

Ricoh UK Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Ofsted's intention to carry out monitoring visits to new apprenticeship training providers that are funded through the apprenticeship levy 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.

Ricoh UK Limited was established in 2017, and is a privately owned independent learning provider. It began delivering vocational training by means of levy-funded apprenticeships in October 2017. This levy-funded provision was in scope for the monitoring visit.

Ricoh UK Limited has 126 enrolled learners on advanced standards-based apprenticeships, of which 35 are taking the team leader programme, 61 the programme for infrastructure technicians and 12 studying business administration. In addition, there are 18 level 5 management apprentices. Apprentices are employed at sites throughout England.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

The senior management team has a clear strategic ambition for apprenticeships that includes rectifying skills shortages and facilitating apprentices' progress to new careers. Senior managers ensure that prospective apprentices have a sound appreciation of how the programmes can help them achieve their personal goals. Managers only recruit apprentices for whom the apprenticeship is likely to lead to improved career prospects. Apprentices volunteer to follow a selection process that includes a series of personal development reviews and final nomination by their line manager. Subsequently, apprentices take part in a comprehensive skills and competency audit. This ensures that apprentices start the correct programme at an appropriate level.

Leaders and managers have invested in high-quality training environments for all apprentices. Facilitator-coaches use a very good range and standard of learning resources to support apprentices' development. For technical training, this includes a wide variety of industry-standard equipment that duplicates what apprentices encounter in their work. Facilitator-coaches utilise appropriately adapted technology and resources to support apprentices with learning needs and disabilities effectively. Leaders and managers have carefully recruited staff with the expertise and ability to deliver apprenticeship training to adult learners.

Monitoring of apprentices' entitlement to training within work time has recently improved and is generally effective. However, apprentices are still developing their confidence in using a newly introduced system for recording training participation and programme completion. Consequently, managers do not consistently have the most up-to-date data to inform their decision-making. This has led to delays in correcting apprentices' use of the planned off-the-job training. The large majority of apprentices are making the expected progress. A small proportion of apprentices have taken a break from learning due to personal circumstances. Managers have appropriately adjusted the funding claim. The training programmes meet the requirements for apprenticeships.

Managers have established relevant arrangements to prepare apprentices for the end-point assessments. However, delays in clarifying testing requirements have contributed to not all apprentices receiving sufficiently prompt assessment preparation.

Leaders and managers have a good awareness of the apprenticeship programmes' strengths and weaknesses. The current self-assessment report includes most of the key areas for improvement found by inspectors. The related improvement plan is appropriately detailed and subject to relevant monitoring and review to aid programme improvement.

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

Apprentices are mastering the required knowledge, and developing pertinent new skills and behaviours, because of the training they receive. This helps them become more successful in their work roles as they swiftly accomplish personal and business aims. For example, infrastructure technician apprentices demonstrate the application of their learning in manipulating electronic systems to provide effective technical solutions and customer care. Management apprentices articulate their use of appropriate communication techniques, acquired during their training, to engender better team cohesion and working. Apprentices have a good awareness of the benefits they are gaining from taking part in their on- and off-the-job training.

Facilitator-coaches are highly skilled and experienced in their vocational areas. They provide apprentices with good quality off-the-job training that allows them, and the apprentices, to recognise progress made. Facilitator-coaches plan and deliver appropriately paced and thought-provoking sessions that effectively motivate apprentices to succeed further. Teaching strategies used by facilitator-coaches suitably address the needs of apprentices with different abilities and experiences of learning.

Within off-the-job training sessions, facilitator-coaches link taught theory very effectively to its vocational application and on-the-job training. Consequently, in a

short time apprentices can articulate effectively how to apply their learning within the workplace. For example, business administration apprentices quickly recognise how to use improvement techniques that contribute to better personal performance in work situations.

Managers provide good-quality support for the comparatively small number of apprentices who need to improve their English skills. Consequently, examination pass rates at first sitting are high. Help for the few apprentices who need to raise their mathematics skills is weaker and needs improvement. This is reflected in the examination pass rates, which are not high enough. It is too early to make a judgement on the effect of recent actions to improve the delivery of both English and mathematics. Facilitator-coaches and managers effectively develop apprentices' digital skills during both on- and off-the-job training.

Leaders and managers use quality assurance procedures that lead to improvements in training for all apprentices. Managers make good use of internal audit procedures to raise the quality of record completion that help apprentices to progress. Their actions to improve facilitator-coaches use of standardised and improving training practices are effective.

Managers elicit and use apprentices' written and verbal feedback particularly effectively to improve programmes. For example, managers have extended the notification time that apprentices have for completion of activities prior to training session attendance. This allows apprentices to plan better how they use their learning and work time.

Managers appropriately exploit direct observation to evaluate and improve taught-session quality. Their observations lead to the sharing of good practice that improves facilitator-coaches' professional practice. Managers are currently addressing the insufficient consideration of learning quality inherent in the present process. Managers do not formally record the outcomes of short observations so that they fully contribute to improvement.

Managers have been too slow to ensure that all apprentices consistently receive off-the-job training that always includes study in work time. Consequently, a minority of apprentices have not reached their milestone target by the planned date. Managers are urgently rectifying the situation for these apprentices. For example, they now allow apprentices home study for one day a week with remote support provided by facilitator-coaches and managers. As a result, participating apprentices' progress has accelerated. Managers' coordination of on- and off-the-job training is generally effective.

Apprentices receive helpful reviews of their development from facilitator-coaches and managers. However, not all apprentices achieve their potential quickly enough because their reviews are insufficiently regular and frequent. Facilitator-coaches and managers do not exploit reviews and other training interventions to ensure that all apprentices fully understand end-point testing arrangements. Too few apprentices

have an adequate awareness of their target grades. They have not all received adequate preparation for the assessment.

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 have established an organisational culture that prioritises apprentices' safety and welfare. Relevant policies and procedures that are subject to appropriate review are in place.

The designated safeguarding officer (DSO) has extensive experience and knowledge to deliver the role. All facilitator-coaches have undertaken professional development that contributes to their good awareness of their safeguarding duties.

The DSO has implemented appropriate safeguarding processes that include recording of referrals and disclosures. At the time of the monitoring visit, managers had not recorded any concerns. Leaders and managers follow safe recruitment practices. This includes a proper vetting of relevant staff using the Disclosure and Barring Service.

The DSO has established suitable links with external agencies. Managers exploit them fully to ensure that facilitator-coaches receive regular updates to improve professional practice. Managers acknowledge the need to develop further their understanding of the potential risks within the dispersed geographical regions in which apprentices are employed.

The DSO and training staff have a suitable awareness of fundamental British values and the 'Prevent' duty. Apprentices undertake most of the training to improve their awareness of these themes at the first stages of the programme. Consequently, not all apprentices have a good enough recall of this learning as it applies to their work and personal lives.

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