

Keith Stevenson and Associates Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Pat Hornsby, Ofsted Inspector

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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 the Education and Skills Funding Agency 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.

Keith Stevenson and Associates Limited provides training and consultancy in leadership, management and business skills. It began to offer levy-funded apprenticeships in 2018. Currently, 39 apprentices are on programmes. Of these, 22 are on improving operational performance frameworks at level 2. A further 17 are on improvement practitioner standards-based programmes at level 4. All apprentices are employed by a multinational infrastructure and construction company. They have facilities management roles at the employer's venues in Manchester and in the south east of England. All apprentices are over the age of 18.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Apprentices undergo an effective recruitment process that provides them with good information, advice and guidance about the programmes. The employer offers learning opportunities to those who have the potential and motivation to progress in their careers. Apprentices are enthusiastic and keen to learn. Their work roles link well to their studies and they can see the relevance of their learning.

Leaders and managers have a clear vision and strategy for the programmes that they offer. They work with the employer closely to plan and deliver the curriculum to meet its workforce development needs. Apprentices develop significant new knowledge, skills and behaviours as a result of their studies. They learn the theory of improvement techniques and apply it to real work projects that have tangible business benefits.

Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices benefit from sufficient high-quality on- and off-the-job learning, so that they meet apprenticeship requirements and make good progress. Apprentices enjoy attending beneficial and inspiring monthly

workshops. They also attend peer support sessions in the workplace during working hours.

Managers monitor the progress of apprentices effectively and share information about apprentices' progress with the employer. Where appropriate, support is provided to ensure that apprentices keep up to date with their studies.

Leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the provision's strengths and weaknesses and are implementing quality improvement actions. For example, they have identified the need to provide better support for English and mathematics development when apprentices need to complete functional skills assessments. However, they make insufficient use of feedback from apprentices to improve the provision.

Leaders and managers ensure that end-point assessment arrangements are in place for apprentices on standards-based programmes. Apprentices know broadly how and when they will be assessed. However, staff do not set apprentices aspirational target grades.

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

Staff plan and deliver the curriculum so that apprentices develop and apply their theory knowledge to challenging work-based projects. The employer is closely involved in identifying projects that are matched well to apprentices' job responsibilities and their business needs. For example, apprentices who work on a helpdesk have overhauled filing systems, resulting in a considerable reduction in printing costs. Apprentices make significant contributions to their employer's business and, as a result, a few have already gained promotion.

Apprentices benefit from the good support provided by staff, the employer and their peers. Staff respond quickly to apprentices' requests for information and help. The employer supports the programmes well and promotes good team working and collaboration in the workplace. Cohorts of apprentices create close networks and benefit from peer support and encouragement.

Staff assess apprentices' work effectively and map their work-based projects against the requirements of the programme. Apprentices have an accurate understanding of how much progress they have made, and what is left to complete.

Trainers are knowledgeable and have extensive experience of delivering business improvement workshops, which are dynamic and highly interactive. Apprentices contribute enthusiastically to the workshops. However, one small cohort of

apprentices who started three months ago have not engaged in learning sufficiently, as a workshop was cancelled due to conflicting diary commitments.

Trainers develop apprentices' English and mathematics skills as part of the programme. For example, apprentices become more proficient in writing to a professional standard and develop their mathematical skills when calculating the impact of business improvements. Apprentices develop their digital skills very effectively by preparing presentations and using spreadsheets. However, managers have been slow to make arrangements for apprentices to prepare for functional skills assessments.

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

Apprentices feel safe and know how to raise concerns, should they arise. Trainers include discussions on safeguarding during workshops and progress reviews to develop apprentices' understanding.

All staff have undergone Disclosure and Barring Service checks on their suitability to work with apprentices. They have also completed training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. In addition, the dedicated safeguarding lead has completed specialist training for the role.

Leaders and managers have completed a 'Prevent' duty risk assessment and action plan that helps them to prioritise actions to safeguard apprentices from the risks of extremism and radicalisation. For example, they have identified the need to reinforce online safety and are taking appropriate action to do so.

While apprentices have a general understanding of how to keep themselves safe from the risks of extremism and radicalisation, they are unaware of the specific issues relating to their workplaces, local communities or personal lives.

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