

Workforce Training & Development Ltd

Monitoring visit report

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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.

Workforce Training & Development Limited (WTD) was formed in 2004 as a subcontractor, mainly for a local college, providing national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in the food and drink sector. Since then, WTD has been a subcontractor for other colleges and training providers delivering apprenticeships in the meat and poultry sectors. The first levy-funded apprentices enrolled in November 2017. At the time of the monitoring visit, 32 apprentices were registered. Six apprentices were studying the level 2 abattoir worker standard and 26 were studying the level 2 butcher standard. All are funded through the apprenticeship levy. There are 19 apprentices based in Colne in Lancashire, and 13 based in Spalding in Lincolnshire. All abattoir apprentices are male, nine of the butcher apprentices are female and 22 are from eastern Europe.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Directors work closely with Morrisons Manufacturing to design and deliver apprenticeship programmes that meet business needs and the high standards that are required in animal welfare, health and safety, and retail work. Assessors are well qualified and highly experienced in the subject areas that they deliver.

Apprenticeships meet Institute for Apprenticeship requirements. Morrisons Manufacturing is committed to off-the-job training. It works well with WTD to overcome the difficulties in providing sufficient time for apprentices to develop their studies. As a result, off-the-job training is delivered frequently and flexibly to accommodate shift patterns and production lines.

Assessment of apprentices' starting points is rigorous, and staff ensure that applicants have the qualifications and aptitudes needed to succeed. Those who speak English as an additional language and require more comprehensive support are offered places on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses at local colleges.

All apprentices receive a thorough induction and have a good awareness of the work they must complete for their apprenticeship. Managers work well with the end-point assessment organisation to prepare their apprentices for end-point tests. However, assessors did not introduce grading at the start of the programme, and as a result, a minority of apprentices were not aware that they could achieve a merit or distinction in their apprenticeships.

Directors use data effectively to monitor apprentices' progress. The financial director produces useful reports for governors and for standardisation meetings to identify progress issues and improvement actions. Morrisons Manufacturing receives regular updates on the progress of each apprentice. However, the use of data to identify performance differences and trends between different groups is underdeveloped.

The business development plan clearly outlines the company's mission and vision, but does not have clear targets against which to assess the success of apprenticeship programmes.

Governance arrangements are well developed and effective. However, directors acknowledge the need to enhance the team with additional and relevant expertise.

The self-assessment process makes good use of feedback from apprentices and employers to support judgements about the quality of provision. The self-assessment report is clear and is an accurate representation of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. The quality improvement plan includes challenging timescales and suitable impact measures to improve the quality of provision.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes? Reasonable progress

Potential apprentices are made aware of opportunities through in-company team meetings. All apprentices are adults and have been with their employer, in some cases, for several years. They are all working towards higher level skills and more demanding jobs.

Staff use assessment effectively to identify apprentices' starting points and continuously monitor the skills and knowledge they develop. Consequently, apprentices work towards an appropriate level 1 award in English and mathematics, and those achieving level 1 are encouraged to obtain their level 2.

Training for functional skills is rigorous and effective. Apprentices develop improved skills in English and mathematics in relation to their work roles. Trainers correct errors in apprentices' work and pass relevant information to the functional skills tutor, who then supports them with their spelling and grammar. First-time pass rates for English and mathematics functional skills examinations are high. A 'buddy' system, introduced by Morrisons Manufacturing to pair English speakers with

apprentices who need to develop their skills, ensures that apprentices are prepared well and are ready to take the examinations.

Apprentices develop good industry-standard skills. They are increasingly contributing to their employers' business in higher skill roles. They can joint pork and trim meat to customer standards and are conscious of the need to balance trimming and maintain the joint weight. They use knives skilfully to bone joints of pork, trim fat and prepare joints. In a recent internal masterclass, one apprentice was highly commended for his skills in preparing joints for retail sale and presentation at one of the Morrisons' stores.

The standard of off-the-job training is good, and well structured and well planned. A detailed plan shows all skills and knowledge to be gained on completion of apprenticeships. This is sequenced over time, but often varies according to production demands and individual needs that causes changes to individual schedules. This can result in some poor attendance at training sessions and is currently being addressed by Morrisons Manufacturing.

Assessors deliver training individually or in small groups, ensuring effective and intensive skills development. A few abattoir training sessions can only be done on production lines, but most training is undertaken effectively away from these lines using the same production-line meat and equipment. Tutors use their extensive experience in the sector very well to pass on skills, knowledge and behaviours and have authority and presence in the workplace.

Apprentices use log books effectively as a record of their training and progress in developing skills and knowledge. Training records are clear and completed by assessors and apprentices after every session, and plans are agreed for the next visit. However, targets set in these plans often lack detail and do not focus on future skills development or the skills they can build on.

Assessment records are clear, and assessment is completed only when competence has been demonstrated through practical activities set in training. Trainers and managers track apprentices' progress through their training modules and assessments well. A detailed spreadsheet identifies each skill and training module and the extent to which each apprentice has achieved these.

Quality assurance procedures to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have recently been changed and now include observations by an independent observer. It is too early to judge the impact of these changes.

Independent careers information is available; however, apprentices have a limited understanding of the opportunities available to them in the sector or how internal progression routes and career planning operate within Morrisons Manufacturing.

Support for apprentices is good and most apprentices make at least the progress expected of them. Feedback on apprentices' work is insufficient to promote a higher standard than a pass.

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

Safeguarding is effective. Directors ensure that appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and updated regularly. The designated safeguarding officer and deputy are suitably qualified and knowledgeable. Disclosure and Barring Service checks are undertaken on all staff.

Directors ensure that all members of staff complete regular training to refresh their understanding of safeguarding, the 'Prevent' duty and British values. Health and safety are covered thoroughly both on- and off-the-job and reinforced rigorously. As a result, apprentices know how to stay safe in the workplace and feel safe. All apprentices have a good understanding of what to do if they have concerns.

Most apprentices have a good understanding of the risk of extremists to the meat industry, although only a few can fully articulate the wider risks of extremism and radicalisation. The majority can articulate at least some British values, but only a few have sufficient understanding of them.

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