

Inspection of Bauer Radio Limited

Inspection dates: 18–21 February 2020

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Bauer Radio Limited (Bauer) is a part of Bauer Media Group, a multimedia company that manages a broad portfolio of magazines, radio and television stations around the world. Bauer Academy, the education and training element of Bauer Radio, was created in 2014 to secure new talent for the company. They began offering apprenticeship programmes in August 2017. They have offices in the borough of Camden in London, Peterborough and Manchester. They also teach apprentices from a centre in Bristol.

Bauer offers apprenticeship programmes which are focused on the media industry. At the time of the inspection, there were 220 apprentices. Most were studying apprenticeship standard qualifications at level 3 in junior content producer, advertising media executive, digital marketer, junior journalist, team leader supervisor and broadcast production assistant. A small number of apprentices were studying apprenticeship standard qualifications in sales executive at level 4. Approximately half of the apprentices are employed by Bauer and half are employed by other employers, mainly in the media industry. There were 14 apprentices on programme who had declared a learning disability or difficulty.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Apprentices are inspired by their training and the opportunities that they have in the media industry. They are taught by experienced and highly skilled tutors and development coaches. Tutors are enthusiastic and keen to share their extensive industry experience with apprentices.

Apprentices develop their confidence and feel more self-assured as a result of their training. Leaders and managers have been successful in ensuring that apprentices across the different centres have a similar high-quality learning experience. Apprentices, including those who have been away from learning for some time, become more resilient in the workplace. They improve their ability to manage challenging situations.

Staff have high expectations of apprentices to achieve and maintain high professional standards. Apprentices are motivated and proud to work in the industry. They recognise how their studies help them in their job roles. Apprentices gain opportunities to network with and work shadow other skilled professionals. They appreciate the industry standard guidance that they receive.

A few apprentices are not supported well enough by their employers to have sufficient time during work hours to study for their apprenticeship. This is particularly the case at the start of their programmes, and results in them struggling to complete their qualifications within the planned timescales.

Apprentices have a good understanding of diversity within the media industry. They appreciate the importance of ethics, such as the use of free speech within the law, and understand the dangers of negative or sensationalist reporting. They know how to be safe at work.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and managers at Bauer have secured a clear strategic direction for the training that they offer. They have established a creative and innovative curriculum, focused on developing high-quality skills within the media industry. They plan their curriculum successfully to meet the training needs of staff within Bauer and the external employers with whom they work.

Managers within Bauer have created a culture in which apprentices aspire to achieve to a high level. Managers plan and develop well-thought-out programmes for the apprenticeships that they offer. They set rigorous standards for themselves, tutors and development coaches. As a result, apprentices are highly motivated and improve their skills and knowledge swiftly.

Senior leaders at Bauer Media Group are highly committed to the training that takes place. They, with leaders in the academy, have recognised that they do not offer

sufficient monitoring and challenge to leaders. For example, they do not ensure that all employers and line managers give their apprentices adequate training time throughout their programme. A few apprentices do not have enough off-the-job training early on and, therefore, have to catch up on this at a late stage. They have recently established new improved governance arrangements to rectify this but it is too early to judge their effectiveness.

Tutors and development coaches are highly skilled and have extensive experience of working in the media industry. For example, many have worked on high-profile magazines, television programmes and radio programmes. They use their experience and in-depth knowledge to inspire apprentices. They provide apprentices with creative learning experiences to improve their understanding of the media sector and to recall knowledge in different contexts. For example, tutors guide team leader apprentices to revise topics by creating podcasts which they share with each other.

Leaders take appropriate action to ensure that tutors have good teaching skills. They provide beneficial in-house staff development for tutors and development coaches. Tutors study for relevant accredited teaching qualifications.

Apprentices are taught good foundation knowledge and skills at the start of their programmes. This enables them to develop more complex skills confidently. For example, apprentices on advertising and media programmes develop a sound understanding of the breadth of the advertising landscape prior to moving on to more specialist aspects, such as the use of digital platforms.

