

# Runway Apprenticeships Limited

Monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 1276533

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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 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 themes set out below.

Runway Apprenticeships Limited was set up in 2008 and began providing functional skills training as a subcontractor. In 2013, leaders expanded the provision to deliver apprenticeships as a subcontractor. The direct provision of levy-funded apprenticeships began in November 2017. These apprenticeship programmes include health and social care, management and team leading, business and administration, customer service and digital marketing.

At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 75 levy-funded apprentices, of whom 64 were on framework programmes and 11 were on standards-based apprenticeships. Apprenticeships are offered at levels 2 and 3.

### Themes

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

#### Significant progress

The managing director has developed a clear strategy for the company. Leaders and managers build and maintain very positive relationships with local employers and with strategic stakeholders such as the local authority, education partnerships and schools. They provide high-quality apprenticeships that meet the needs of employers.

Leaders have carefully managed the growth of the business. They have clear lines of accountability to manage the growth of the organisation. They ensure that the focus on maintaining the quality of teaching, learning and assessment remains clear.

Leaders have a good understanding of the principles and requirements of apprenticeship training. They set high expectations for staff and apprentices. They create a respectful and tolerant environment. As a result, the very large majority of apprentices make good progress in their studies and in their careers.

Leaders and managers have developed rigorous recruitment and selection processes to ensure that apprentices join the right programmes. Leaders monitor the progress of all their apprentices frequently and systematically. They identify accurately those who are on, or ahead of, target and those who make slow progress. Leaders and managers take appropriate action when apprentices' progress is slow, to help them to catch up as quickly as possible.

Leaders have established strong links with all their employers. They are demanding of them in the development of their apprentices. Leaders have shaped the programme to meet employers' needs and to reflect the nature of their businesses. Employers are aware of the progress that their apprentices make and are involved in the development of the required behaviours and skills. Employers recognise that their apprentices develop valuable new skills, behaviours and confidence as result of the programme. Apprentices, as a result, make increasingly positive contributions to their businesses.

Leaders and employers have a clear understanding and commitment to meet the requirements for on- and off-the-job training. Apprentices benefit from extensive off-the-job training that blends with a wide range of on-the-job learning activities. The very large majority of apprentices record this training systematically.

Leaders and managers know their provision and its strengths and areas for improvement. They make good use of a range of data and observations of key aspects of training, such as workshop sessions and reviews. Managers make effective use of feedback from apprentices and employers and comments from staff. They use these to evaluate the programmes they offer and make improvements. Their self-assessment report and associated quality improvement plan are detailed, thorough and accurate.

Vocational assessors are highly qualified and experienced for their roles. They have appropriate qualifications in their subject areas. Assessors use their considerable vocational experience to expertly plan teaching and learning. This ensures that apprentices develop high levels of competence. All staff benefit from a comprehensive continued professional development programme that promotes improvement. This benefits the business and the individuals. For example, assessors have recently completed the end-point assessment qualification to support the introduction of standards-based apprenticeships.

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

**Significant progress**

Leaders use initial assessment effectively to inform apprentices' programmes. Most apprentices join with the required qualifications in English and mathematics. Those who need further study in these subjects attend workshops and individual sessions at an early stage in their apprenticeships. Managers pay careful attention to developing apprentices' English and mathematical skills in workshop sessions and during reviews. However, a small minority of assessors do not provide consistently useful

feedback on apprentices' written work. Consequently, apprentices do not develop their written English skills as well as they should.

Assessors set challenging individual targets and carefully plan the development of apprentices' behaviours and skills so that they can make good progress. Assessors link clearly the requirements for the development of knowledge, skills and behaviours on standards-based apprenticeships to the criteria for the achievement of distinction and merit grades. As a result, apprentices are clear about what they need to do to achieve the highest grades.

Assessors provide accurate guidance and assessment of apprentices' progress during their programmes. This helps apprentices understand what they need to do to improve, and to make rapid progress. Assessors' planning for learning with the employers is highly effective. They plan assessments so that they are evenly spaced throughout the course. Managers and assessors work collaboratively with employers to provide appropriate learning resources and assessments, which reflect current business practice. For example, apprentices working in the digital skills sector can attend training provided by an employer that ensures that they use the latest practice in their job roles.

Assessors carry out frequent progress reviews with apprentices and use them to cover a wide range of topics. Assessors make effective use of these reviews to help apprentices understand the progress they have made. They also use them to set relevant targets and actions to improve apprentices' skills, knowledge and behaviours. Assessors make clear links between apprentices' work and their off-the-job training so that apprentices can apply their learning.

Managers at Runway Training and employers give apprentices detailed information about the training and career opportunities available to them. Apprentices benefit from opportunities to gain additional relevant qualifications such as first-aid and understanding mental health awards. Apprentices working towards a business administration qualification also complete units from the customer service programme, as additional learning.

Apprentices are clear about their progression routes. Almost all apprentices progress into permanent employment with their employers at the end of their apprenticeships. Apprentices gain increased responsibility and a higher rate of pay.

Leaders and managers place a high importance on assuring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Managers carefully use an appropriate range of quality assurance processes. In most cases, they complete these processes to a high standard.

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

### **Reasonable progress**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders and managers use strong safer recruitment processes to ensure that staff are suitable to work with young people and vulnerable adults. All staff who have contact with apprentices receive appropriate checks. New members of staff do not work with apprentices until checks

are completed. Staff receive good training in safeguarding and the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Managers refresh and update staff understanding frequently.

Leaders and managers place a high priority on safeguarding their apprentices. The safeguarding policy and procedures are comprehensive. The designated safeguarding officer (DSO), the deputy DSO and the managing director have the appropriate levels of qualification for their roles.

The designated safeguarding lead has completed appropriate training and has good links with external agencies and with the Local Safeguarding Children Board. She has a good understanding of generic safeguarding matters and those that are more locally specific, such as the threats posed by 'county lines' drug traffickers.

All apprentices complete an informative introductory 'Prevent' duty and British values workbook when they begin their programme. Managers provide appropriate information about the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Apprentices also learn about e-safety and how to keep safe online. As a result, they have good levels of awareness and know how to report any concerns they might have.

Appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures contain clear statements about the responsibilities and duties of managers and assessors in safeguarding their apprentices. Staff understand how to identify and report any concerns they have. However, staff do not record general welfare concerns about apprentices and therefore cannot monitor trends and identify concerns that might escalate.

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