

CMS Vocational 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

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 ESFA 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.

CMS Vocational Training was established over 30 years ago and has had experience in the delivery of apprenticeships since 2000. In 2017, the company began training apprentices through the apprenticeship levy. At the start of 2018, it added apprenticeship provision for non-levy employers. The company provides training for 142 apprentices at levels 2, 3, 4 and 5. Just over half of the apprentices are on standards-based apprenticeships with the remainder working towards completing apprenticeship frameworks in subjects such as business administration and childcare.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have a sensible approach to ensure that employers and apprentices are fully aware of the requirements of an apprenticeship. Leaders appreciate the need to provide good-quality provision, and the standard of apprenticeship programmes is high. Leaders work effectively with employers to ensure that they fully understand the on- and off-the-job training requirements of an apprenticeship. Most employers provide good support for their apprentices to help them complete their programmes. Consequently, apprentices benefit from their allocated off-the-job training which enables them to gain new skills, knowledge and behaviours. However, a very few employers do not provide sufficient time for apprentices to complete their training while at work.

Leaders and managers have ensured that tutors have the specialisms required to enable them to provide apprentices with the greatest opportunities to make good progress. Tutors are well qualified and experienced in their subject. Managers hold tutors to account effectively through regular progress and performance review meetings and through observations of teaching, learning and assessment. However, as managers recognise, observations of teaching, learning and assessment concentrate too much on the tutor and not on the progress that apprentices make or what they learn.

Leaders and managers ensure that they recruit apprentices with integrity. They work well with employers to tailor apprenticeship programmes to meet employers' specific needs and workforce requirements. Staff liaise well with employers and apprentices to ensure that apprentices are suitable for their job roles and can confidently gain new skills, knowledge and behaviours on their programmes.

As an integral part of their performance management of tutors, leaders and managers monitor apprentices' progress effectively. Managers have a good understanding of the progress that most apprentices make. However, their review and monitoring process requires further development. Managers have meaningful and significant plans in place to introduce weekly tutor meetings, so that tutors can review performance and the progress that apprentices make.

Leaders' and managers' evaluation of the quality of their provision is mostly accurate and identifies the key areas for development. Leaders and managers have a strong commitment to improving the quality of the provision. They combine this with a determination to ensure that the quality of the apprenticeship provision is secure before they make any significant expansion.

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

Leaders, managers and staff have worked effectively with employers to put in place comprehensive training programmes for apprentices that cover all aspects of an apprenticeship. Managers and tutors work well with employers to plan programmes that meet apprentices' individual and specific development needs and employers' business demands. Tutors and apprentices use online systems well to complete learning programmes, track and monitor the progress that apprentices make, set tasks and targets, mark submitted work and provide effective feedback on how apprentices can improve the standard of their work.

Most apprentices make good progress. They benefit from regular and well-planned teaching, learning and assessment, in both the classroom and the workplace. Tutors consider apprentices' prior knowledge and learning when planning programmes. They use comprehensive initial advice and guidance discussions to ensure that apprentices are on the most appropriate programmes. They make good use of their knowledge of apprentices' starting points. They challenge apprentices to make their expected progress.

Tutors and apprentices use online resources well to support teaching and learning. This enables apprentices to improve their levels of confidence and to gain and develop new skills, knowledge and behaviours. Apprentices enjoy their learning and appreciate the benefit they bring to their employers' businesses.

Apprentices quickly become valuable members of staff and make good progress in acquiring the practical skills that they need for their job role. For example, apprentices working in children's nurseries become more aware of the legislative aspects of childminding and keeping children and young people safe. Apprentices working in a doctor's surgery become more aware of the need for confidentiality when talking to, and dealing with, patients.

Leaders and managers have a strong emphasis on the need for apprentices to develop their English and mathematics skills as part of their training. Apprentices continue to develop their literacy and numeracy skills through their good use of resources and the feedback that they receive from their tutors. A high proportion of apprentices continue to gain qualifications in English and mathematics as part of their apprenticeship.

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

Leaders and managers have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are in place and are fit for purpose. All staff are suitably qualified and complete regular mandatory training. Frequent staff meetings have a good focus on the implementation of safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty and help to raise staff's awareness. Staff follow appropriate procedures well and use them effectively.

Managers work effectively with local and regional external agencies and ask for advice when required. They inform all their staff of any updates regarding the 'Prevent' duty. Through staff development, they ensure that staff keep abreast of developments around the safeguarding of young people and vulnerable adults.

Apprentices feel safe in their workplace and have a good understanding of how to report any concerns. Tutors make effective checks on apprentices' safety and well-being when they visit them at work.

Leaders, managers and staff provide apprentices with appropriate information regarding the dangers from extremist groups and possible radicalisation. They start this in induction and reinforce the messages during their regular interactions with apprentices.

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