Tutors help apprentices to develop relevant skills and knowledge that they can use in the workplace. For example, apprentices on team leader qualifications know the difference between leadership and management. They apply this knowledge confidently at work to manage their teams more effectively. Advertising and media apprentices understand about 'influencers' on social media, and learn how to use words that are trending on the internet to attract more customers.

Staff plan relevant assessments to ensure that apprentices understand and can recall the knowledge that they have gained. They assess apprentices' skills and knowledge accurately at the beginning of their course and identify any gaps in their understanding. Tutors use assessments effectively to plan work that is tailored to the needs of apprentices. Staff check what apprentices have learned frequently throughout the programme. They use probing questions to check and deepen apprentices' understanding of complex topics. Tutors in mathematics and junior journalist apprenticeships use mock examinations well to consolidate apprentices' knowledge.

Tutors provide apprentices with detailed and helpful feedback on their assessments. As a result, apprentices know what they need to do to improve. Most apprentices produce work of a high professional standard. The vast majority of apprentices pass their qualifications, many with distinctions.

Apprentices make good progress on their programmes. They develop knowledge and skills that are relevant to the fast-moving industry in which they work. For example, on advertising and media apprenticeships, tutors guide apprentices on how to carry out research to reduce the time viewers need to select films. This helps them to improve customer satisfaction.

Staff give good support to apprentices, including those who declare a learning difficulty or disability, to achieve their qualifications. Where appropriate, apprentices are given supplementary work to help their understanding or additional time to complete their assignments. As a result, apprentices with a learning difficulty or disability achieve as well as their peers.

Most apprentices have a good understanding of the opportunities available to them when they complete their apprenticeship. Tutors use their detailed knowledge of the industry to ensure that apprentices have a good insight into job roles. Digital marketing apprentices take additional courses which help them to understand the breadth of jobs available to them.

Development coaches provide frequent and effective reviews of apprentices' progress. They encourage apprentices to reflect on the skills, knowledge and behaviours that they have gained and to use them confidently in their work. As a result, apprentices perform better in their job roles. Most apprentices remain in employment and a few gain promotions.

Most apprentices have good skills in English and mathematics prior to commencing their programmes. Staff encourage apprentices to further develop their skills so that they become more professional in their work. For example, apprentices learn to present mathematical data accurately for social media campaigns. In English, apprentices become skilled in using industry-specific language in formal writing. Tutors guide apprentices skilfully to improve the layout, content and sentence structure in their written work. As a result, apprentices improve their professionalism in the workplace. Most apprentices who take functional skills examinations in English and mathematics achieve their qualifications.

Staff prepare most apprentices well for their end-point assessment. Tutors provide opportunities for apprentices to practise and refine their presentation skills and to develop their confidence in public speaking. On a minority of apprenticeships, such as digital marketer, staff do not ensure that apprentices complete their work swiftly enough. As a result, too many do not achieve their qualifications within the planned timescale. Leaders have taken appropriate action to rectify this but improvements have not had enough impact.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders at Bauer Radio Limited place safeguarding as a high priority. They have suitable policies and procedures, which they use effectively to keep apprentices safe.

Apprentices have a sound understanding of how to keep themselves safe at work and in their daily lives. They are aware of the dangers of cyber bullying and how to keep themselves safe online. Apprentices know the risks associated with extremism and radicalisation and what to do if they have concerns.

Leaders have put in place checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with apprentices. They ensure that staff receive relevant training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Managers have established good links with external agencies so that they can help apprentices to manage personal issues that arise.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Governors must ensure that they challenge leaders and managers to improve all aspects of the provision. They should check that apprentices on all apprenticeship programmes make good progress.
- Governors, leaders and managers must ensure that they plan digital marketer programmes so that apprentices have sufficient time to complete their qualifications within the planned timescales.
- Leaders and managers must ensure that tutors, development coaches and employers understand the requirement for apprentices to complete activities that contribute to their off-the-job training. They should confirm, through reviews, that apprentices use this time throughout their programme to enhance and develop their skills further.

Provider details

Unique reference number	51708
Address	Forth House 13–17 Forth Street Edinburgh EH1 3LE
Contact number	0131 475 1345
Website	www.bauermedia.co.uk
Principal/CEO	Courtney McLeod
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	N/A

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the managing director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including observing learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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