

JM Recruitment, Education & 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 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 four themes set out below.

JM Recruitment, Education & Training Limited is an independent learning provider founded in 2004 and based in the Wirral. The company has previous experience providing apprenticeships for sport, teaching assistants and business administration in schools, as a subcontractor, since 2011. They began delivering directly contracted apprenticeships for levy-paying businesses and non-levy-funded programmes in July 2017, and adult education in functional skills in English and mathematics from November 2017. At the time of the monitoring visit, the company provides training for 149 apprentices and 351 adults, a small number of whom follow traineeships.

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers have not yet implemented effective quality monitoring processes that allow them to check that all apprentices receive high-quality training and make the progress of which they are capable. They do not set specific actions to improve swiftly the standard of education and training that learners and apprentices receive. As a result, a small minority of apprentices do not reach their potential.

Leaders and managers do not analyse management information rigorously to inform improvement strategies. Consequently, the improvements required are not always identified fully and this delays improvement in the standard of education. For example, in the most recent self-assessment report, managers identify attendance as a strength, despite the low attendance in English and mathematics lessons.

Leaders have not ensured that governance or supervisory oversight of the performance of the organisation is in place. As a result, senior leaders are not held to account for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment that apprentices and learners receive.

Leaders, managers and tutors do not have sufficient oversight of off-the-job training. Although off-the-job training takes place frequently, they are unsure of the proportion of apprentices that receive their entitlement.

Leaders do not monitor the quality of subcontracted provision well enough. Information about the quality of subcontracted provision is inaccurate and leaders are unaware of apprentices who have left their programme early. The strategy to develop and deliver subcontracted apprenticeship provision across several sectors is unclear.

Leaders and managers do not have sufficient oversight of apprentices' and adults' progress in relation to their starting points. They do not ensure that staff complete records promptly. Managers do not ensure that the results of apprentices' assessments are used consistently to plan the curriculum to improve their knowledge, skills and development and meet the requirements of their programme.

Staff do not plan work that builds on apprentices' starting points sufficiently well. Consequently, work is not suitably challenging and, as a result, a few apprentices do not make the progress of which they are capable. The tracking of apprentices' progress is based on unit completion and not the knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices develop.

Leaders have a clear strategy to increase the number of apprentices on teaching assistant programmes. Headteachers value the skills that their teaching assistant apprentices develop. They have developed the strategy effectively to include adult learning programmes. For example, English and mathematics courses for parents at primary schools have supported them in developing these skills. This has then helped parents to support the development of their children's English and mathematics skills.

Leaders have good partnerships with the National Health Service (NHS). Adult learning courses for NHS staff help them to develop their English and mathematics skills, enabling them to access careers in nursing.

Leaders and managers ensure that most prospective apprentices and adult learners receive effective initial advice and guidance. The majority of apprentices and adult learners enrol on the most appropriate programme for their career aims and ambitions.

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 develop good work-related skills that they apply effectively in the workplace. Apprentices on level 3 programmes improve their skills and confidence. For example, apprentices on teaching assistant programmes quickly improve their

communication and interaction with young children and are more able to interpret a child's emotional state.

Apprentices benefit from a thorough induction with their assessor and employer at the start of their programme. Apprentices are clear about expectations of the programme. During induction, assessors raise apprentices' awareness of the 'Prevent' duty, British values, safeguarding and equality and diversity. Assessors reinforce these through meaningful discussions during apprentices' progress reviews. Apprentices articulate how they would apply these in the workplace. For example, apprentices on teaching and learning programmes demonstrate a very good understanding of how they would keep children safe at school.

Assessors provide written and verbal feedback that help apprentices to improve the quality of their written work. Assessors discuss with apprentices, during reviews, potential scenarios that they may not naturally encounter in the workplace. For example, apprentices on teaching assistant programmes were unaware of what they should do if a teacher spoke inappropriately to a pupil. The assessors guide apprentices to consider the options and provided them with clear guidelines on how to handle the situation. This ensures that apprentices develop a good understanding of expected standards and behaviours. A few apprentices on level 3 programmes have gained extra responsibility in their workplace.

Assessors provide good support and guidance to apprentices. As a result, apprentices make expected progress, and in many cases good progress, against unit completion. Frequent visits to apprentices means that assessors can respond quickly to meet apprentices' individual needs. Apprentices skilfully check their progress on the electronic portfolio.

Apprentices benefit from good support, in the training centre and the workplace, to ensure that they can develop their skills and achieve qualifications in English, mathematics and information and communications technology. Specialist tutors in English and mathematics provide individual support, for example in improving spelling, punctuation and grammar. Most apprentices achieve their functional skills qualifications; however, too few pass their tests on their first attempt.

