

British Airways PLC

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 'Providers newly directly funded to deliver apprenticeship training provision' and 'Monitoring visits'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

British Airways PLC (BA) is an international airline company based at London Heathrow Airport. Staff in the Global Learning Academy at BA provide all the training for BA personnel. In March 2019, the company began to enrol levy-funded apprentices on to the cabin crew standards-based apprenticeship at level 3. Currently, BA has 531 apprentices on this programme, the vast majority of whom are adults. BA works with two subcontractors who deliver functional skills English and mathematics and the mandatory aviation programme on its behalf.

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

BA has a long-standing training programme for cabin crew. In adapting this programme to an apprenticeship, leaders and managers ensure that their staff receive successful training for their jobs. However, they have been slow to adapt the curriculum successfully to meet all the requirements of an apprenticeship programme.

Apprentices are proud to work for the airline. They contribute positively as team members on flights. However, they are frustrated by the disorganisation and inconsistent approach they experience in their apprenticeship. As a result, too many apprentices whom inspectors spoke with do not see the value of being an apprentice.

Staff do not give apprentices detailed and clear information about what the apprenticeship involves and the benefits of the programme. Apprentices are not sufficiently aware, when recruited, that they are starting an apprenticeship programme.

Leaders and managers have not put in place effective arrangements with their subcontractor to ensure that those apprentices who need qualifications in English

and mathematics gain them. Too many apprentices fail their mathematics examinations at their first attempt. The picture is more positive for English qualifications due to recent improvements.

Leaders have not recruited sufficient coaches to carry out frequent and effective reviews of apprentices' progress. Coaches' caseloads are high. As a result, apprentices do not consistently have the same coach to review their progress. Leaders and managers do not have a secure oversight of apprentices' progress. Apprentices do not know what they still need to do to complete their programme successfully.

Leaders and managers have recently put together plans and implemented training for coaches to enable them to prepare apprentices for their end-point assessment (EPA). However, they do not ensure that staff give apprentices clear information about what to expect in their EPA and how they can achieve a distinction. Consequently, apprentices are not sufficiently aware of what their EPA will involve when they come to this point in their programme.

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

Staff identify correctly apprentices who will benefit from being on the programme. Apprentices do not have any work-related flying experience. As a result, they develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours. They become competent and compliant cabin crew members, working safely, in a short period of time.

Apprentices benefit from learning in high-quality training facilities that reflect exactly their onboard experience. Very experienced and knowledgeable trainers provide the training. Trainers use their expert knowledge to teach apprentices the legislative aviation requirements and health and safety regulations. They facilitate effectively practical training activities. For example, trainers teach apprentices to understand the process of 'ditching' if a plane lands on water in an emergency. They check apprentices' competency through practical activities, such as understanding the different functions of an aircraft door and how to open and close doors securely.

Trainers check whether apprentices remember key concepts through effective questioning. They support apprentices to build on their knowledge in a logical way. For example, trainers ask apprentices to recall the structure of an aircraft with which they are familiar, and then to compare it with other aircraft to identify the differences in cabin-crew seat locations.

Staff do not link the on- and off-the-job training activities in an organised way. Too often the results of the training and assessment of apprentices' abilities on flights do not feed into their progress reviews. Apprentices do not receive sufficient feedback on how they have completed these activities.

Trainers do not have sufficient time before they start their sessions to take into account the prior knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices have acquired. As a result, trainers cannot alter the delivery to meet apprentices' individual needs sufficiently.

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

Leaders and managers have put in place appropriate policies, procedures and training expected of an employer-provider. They have an appropriately trained and knowledgeable senior leader with overall responsibility for safeguarding.

Apprentices receive appropriate safeguarding training. They know what to do if they have concerns about their own safety or that of a peer. Apprentices have a good understanding of the concepts of radicalisation, extremism and passenger vulnerability when flying. They talk confidently about what to look out for. For example, they can identify the signs associated with the risk of child trafficking. Apprentices know how to keep themselves safe.

Senior managers recognise that there is an issue around apprentices feeling patronised and instances of intimidating behaviour while flying. Managers are trying to tackle this but, currently, actions taken have not had sufficient impact in improving the experience for a few apprentices.

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