

Cauntton Engineering Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 2539270

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Inspection date(s): 25–26 September 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 the Education and Skills Funding Agency 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 'Monitoring visits' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

Caunton Engineering Limited is a structural steelwork contractor that designs and builds steelwork for large building projects across the United Kingdom. It has trained its own apprentices for several years through a subcontracting relationship. In September 2017 it began providing levy-funded apprenticeships on its own account and took responsibility for all aspects of apprentices' training. It currently has 13 apprentices. Eight are completing frameworks in engineering manufacture. The five most recent recruits are working towards the level 3 metal fabricator standard.

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 rationale for the apprenticeship programme. The company has an ageing staff and managers view apprentices as essential to maintaining their skilled workforce. As a result, they select apprentices carefully in the expectation that they will remain employees of the firm once they complete their programmes.

Caunton's programmes meet fully the requirements of apprenticeships. Apprentices are employed for the full duration of their studies, paid appropriately, and benefit from well-planned on- and off-the-job training that far exceeds the minimum expectations.

Training staff have identified clearly the range of knowledge, skills and behaviours which apprentices should acquire. They have carefully recorded this using a skills matrix, a progression tree and other documents that describe these competencies in detail. This helps to ensure that apprentices following both frameworks and standards benefit from good technical training. However, managers have not planned carefully enough for aspects of the standards apprenticeship. This has had little short-term impact on apprentices, who develop their skills well, but managers

recognise the need to improve their arrangements to meet the demands of a standards apprenticeship and to prepare apprentices for end-point assessments.

Training staff are appropriately qualified and have good vocational skills and experience. They use their expertise well to help apprentices to develop their skills. Apprentices spend their first year training in an 'academy' area that adjoins the main factory floor. This gives them ready access to industry-standard resources that help ensure they develop their skills to a high level.

Managers have made suitable arrangements for quality assurance of apprenticeship programmes. These arrangements include standardisation meetings, reviews of training materials, reviews of apprentices' progress, and observation of the lead trainer by a qualified mentor. Although these arrangements are basic, they have contributed to the high standard of apprentices' training. However, managers do not have sufficient oversight of the small amount of subcontracted training in information technology and English and cannot be certain of its quality.

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

Trainers provide well-planned training, and help apprentices to develop their knowledge and skills from design through to manufacture. They support apprentices well to complete both individual and group work. Several current apprentices are working at a level beyond what would be expected at this stage in their programmes.

Trainers assess apprentices' existing skills and knowledge at the start of their programmes. They make good use of the information this provides to plan training activities that match apprentices' capabilities. Trainers have very good technical skills that they use to provide continuous guidance that helps apprentices to develop their expertise rapidly. For example, they provide tips and advice as apprentices practise welding.

Apprentices benefit from a programme that rotates them through all areas of the factory. This enables them to develop a firm understanding of all the technical aspects of the business. Training staff work well with production staff to identify opportunities for apprentices to develop and apply their skills to real work situations. This contributes significantly to apprentices' development.

Trainers help apprentices to develop their English skills. They correct apprentices' spelling, punctuation and grammar and give effective feedback on written work. However, this support is not systematic, and when apprentices receive written feedback, they do not always act on it. Apprentices develop their mathematical skills well through their practical work, for example through calculations of volume and

area. Staff make appropriate provision for apprentices who need to complete functional skills qualifications.

Training staff make good use of assessment to check the competence of apprentices and to monitor their progress. Consequently, they understand the skills that apprentices need to practise and provide repeated opportunities for them to do so until they achieve mastery. Although the standards programme is at an early stage, staff have recognised the need to develop a different model of progress tracking for this programme that ensures apprentices are well prepared for end-point assessment.

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

Apprentices are safe and feel safe. They work in a hazardous environment and, consequently, training staff ensure that apprentices have a very good understanding of health and safety procedures. Apprentices carry out their own risk assessments before undertaking any practical work. Apprentices also develop a good understanding of a range of safeguarding topics such as how to stay safe online.

The designated safeguarding lead understands the fundamental requirements of the role and takes her responsibilities seriously. However, she lacks a detailed understanding of the full range of safeguarding themes. She has acknowledged this and has rapidly addressed concerns.

Training staff have a broad understanding of safeguarding topics. They care about the well-being of apprentices and monitor this closely. However, they do not have a good understanding of British values and how they relate to the dangers of extremism. Although staff are aware of particular challenges in the local area these do not feature in the 'Prevent' duty risk assessment.

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