

Aspire to Learn Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 1278619

Name of lead inspector: Sambit Sen Her Majesty's Inspector

Inspection dates: 17–18 July 2019

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 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.

Aspire to Learn Limited is a private training provider which operates mainly in London and Essex. It started providing directly funded apprenticeships in December 2017. Currently, there are 150 apprentices. They are mostly on standards apprenticeships, with a few on framework apprenticeships. These include adult care level 2, lead adult care level 3, early years educator level 3, leadership for health and social care and children and young people's services level 5, business and administration level 3, customer service practitioner level 2, housing/property management level 3, rail engineering operative level 2, supporting teaching and learning in schools level 3, team leader/manager level 3 and operations/departmental manager level 5.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have a clear and challenging vision, mission and strategy which work effectively to meet local businesses' training needs. Leaders and managers work effectively with most employers. They involve them in curriculum design and delivery to meet their business and industry needs.

Leaders and managers have good industry knowledge and experience. This helps them to design and deliver bespoke training programmes. As a result, apprentices receive good individualised training.

Leaders and managers recruit apprentices with integrity. Most apprentices gain significant new knowledge, skills and behaviours during their apprenticeship programme.

Leaders and managers meet most of the principles of an apprenticeship. For example, apprentices benefit from good-quality off-the-job training delivered by the provider and employers.

Apprentices and employers have basic knowledge of end-point assessment. This is communicated to them at induction and throughout the training programme. However, apprentices are unable to recall all aspects of it, especially how to achieve higher grades.

Leaders and managers recruit experienced staff who have good subject knowledge. This helps apprentices to develop good knowledge, skills and behaviours for their roles. However, due to staff turnover, a small minority of apprentices are not on track to complete their apprenticeship in time. Senior managers are taking appropriate steps to rectify this.

A new senior management team is in place. Managers have implemented a new process for the tracking and monitoring of apprentices but it is too early to judge its impact. Currently, managers do not keep a small minority of employers fully informed about apprentices' progress.

Currently, the provider has no structured external governance. However, leaders have recruited external consultants who challenge and support them. For example, they have appointed external audit and freelance consultants to support them to scrutinise their training provision.

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
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Most apprentices develop the new knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to perform effectively in their employment. For example, care apprentices learn how to administer medication and recognise signs of abuse, such as coercive control. Most apprentices receive good additional training to complement and enhance their sector knowledge, skills and behaviours. For example, railway engineering apprentices receive training on how to form complex junctions, in addition to the requirements of the standards.

Most apprentices benefit from regular contact with their assessors. Assessors check apprentices' knowledge, skills and understanding regularly by setting challenging tasks. These are reviewed frequently in the workplace, by telephone and online.

Most apprentices contribute to their business and have a direct impact on productivity within their teams. For example, team-leading apprentices develop the skills and knowledge required to lead teams and alleviate stress levels by managing staff workloads effectively.

Most apprentices develop good English and mathematics skills. For example, rail engineering apprentices develop advanced mathematics skills to calculate quantities of materials used to replace sections of track.

Initial advice and guidance are good. For example, rail engineering apprentices receive a thorough appraisal of the conditions they can expect when working night shifts.

Assessors do not always use initial assessment effectively to identify learners' starting points from which to plan their training. As a result, a minority of apprentices do not receive high-quality individualised training that enables them to make rapid progress.

Although most apprentices complete significant off-the-job training, tutors do not sufficiently track and validate this information. Assessors do not set challenging and developmental targets during progress reviews for a minority of apprentices. As a result, they make slow progress.

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

The designated safeguarding officer is fully qualified. Appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and updated regularly.

Most apprentices have detailed knowledge of safeguarding, including how to keep themselves safe. They have good contextual understanding of their own sectors. For example, care apprentices can describe the components of how to spot signs of neglect and the difference between bruising sustained by appropriate restraint and care and that sustained through various forms of abuse.

All staff are fully trained on safeguarding. However, leaders and managers need to do more to ensure that apprentices understand better the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism.

Leaders and managers implement safe recruitment practices when appointing new staff. These include reference checks, the right to work in the United Kingdom checks and Disclosure and Barring Service checks before new staff start their employment.

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