

Cips Corporate Services 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.

Cips Corporate Services Limited (Cips) was awarded a contract to provide levy-funded apprenticeships in January 2018. It began enrolling apprentices in November 2018. It currently has 172 standards-based apprentices studying commercial procurement and supply at level 4. The vast majority of apprentices are adults. Cips works with one subcontractor that delivers functional skills English and mathematical qualifications on its behalf.

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 implemented a commercial procurement and supply apprenticeship that matches the needs of employers and apprentices. Careful curriculum planning ensures that apprentices receive the training they want in order to access higher-level qualifications in their chosen careers. Employers rightly value the skills, knowledge and behaviours that apprentices gain, which contribute effectively to business goal attainment.

Leaders have established relevant arrangements for apprentices to complete the end-point assessment (EPA). Most apprentices have a good understanding of the EPA, although not all have an adequate appreciation of the relevant grading criteria.

The small minority of apprentices who commence the programme without an English and mathematical qualification at level 2 receive good additional support. Consequently, examination pass rates at first attempt are high.

Governance arrangements are adequate. Governors receive a relevant range of reports to aid their scrutiny of leaders' and managers' decision-making. Challenges from governors have resulted in improvements that benefit apprentices.

Leaders ensure that apprentices receive their full apprenticeship entitlement. As a result, a high proportion of apprentices pass examinations during the programme. Apprentices are aware of their right to paid time off during work time for private study. Not all apprentices log their off-the-job hours accurately or frequently enough. This hinders managers' ability to take swift corrective action.

Managers routinely evaluate training quality, and this leads to improved professional practice. Consequently, leaders have an appropriate appreciation of the provision's strengths and areas for improvement. They correctly recognise that they have been slow in applying comprehensive processes to evaluate the subcontractor's effectiveness. Information systems are new and not all have enough data to support managers' rapid intervention to correct performance shortfalls.

Leaders only recruit staff who have the high-level skills and vocational knowledge needed to undertake their role. However, a small number of tutors have yet to commence relevant trainer training.

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 develop a good range and variety of new skills, knowledge and behaviours. Improvements in their self-assurance and self-esteem are particularly good. Apprentices are proud of what they are undertaking and achieving. Their workplace supervisors encourage them to exploit contacts with other professionals. This fosters their wider learning successfully.

The curriculum suits apprentices' and employers' needs well. All apprentices receive a good introduction to relevant concepts and how to apply them within their roles. They quickly develop the confidence to use their learning at work. For example, early in their programme apprentices can put together a business case for cost savings, which considers acquisition cost, usage, disposal and risk.

Tutors deliver off-the-job training to a good standard. They use their extensive commercial experience to make links between theory and its practical application. This accelerates apprentices' development. Apprentices receive helpful and supportive feedback from tutors. They know how to improve to achieve their potential. Revision sessions are particularly effective in embedding apprentices' knowledge and understanding. The quality of apprentices' completed work is good.

On-the-job training promotes and extends apprentices' learning effectively. However, not all Cips workplace mentors support apprentices from the start of their programme. This slows the pace of apprentices' achievement.

Apprentices do not have access to enough impartial careers guidance. All apprentices receive relevant help prior to commencing their programme. Consequently, they have a realistic appreciation of how the apprenticeship contributes to their short-

term career aspirations, including promotion in their own workplaces. However, few apprentices have an adequate understanding of what is available to them in the wider employment market.

All tutors use information on apprentices' prior attainment and experience to establish a relevant programme of study. Tutors accurately identify apprentices' English and mathematical development needs, but rarely improve skills levels beyond those required of the apprenticeship standard.

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

Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Senior leaders have put in place all the necessary policies and procedures to protect apprentices. These include arrangements for the safe recruitment of staff working with young and vulnerable people.

The designated safeguarding officer (DSO) has received appropriate training and is suitably knowledgeable to carry out the role. The DSO takes relevant and swift action if safeguarding concerns arise. Staff have an adequate understanding of their safeguarding roles, although they are yet to receive more detailed and appropriate training.

Tutors extend apprentices' awareness of safeguarding effectively, throughout their training. Apprentices usually know how to raise issues and whom they should contact if they have concerns about their own or others' safety. Most apprentices have, at least, an adequate appreciation of the dangers inherent in radicalisation or extremism. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe when using the internet and social media.

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