

Construction Gateway 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.

Construction Gateway Limited is a small independent learning provider, working exclusively with the housing sector across England. It gained approval as a prime contractor in May 2017. Construction Gateway Limited has been providing private training courses to the construction and housing sectors for 20 years. The first publicly funded apprentices started their programmes in July 2017. At the time of the monitoring visit, 79 apprentices aged 19 and over were studying the standards-based apprenticeship in property maintenance at level 2. Construction Gateway Limited does not work with any subcontractors.

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

Leaders do not secure improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. For example, their observations of practice focus too heavily on what trainers do rather than the impact they have on apprentices and the progress that they make. Leaders do not plan appropriate actions to improve the quality of trainers' practice and ensure good outcomes for apprentices. Most trainers are supplied by an employment agency. Although managers ensure that these agency staff have the right skills and abilities to provide technical skills training, they do not ensure that their professional development focuses on improving their craft of teaching and assessment.

Managers do not effectively track apprentices' progress in order to identify those at risk of falling behind. As a consequence, managers do not have sufficient information to enable them to intervene swiftly to ensure that apprentices are able to achieve all parts of their apprenticeships within planned timescales.

Managers do not ensure that apprentices have sufficient opportunity to develop and use new skills in the workplace. Trainers do not visit apprentices in the workplace and, as a result, the majority of apprentices are not effectively supported to develop their skills in a real working environment. Due to the lack of evidence of workplace activity and managers' ineffective quality assurance, staff are not fully prepared for the end-point assessment of the apprenticeships.

Too many apprentices are placed on a programme that does not sufficiently challenge them and where they do not develop substantial new skills. Too many apprentices do not understand the requirements and commitment of their apprenticeships programmes. For example, some apprentices do not know that they are enrolled on an apprenticeship programme. Other apprentices are not aware if they are required to achieve functional skills qualifications.

Managers do not ensure that apprentices are sufficiently challenged to improve their English and mathematics skills. Apprentices achieve functional skills qualifications at levels they are already identified as working at when they start their programme. Trainers do not enable apprentices sufficiently well to develop their reading, writing and problem-solving skills further in order to excel.

Leaders have established effective links with the construction housing sector in order to ensure that apprentices have the opportunity to achieve the technical skills that are required for maintenance operatives. For example, Construction Gateway are leading on developing the new standards-based apprenticeships for the sector at Level 3 in order to provide progression routes and advanced courses for workers. However, too many apprentices are highly skilled in their trade at the start of their learning programmes and are not sufficiently challenged by their apprenticeships.

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

Trainers do not set and review challenging training and development targets with their apprentices to help them to make good progress. Assessors solely focus on the completion of workshops and task sheets and not on the wider development of apprentices' knowledge and behaviours. The majority of apprentices are making progress developing basic technical skills, such as invisible repairs to walls and ceilings to industry standards. Some apprentices have requested opportunities to shadow tradesmen to refine and practise what they have learned in their off-the-job training. However, too few have these opportunities as part of their job roles.

Apprentices do not benefit from constructive feedback on their work so that they know exactly what they need to do to improve. Trainers' feedback to apprentices is insufficient in both quality and quantity and is limited to apprentices' performance in the training environment. Trainers are not able to ensure that apprentices develop the full breadth of skills, knowledge and behaviours required for the apprenticeships standard due to not visiting them in the workplace.

Apprentices' technical skills and existing knowledge at the start of their learning programmes are effectively assessed and recorded by staff. However, this information is not used to enable apprentices to make good progress. Trainers do not plan and provide learning programmes that ensure apprentices make swift progress in their specific training needs.

Apprentices do not improve their English and mathematics skills through their job roles. Trainers do not identify and help apprentices to correct punctuation, spelling and grammatical errors or question the structure and format of their writing. As a result, apprentices continue to repeat the same mistakes, including incorrect spellings of technical terms and vocabulary.

Trainers do not routinely promote, assess and enable apprentices to develop appropriate work-related behaviours. As a consequence, apprentices do not know if they are meeting the full requirements of the apprenticeship standard.

Trainers do not ensure that employers and line managers contribute to or are sufficiently involved in the reviews of apprentices' progress. As a result, employers are not able to contribute and help enable their apprentices to develop the new skills, behaviours and knowledge required for their apprenticeship and for the work place.

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

Leaders' records of staff training are incomplete, and too many agency staff have not received up-to-date training on safeguarding. All staff employed by Construction Gateway Limited have completed safeguarding training. The designated safeguarding officer has completed designated persons training. All staff, including those supplied by the employment agency, are employed following appropriate safer recruitment procedures.

Managers do not ensure that agency staff employed as trainers have completed training in safeguarding or the 'Prevent' duty and, as a result, trainers do not promote or develop apprentices' wider understanding of such issues. For example, apprentices have limited knowledge of how to protect themselves from the risks of extremism or radicalisation.

Safety in the workplace is a priority for all staff. Apprentices safely use hand tools and power tools in the work place. However, not enough apprentices know how to report concerns with the provider and at their workplaces. Apprentices have a good understanding of their client needs when working in different homes and with differing client groups. However, this has been developed through training with their respective employers rather than through the apprenticeship.

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