

# Fitch Learning Ltd

Monitoring visit report

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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.

Fitch Learning Ltd provides training to the financial services industry. The company recruited its first apprentices in September 2018. At the time of the monitoring visit there were 159 apprentices. 112 were on the level 4 investment operation specialist standard, 2 on the level 3 compliance and risk officer standard and 45 on the level 3 investment operations technician standard. The company also offers level 6 and 7 standards apprenticeships but these were not in scope during this visit.

### Themes

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

#### **Significant progress**

Leaders and managers have used their understanding of the sector highly effectively to create a clear rationale for the provision. The curriculum offer and learning content match the needs of the finance industry closely. Senior leaders monitor the quality of the provision well. They have close oversight of the development of the apprenticeships and the progress that apprentices make. They have made sure that the facilities, resources and quality of training are of a high quality.

Leaders and managers ensure that the provision meets apprenticeship requirements. For example, apprentices spend at least the required time on off-the-job training that is taught extremely proficiently. Leaders and managers have strengthened the information and guidance available to apprentices and employers before they sign up for apprenticeships. Apprentices, employers and Fitch staff are clear about their responsibilities and work well together to enrol apprentices on the most appropriate programme. This contributes to a high proportion of apprentices staying on their programme.

Managers have a very detailed understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. They have taken effective steps to develop, for example, the use of the off-the-job training. As a result, apprentices reflect effectively on what they have learned and how they apply their new knowledge and skills in their work. While skills

coaches monitor apprentices' progress effectively, managers have rightly recognised that, in a few cases, recorded targets do not focus sufficiently on the knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices need to develop. Managers have put in place training to improve this. However, it is too early to judge its impact.

Leaders and managers have taken positive steps to attract a wide section of society to the finance sector. This has resulted in a fifth of apprentices coming from disadvantaged backgrounds and an increase in the recruitment of women and people from ethnic minorities.

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

Skills coaches and tutors have excellent sector-specific skills and experience which enable them to give highly effective support to apprentices. Leaders and managers have put in place effective training and support for new staff.

Apprentices benefit from high quality off-the-job training. Tutors bring the learning content to life by using interesting and practical work examples. Apprentices make very good progress and develop new skills and knowledge. They develop a thorough understanding of financial markets and products, including complex financial and tax regulation.

Apprentices make very good use of high-quality online facilities to develop their knowledge and skills over time. They make impressive use of online and mobile phone application resources to learn new content and revise what they have learned. Online quizzes and question banks enable apprentices and their tutors to see their progress. Apprentices get instant online feedback on their answers. They can contact a helpdesk for more support. Tutors use the analysis of apprentices' online learning effectively in order to follow up on areas that apprentices find difficult.

Skills coaches, apprentices and line managers work together well to evaluate the progress that apprentices make and to set further development targets. Line managers use reviews effectively in order to plan additional work tasks, including in other departments, to enhance apprentices' learning and experience.

Apprentices extend their mathematical skills significantly. For example, they learn to use excel spreadsheets and mathematical processes for algorithms, macros and formulas. Skills coaches work effectively with apprentices on their oral presentation skills and to write in English that is easy to read and understand.

Employers appreciate the benefits of the apprenticeships to their company. Apprentices acquire a wider range of skills and experience than they would do in

their jobs alone. As a result, apprentices are able to handle an increased range of work tasks and take more responsibility. Some have been promoted while on the programme.

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

Leaders and managers put a high priority on safeguarding apprentices and implementing the 'Prevent' duty. Learning coaches and tutors have had relevant training and receive timely updates which ensure that their knowledge is up to date. The designated safeguarding officers have appropriate qualifications and have good contacts with other organisations, such as Prevent coordinators, in the areas where their apprentices work. Skills coaches and managers handle safeguarding and duty-of-care referrals well and provide appropriate support and advice to apprentices on external sources of help.

Managers have given much thought to safeguarding aspects which are relevant to the financial sector. They have made sure that the apprentices' learning content reflects the work environment closely. Apprentices learn about mental health, stress management and their own financial well-being. They also cover money-laundering in the context of the 'Prevent' duty. Skills coaches use the six-weekly reviews well to develop apprentices' understanding and reflect on how safeguarding aspects apply to their work and own lives. Learners feel safe and know who to contact if they have concerns.

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