

Code Nation Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 2539252

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Inspection dates: 4–5 February 2020

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.

Code Nation Limited has had a contract to deliver apprenticeships since October 2018. The first group of apprentices began in January 2019. All apprentices are on standards-based programmes. Currently, 79 apprentices are working towards software developer at level 4. One apprentice is working towards cyber security technologist, also at level 4. The apprenticeship levy funds 66 of the apprentices.

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 designed and implemented a highly effective curriculum. They work collaboratively with employers to ensure that the content is relevant and logical. Through this curriculum, leaders and managers make a good contribution to developing employees with digital-talent skills which are in demand locally, regionally and nationally.

Leaders, managers and employers justify the importance of apprentices learning off the job during their first 12 weeks on the programme. However, leaders and managers have not given enough attention to the long- and medium-term planning of on-the-job learning.

Leaders and managers are extremely proactive in keeping up to date with developments in the digital industry. They make full use of their knowledge and experience to ensure that apprentices' training reflects current digital practices.

Leaders and managers make sure they follow the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. They have excellent relationships with employers. Employers also contribute to the curriculum by giving stimulating presentations and talks.

Leaders and managers implement a rigorous and appropriately sequenced recruitment process. They ensure that they involve employers in selecting suitable

apprentices for their organisations. This has had a positive impact on apprentices' retention, which is very high.

Board members receive frequent reports about the apprenticeship provision. They hold leaders and managers to account for the quality of the programme. Currently, only two out of six board members are external appointments.

Leaders and managers ensure that end-point assessments for apprentices are in place. They have communicated information about these appropriately to apprentices, employers and staff. However, not all apprentices receive full information about the standard of their work and what they need to do to achieve a merit or distinction grade.

Managers have implemented a new electronic portfolio system. Although they cannot utilise this fully, they are developing it to increase its potential and benefit to apprentices.

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 acquire substantial new software development knowledge, technical skills and behaviours very swiftly during the 12-week off-the-job training period. For example, they learn how to write good-quality code, test code and analyse the results to correct errors. They also receive a good introduction to effective team working. Consequently, apprentices make an effective contribution to employers' businesses as soon as they start their on-the-job training.

Employers maintain frequent contact with apprentices throughout their off-the-job training. They facilitate and support a relevant and bespoke work-related project towards the end of this period. Apprentices contribute to other projects, such as developing software to maintain medical supplies in hospital wards, during their on-the-job training.

Instructors and other staff are highly experienced in the digital sector and have appropriate qualifications. They use their expertise effectively to support apprentices to apply their new knowledge, skills and behaviours in their workplaces. Apprentices place a high value on the guidance instructors and other staff provide.

Apprentices receive their full entitlement to off-the-job learning. Skills coaches are in frequent contact with apprentices after their initial 12-week off-the-job learning period. They provide specific support for the various group projects on which apprentices work.

Apprentices enjoy their programme and most are making good progress. Most apprentices have been successful in recent professional examinations.

Apprentices develop their English and mathematics in the workplace through individual and group project work. For example, they code algorithms, produce and analyse statistics, and write product-release notes. However, leaders and managers place too little importance on apprentices developing their English and mathematical competencies to the highest possible level.

Skills coaches and employers review apprentices' on-the-job learning frequently. However, their recording of apprentices' progress lacks coordination and documentation.

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

Leaders and managers place a high priority on safeguarding apprentices and staff. The designated safeguarding officers have clearly defined roles and responsibilities. They take all safeguarding and safeguarding-related incidents seriously. They follow them up immediately and track them systematically to their conclusion.

All staff, including board members, receive training for a safeguarding qualification at level 1. They also receive frequent updates to help them understand their safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty responsibilities. Managers check applicants for employment thoroughly to assess their suitability for a training role.

Apprentices have a basic understanding of safeguarding and a good awareness of how to keep safe online. Leaders and managers have not previously given enough attention to risk assessing employers' geographical locations to identify possible local risks to apprentices. They are starting to carry out risk assessments and to inform apprentices of potential dangers.

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