

The Square Metre Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 2554082

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Inspection dates: 4–5 December 2019

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.

The Square Metre Limited gained a contract to deliver apprenticeships in 2018. Prior to this, it mainly operated as a subcontractor. At the time of this visit, 19 apprentices were on programme. Most apprentices study the level 3 team leader and level 5 operations manager apprenticeship standards programmes. The remainder study the level 3 business administration standard.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Leaders have developed a programme that meets the requirements and principles of apprenticeships. They have designed the programme to meet the needs of apprentices and employers who need to embed crowd safety management as part of the training. For example, they have designed the level 5 operations manager programme to include additional modules on crowd safety. As a result, apprentices can develop a crowd management plan, measure crowd density and use risk analysis methods.

Apprentices gain additional knowledge, skills and behaviours beyond the apprenticeship standard. This supports their future career aspirations. For example, the level 5 operations manager apprentices gain additional qualifications at the end of the programme, such as the level 4 NVQ diploma in spectator safety and the level 5 diploma in crowd science and risk analysis.

Leaders have used the support of their quality improvement governor well to communicate the requirements of the end-point assessment to employers and apprentices. As a result, trainers and workplace mentors are more able to support apprentices in understanding the standards of work expected of them. Apprentices can confidently describe what is involved in the different elements of their end-point assessment.

Leaders do not have a true oversight of the progress that all apprentices are making. There are inconsistencies with the recording of training in the new online system. For example, in the level 3 team leader apprenticeship programme, leaders do not identify areas for improvement sufficiently and improvement plans are not effective enough to help leaders to intervene to increase apprentices' progress in learning.

Leaders have introduced a strong governance panel that has already started to have a positive impact on safeguarding and the quality of the provision. Governors frequently scrutinise the strengths and weaknesses of the provision to ensure that leaders remain focused on their intent to deliver apprenticeships which include crowd safety management.

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 enjoy their learning and apply their theoretical learning to their work roles. For example, apprentices delegate tasks more fairly to reflect the personal capabilities of the staff in their department. Apprentices' understanding of the need to protect other people's data has improved. As a result, they have adopted new ways of working to protect sensitive information in the workplace.

Leaders have a well-planned training programme that helps apprentices develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they require for their current and future career job roles. For example, the programme helps apprentices increase their understanding of the team dynamics of the people they manage. They are more able to reflect on their own unconscious bias when dealing with others, and so they alter their workplace behaviours. They become better at listening to the views of others by displaying empathy and communicating work-related instructions more clearly.

Leaders have introduced an effective new functional skills strategy to assess apprentices' prior learning. Trainers use the results of the initial assessments of English and mathematical skills, as well as relevant previous vocational experience, to plan training that meets apprentices' needs. As a result, most apprentices understand the contribution that English and mathematical skills make to their personal career aspirations, and so they develop these skills throughout their training.

Trainers provide frequent oral feedback to apprentices that motivates them to make progress with their academic work. However, they do not provide written feedback to apprentices on the standards of their academic work to which they can refer between tutorials and workshops. As a result, a few apprentices do not make rapid progress in their learning. They do not use their reflective diaries well enough to record their areas for improvement or the new knowledge and work-related skills that they have developed.

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

Apprentices feel safe and work safely as a result of the effective culture of safeguarding within the organisation. All designated safeguarding leads have completed suitable training to perform their roles well. All staff complete safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty training. As a result, apprentices know how to report concerns and obtain the support they need from their trainers or the three designated safeguarding leads.

All apprentices complete health and safety training. They have a good understanding of how to deal with potential risks, such as evacuating crowds at large events.

Leaders frequently review safeguarding policies and procedures and benefit from strong guidance from the non-executive safeguarding governor.

Leaders have developed an effective 'Prevent' duty policy. Apprentices have a good understanding of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism in the general population but are less secure in their awareness of particular threats to their employers or in their own daily lives.

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