

First Intuition Reading Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Andy Fitt, Her Majesty's Inspector

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: 16 Forbury Road
Reading
RG1 1SB



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.

First Intuition Reading Limited (FI Reading) was set up in 2011 to provide accountancy and tax training to the commercial market. In 2017, it started offering apprenticeships at levels 3, 4 and 7 in Reading and more recently in Southampton. Just over 50 apprentices were on programme at the time of the monitoring visit with most over 19 years old. Apprentices study standards-based level 3 apprenticeships in assistant accounting and level 4 standards-based apprenticeships in professional accountant/tax technician. A very small number of apprentices receive their training in subcontracted provision at First Intuition London. FI Reading also offers apprenticeships at level 7, which were not in scope for the monitoring visit.

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 rationale for their apprenticeship offer and work closely with employers to plan apprenticeships. Employers value the frequent and effective communication with staff at FI Reading and appreciate the skills that apprentices develop during their apprenticeships. They receive frequent reports about the progress that apprentices make and attend almost all progress reviews. Staff alert them quickly if there are concerns. Leaders make sure that employers are aware of the requirements of apprentices' end-point assessments.

Leaders evaluate the quality of their provision effectively. They understand key strengths and plan carefully to improve weaknesses. They use feedback from employers and apprentices to improve their courses. They recognise that targets in their improvement plan are not specific enough to enable them to know when they have achieved them. They track the off-the-job learning of apprentices carefully. They understand the progress that apprentices make and identify and support those falling behind quickly. Most apprentices make good progress. Very few leave their courses early.

Leaders employ teaching staff who are subject experts. They make sure that teachers improve their skills by sharing good practice in frequent meetings. Leaders

are developing their processes for overseeing the quality of classroom practice, but it is too early to comment on the impact of these new systems. They do not check teachers' progress against targets from observations quickly enough to make sure that they improve their skills swiftly. Leaders recognise the need to carry out observations of teaching in the very small amount of subcontracted work.

Leaders have made sure that an effective system of governance is in place. An experienced non-executive board member holds staff to account and understands the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Leaders benefit from further levels of governance provided by members of the First Intuition groups across the country.

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

Apprentices benefit from well-planned on- and off-the-job training. They develop the skills and knowledge that enable them to become valued employees quickly. Apprentices recognise how the knowledge they gain in off-the-job training complements what they learn at work. Employers support apprentices effectively to help them apply their newly acquired knowledge. They appreciate the additional skills that apprentices develop, such as bookkeeping and advanced bookkeeping that help them to become more effective at work. Apprentices benefit from carefully designed skills days which develop their teamworking, analysis and problem-solving skills. Employers value the improvements in apprentices' confidence as a result of these days.

Teachers provide useful feedback that enables apprentices to understand how to improve their work. Apprentices know the progress that they are making with their apprenticeship. However, teachers do not always challenge apprentices to achieve the highest quality work they can. In a few lessons, teachers fail to engage all apprentices effectively and do not check apprentices' learning in enough detail to enable them to make fast progress. All of the small number of apprentices who have completed their courses have passed their apprenticeships, with one achieving a distinction grade.

Teachers support apprentices effectively to develop their mathematics skills throughout their apprenticeships. This helps them become confident in their job roles. Apprentices develop their specialist vocabulary and subject terminology successfully. However, teachers do not give apprentices clear feedback to enable them consistently to develop their English skills to a high level.

Leaders make sure that they recruit apprentices with integrity. They design their induction carefully to prepare apprentices and their employers effectively for the apprenticeship. Staff are improving their processes for initial assessment of apprentices, but these changes are in their infancy. Staff plan carefully to make sure that apprentices understand the requirements for their end-point assessments.

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

Leaders and managers make sure that apprentices are safe. Assessors discuss safeguarding topics and the 'Prevent' duty in detail with apprentices during their meetings. They check carefully that apprentices know how to contact safeguarding staff at FI Reading. Consequently, apprentices understand, and can explain in detail, how to keep themselves safe.

Well-trained designated safeguarding officers record the few safeguarding incidents carefully. They involve external agencies when needed, but they do not always follow up actions that staff have taken in sufficient detail to make sure of the impact of their actions.

Managers use safe recruitment processes when employing new staff. Almost all staff complete safeguarding training when they start work at FI Reading. A few very new members of staff have not completed this training and senior staff recognise the need to ensure that this takes place earlier in their induction programme.

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