

Primary Goal Ltd

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 2510883

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Inspection dates: 11–12 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.

Primary Goal Ltd is a training provider based in Coventry, specialising in delivering information technology (IT) apprenticeships. At the time of this monitoring visit, 52 apprentices are on standards-based programmes at level 3 and level 4. Of these, 44 study the level 3 infrastructure technician apprenticeship standard, and eight study the level 4 network engineer apprenticeship standard. Seventeen learners are aged 16 to 18 and 35 are aged 19 and over.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have a clear vision for the curriculum. They work closely with several schools-based employers, including their supply chains, to design well-structured programmes for apprentices supporting teachers and IT teams in the workplace. Leaders ensure that they meet all the requirements for delivering apprenticeship programmes.

Employers benefit from the new skills and knowledge apprentices apply in their job roles. For example, apprentices competently help teachers with IT support and quickly move on to more complex work, such as managing the helpdesk. Consequently, employers confidently delegate tasks to apprentices.

Leaders and managers use apprentices' and employers' feedback well to review and improve the structure of the curriculum. Managers changed the order in which apprentices study modules and take tests. Apprentices now learn about business processes first before moving on to the technical aspects of the course. As a result, first-time pass rates for the knowledge modules have improved.

The executive board supports and challenges leaders and managers effectively. The board provides useful guidance to focus leaders and managers on their strategic priorities. Board members support leaders and managers to make better use of data and management information to help improve the quality of education. For example,

managers analysed data to identify reasons for the low numbers of learners staying on the programme in the beginning. As a result, leaders changed the entry requirements for the level 3 programme and rewrote the job description. It is too soon to evaluate the effectiveness of the changes.

Leaders, managers and board members have an accurate oversight of apprentices' progress. They recognise that most apprentices on the level 3 programmes are making slow progress. Leaders and managers recently changed the length of the programme from 15 to 18 months and have increased the number of progress reviews in the workplace but it is too soon to assess the impact of this.

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 benefit from regular support and access to weekly online classroom sessions. Work-based coaches teach apprentices a breadth of technical skills and knowledge so that apprentices can take on challenging tasks and responsibilities at work, such as network configuration. As a result, of the few apprentices that have completed the apprenticeship, the majority have gained promotion or permanent employment.

Apprentices undertake a range of additional off-the-job training qualifications, such as in information and communications technology, which supports the development of their knowledge beyond the apprenticeship standard. They quickly learn and apply new skills to identify and solve problems in the workplace.

Specialist staff provide effective support for apprentices who need to improve their English, mathematics and IT skills. Work-based coaches give apprentices detailed feedback that helps them develop the structure of their written English. Apprentices learn new English and mathematics skills through a good range of online resources and benefit from taught sessions, as well as one-to-one support. Most apprentices pass their English qualifications at the first attempt.

The majority of apprentices are behind with their work. Managers have taken steps to support apprentices who are close to their end date, for example by providing additional progress reviews in the workplace. In a few cases, work-based coaches do not plan or structure the sessions sufficiently well to ensure that apprentices make timely progress.

In most instances, employers attend induction meetings and progress reviews. As a result, employers provide apprentices with work-based tasks which complement the off-the-job training. Apprentices and employers are clear about assessment activities during the course and for the end-point assessment.

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

Leaders have developed a strong safeguarding culture. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) has an appropriate level of training. All staff undertake certificated training in safeguarding, the 'Prevent' duty and British values. They receive frequent updates on these topics, both face to face and online. Managers carry out appropriate checks before appointing staff.

Apprentices complete additional training modules in safeguarding, the 'Prevent' duty and British values as part of their course. Apprentices feel safe and are confident about how, and to whom, they should report any concerns.

Leaders identify apprentices who are vulnerable. All apprentices complete a health and well-being questionnaire at induction. Apprentices with mental health problems, such as anxiety or depression, receive individual support. In a few cases, this has helped apprentices stay on their course.

The DSL maintains comprehensive records of safeguarding concerns and monitors cases rigorously. Leaders report these to the executive board.

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