

Skills Republic Ltd

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Francoise Beregovoi, Ofsted Inspector

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: 14 Cedar Height
Richmond
London
TW10 7AE

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.

Skills Republic Ltd is a new independent training provider, which received approval to deliver apprenticeships in January 2018. The first cohort of 26 apprentices enrolled in February 2018. The very large majority of apprentices work in various roles for a single employer, in the Premier League football sector. At the time of the monitoring visit, 52 apprentices are with the provider. The large majority undertake apprenticeship standards in hospitality, project management and accounting at levels 2, 3 and 4. A cohort of twelve apprentices has recently started a sporting excellence professional standard apprenticeship at level 3.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Managers have a clear rationale for the programme. They have developed a curriculum which ensures that apprentices' programmes align very closely with their employers' specific business needs and apprentices' career aims. Managers maintain strong relationships with the supervisors who oversee apprentices' work. As a result, employers contribute to the development and delivery of their apprentices' programmes.

Apprentices develop transferable skills and behaviours, which they apply in a range of challenging and fast-paced work environments. Trainers plan the delivery of the programme to ensure it is personalised to each apprentice. Therefore, it is sufficiently flexible to meet apprentices' varied needs and takes account of their unusual working patterns.

Managers and trainers are well qualified and have a wide range of relevant industrial experience. They take on a variety of additional roles within their sector, and this ensures they are up to date with current trends and practice. They use these experiences to inform apprentices' training.

Managers were naïve about the constituent parts of the apprenticeship programme and the complexity involved in their planning. As a consequence, apprentices recruited in the first cohort have yet to complete their apprenticeships. However, managers now have an appropriate insight into the delivery of the new standards apprenticeships. The large majority of apprentices now make appropriate progress towards their milestones.

Leaders have been slow to develop a robust quality assurance process to monitor and analyse all aspects of the apprenticeship programme. Leaders have now put in place a number of strategies to further improve the provision, but it is too early to assess the impact of quality improvement plans.

Currently, a single manager takes on most of the tasks associated with leading, managing, monitoring and delivering a complex programme. The management team is right to recognise that this is not sustainable and has clear plans to employ additional staff.

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
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Apprentices develop a very good understanding of how their business works. The large majority make good progress. Trainers help apprentices to use examples from their workplace to develop their knowledge and skills. For example, hospitality apprentices research and develop the business case for changing the pricing of spa treatments in their employer's health club. Apprentices complete projects involving original research. Their findings have been adopted by the club to improve profitability.

Apprentices explain clearly how their skills have developed. They are on the most appropriate type and level of programme. Many apprentices are given greater responsibilities at work, or promotion, while they undertake their apprenticeship. For example, digital marketing apprentices have been given additional responsibilities for new campaigns or for overhauling the organisations website; others take on the role of duty manager.

Hospitality apprentices who fell behind in their training have only recently received support to catch up with their studies. Apprentices who are close to completion do not have a clear enough idea about their end-point assessment. A small minority of apprentices have not had sufficient support to develop their English and mathematical skills.

The twelve apprentices aged 16 to 18 on the level 3 sporting excellence programme make good progress in gaining and refining the skills and understanding needed to

become elite professional-level footballers. Managers have designed a well-planned, well-structured and effective curriculum for this programme. These apprentices receive a very good range of training and support from highly experienced staff. This develops apprentices' technical, tactical, physical and psychological knowledge, skills and behaviours very well.

Apprentices undertake numerous additional learning activities, such as leading presentations in schools, learning about nutrition and navigating social media safely. Apprentices have become competent, reflective learners, identifying what they do well and what they need to do to improve.

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

Apprentices understand how to maintain their safety at work. They know what action to take if they have any concerns. They receive high-quality training regarding safeguarding, health and safety, and the risks of extremism. Apprentices have a good understanding of these topics and the risks in social media but are not aware of fundamental British values.

Apprentices are encouraged by the provider and employer to take care of their physical and mental well-being. For example, they attend yoga classes, and can discuss personal concerns with well-being managers, should they need emotional support.

Designated safeguarding officers receive training to ensure they can carry out their safeguarding responsibilities. However, managers have not ensured that they use the most recent guidance to inform their safeguarding policy.

When apprentices live away from home with local families, staff check the quality of these locations and liaise closely with apprentices and the families to ensure that apprentices are safe.

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