

Greendale Limited

Monitoring visit report

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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 that began to be funded from April 2017 or after by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (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 three themes set out below.

Greendale Limited (trading as ECTA Training) received their first publicly funded contract for apprenticeship training in May 2018. They are an independent learning provider that delivers apprenticeships in the gas engineering sector. Currently, 13 apprentices follow the gas engineering operative standards-based apprenticeship at level 3.

Themes

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

Leaders have a clear vision and strategy to deliver high-quality training for apprentices in the gas engineering sector. They meet the needs of apprentices, employers and the gas industry very successfully. Leaders use their gas training expertise, labour market information from the 'gas safe decade review' and partnerships with employers effectively in order to develop a bespoke curriculum.

Leaders ensure that tutors have the required qualifications and experience to teach and assess apprentices. Tutors use their vocational experience in the gas sector to deliver high-quality training. Development plans are in place to ensure that all tutors have or are working towards teaching qualifications to improve further the quality of provision.

Leaders identify accurately most aspects of the provision they need to improve. For example, performance during the early part of the new contract was poor. Too many apprentices left their programme early. Leaders intervened to improve the recruitment to, and staffing of, the programme. Consequently, the vast majority of apprentices now stay on their programme and develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need for work.

Leaders and managers have an accurate oversight of the progress apprentices make. They recognised, for example, that too many apprentices were making slow progress

because they were not submitting their written work on time. They intervened swiftly to ensure that trainers took effective action to help apprentices to catch up when they fell behind. As a result, the large majority of apprentices now make at least the expected progress.

Leaders have not ensured that there are appropriate governance arrangements in place. Consequently, they are not supported, challenged or held to account for the quality of the apprenticeship provision or the effectiveness of their leadership.

How much progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? Reasonable progress

Leaders and tutors use their expertise in the gas sector effectively in order to plan and deliver high-quality training. This ensures that apprentices develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours and improve their performance in the workplace.

Apprentices' practical work is of a good standard. They develop and master skills in pipe bending, jointing and pipe assembly, using copper pipe of different bores. Apprentices produce good-quality soldered and crimped joints. They bend copper pipe accurately when designing and constructing different types of central heating systems in the workshop.

Apprentices receive their full entitlement to off-the-job training during working hours. Tutors plan and sequence on- and off-the-job training effectively. They ensure that apprentices apply what they learn in the training centre to their workplace.

Employers recognise how training benefits apprentices' performance and effectiveness at work. They value rightly the new knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices develop through their apprenticeship.

Tutors offer supplementary bespoke training courses that ensure that apprentices develop additional knowledge and skills relevant to their job role. For example, apprentices access further qualifications, such as working on domestic-sized central heating boilers in commercial property. This is beyond the apprenticeship requirements but necessary for working in the industry.

Tutors prepare apprentices thoroughly for their end-point assessment (EPA). They design relevant online multiple-choice tests and 'mock' professional discussions. These provide apprentices with good opportunities to practise the techniques they need for their EPA.

Apprentices produce written work of an appropriate standard. Tutors do not emphasise sufficiently to apprentices the importance of submitting work to meet deadlines. However, they provide suitable opportunities to help apprentices to catch up if they fall behind.

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

Leaders ensure that safeguarding has a high priority. The designated safeguarding officer (DSO) and the deputy DSO have appropriate training and experience to carry out their roles efficiently.

Staff benefit from regular training on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. They know to whom they should refer any issues relating to safeguarding, including radicalisation and extremism. Managers follow safe recruitment practices. Staff receive relevant pre-employment checks to ensure they are suitable to work with apprentices.

Apprentices feel safe and are safe. They benefit from comprehensive training on multiple aspects of health and safety, as well as safeguarding in relation to their work. As a result, they take appropriate precautions and follow safe working practices. Apprentices have a good understanding of the inherent dangers in their work, where accidents can be fatal. Apprentices know how to keep themselves safe online and who to contact should they have any safeguarding concerns.

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