

Redsky Learning Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
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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 (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.

Redsky Learning Limited has delivered training in leadership and management since 2004. It began to deliver levy-funded apprenticeships in October 2018. Apprentices work in large, high-profile companies across the country. Currently, 122 apprentices are on standards-based apprenticeships in team leader/supervisor at level 3 and operations/departmental manager at level 5. Approximately four fifths of apprentices study at level 5, and the rest study at level 3. All apprentices are aged 19 and over.

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

Leaders have in place a well-established curriculum that is clear and purposeful and relates to their priorities and expertise in providing training in leadership and management. However, they have been too slow to revise and develop this curriculum so that it meets all the requirements of an apprenticeship.

Leaders and managers have not designed the level 5 programme to give apprentices sufficient time to complete it successfully by the end date. Although apprentices develop new knowledge and skills, too many are not on target to complete on time.

Leaders have not made sure that all apprentices receive their full entitlement to off-the-job training, resulting in too many apprentices falling behind in their studies. Managers have begun to take action to address this concern, but this has not yet had sufficient impact.

Leaders and managers focus insufficiently on the quality of provision and are over-optimistic in their self-assessment. They have not taken rapid enough action to address the key areas for improvement. Leaders do not have any governance or external scrutiny arrangements in place to hold them to account for the quality of education.

Leaders and managers do not intervene quickly enough to ensure that apprentices make good progress, resulting in too many apprentices leaving their programme early. Leaders have not put a system in place that enables them to monitor and evaluate apprentices' progress accurately. Managers have been too slow to intervene when apprentices have not had their scheduled reviews. Too many reviews are overdue.

Leaders and managers ensure that end-point assessment arrangements are in place and most apprentices feel well prepared for assessment.

Most apprentices benefit from opportunities to take recognised qualifications beyond the requirements of the apprenticeship. These opportunities help apprentices to develop knowledge, skills and behaviours which they can use in their future careers.

Leaders and managers have effective arrangements in place to manage the subcontractor that provides training in functional skills to around a fifth of the apprentices.

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

Apprentices develop substantial leadership and management skills that help them to become more effective at managing their teams in the workplace. For example, apprentices become more confident in dealing proactively with disciplinary issues based on their new understanding about emotional intelligence.

Trainers provide effective support for apprentices to enable them to make the necessary links between learning and workplace practice. This helps apprentices to become valued members of the workforce. For example, apprentices delegate tasks appropriately and monitor team performance effectively.

Apprentices benefit from the individual support that they receive between workshops from their highly skilled trainers. They produce work at the appropriate standard for the level of their programme. Most trainers provide positive and helpful feedback. However, in a minority of instances feedback does not identify how apprentices can improve their work.

Trainers assess effectively the skills and knowledge that apprentices have at the start of the programme. However, they do not make sufficient use of this information when planning and organising the learning. As a result, a minority of apprentices find it difficult to cope with the volume and complexity of the work.

Trainers introduce apprentices to the arrangements for end-point assessment early in the programme. Consequently, most apprentices have a good understanding of the requirements and are well prepared.

Trainers do not carry out progress reviews frequently enough to recognise when apprentices have not completed work on time. This results in managers not having access to an accurate and complete overview of progress for a few apprentices.

Staff at the subcontractor provide good support for apprentices to quickly improve their skills in English and mathematics. Apprentices benefit from highly individualised programmes that help them to improve their knowledge and skills, complete their courses on time and achieve their functional skills qualifications.

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

Leaders and managers have appropriate arrangements in place to ensure that staff are suitable to work with apprentices. Managers ensure that all staff are subject to Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

Leaders and managers support a culture of working safely. Managers ensure that all staff and apprentices receive appropriate training in safeguarding, online safety and the 'Prevent' duty. Apprentices understand the potential risks of radicalisation and extremism at work and in their daily lives.

Apprentices feel safe and know how to report any concerns that they might have at work. Employers communicate concerns to the provider when appropriate. Trainers ensure that they cover safeguarding appropriately in the curriculum.

Leaders and managers are taking steps towards meeting the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty by including this within the safeguarding policy. However, the policy does not include an action plan or risk assessment. Managers acknowledge this and are taking rapid action to review and amend it.

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