

Proactive in Partnership Training Limited

Monitoring visit report

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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 (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.

Proactive in Partnership Training Limited (PIP) has provided apprenticeship training at intermediate and advanced levels in business improvement techniques (BIT) since July 2017.

At the time of the monitoring visit, the provider was working with 78 apprentices, all of whom were adults. All are enrolled on frameworks apprenticeships. The apprentices work in the warehousing and distribution sector across 12 sites throughout England with three employers: XPO Logistics Limited, Coloplast Limited and MMUK Limited.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Leaders have a clear vision to provide high-quality training that will enable apprentices to improve employers' businesses and their operational cost efficiency through proficiently applying continuous improvement techniques. A central tenet within this aim is that apprentices will develop high levels of confidence, knowledge and skills to work individually and within teams to effectively problem solve and increase productivity levels in the workplace. Leaders work diligently with employers to ensure that apprentices' on- and off-the-job training is well planned and coordinated and meets the requirements and principles of apprenticeships. For example, apprentices commit a part of their off-the-job entitlement to devise, present and implement projects to improve business processes such as wrapping and packaging goods, writing off damaged stock, documentation checks for drivers before being released to drive, and the layout of employees' work stations.

Leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their provision. Their self-assessment is appropriately self-critical and their action planning to rectify most identified weaknesses is robust. However, too many actions to

improve the quality of teaching and assessment lack the required specificity and timescale to secure swift improvement in the quality of the provision. Leaders' observations of teachers' practice are overly generous and often fail to focus sufficiently on the impact on apprentices. They do not make enough use of the information drawn from observations to address weaknesses and ensure that teachers' practice improves. Leaders do not ensure that teachers have appropriate professional development to improve their teaching practice.

Leaders ensure that all apprentices are rigorously assessed at the start of their programmes to ensure that their abilities and needs are accurately identified and that they are provided with bespoke training programmes. Leaders assiduously monitor the progress that apprentices make against the unit components of their qualifications and whether they achieve their functional skills qualifications. However, leaders do not monitor the progress that apprentices make in acquiring new knowledge, skills and behaviours from their starting points.

In the summer of 2018, leaders secured a suitably experienced external adviser to provide appropriate challenge of their actions. However, recordings of governance meetings do not demonstrate that leaders are held effectively to account. Leaders are yet to share their quality improvement planning with the external adviser.

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

Teachers ensure that the project element of the apprenticeships' off-the-job training enables apprentices to acquire new practical knowledge, skills and behaviours that tangibly benefit their employers' businesses. As a result, employers highly value the contributions their apprentices make. Apprentices work closely with employers' senior and operational managers and teachers to plan, present and bring business improvement ideas to fruition. As a result, most apprentices greatly improve their levels of confidence, produce good standards of practical work, feel empowered to make further contributions and add value to their workplaces. For example, one group of apprentices worked collaboratively and productively in scoping out and designing improved warehousing processes that secured considerable financial savings through radically changing the way their company ordered, recycled, stored and used pallets.

Teachers use their considerable expertise of the warehousing and distribution sector to enable apprentices to hone their practical industry-specific skills. However, not enough teachers use questioning techniques to challenge their apprentices to grasp underpinning theory and understand how it relates to the workplace. Not enough teachers provide incisive feedback that motivates apprentices to improve their

written work. As a consequence, too many apprentices do not produce good standards of written work.

Most apprentices are visited on at least a monthly basis by their teachers. However, at progress reviews and assessments, most teachers solely focus on ensuring that their apprentices achieve units within qualifications. Too often, teachers do not set demanding targets that enable apprentices to deepen their understanding, knowledge, skills and behaviours and make good progress, particularly in understanding theory. Too many reviews are not attended by employers and, consequently, some apprentices do not benefit from a coordinated approach to ensuring that they are able to excel.

While most apprentices achieve their functional skills qualifications, not enough improve their English and mathematical skills beyond the minimum levels required. Those apprentices who are exempt from studying functional skills qualifications do not receive sufficient tuition and support to improve their English and mathematical skills. As a result, too many apprentices do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Leaders ensure that most apprentices receive appropriate information, advice and guidance to help them make informed choices as to their next steps. In particular, on successful completion of the project element of the apprenticeship off-the-job training, some apprentices secure enhanced roles and/or promotion in their employers' businesses.

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

Leaders place a high priority on safeguarding arrangements. Leaders have received appropriate training to serve as designated safeguarding officers. They conduct safer recruitment practices and ensure that all staff have appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service checks. Leaders ensure that staff fully understand the company's safeguarding policies and procedures and know whom to report any safeguarding concerns to.

Staff conduct appropriate safeguarding training. As a result, they ensure that apprentices know whom to contact if they have any safeguarding concerns. Teachers also undertake training in the 'Prevent' duty. However, too many apprentices do not have a good awareness of the dangers associated with extremism and how these issues relate to their lives and workplaces.

Teachers effectively promote the safety and welfare of apprentices in the workplace and learning environments. They pay good attention to ensuring that apprentices wear appropriate personal protective equipment at all times and that apprentices are fully aware of safety risks. For example, they make sure that apprentices assess

safety risks and hazards when scoping all projects designed to improve efficiency in the workplace.

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