Tutors at the subcontractor assess accurately apprentices' starting points. However, tutors do not use this information routinely to plan and develop individualised learning programmes. In a small minority of off-the-job training sessions, apprentices complete the same work irrespective of their stage in the programme or the skills they have acquired in the workplace. A few apprentices make slower-than-expected progress and do not gain substantial new knowledge and skills.

A few apprentices on the teaching and learning assistant programme have been in their job roles for a long time. As a result, these apprentices do not develop substantial new skills, they gain accreditation for the skills they already have. Assessors do not challenge apprentices sufficiently well to explore how apprentices can reflect on existing practice to improve standards. In professional discussions,

assessors do not question apprentices well enough to enable them to develop a deeper understanding of their work.

Assessors plan training and assessment well to meet the requirements of the programme. However, not all apprentices benefit from enough time in the centre or workplace to complete their off-the-job training.

While most employers are broadly aware of the requirements of the apprenticeship programme, they have too little involvement in the planning of apprentices' training. A few employers do not know if their apprentice is completing a framework or standards-based apprenticeship.

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

Leaders and managers place great importance on ensuring that apprentices and learners are safeguarded. For example, apprentices who work in primary schools demonstrate a good understanding of safeguarding and the health, safety and well-being of children in their care. They speak confidently about school safeguarding procedures.

Appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures, including the 'Prevent' duty, are in place. Staff know and understand what they should do if they have any concerns about their apprentices or learners in relation to safeguarding or radicalisation. Staff benefit from training in safeguarding, including topics relating to the threats from radicalisation and extremism.

Leaders and managers implement safe recruitment practices. All staff have relevant Disclosure and Barring Service checks. The newly appointed safeguarding manager is currently compiling staff information into a single central record to strengthen safeguarding practices. The safeguarding manager has strong links with external safeguarding partners, including the designated safeguarding lead at the subcontractor, the local area designated officer and northwest 'Prevent' duty coordinator.

The designated safeguarding manager has completed appropriate training and has the required expertise to undertake the role. However, no senior staff member, at board level, has received training or has the expertise to provide leadership support to the safeguarding manager.

Managers have investigated thoroughly and taken appropriate action for the very few safeguarding incidents. They record diligently the actions they take and monitor apprentices and learners closely to ensure that they are safe.

Apprentices and learners feel safe and are kept safe. Apprentices benefit from an effective induction that ensures they know how to keep themselves safe. Assessors check apprentices' safety and well-being when they visit them in the workplace.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that learners benefit from high-quality adult education that prepares them well for their intended job role, career aims and/or personal goals? Reasonable progress

Tutors assess learners' starting points effectively and use this information well to provide personalised learning. Most tutors use relevant English and mathematics resources skilfully to support learners to achieve their qualifications. They ensure that learners practise the specific skills they need to improve.

Tutors have a good understanding of the progress that their learners make. They provide specific guidance to help learners make good progress or to re-engage with their programme. Tutors set personalised homework to help learners practise and develop skills based on their starting points and achievements. As a result, the majority of learners improve their work and make the progress expected of them.

Most tutors provide helpful feedback to learners. Tutors identify accurately the strengths and areas that need improving. They provide specific guidance on what learners can do to develop their understanding or improve their work. For example, tutors in English identify errors in grammar. They model the correct use of the word in a sentence, such as 'to' or 'too'. In a few cases, tutors give feedback that is too generic and lacks specific guidance on what learners need to do to improve.

Tutors support learners effectively to achieve their qualifications. They offer additional support, for example at the end of lessons, by telephone or email. Learners receive prompt feedback that helps them to improve their work.

Learners value their learning and have a clear ambition to use their qualification to move on to further study or employment. For example, learners who are registered nurses in their home country develop language skills to progress their careers in the United Kingdom.

Learners show determination, make progress and improve their skills in lessons. They complete tasks and demonstrate their understanding. For example, learners make good use of adjectives when describing a task. They can calculate the statistical mean in a range of problems. Tutors plan lessons that are relevant to learners' own lives. For example, learners reflected on the language used in a reading from the singer Tina Turner.

Tutors plan and implement traineeship programmes effectively, ensuring that they meet the needs of individual learners. Tutors assess trainees' starting points accurately to determine trainees' existing skills and knowledge. Tutors use

information well to plan individual learning programmes. Tutors support trainees skilfully to develop new skills which local employers value. For example, hospitality trainees mix cocktails competently and communicate well with customers. Consequently, adult trainees progress into employment in the local community.

Tutors, in a small number of lessons, do not challenge learners sufficiently to develop their understanding or check their learning. In online sessions tutors give answers too quickly before allowing learners to answer. As a result, learners do not reach their full potential.

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