

Genius Solutions 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.

Genius Solutions Limited is a small independent learning provider. Prior to gaining approval to deliver levy and non-levy funded apprenticeships, it worked as a partner member of a learning consortium. At the time of the monitoring visit, the company has 36 standards-based apprentices. Of these, 19 apprentices are working towards learning and development practitioner at level 3, nine are working towards assessor/coach at level 4, five are working towards learning and skills teacher at level 5, two are working towards operations/departmental manager at level 5 and one apprentice is working towards associate project manager at level 4.

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

Leaders have not developed a curriculum that considers apprentices' starting points or is tailored to the needs of apprentices or employers. Employers and apprentices value the qualification included in the apprenticeship. However, apprentices do not develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours additional to those developed through the diploma in teaching English to speakers of other languages.

Leaders do not involve employers in the development of their apprentices. The majority of employers recognise that apprentices develop teaching strategies used in the workplace. However, employers do not know what knowledge, skills and behaviours are being developed as part of the apprenticeship.

Leaders do not ensure that their programmes meet the requirements of an apprenticeship. They do not check that all apprentices get enough high-quality off-the-job training. The majority of apprentices are not clear about what counts towards their off-the-job training. A significant minority of apprentices work on their apprenticeship in their own time.

Leaders and staff do not track apprentices' progress effectively. As a result, staff, employers and apprentices are not clear about the progress they make towards completing the apprenticeship.

Leaders do not have effective systems in place to check and improve quality. They know that some areas require improvement, but they have not identified the key areas. There is no external scrutiny through governance, and leaders do not make good use of local provider networks. As a result, leaders and managers receive no challenge or support on how to improve the provision.

Leaders have a clear strategy for the range of apprenticeships they provide. The offer reflects a good understanding of the local, regional and national demand from employers, particularly in the language training sector.

Leaders employ highly qualified staff who are current practitioners. All staff are qualified at a minimum of level 7. Apprentices benefit from their current occupational experience and specialist knowledge.

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

Teachers do not identify apprentices' starting points. They do not consider their previous experience, knowledge, skills or qualifications to plan the apprenticeship. As a result, all apprentices follow the same curriculum and are not challenged to achieve ambitious targets or high grades.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that apprentices develop their English and mathematical knowledge and skills. Many apprentices are working at the level required for the apprenticeship when they begin the programmes, but teachers do not plan or set targets for apprentices to develop their knowledge and skills further.

Apprentices value the classroom-based sessions which they attend. Apprentices who cannot attend the face-to-face sessions participate through 'Mashme', a virtual classroom facility. Apprentices receive useful training and leave the sessions feeling motivated. However, a minority of apprentices do not get any off-the-job training time at all and attend the sessions in their own time.

The majority of employers can identify the new knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices apply in the workplace. As an example, two apprentices incorporated pronunciation elements in their lesson after a session on phonology.

Employers are not involved in planning on- and off-the-job training. Staff do not work with employers to plan and design a programme that is of value to the apprentice and the workplace.

Staff do not use progress reviews successfully to monitor and improve apprentices' progress. Progress reviews are not carried out frequently enough. They do not inform staff and apprentices about progress or identify any targets. Employers are not involved in progress reviews and are not informed of apprentices' progress. Employers are only contacted if there is a concern. The majority of employers do not know if their apprentice is on track to complete the apprenticeship by the planned end date.

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

Leaders carry out appropriate checks on staff during the recruitment process. Leaders have suitable policies and procedures in place for safeguarding and meeting the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty. They implement these appropriately. Staff and apprentices understand their responsibilities and how to keep themselves safe.

Leaders have appointed an appropriately trained designated safeguarding lead. Apprentices feel safe and know to whom they can report any safeguarding concerns. Leaders ensure that staff support apprentices when needed. Leaders have correctly identified that further development of the recording process is required to ensure that they have detailed records and staff can easily access information.

Leaders use a carefully constructed 'Prevent' duty risk assessment and action plan that are relevant to education. Staff and apprentices have a good general awareness of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Apprentices are aware of the risks of radicalisation and extremism in the areas in which they work.

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