learn about current issues, including those in their local communities. Apprentices have an appropriate understanding of the risks associated with extremism and radicalisation and know whom to contact if they have concerns.

Leaders have implemented safer recruitment practices. They ensure that all staff have enhanced disclosure checks and appropriate references before they work in the provider's settings. Included are other staff from automotive companies who lease part of the facility.

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