

# John G. Plummer and Associates

Monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 52632

**Name of lead inspector:** Matt Vaughan, Ofsted Inspector

**Inspection date(s):** 13–14 June 2019

**Type of provider:** Employer

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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 ESFA 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.

John G. Plummer and Associates Ltd has operated as a directly funded apprenticeship provider since June 2017. At the time of the monitoring visit, the employer was training 19 apprentices that it directly employed. Nearly all apprentices are aged 16 to 18 and study the standards-based apprenticeship in dental nurse training at level 3, over two years.

### Themes

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

**Reasonable progress**

Leaders have a clear vision to provide high-quality training that enables their apprentices to take up lifelong careers within the dental nursing and technician industry. Leaders ensure that apprentices take up well-planned, plentiful on- and off-the-job opportunities, improve their knowledge, skills and behaviours and meet their high expectations.

Leaders assiduously monitor apprentices' progress and ensure that any who fall behind in their studies are given appropriate time, challenge and help to catch up. As a result, almost all apprentices complete their programmes in the planned timescales and add significant value to their employer's business.

Leaders provide a broad curriculum that is well-resourced and enables apprentices to enhance their industry-specific knowledge and skills. Apprentices enthusiastically participate in a rich array of valuable enrichment opportunities. For example, they accompany dentists on visits to schools across Norfolk to highlight to children the damage to teeth from eating too much sugary food. Some apprentices progress at the end of their programmes to take up further training in specialised roles, such as oral health educators, dental radiographers, sedation nurses and minor oral surgery assistants.

Leaders' self-assessment is appropriately self-critical, but their improvement planning lacks sufficient focus on improving the skills of teachers to enable further

improvement. Leaders' observations of teachers' practice focus too much on the actions of staff and not enough on the impact on apprentices' outcomes. Consequently, observation judgements are overly generous and do not identify where apprentices could make better progress.

Governance arrangements are underdeveloped. While leaders have plans to ensure their leadership is challenged by external expertise, they have yet to put their plans into action.

**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**

Highly qualified and experienced staff provide a rich variety of training to ensure that almost all apprentices gain considerable new knowledge, skills and behaviours that tangibly add value to their employer's business.

Learners produce good standards of theory work. For example, learners can interpret different workplace scenarios, reflect incisively on the correct use of aspirators and sterilisation tools, and write informatively and accurately on the function of orthodontic and endodontic appliances.

Tutors and assessors provide effective questioning techniques and oral feedback that improves apprentices' understanding and enables them to fluently apply new theory effectively.

Assessors' challenging feedback ensures that learners make swift progress in developing their practical knowledge and skills to meet the demands of their employer. Consequently, apprentices can conduct complex practical tasks successfully, such as to irrigate during surgical extraction and assist surgeons in fitting fixed appliances. For example, during an assessment, the assessor carefully checked the knowledge and understanding of the apprentice about her role assisting in root canal treatments. The assessor enabled the apprentice to reflect on possible different scenarios with this surgery and confidently articulate how she would adapt her role accordingly to meet the needs of the dentist and patient.

Tutors set apprentices challenging targets that fully underpin apprentices' learning plans and are comprehensively reviewed on a regular basis. As a result, apprentices are motivated to work hard and excel.

Tutors and assessors successfully improve apprentices' English and mathematics skills throughout their learning. For example, they provide apprentices with helpful learning techniques that enable them to correctly spell specialist terminology. Apprentices become mathematically proficient in their calculations, ensuring that weight to water ratios and the mix of different chemical composites are accurate.

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

Leaders place a high priority on ensuring that apprentices are safe, feel safe and know whom to report to if they have any arising concerns. Leaders have received appropriate training to conduct the role of designated safeguarding officers. Leaders conduct safer recruitment practices and ensure that all staff are appropriately vetted prior to working for the company.

Leaders make sure that staff have taken up a broad range of relevant safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training and fully understand reporting arrangements. As a result, staff effectively promote the importance of safeguarding with apprentices throughout the apprentices' training programmes.

Staff adeptly ensure that apprentices are acutely aware of how to identify and report any potential safeguarding issue, such as neglect, that may manifest when children and vulnerable adults visit the dentists for surgery. Most apprentices have a good awareness of the dangers of extremism and how such issues relate to their workplaces and personal lives.

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