

# Genius Software Solutions Limited

Monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 1280339

**Name of lead inspector:** Sarah McGrath, Ofsted Inspector

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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 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.

Genius Software Solutions delivers apprenticeships across Scotland and England. Programmes in England were in scope for this visit; at the time of the monitoring visit, there were 109 apprentices on these programmes. Nearly a fifth of apprenticeships are delivered through a subcontracting arrangement. These are a mixture of frameworks and standards-based programmes at levels 2 and 3, predominantly in early years and teaching and learning. All of the apprenticeships that are delivered directly are at level 3. Just over a half are standards-based apprenticeships in team leading. Slightly fewer than a half are frameworks in financial services and a very small number are frameworks in business administration.

### **Themes**

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

#### **Insufficient progress**

Leaders do not ensure that the curriculum is sufficiently challenging for apprentices. Too many apprentices already have the skills and knowledge that they need to perform their roles. They see the apprenticeship as a way to accredit these skills, rather than to develop them. Consequently, programmes are of little benefit to too many apprentices and do not develop or extend their knowledge, skills or behaviours.

Leaders and managers do not evaluate well enough the quality of training that apprentices receive and have not put in place effective arrangements to improve quality. When managers do identify areas for improvement, they do not set specific enough actions for staff to take to improve the quality of training.

Leaders do not act with sufficient urgency to address concerns about apprentices' progress. They have a clear overview of the apprenticeship provision and have processes in place to identify any concerns, but do not use these processes well enough. As a result, apprentices who have been identified as making slow progress continue to make slow progress over several months.

Leaders and managers work well with employers to develop the curriculum in line with the provider's specialist areas of financial services and leadership and management. Employers are fully involved in the development of programmes and they help to select the most appropriate units and training patterns for apprentices. As a result, apprenticeship programmes are closely aligned to the business needs of employers.

Leaders and managers have recruited appropriately qualified staff with expertise in the subjects that they deliver. Staff receive support to acquire teaching qualifications where appropriate.

Leaders manage the subcontracted provision effectively.

**What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices?      Insufficient progress**

Too many apprentices do not make rapid enough progress in developing their skills and knowledge. Tutors do not routinely discuss skills development as part of the review process, and do not set appropriately challenging targets for apprentices to help them make good progress. Tutors provide feedback that focuses too narrowly on completion of assessment criteria and does not explain to apprentices what they need to do to improve.

Around half of the apprentices on programme are not developing substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours. Apprentices on frameworks, and those on the early cohorts of standards-based apprenticeships in team leading, use the apprenticeship programme to become more confident in their roles and to accredit their existing skills.

Although managers plan off-the-job training carefully at the start of programmes and ensure that employers understand its importance, they rely on employers delivering much of the training as part of their existing induction and training programme. Ineffective communication between tutors and apprentices means that tutors do not track or record off-the-job training accurately and do not measure its impact. As a result, learners do not progress as quickly as they should between tutors' visits.

Managers do not place a sufficiently high priority on the development of apprentices' skills in English and mathematics. Tutors do not support apprentices well enough to improve the accuracy of their written work. They do not routinely identify or correct errors in apprentices' written work. This means that apprentices do not know what they need to do to improve their skills. Apprentices who need to achieve English or mathematics qualifications do not receive enough structured support to develop their skills, and they are not well prepared for examinations.

A high proportion of the apprentices recruited recently to standards-based apprenticeships make good progress. They are developing new knowledge, skills and behaviours which they apply well at work. This group accounts for approximately a third of current apprentices.

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

Leaders do not have in place sufficiently rigorous safeguarding procedures. Consequently, learners do not have a clear understanding of how, or to whom, they should report concerns. Leaders do not have a sufficient understanding of the specific risks to learners in the locations where they deliver apprenticeship programmes. They do not have a clear understanding of local authorities' reporting procedures. As a result, they do not carry out specific and accurate risk assessments.

Although apprentices receive training on safeguarding as part of their induction, tutors do not revisit these topics during apprentices' programmes. Consequently, apprentices' understanding is not secure. Employers, however, work well with apprentices to ensure that they understand how safeguarding applies to their specific roles and industries.

Leaders have implemented appropriate safe recruitment policies and practices. All staff receive appropriate training on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty at induction and renew this training at appropriate intervals. However, the designated safeguarding lead had not updated her training prior to this monitoring visit.

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