

Norton Webb Limited

Monitoring visit report

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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.

Norton Webb Limited was awarded a contract to deliver apprenticeships in October 2017 and, at the time of inspection, had 121 levy-funded apprentices. The majority of apprentices follow programmes in health and social care and childcare, with the remainder on apprenticeships in hospitality and business. Seventy-one apprentices are on standards-based apprenticeships and 50 are working towards apprenticeship frameworks. Norton Webb Limited works with 13 employers in Yorkshire and the North West.

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 well-planned apprenticeship strategy that meets employers' needs and takes account of regional priorities. They have good relationships with the employers that they work with, many of which were established prior to the introduction of the levy.

Leaders have introduced governance arrangements that are highly effective. Governors have relevant knowledge about the provider's work and challenge leaders appropriately. Governors recently undertook a telephone survey with employers to elicit their understanding of the off-the-job training requirements. The outcome of the survey led to revisions to the provider's guidance for employers.

Leaders tailor the curriculum well to meet the needs of employers. They carefully consider any plans to grow the provision and maintain a strong focus on maintaining quality.

Tutors are well qualified and very experienced in their vocational subjects. They undertake training based on the outcomes of an appraisal of their knowledge and skills. They use their skills well to develop apprentices' understanding by linking newly acquired skills to the workplace. Tutors and work-based mentors meet regularly with apprentices to review progress.

Managers accurately identify apprentices' starting points. They use this information well to plan and deliver training to meet apprentices' needs. For example, managers adjusted the sequencing of training for apprentices recently promoted to supervisory positions by delivering the supervision element of the programme first.

Leaders ensure that apprentices can fulfil the requirements of the apprenticeship through their work role. They are careful only to recruit apprentices who have an appropriate work role and relevant qualifications. Leaders ensure that employers and apprentices are fully aware of the requirements of the end-point assessment through a comprehensive written guide.

Tutors accurately monitor apprentices' progress through the programme. However, leaders and managers do not have an overview of apprentices who are at risk of not completing their off-the-job training. Governors and leaders have identified this as an area 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? Reasonable progress

Tutors plan and deliver a well-sequenced and high-quality programme that enables apprentices to make good progress, particularly on the vocational elements of their apprenticeships. Apprentices develop new knowledge that they apply well in their workplace.

Tutors provide good support to help apprentices to develop the required skills and behaviours and to become more confident contributory members of the workforce. This benefits apprentices' employers.

Managers have recently strengthened quality assurance arrangements. They now hold weekly meetings with tutors to review the quality of the programme and apprentices' progress. They identify those apprentices who are at risk of falling behind and make arrangements to support them to catch up. However, leaders and managers do not ensure that apprentices have access to impartial careers information to help them decide on their next steps.

Apprentices successfully improve their understanding of terminology and concepts that are specific to their vocational area. This helps them to carry out their job roles effectively. However, too many apprentices make slow progress in developing their English and mathematics skills to achieve the qualifications that they need. Managers have recognised this and now place a high priority on the development of English and mathematics skills.

Although apprentices benefit from off-the-job training, this element of the programme is not planned well enough with employers. As a result, a few apprentices do not have sufficient time away from their job to enable them to complete their learning quickly.

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

Significant progress

Leaders have a highly effective approach to safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' duty. They use safe recruitment practices. The lead safeguarding officer (who is also a member of the Kirklees safeguarding board), staff and governors are appropriately trained. Leaders have appointed a mental health first-aid officer who is available to support apprentices.

A high level of importance is placed on developing apprentices' understanding of current issues, such as gang culture and county lines. As a result, apprentices have a good understanding of the dangers that such issues pose and how to keep themselves safe from these dangers. Staff successfully raise apprentices' awareness of specific issues, such as honour-based crime and the use of malnutrition bands to monitor food intake in vulnerable people.

Leaders have developed a comprehensive 'Prevent' duty action plan and have a good awareness of the risks in the different regions in which they work. Apprentices have a good understanding of the risks of radicalisation and extremism. British values are embedded well into the curriculum. For example, tutors and apprentices discuss the impact of modern slavery on vulnerable people.

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