

Cherith Simmons Learning & Development LLP

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Martin Hughes, 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 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.

Cherith Simmons Learning & Development LLP is a learning and development training organisation founded in 1984. It specialises in delivering leadership, management and supervisory programmes for managers in the public, private and health sectors. It delivers training nationwide through workshops, self-study, distance and e-learning. Currently, 80 levy-funded apprentices are on standards-based programmes. Approximately half of these are on level 3 management programmes and the remainder are on level 5 management programmes. The provider's tutors deliver all the training.

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 not ensured that apprentices acquire rapidly enough the knowledge, skills and behaviours to help them work more effectively in their workplaces. Despite the passing of their planned end dates, no apprentices have completed their qualifications.

Leaders and managers do not assess the existing knowledge, skills and competencies of apprentices well enough to enable them to tailor programmes to meet individual needs. Leaders do not have adequate systems in place to enable them to identify apprentices' starting points in English and mathematics accurately. They are unable to identify whether apprentices are making adequate progress in these subjects.

Leaders and managers have implemented apprenticeship programmes that run alongside other professional qualifications. They have established a useful range of tools to collate and monitor the time apprentices spend completing their off-the-job training. However, they do not use this information to monitor apprentices' progress in sufficient detail. Consequently, they do not intervene swiftly when apprentices cease to make their expected progress. Too often apprentices receive lengthy extensions to complete their assignments because of problems at work.

Leaders and managers did not understand the need for end-point assessment to be completed by the planned learning end date for apprentices commencing programmes before August 2019. They expected this to take place after apprentices complete their planned training. They have developed effective units of study with good support materials, in line with the standards. These provide a broad range of learning styles to meet apprentices' varying needs.

Leaders analyse tutors' performance effectively. They use feedback from learners and employers very well to make improvements and monitor their impact. They assess their own performance annually and know their main strengths and areas for improvement. Leaders have systems in place to monitor the quality of taught sessions. However, these place too much emphasis on administrative processes rather than on the quality of learning.

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

Managers do not adequately tailor the curriculum to meet the needs of apprentices. They do not plan or organise the curriculum, beyond the assessment criteria, to consider individual job roles. They do not use apprentices' experiences or qualifications effectively to plan learning. They do not consider the personal and work factors that could impact on apprentices' progress. Employers lack sufficient involvement in the planning and organising of the curriculum.

Tutors and assessors are vocationally experienced and qualified. They use a good range of resources effectively to support learning. Apprentices benefit from an accessible and well-planned computer-based system that enables centralised access to all elements of their apprenticeships. It also provides timely reminders on submission dates and scheduled training. Managers respond swiftly to concerns and questions raised by apprentices.

Too many apprentices make slow progress, and tutors do not challenge this well enough. Too few benefit from well-planned off-the-job training. Too many do not access their entitlement to off-the-job training, because of work pressures. Apprentices record the time spent in off-the-job training, but they do not consider its impact on their knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Tutors and assessors do not use the outcomes of assessments to improve learning. Apprentices complete assignments, but the feedback only focuses on the awarding body criteria and does not systematically provide guidance to enable apprentices to improve the content of their assessments or their written English skills.

Apprentices do not benefit from regular progress reviews with their tutors and employers. As a result, employers are not always aware of apprentices' progress or how they should support them.

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

A designated safeguarding lead and deputy lead manage safeguarding, but neither has received the appropriate training. All apprentices say they feel safe in their workplaces and remember their radicalisation and extremism training at induction, but they do not receive any reinforcement of this through their apprenticeships. Apprentices are unaware of radicalisation or extremism concerns in the areas in which they live and work.

Managers have established appropriate policies, procedures and mechanisms to record apprentices' safeguarding and pastoral concerns. Staff know how to deal with concerns and to whom they should report them. Managers conduct appropriate employment checks on staff who tutor apprentices. All staff have completed online safeguarding, bullying and harassment, British values and 'Prevent' duty training.

Leaders and managers have not established a 'Prevent' duty risk assessment and do not conduct health and safety assessments in apprentices' workplaces. Most apprentices have a minimal knowledge of safeguarding and how they can participate fully in, and contribute positively to, life in modern Britain. They have little understanding of how these values relate to their roles at work, their colleagues, their clients and their personal lives.

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