

Blue Arrow Limited

Report following a monitoring visit to a 'requires improvement' provider

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Type of provider: Employer

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Blue Arrow Limited was inspected in February 2019. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in addressing the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

Blue Arrow Limited is based in Luton. At the time of the inspection, there were 96 apprentices. Around half are on the level 5 operations manager and level 3 team leader apprenticeship standard programmes. The remainder are mostly on the level 3 recruitment apprenticeship programme. Most apprentices have level 2 English and mathematics qualifications.

Themes

What progress have senior executives made to ensure that leaders are held to account for the outcomes and quality of the apprenticeship provision?

Reasonable progress

Senior executives have rapidly improved the governance arrangements for the apprenticeship programmes. They hold senior managers to account for the quality of the provision. Senior managers now use frequent reporting to effectively track and monitor apprentices' skills development. They can show senior executives that the quality of learning is improving. As a result, senior executives have an accurate oversight of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision.

Leaders and managers have improved performance at all levels across the organisation. There is a good culture of staff working closely with employers to improve the provision. As a result, communication between staff, apprentices and employers has improved.

What progress have leaders and managers made to setting and monitoring clear targets and actions for improvement?

Reasonable progress

Staff set clear targets and follow up actions for monitoring the quality of learning using a new case load review system. Managers evaluate the impact of these actions frequently. However, leaders have still not ensured that assessors check the learning of apprentices thoroughly. As a result, a few apprentices continue to make slow progress.

What progress have leaders and managers made in improving the quality of the apprenticeship provision to ensure that apprentices make rapid progress and achieve within planned timescales? Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers test the impact of their new quality monitoring systems. They use this information to provide targeted continued professional development sessions for staff. This has rapidly improved the teaching skills of staff. Staff are now able to better support apprentices to make good progress.

Most apprentices learn skills relevant to their job roles. This enables them to gain promotion and continue to study at a higher level. For example, level 5 apprentices use emotional intelligence effectively. They understand the impact their emotional state has on the teams they manage. This has significantly shaped the way they manage their teams and delegate tasks.

Skills coaches provide apprentices with good support and developmental feedback. Apprentices are clear about what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve. Apprentices value the support they receive. It helps them remain motivated to achieve during challenging periods in their life and work. Skills coaches take care to understand their apprentices' roles in depth to ensure that learning is precise and relevant. They prepare apprentices thoroughly for end-point assessments. They use mock discussions and review of likely scenarios effectively. As a result, most apprentices are now making good progress towards completing their apprenticeship.

A few learners have not developed their skills and knowledge promptly. Leaders have been slow to identify that they are not receiving frequent training at work.

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