

Geason Apprenticeships Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Alex Lang, Her Majesty's Inspector

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: Unit 2, 1 Longwall Avenue
Meadows
Nottingham
NG2 1NA

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.

Geason Apprenticeships Limited offers seven apprenticeships in construction and two apprenticeships in business administration. At the time of inspection, there were 121 apprentices studying at level 2, level 3 and level 4. There were 48 on framework apprenticeships and 73 on standards-based apprenticeships. The bricklayer level 2 standards-based apprenticeship has 53 apprentices and is the largest area of provision.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Leaders are ambitious to be the provider of choice for the construction and related industries. They have created four learning hubs across the country to provide local training centres for the employers they work with. Leaders have invested in the learning hubs, ensuring that they are well equipped to meet the needs of the industry. This enables apprentices to develop and gain practical skills using quality trade equipment. For example, new carpentry rooms have specialist equipment, including false floors, nets and harnesses, so that apprentices practise working at height.

Leaders work closely with employers to design the apprenticeship programme. They have developed a relevant curriculum. Leaders incorporate specific knowledge and skills units to meet the needs of individual employers. These exceed the minimum requirements of the standards-based apprenticeship programme. For example, bricklaying apprentices take part in extra training linked to cavity wall insulation and fire stops. This prepares them exceptionally well for their workplace.

Leaders are developing a thorough programme to recruit apprentices so that they are placed on the right programme. Together with employers, they select the most suitable applicants during a week-long recruitment event. The applicants receive a briefing and a taster of the apprenticeship in a real working environment. They attend an interview with the employer and trainer. Both employers and applicants

have a clear understanding of the apprenticeship before they start the programme. As a result, very few apprentices leave. Leaders are rolling this model out to all the employers they work with.

Leaders have recently introduced processes to scrutinise the quality of the apprenticeship provision. They have strengthened external scrutiny and have an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses. The members of the board provide appropriate challenge. Leaders are introducing actions to address weaknesses. However, these actions are still in their infancy and it is too early to assess the impact on the quality on the apprenticeship programmes.

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

Leaders recruit staff who are appropriately qualified and experienced. For example, most staff have a teaching qualification alongside their occupational qualifications. Some staff have master craftsman status. Staff update their occupational competence annually. This ensures that apprentices experience training that is current and of a high standard.

Leaders have recently improved the recording of apprentices' starting points. These are beginning to inform individual curriculum plans. This is not yet consistent across all apprenticeship programmes.

Trainers identify any gaps in apprentices' knowledge through tests, observations, assignments and mock end-point assessments. They use this information to make changes to the curriculum. As a result, trainers tailor future sessions to ensure that apprentices can catch up. They arrange extra visits and extra training and coaching sessions.

Apprentices and employers use the online portfolio system productively to track the progress they are making. Many apprentices make strong progress and are ahead of their expected point.

Trainers design the functional skills English and mathematics curriculum to support the apprentices' vocational curriculum. For example, apprentices on brickwork improve their communication skills through role play. They practice communication skills with different people they meet on site such as colleagues, clients and managers. This builds their confidence.

Apprentices develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours. These contribute positively to their employers' businesses. For example, bricklaying apprentices learn about plumb levels, different types of bonds, house and build specifications and scale drawings. As a result, they are productive and quickly support their businesses.

Trainers do not always coordinate apprentices' on- and off-the-job training well enough. They do not identify how apprentices can develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours further, or how they can put new theory into practice quickly in their workplace.

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

Leaders ensure that they have appropriate policies and procedures in place to safeguard apprentices. These have yet to be tested as there have been no referrals to date. Managers review policies and procedures annually and when national changes take place. This includes the 'Prevent' duty risk assessment.

Leaders carry out thorough pre-employment checks on staff members' suitability to work with apprentices. Leaders encourage a culture of safeguarding. They produce a monthly bulletin to update and inform staff of local risks, such as knife crimes.

Staff ensure that apprentices can identify risks to themselves and where they work. Staff, including the safeguarding leads, have undertaken appropriate training to carry out their roles and responsibilities. They update their knowledge annually. As a result, apprentices feel safe and understand how to keep themselves safe.

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