

BPP University Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 1270751

Name of lead inspector: Peter Nelson, Her Majesty's Inspector

Inspection dates: 26–27 September 2018

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: Aldine House
142–144 Uxbridge Road
London
W12 8AA



Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of a programme of monitoring visits to 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.

BPP University Ltd. (BPP) forms part of a group of BPP companies involved in a broad cross-section of education and training activities in the UK and abroad. The organisation has official degree-awarding powers. BPP University's mission is to provide memorable, inspirational and motivational programmes that help employers develop the talent and skills they need, today and in the future.

The provision in scope for this inspection included apprentices on programmes from level 2 to level 5 in a range of professional vocational areas including legal, paralegal, insurance, financial services and technology. At the time of the monitoring visit there were around 350 apprentices aged 16 to 18, and 900 adults on apprenticeship programmes.

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 do not have access to timely, accurate or reliable data on apprentices' progress. As a result, they do not have sufficient oversight of the progress that apprentices make towards achieving their qualifications. Managers are too reliant on subjective information from assessors on the progress of their apprentices, which at times misrepresents the slow progress that apprentices make. Managers are therefore unable to hold assessors to account fully, or to ensure that assessors support apprentices to achieve in the expected timescale.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that all employers provide sufficient off-the-job study time to apprentices. BPP managers attempt to make clear to employers the importance of this off-the-job component, and many of the employers are strongly committed to ensuring that apprentices receive their full entitlement of study time.

Leaders and managers have established a clear vision for the organisation. This focuses strongly on working with leading employers, to help address their succession planning and workforce development needs. This vision forms a sound strategic rationale for BPP, which reinforces an appropriate selection of subjects and levels of apprenticeship offered by the company. Managers and staff ensure that the apprentices they recruit are suitable for, and will benefit from, an apprenticeship programme.

Leaders and managers have established very strong links with a wide range of high-profile employers in the City of London and beyond. Leaders work particularly effectively with employers to understand their business goals and priorities, so that BPP can recommend and develop appropriate apprenticeship solutions for them. For example, managers have recently worked with a leading bank to establish a specialist course in identifying and addressing financial crime. Managers from BPP have also developed strong links with the legal, financial services and accountancy professional bodies to ensure that the apprenticeship programmes are matched to the needs of employers and professional bodies.

Leaders have put in place a sound management structure and governance arrangements to oversee the strategic direction of the organisation and help ensure effective operational management. Governance functions include maintaining oversight of programme approval, programme monitoring and quality improvement. Managers have completed a detailed self-assessment report, and quality improvement plan. While managers have not identified all weaknesses, the proposed improvement plan appropriately explores a high proportion of the developmental areas and proposes suitable priorities for improvement.

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

Too many apprentices make slow progress on their apprenticeship programme. A significant minority of apprentices have not submitted assignments to their assessors by the stipulated submission date, nor have they resubmitted work that assessors had previously referred because it did not meet the required standard. Apprentices are also slow to develop the range of skills and behaviours that form part of the apprenticeship.

Assessors are too slow to intervene when apprentices start to fall behind, and do not set or enforce sufficiently stringent deadlines to ensure that apprentices resubmit work in a timely manner. As a result, they do not reinforce to apprentices the importance of staying on track. Consequently, apprentices' progress is often too slow.

Assessors' feedback to apprentices on their written assignments is too superficial. Their comments are supportive, but they do not provide enough detail of what apprentices should do to ensure that they develop and progress.

Apprentices are not fully conversant with the end-point assessment requirements. In particular, assessors have not explained clearly to apprentices the potential for them to gain merit or distinction grades. Apprentices do not have enough insight into whether they are on track for a higher grade. Assessors do not have any clear strategies to encourage and support the most able apprentices towards achieving higher grades.

Most apprentices are motivated, and keen to learn. Assessors engage apprentices well in classroom-based activities, through a range of relevant and suitably challenging practical activities and problem-solving tasks. Apprentices speak highly of

the value they gain from these sessions, which help them to develop the knowledge and insights they require to carry out their job role effectively. Apprentices' participation in online lesson activities is less effective. At times, the strategies assessors try to use to involve learners in group activities are ineffective. As a result, learners are sometimes passive and do not engage sufficiently with online activities.

Managers have effective systems in place to identify those apprentices who need to take functional skills qualifications in English and/or mathematics as part of their programme. Apprentices generally make good progress in functional skills English, and the majority successfully gain the qualification. However, too few apprentices achieve the functional skills in mathematics.

Leaders and managers have recruited assessors with a broad wealth of specialist expertise in their respective vocational areas. Leaders positively promote the mantra that underpins assessor recruitment of 'professionals teaching professionals'. As a result, assessors are readily able to share their experience and expertise with the apprentices. Assessors also maintain close links with apprentices' line managers. This means that assessors can help influence and agree with line managers' suitable activities for apprentices, which helps them to develop suitable knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Assessors accurately identify the starting points of apprentices, and draw up a suitable gap analysis, identifying and prioritising areas of development. Apprentices have a sound understanding of the different areas they should develop, and regularly meet to discuss their progress with assessors.

Many apprentices have particularly good opportunities to pick up additional professional qualifications alongside their apprenticeship programme. For example, apprentices on the level 3 team leader/supervisor apprenticeship also acquire a qualification accredited by the chartered management institute. This helps improve their progression opportunities on completion of the apprenticeship.

Where necessary, managers and assessors make suitable adjustments to support apprentices. For example, staff arranged to provide assisted technology to support an apprentice with hearing impairment so he could engage fully in lesson activities.

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

Leaders and managers have suitable policies, procedures and practices in place to help ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective. Support and guidance are available to learners when required, on a wide variety of themes such as mental health, welfare, disability, domestic violence and abuse, and emotional well-being.

Assessors and employers provide suitably detailed information to apprentices at induction, reviews and throughout their programme to help ensure that they know how to stay safe. Assessors frequently instigate informative discussions with apprentices around safeguarding, British values, the risks associated with extremism

and radicalisation and e-safety. They also make sure apprentices are aware of what action to take should they feel unsafe, vulnerable or at risk. Apprentices confirm that they feel safe in their respective work places and are clear about what action to take if they feel at risk.

Leaders have a highly effective process in place for apprentices to report any concerns. They maintain detailed records of any reported incidents and take prompt and effective action to support apprentices. Where necessary, they involve other organisations in responding to, and dealing with, apprentices' concerns. Leaders and managers carry out appropriate pre-employment checks and follow safer recruitment practices.

Staff have undergone suitable training on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. They are familiar with indicators of extremism and radicalisation and know what action to take if they are concerned about anyone.

Learner View

Learner View is a website where learners can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other learners think about them too. To find out more go to www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk.

Employer View

Employer View is a website where employers can tell Ofsted what they think about their employees' college or provider. They can also see what other employers think about them too. To find out more go to www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education

and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate Store
Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk W:
www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2018