

Cambridge Professional Academy Limited

Monitoring visit report

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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.

Cambridge Professional Academy Limited started to provide levy-funded apprenticeships in November 2018. At the time of this monitoring visit, 68 apprentices were on programme. All apprentices are over 19 years of age. Fifty-three apprentices work towards the level 4 marketing executive and 10 apprentices work towards the level 3 team leader/supervisor standards programmes. The remainder study the level 3 digital marketing and level 5 operations manager standards. Most apprentices already have GCSE mathematics and English qualifications.

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 a clear rationale for the delivery of the apprenticeship programmes. They use feedback from employers to design a well-planned curriculum that meets the requirements and principles of an apprenticeship.

Leaders provide expert specialist staff and resources and deliver high-quality training. Most tutors have chartered status and are external examiners for different awarding bodies. Apprentices benefit from a tailored programme with mentors who have suitable expert industry skills and knowledge relevant to their employers' business.

Leaders have introduced a new governance panel to better scrutinise the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. The panel has already started to have a positive impact by establishing new policies and formal procedures for monitoring the quality of the provision.

Apprentices have a good understanding of the expectations and arrangements for the end-point assessments. They confidently describe the different elements of their end-point assessment and are on target to complete their programme in the time planned.

Apprentices are recruited appropriately. They receive suitable initial assessments at the start of the programme which identifies their prior knowledge and suitability for the apprenticeship. A few apprentices do not benefit from impartial advice and guidance to support their long-term career goals.

Leaders do not track all the off-the-job training effectively. They do not have a good oversight of the progress that apprentices make.

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 receive high-quality off-the-job training. Experienced tutors use real world examples very successfully to link new learning to the workplace. For example, the level 4 marketing tutors use the experiences and job function of each apprentice to support them in understanding a range of marketing concepts. Tutors design training sessions effectively. This enables apprentices to build on what they already know and experience when at work. Apprentices enjoy these sessions and attend well.

Apprentices develop a broad range of useful and relevant skills closely matched to the individual businesses in which they work. For example, level 3 team leader/supervisor apprentices understand organisational structures, leadership styles and the use of personality profiles within teams. They then motivate their teams by adapting their approach when working with different individuals.

Apprentices are more confident and resilient as a result of the programme. They use their project management skills to plan bespoke work-based projects. As a result, they successfully gain promotions within the company.

Apprentices benefit from good support while in learning. They value this highly and this motivates them to do well.

Employers are very supportive of apprentices. They are involved in all aspects of the training, such as the co-delivery of induction and revising the programme content of the workplace projects. Employers recognise the positive impact that the apprentices have on their business, such as improved customer experiences and implementing more efficient practices in the workplace.

Leaders do not ensure that apprentices make rapid progress in completing English and mathematics functional skills qualifications. Tutors do not focus sufficiently on improving and consolidating apprentices' existing skills in English or mathematics.

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

Leaders have developed a good culture of safeguarding within the organisation. The two designated safeguarding leads have completed suitable training and perform their role effectively. Leaders set high expectations for staff to include safeguarding as part of the frequent review discussions with apprentices. As a result, apprentices know how to report concerns too, and to obtain the support they need.

Apprentices know how to stay safe online and how risks, for example phishing emails, can affect the company and them personally. Leaders place a high priority on maintaining health and safety standards to minimise accidents in the high-risk environments apprentices work in. As a result, apprentices feel and are safe.

Apprentices have a good understanding of the potential risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. However, apprentices are less secure in their awareness of specific threats, for example county lines, and how it might affect their daily lives.

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