

Gower College Swansea

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Judy Lye-Forster, Her Majesty's Inspector

Inspection date(s): 14 to 15 October 2020

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 ESFA and/or the apprenticeship levy. This provider received a monitoring visit under these arrangements and was found to be making insufficient progress against one or more themes.

On 17 March 2020, all routine inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. As part of our phased return to routine inspections, we are carrying out additional monitoring visits to new providers that were judged to be making insufficient progress against one or more themes at their previous monitoring visit and would have been due their full inspection up to or during the interim phase but have not received it because of the suspension of routine inspections. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements as outlined in the [interim phase operational note for further education and skills](#) and with reference to the further education and skills handbook and is focused on the themes set out below.

Gower College Swansea started to deliver apprenticeships in England in October 2017. Currently, there are 17 levy-funded apprentices. All apprentices are over 24 years of age. Two apprentices are on apprenticeship frameworks at level 3. Fourteen apprentices are studying standards at level 3 and one at level 5. Nine of these are on the facilities management standard, five of them are on the team leader/supervisor standard and one is on the management standard at level 5. A subcontractor delivers just over a third of the apprenticeship programmes. At this visit, 37 apprentices had successfully completed their apprenticeships.

Themes

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

Significant progress

Senior leaders took decisive action following the previous monitoring visit. They restructured and retrained much of their apprenticeship workforce and re-engaged with employers. Employers are now fully involved in all aspects of the apprenticeship programme and value greatly the contribution that the apprentices make to their business.

Leaders and managers have developed the curriculum to meet the needs of the apprentices and the employers. Expert tutors sequence the curriculum logically and deliver it flexibly around the apprentices' shift patterns. Apprentices benefit from high-quality resources and an accessible online learning platform that supports their

studies and gives them a high degree of flexibility in their learning. Managers have ensured that the programmes they offer are accessible and ambitious for all learners, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They have ensured that their resources work effectively with adaptive technologies to support the development of knowledge, skills and behaviours for those learners with disabilities.

Employers and apprentices are now provided with comprehensive information about the requirements and demands of the apprenticeship programmes. Links with employers are good and communication is effective. Off-the-job training requirements are now fully understood by employers and apprentices. This is now planned well, and all apprentices make full use of this training. Employers now engage actively with on-the-job training and support, and this has a positive impact on the apprentices' development.

Senior managers have made significant progress in their relationship with the subcontractor and now have a detailed understanding of the progress the apprentices are making on this provision.

Since the monitoring visit in August 2019, governance arrangements have been strengthened and developed. Experienced, specialist governors have been engaged to ensure effective oversight and scrutiny of the apprenticeship provision.

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

Apprentices benefit from the apprenticeship programme. Many describe the new skills, knowledge and behaviours they have gained, for example being able to work out what the best management style would be when having to manage a different shift group or when solving problems independently in daily tasks. Apprentices highlight how they have grown in confidence, and most have used what they have learned to get better at their roles. Some apprentices have put themselves forward for promotion and have achieved it.

Following the previous monitoring visit, all apprentices have been reassessed to establish their level of competence in English and mathematics. Bespoke English and mathematics lessons have been developed to target the identified areas of weakness for each apprentice. Apprentices now develop their skills at much greater pace and have increased confidence in these areas. Apprentices now proofread their presentations and work out percentages of absenteeism in their departments.

Apprentices are well supported by their tutors, who are approachable and can be reached by a variety of methods between sessions. Tutors work with the apprentices and employers to identify areas which need strengthening and provide the support required. Apprentices benefit from useful feedback on their work and discussions with their tutors about their progress. As a result, apprentices understand what they need to do to

improve their work and to get better grades. Apprentices value highly the input and support of their tutors.

Employers now support their apprentices well and give them the time off work they need for their studies. Line managers meet with tutors and are involved in the apprentices' progress reviews. They have a good overview of the programme their apprentices are studying and work with tutors in a timely manner when an apprentice is struggling. When this occurs, managers work with tutors and the wider college staff to set up support plans for the apprentices, for example when they were falling behind with their English or mathematics or if they need additional support because English is not their first language.

Apprentices are prepared well for end-point assessment and are aware of the grades they can achieve. Where end-point assessment has been disrupted and changed because of COVID-19, managers and tutors have worked hard to adapt their preparations to meet the changing requirements of the awarding bodies.

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

Leaders and managers have continued to improve their safeguarding arrangements following the monitoring visit in November 2019. Senior staff, governors and tutors now have a comprehensive understanding of safeguarding as a result of extensive training and development. Tutors make good use of this increased knowledge and awareness, contextualising safeguarding as part of their teaching with apprentices.

Apprentices also have an increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of safeguarding and can apply this to their work place and personal lives. Apprentices know how to keep themselves and others safe and know how to raise a concern at work and with staff at Gower College.

The designated safeguarding lead is well trained and has established effective relationships with organisations across the local areas in which they deliver. The 'Prevent' duty risk assessment now identifies regional threats, and these have been shared with tutors, who in turn share them with apprentices. Apprentices are now aware of threats local to where they work.

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