

Floortrain (GB) 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 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 '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.

Floortrain (GB) Limited began to deliver non-levy and levy-funded apprenticeships in January 2018. It has two training centres, one in Doncaster and one in London, and delivers nationally. Currently, the company has 77 apprentices. Of these, 50 are on frameworks and 27 are on standards-based programmes. All apprentices are studying floorcovering operations at level 2. Two thirds of the apprentices are aged 16 to 18 and the remainder are 19 years of age and over.

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 strategic rationale for providing this niche apprenticeship programme. The aim is to develop competent specialists in the flooring industry and meet training needs locally, regionally and nationally. Leaders ensure that specialised training is accessible to apprentices working in this industry.

Leaders and managers ensure that trainers deliver the curriculum in a logical order which provides apprentices with new knowledge, skills and behaviours. Trainers structure learning to focus on developing technical knowledge prior to the delivery of practical skills training. Apprentices skilfully apply their new knowledge and skills to prescribed work-related tasks. Subsequently, most apprentices make the expected progress in developing new skills and knowledge.

The principles of an apprenticeship are met. However, a few employers do not release apprentices to attend off-the-job training on a regular basis. A small minority of apprentices have been on programme for several months and have not yet attended theory sessions. This interrupts the planned theoretical learning and slows the progress of these apprentices.

Managers' self-assessment captures accurately the strengths and areas for development of the apprenticeship. Although no formal governance arrangements are in place, managers hold each other to account well and they understand their priorities clearly. However, their evaluation of the quality of teaching does not focus sufficiently on the overall educational experience of apprentices.

Managers recruit apprentices who are in a position to sustain employment and to complete the programme. They consider alternative routes for applicants who may not benefit from following an apprenticeship. Leaders ensure that staff remain commercially competent through continuing to work as practitioners in the industry. This enables staff to support and advise apprentices about current career options in the flooring industry. However, apprentices do not benefit from effective guidance to raise their career aspirations and inform their longer-term plans.

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 develop a wide range of specialised knowledge and skills. Their new skills include laying commercial and resilient flooring. Apprentices repeatedly practise and improve their skills in the cap and cove method of wet room construction. Their acquisition of specialised knowledge and skills results in the vast majority of apprentices retaining sustained employment within the sector.

Apprentices self-reflect and assess their existing practical skill level to determine their own starting points. Trainers use this information well to inform the specific level of coaching required. This approach enables apprentices to move rapidly towards practical assessment. Individual coaching helps apprentices to improve their understanding of the practical skills and technical knowledge needed in the industry. However, the most able apprentices are not supported well enough to move more rapidly through the programme.

Apprentices access high-quality learning resources, including video clips, through a mobile application accessible on smartphones and tablets. They revisit training materials and regularly view videos prior to carrying out their practical skills. As a result, apprentices remember key learning points and recall them easily when carrying out practical activities. Trainers ensure that apprentices on new standards-based programmes understand end-point assessment and the opportunity to attain higher grades.

Trainers use assessment accurately to capture how apprentices have performed in their off-the-job activities and their workplace training. However, they do not consistently identify apprentices' knowledge gaps to plan further training. Apprentices are not encouraged to revise and resubmit their work to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the topics that they study.

Trainers focus well on the development of apprentices' mathematical skills. As a result, apprentices improve these skills. However, trainers do not routinely develop apprentices' written English skills beyond those that are required for them to achieve their qualification. Apprentices repeatedly make similar mistakes in their written notes and assessed work.

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

Apprentices feel safe. They have a good understanding of safeguarding and know how to stay safe and report concerns.

Designated safeguarding leads are in place in both main locations and carry out their roles appropriately. Staff complete appropriate training and qualifications to carry out their roles. All staff are subject to Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

Apprentices understand the potential impact of radicalisation and extremism on their own lives and those in their wider community. Most apprentices understand the principles of fundamental British values and apply them well in their training. This is reflected in their positive behaviour and their attitudes towards their trainers and peers.

Managers have not included information on local risks, such as county lines, in apprentices' induction. Consequently, most apprentices are not aware of these risks. Managers are now taking prompt action to ensure that staff have a greater focus on raising apprentices' awareness.

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