

# Train Together Limited

Monitoring visit report

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**Name of lead inspector:** Nigel Bragg, Her Majesty's Inspector

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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.

Train Together Limited began delivering vocational training by means of apprenticeships in May 2011. The company started training apprentices using levy funding in July 2017. This levy-funded provision was in scope for the monitoring visit.

Train Together Limited currently delivers training to 119 apprentices, of which 38 follow standards-based programmes in assistant accountancy, customer service, facilities supervisor management, facilities management, team leading, and operations and departmental management. Standards-based apprenticeships are offered at levels 2, 3, 4 and 5. The remaining apprentices are enrolled on framework apprenticeships in classroom support, sports coaching, childcare, and business administration at levels 2, 3 and 4.

### 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 have established and communicated to all stakeholders ambitious organisational values designed to help all apprentices achieve their potential. This supports and guides managers' actions to use work-based learning, including standards-based apprenticeships, to reduce skills shortages. Senior managers have prioritised specific employment areas, notably those in education support-worker roles, which best fit their delivery capacity. Senior leaders have invested appropriately in relevant information and communication technology, and staff development to aid apprentices' success.

Senior managers have established effective partnerships with a wide range of employers. Managers are careful to ensure that employers and apprentices fulfil the requirements of the apprenticeship programme. The large majority of apprentices routinely receive their on- and off-the-job training entitlement. However, managers recognise that the regular updating of training records requires improvement so that they give an accurate account for each apprentice. It is too early to judge the effect of the improvement actions implemented by managers to correct this deficiency.

Managers ensure that apprentices participate in appropriate programmes that address their long-term goals. Consequently, apprentices develop new skills, knowledge and behaviours that make them more effective employees. For example, schools business managers are able to show how an understanding of basic bookkeeping skills and terminology enhances their work performance.

Employers are committed to delivering all aspects of the standards-based apprenticeships. Most provide a wide range of relevant in-house development programmes and on-the-job training that support apprentices' progress. However, managers acknowledge the need to coordinate off-the-job training better to reinforce and support further apprentices' on-the-job learning.

Managers prepare apprentices appropriately for the end-point assessment. Consequently, apprentices have an adequate understanding of how and when they will be assessed prior to completing their programme. Senior managers have rightly taken a contingency approach to planning for the end-point assessment. They continue to adapt and respond effectively to the update guidance about the final form of the assessment.

The senior management team undertakes effective monitoring of apprentices', trainer/teachers' and coaches' performance. This contributes effectively to managers' evaluation of the quality of apprenticeships. It also helps the team to identify and improve suitably prioritised weaknesses. However, senior managers acknowledge that governance arrangements provide limited independent scrutiny and challenge of these assessments.

**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**

Trainer/teachers and coaches are well qualified and highly experienced in the subject areas for which they are responsible. They are enthusiastic about their subject(s) and communicate this effectively during group and individual learning sessions. As a result, apprentices are motivated, engaged and keen to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours. All staff have an appropriate teacher-training, assessment or internal-verification qualification corresponding to their roles and responsibilities.

Managers ensure that trainer/teachers assess apprentices' knowledge, skills and behavioural-development needs before beginning their training. Staff make good use of the assessment results to establish apprentices' starting points and plan their training.

Trainer/teachers plan and deliver off-the-job training effectively. They make good use of a wide range of learning materials and resources, including information and communication technology, to engage and motivate apprentices. For example,

trainer/teachers utilise computer applications effectively to create online bulletin boards that apprentices use to enhance their learning.

Apprentices develop a good range of new occupationally specific knowledge, skills and behaviours. For example, apprentices in learning-support roles in schools become better able to address the learning needs of children in their care. In addition, the apprentices play a more significant role in classroom management. Business administration apprentices demonstrate good improvements in their ability to communicate with external clients, secure new business and lead project teams. In a few cases, apprentices are unable to identify adequately the range of new knowledge, skills and behaviours they have developed or expect to develop.

The very large majority of apprentices make good progress from their starting points. All apprentices are on target to achieve by their planned end date. Apprentices receive appropriate guidance on the assessment strategy that trainer/teachers and coaches use to assess their progress and achievement. Trainer/teachers make good use of an electronic portfolio to review apprentices' progress and to set suitably challenging achievement and progress targets. Apprentices know how much progress they have made and what they must do to complete by their planned end date. Managers identify accurately any apprentices at risk of falling behind or leaving before they have completed their studies. Actions by managers to ensure that apprentices progress and achieve as planned are usually effective.

Staff provide apprentices with impartial information on the range of career pathways available at the start and end of their training. However, information, advice and guidance arrangements require strengthening so that suitable support is available throughout apprentices' training.

Senior leaders and managers use wide-ranging quality-assurance arrangements to monitor and improve standards quickly. Their internal audit processes are thorough and ensure adherence to operating procedures. Self-assessment processes are well established. They make a good contribution to leaders' and managers' honest self-critical culture. Taught sessions are subject to regular and frequent quality evaluation using direct observation. Trainer/teachers and coaches receive action points after being observed. However, observers place insufficient emphasis on the quality of learning that apprentices experience. This limits the usefulness of the process as an improvement tool.

For a small minority of apprentices the promotion and reinforcement of English and mathematics skills development requires improvement. A few trainer/teachers fail to plan the effective integration and delivery of these subjects within the main programme of study. Trainer/teachers and coaches do not record routinely, or formally acknowledge, apprentices' knowledge and skills development in English and mathematics.

Written feedback on apprentices' marked work is generally constructive. However, too often trainer/teachers and coaches pay insufficient attention to the correction of spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors. As a result, a small minority of apprentices repeat mistakes and do not improve their English skills quickly enough.

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

Safeguarding arrangements are effective. Leaders and managers give high priority to the welfare of apprentices and staff. Staff participate in a wide range of relevant update training that raises their professional competence to safeguard apprentices. Consequently, apprentices undertaking training are protected from harm.

The designated safeguarding officer has received appropriate training to undertake the role effectively. The safeguarding officer uses relevant working links with local safeguarding boards and support agencies to improve safeguarding arrangements, including the identification and sharing of best practice.

A comprehensive safeguarding policy and associated procedures are in place and subject to appropriate review. Leaders and managers ensure that all staff are subject to relevant pre-employment checks and vetting procedures before their employment begins.

Staff work effectively with apprentices during their induction to cover the full range of topics related to safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. However, staff do not extend and reinforce all apprentices' understanding sufficiently during subsequent interventions, such as progress reviews.

Apprentices have an appropriate understanding of fundamental British values and the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism. They have a fitting or better appreciation of how to stay safe in their workplace and when undertaking training. Apprentices working in the child-education and care sectors have a very good understanding of their safeguarding duty for the individuals for whom they are responsible.

Managers respond rapidly to the relatively small number of concerns raised by apprentices. They do not analyse sufficiently the available data on apprentices' welfare to identify trends.

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