

# JD Academy Limited

Monitoring visit report

---

**Unique reference number:** 2510891

**Name of lead inspector:** Jackie Moores, Ofsted Inspector

**Inspection dates:** 5–6 February 2020

**Type of provider:** Employer

**Address:** Edinburgh House  
Hollins Brook Way  
Bury  
BL9 8RR

## 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.

JD Academy Limited began to deliver apprenticeships in May 2019. At the time of the monitoring visit, 22 apprentices are on standards apprenticeships in level 3 team leading, level 3 digital marketing, level 4 retail management and level 5 operations management. JD Academy Limited works with its own employees at its head office and in retail stores across the UK. The provider works with 3 subcontractors for apprenticeships. The largest number of apprentices are at the head office in Bury.

### Themes

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

#### **Insufficient progress**

Leaders and managers have a long history in sports and fashion retail. They have worked hard to develop an apprenticeship programme that meets the needs of the business. However, they have not ensured that all apprentices benefit from well-planned and sufficient training away from their job. When leaders identified concerns on the level 4 retail manager apprenticeship, they were too slow to put effective action in place. As a result, too many level 4 retail apprentices leave the programme before they achieve their qualifications.

Most training staff are well qualified as trainers, assessors and verifiers. All staff, including subcontractors' staff, have good vocational skills and experience. On-the-job coaches use their vocational expertise well to help apprentices develop their skills at work.

Although plans are now in place, managers were too slow to ensure suitable quality assurance arrangements at the start of them delivering apprenticeship programmes, including those elements provided by subcontractors. As a result, they are not aware of the quality of training that apprentices receive. Governors do not challenge or hold leaders and managers to account for improving the quality of learning and ensuring that performance management systems are effective. Leaders are right to recognise

the need to develop governance arrangements to enable the scrutiny of the quality of provision. The Board, although established, has not met.

Managers have ensured that arrangements for end-point assessment are in place for apprentices. However, managers have not communicated these arrangements effectively to retail apprentices' line managers. As a result, these line managers are unable to support retail apprentices in preparing for their final assessment.

<b>What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices?</b>	<b>Insufficient progress</b>
--	------------------------------

Programme managers plan the academic curriculum in a logical way, building on the knowledge that apprentices gain. In retail, trainers deliver the business and finance module in line with the end of the financial quarter. This enables apprentices to relate theory to practice, using live turnover figures.

Team leading apprentices gain new knowledge and skills and apply these at work. For example, they are now more confident to tackle problems and deal with conflict in the workplace.

Trainers delivering the retail apprenticeship programme do not plan enough off-the-job training for the duration of the course. Retail apprentices receive an initial block of training but do not get enough off-the-job training afterwards. As a result, they do not build on the knowledge they gain over a sustained period. Most apprentices find the workload onerous and leave the programme early.

Apprentices do not receive sufficient support to develop their skills in English and mathematics. Apprentices requiring functional skills qualifications, including those for whom English is a second language, do not receive adequate support to achieve them.

Communication between trainers, coaches, apprentices and line managers are weak. The apprentices' line manager at work is not sufficiently involved in reviewing the progress of their apprentices. They have little understanding of the requirements for the end-point assessment. Too often, off-the-job training does not take place due to work pressures. Apprentices complete most of their portfolio work in their own time.

Trainers do not monitor apprentices' individual progress sufficiently. Too many apprentices do not receive time bound, specific targets. Comments from coaches in progress reviews and coaching calls are often cursory. They do not follow up apprentices' targets when they don't meet them. As a result, apprentices fall behind and receive insufficient support to catch up with their work.

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

Managers ensure that appropriate policies, procedures and reporting mechanisms are in place to keep learners safe, including when online. They dealt appropriately with their only safeguarding concern.

Staff receive appropriate support for safeguarding from trained, designated safeguarding officers. As a result, trainers promote the health, safety and well-being of apprentices. Apprentices feel safe and know whom to contact if they are concerned about their own or others' welfare.

Leaders and managers check carefully and systematically the background of new staff. However, the provider has been slow to ensure that all subcontractors complete the same level of staff checks.

Managers and trainers have completed training to ensure they understand the issues relating to safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty strategy. Apprentices understand local threats and the dangers posed by radicalisation and extremism. They can explain how they would identify signs of radicalisation in others.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2020