

Inspection of Lean Education and Development Limited

Inspection dates:

3–6 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Apprenticeships	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Lean education and development limited (LEAD) is an independent training provider specialising in delivering apprenticeships in business improvement techniques for learners aged 19 and over. All apprentices work at levy-paying employers in a variety of sectors such as manufacturing, logistics, engineering, automotive, and healthcare services.

At the time of the inspection, 505 apprentices were undertaking a level 2 improving operational performance apprenticeship framework. An additional 201 apprentices were on a level 3 improvement technician standards-based apprenticeship, and a further 18 were on a level 4 improvement practitioner standards-based apprenticeship.

LEAD became a prime-contract holder in May 2017. The provider received a monitoring visit in April 2018, and since then it has almost doubled its learner numbers and launched apprenticeships at levels 3 and 4. The provider does not use subcontractors for the delivery of its apprenticeships.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Apprentices value highly the new continuous improvement techniques they learn through their apprenticeship. They complete projects which help them to use the 'lean principles' to solve a specific problem within their job role.

As their personal and professional behaviours develop, they improve their time management and productivity, making a better contribution to their workplace as a result. Apprentices enjoy learning and feel safe in their work environments. They appreciate the supportive approach of coaches which helps them rapidly to become comfortable with learning – in some cases after a long gap in their studies.

Apprentices do not receive the support they need to develop their English and mathematics skills. Apprentices who speak English as an additional language do not become better prepared for their next employment or study moves. Apprentices do not benefit from high-quality, impartial careers advice and guidance, as the focus of the information they receive is limited to opportunities within their current employer.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and managers have developed well, over years of experience, teaching of the 'lean' element in their apprenticeship programmes, but the content of the programme is too narrowly focused on the standards or framework part of the apprenticeship. As a result, apprentices develop their understanding of 'lean' techniques but they do not receive adequate support to develop the wider skills and knowledge which they need to pursue their next steps such as in English, mathematics or digital skills.

Leaders and managers have developed extensive and strong links with successful, often multinational, employers, jointly designing and tailoring their improvement techniques training programmes. Managers have structured the continuous improvement element to the apprenticeship well, and coaches teach it in a logical order.

The majority of coaches assess apprentices' starting points clearly in relation to their knowledge and skills in continuous improvement. Coaches are knowledgeable and use this information to plan theory sessions well. They communicate ideas and concepts to apprentices clearly, which are relevant to the employers' business. As a result, the large majority of apprentices bring cost reductions and efficiencies to their workplace.

Coaches question, check, and correct learners' misunderstandings in relation to their vocational knowledge and skills. This helps coaches to adapt and reorder their teaching methods, revisiting the topics that will address apprentices' gaps in knowledge. As a result, apprentices at level 2 achieve their framework and complete their English qualification promptly.

Leaders and managers have not yet ensured that coaches develop their teaching skills in improving apprentices' command of English. As a result, apprentices who speak English as an additional language do not receive the necessary assessment and subsequent support of their language needs. In addition, the large majority of coaches do not plan effectively to support apprentices' development in mathematics. Many apprentices do not pass their mathematics qualifications at the first attempt.

Staff and employers have high expectations of apprentices and their ability to apply their new skills to drive improvements in their workplaces. For example, a steel manufacturer benefited from a team project that made a very significant annual saving in transport infrastructure costs.

Coaches and employers clearly highlight to apprentices the desired behaviour and conduct in the workplace. Apprentices' attendance at off-the-job training is high. They arrive punctually and ready to learn. Staff extensively promote a positive culture of non-acceptance of bullying, harassment, and discrimination. For example, apprentices understand the harmful impact of banter on colleagues' well-being.

Apprentices develop their personal and professional behaviours, improving their effectiveness at work and in their broader lives. The communication and influencing skills they learned on the programme help them to reduce overtime hours, improving their work-life balance. They grow in confidence when they see the impact of their newly introduced, efficient working practices on their employers' productivity. This enables them to work with new colleagues and managers in different parts of their businesses, proudly sharing what they have learned.

Staff and apprentices are highly respectful to each other's views and value contributions from others. For example, a diverse group of apprentices (including males, females, and Polish nationals) took part in a rich discussion with their peers about diverse cultures and how they can be fostered in the workplace. Apprentices understand clearly how to report any safeguarding concerns they may have about their own welfare, or that of others.

Coaches routinely ask apprentices questions about topics linked to British values such as democracy, Brexit, and the forthcoming elections. This deepens their understanding. They ensure that apprentices are sufficiently aware of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. However, apprentices do not always know how to relate these issues to the workplace or their local community.

Employers support apprentices well by providing a range of health and well-being services such as cognitive behaviour therapy and employee assistance by telephone. At one manufacturing employer, level 4 apprentices have trained as mental health first aiders. However, managers and coaches do not promote healthy living as part of the apprenticeship, signposting them instead to the employer's services.

Leaders and managers recognise that the unsteady leadership of the business since the monitoring visit has prevented them from acting quickly enough to continue to improve the provision. They are currently in the process of restoring stability, but in

the meantime they recognise that they have not been successful in securing effective governance. As a result, they do not receive the necessary support and challenge to instigate the rapid improvement of the quality of the apprenticeships.

Leaders and managers do not yet use all the information available to them to assure the quality of training. For example, they do not monitor the success of apprentices in moving on to the next stage in their professional careers and further studies. Careers advice and guidance are not impartial, as they do not include broader opportunities outside their current employer.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding leads undertake the appropriate training and ongoing development in safeguarding matters. Staff appropriately reinforce safeguarding topics throughout the learning programmes. Learners have now a greater understanding of the possible signs of radicalisation and extremism in the workplace.

Leaders and managers are alert towards specific, relevant safeguarding risks to their apprentices, such as people trafficking and modern slavery. They ensure that employers understand the importance of these topics when it comes to keeping learners safe. However, the provider has not yet completed a full risk assessment for all learners who come to work in the UK from other countries, to enable managers to monitor any risks.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders must establish swiftly effective governance to provide them with the appropriate support and challenge to rectify rapidly all identified improvement areas in the apprenticeship programmes.
- Governors, leaders and managers must ensure that all groups of apprentices access a learning programme that supports them to develop a range of useful and transferable skills, such as in English, mathematics and information technology, over and above the vocational 'lean' element, which supports their next steps and progression.
- Leaders and managers must use the information available to them to assure the quality of education they provide and to inform them of the impact that their teaching and training have on apprentices' achievement.
- Leaders and managers must offer appropriate, impartial advice to all apprentices to enable them to pursue their career interests and ambitions on completion of their apprenticeship.

Provider details

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Website	www.leadlimited.co.uk
Principal/CEO	Maxine Jones
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of quality, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including observing learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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