

Marshall of Cambridge Aerospace Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	53257
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From October 2018, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision which began to be funded from April 2017 or after by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and/or the apprenticeship levy. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the 'Further Education and Skills Inspection Handbook', especially the sections entitled 'Providers newly directly funded to deliver apprenticeship training provision' and 'Monitoring visits'. The focus of these visits is on the three themes set out below.

Marshall of Cambridge Aerospace Ltd (Marshall) started its directly funded apprenticeship programme in 2017, with the first group of apprentices starting in May 2017. It provides apprenticeship programmes for engineering technicians specialising in aircraft engineering and land-based systems engineering. Prospective aircraft engineers choose to follow either the mechanical or avionics route. In addition, Marshall also provides apprenticeships in team leading, project management and administration. Marshall employs all the 120 apprentices currently on the programme. Approximately half of the apprentices are on engineering programmes. Most apprentices work at the Cambridge site. Marshall does not use subcontractors and does not provide any training under a subcontract for another provider.

Themes

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

Significant progress

Leaders ensured that the development of the directly funded apprenticeship provision has been at an appropriate pace, and that all elements were in place before the first apprentice started. They have made good use of their strengths, based on delivering engineering apprentice training, of one form or another, for the past 98 years. Leaders have ensured that the programmes meet all the requirements of an apprenticeship, including the requirement for off-the-job training, which is a strong part of the programme.

Leaders have invested well in staff and training resources to ensure that apprentices receive a high-quality training experience. Staff have a good range of professional and teaching qualifications and experience. Training resources are of industry standard. From the second year of their four-year programme, aircraft engineering apprentices work on aircraft being serviced for a range of military and civilian customers. Apprentices taking non-engineering apprenticeships also work in this

commercial environment. As a result, apprentices quickly develop new skills and behaviours that have a positive impact on the business.

Leaders have created a culture of open and fair recruitment for apprentices. Due to the esteem in which the company's training is held, competition for the limited places is high. Managers select apprentices on appropriate criteria. For young people, especially those who are going to live away from home for the first time, this process involves their families, to help them make the transition to the workplace. Leaders use their links with local schools to great effect to recruit apprentices. In the words of one first-year apprentice: 'from the day they visited my school in year 10 I knew I wanted to be a Marshall apprentice'.

Leaders focus on providing equality of opportunity for prospective apprentices. Inspectors found several examples where leaders had worked hard to recruit existing staff onto the programme. These staff had been at risk of redundancy or simply wanted to change their employment to meet their own aspirations. For those staff who wanted to move to an aircraft engineering role, leaders ensured that they could shadow the work of the two types of aircraft engineer, mechanical and electronic. This was for a period of one week for each type and allowed the apprentice to make an informed choice about their future role.

Leaders ensure that they celebrate apprentices' success. All apprentices have a presentation day, when they receive their certificates. Families and line managers attend these events. In addition, Marshall has established a range of awards for engineering apprentices. The winners of these awards attend a 'winners' day' event. Apprentices following other programmes are not yet included in this additional celebration of success.

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

Apprentices develop very high-level new skills, knowledge and behaviours. These are directly relevant to their workplaces and enable them quickly to become productive in their workplace teams. For example, an apprentice who is on a business administration apprenticeship has learned key skills in minute taking and provides detailed and accurate minutes of team meetings.

Aircraft engineering apprentices develop a good understanding of the theory of flight and how it applies to the aircraft on which they work. For example, one second-year apprentice gave a very detailed explanation of how an aircraft's flaps change the shape of the wing to provide additional lift at low speeds. They also develop a detailed understanding of all the aircraft systems on which they will work. For example, one group of apprentices explained in detail the operation of 'firewire', the sensor that is used in an aircraft engine's fire detection system.

Apprentices following other programmes develop and apply their knowledge equally well. For example, one apprentice on a project management apprenticeship explained clearly how she used the lessons learned from the analysis of a previous

aircraft maintenance programme to create an improved maintenance project plan. Another apprentice explained in detail how she had learned about the resolution of conflict in the workplace and how she had applied that in a real situation.

Apprentices receive clear guidance about their programmes, how they will benefit them in the workplace and how the workplace will benefit from their work as employees. Training staff and line managers work very effectively together to coordinate apprentices' programmes with their operational work.

Leaders ensure that all apprentices develop a good range of additional skills. For example, all apprentices complete an additional project about improving operational performance. Apprentices also take part in a one-week activity programme in the Lake District. This helps them develop confidence, self-analysis, team working and a range of other skills.

The quality of apprentices' written English is good. In addition, staff work closely with them to develop these skills further and explain how they relate to the workplace. For example, avionics apprentices have extended their technical vocabulary significantly in their training to enable them to understand and follow their work tasks.

Quality improvement is a key element in the overall management of the provision and is effective. Observers of teaching, learning and assessment accurately identify strengths and weaknesses. Staff value the feedback they get, which helps them to improve, as does the feedback from peer assessments. Leaders had identified all the development points found by inspectors.

Leaders are aware that some aspects of the experience of apprentices following other programmes, such as the quality of target setting, are not yet quite as good as those of engineering apprentices. Leaders have well-developed plans in place to provide commonality of programme delivery. Managers closely monitor the progress made towards completing each action on the action plan. However, the self-assessment report is overly descriptive, and the improvement success measures do not refer to the impact on learners' experiences in sufficient detail.

Apprentices benefit from well-planned ongoing assessment. Feedback on both written and practical work is detailed and enables the apprentices to know what they have to do to improve. This includes feedback about the apprentices' English and mathematics skills. For example, in one comment the teacher stated '... it would be better to use a semi-colon here because ...'. Teachers prepare apprentices thoroughly for their end-point assessments. Apprentices describe in detail how their previous, current and subsequent work will enable them to develop the skills and knowledge they need for their final assessment.

Most apprentices are making expected or better progress from their starting points. However, a few of the non-engineering apprentices are not making such good progress as those on engineering programmes. Managers monitor this progress in detail on an individual basis and for individual year groups, through an online tracking system. The system needs development to enable managers to evaluate progress overall and trends in performance over time.

The monitoring of individual progress includes action planning and individual targets for each apprentice. However, in a few cases these are not sufficiently detailed.

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

Marshall has an effective culture of safeguarding. As a result of the 'family company' ethos, staff work together well and help each other. Leaders have established the post of designated person for each of the three training locations around the site where apprentices receive training. These staff have all received thorough training. Records of the two safeguarding-related incidents are detailed. Because of the low number of cases, managers have not yet needed to establish some form of case tracking.

Managers record all health and safety incidents in detail and take swift and extremely thorough follow-up action.

Apprentices know well how to keep themselves safe in the workplace and follow safe working practices. For example, a group of second-year apprentices gave a clear explanation of the checks required before and after applying external power to an aircraft in the hangar. This included checking that the aircraft cockpit indicator showed that the undercarriage was down and locked, with 'three greens'.

Apprentices have a good understanding of equality and diversity, and treat each other with respect. In addition to the corporate policies, apprentices have created their own list of behaviours, which is comprehensive. Staff deal immediately and effectively with issues that may arise, such as the very occasional use of bad language, and apprentices immediately realise the error of their ways.

Apprentices have a thorough understanding of the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. They understand how this applies in the context of their workplace and the potential impact on the lives of those flying in the aircraft on which they work. They articulate well the signs that would show that one of their colleagues is being radicalised. Apprentices have a good understanding of British values and how these values apply to them and their colleagues.

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