

Ginger Nut Media Limited

Interim visit report

Unique reference number:	1276527
Name of lead inspector:	Sambit Sen, HMI
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Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
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Interim visit

Context and focus of visit

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 'interim visits' to further education and skills providers. Interim visits are to help learners, parents, employers and government understand how providers are meeting the needs of learners and apprentices in this period, including learners with high needs and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

We intend to return to routine inspection in January 2021 but will keep the exact timing under review.

The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below and the findings are based on discussions with leaders, managers, staff and learners.

Information about the provider

Ginger Nut Media Limited (Ginger Nut Training) is an independent learning provider based in Colchester. All training is provided in employers' workplaces across the country. At the time of the interim visit 196 apprentices were on apprenticeship programmes on levels 2 to 5. Most apprentices are on standards-based programmes, with a small minority on framework programmes. Leaders offer apprenticeship programmes in administration, customer service, learning and development, management and digital services, including marketing. Ginger Nut Training does not work with any subcontractors.

What actions are leaders taking to ensure that they provide an appropriate curriculum that responds to the reasonable needs of learners and stakeholders and adapts to changed circumstances?

Leaders and managers say that they have had clear and regular communication with the apprentices and employers. They believe that this has kept the disruption of learning to a minimum. Leaders think that this has resulted in apprentices remaining active and motivated in their learning. Leaders have spent time understanding the changes that employers have made to the roles of apprentices during lockdown. This has helped to inform the changes needed to apprentices' training plans.

Leaders say that they have taken a considered decision to provide training entirely online. They have done this to meet the needs of the digital sector. Most apprentices are still currently working from home.

Leaders and managers say they have worked closely with tutors to ensure that revised training plans meet each apprentices' needs. For example, where apprentices found online

learning difficult, they allocated additional resources to familiarise the apprentices with the technology.

Employers have praised leaders, managers and tutors, for keeping in touch with them and informing them of any changes since the pandemic. They are complimentary about the level of personalised support provided to their apprentices.

Leaders and managers report close working with external agencies to meet the assessment requirements of the apprenticeship programme. For example, they have collaborated with examination organisations to adapt end-of-course examinations and practical assessments.

What steps are leaders, managers and staff taking to ensure that the approaches used for building knowledge and skills are appropriate to meet the reasonable needs of learners?

Tutors say the biggest change they have had to make is to regularly review and amend how they offer the curriculum. This is to adapt the learning so that apprentices, whatever their working circumstances, are able to complete the full range of learning that their apprenticeship requires. For example, those apprentices who are on furlough learn the knowledge element at the start of the apprenticeship. This prepares them appropriately to apply their knowledge to practical elements when they return to work.

Tutors recognise how well they are supported to quickly develop their skills and knowledge to provide effective online learning. They have done this through online training, webinars and use the specialist equipment provided by leaders.

Leaders are very positive about moving to a wholly online curriculum. They believe that they have overcome the challenges that they faced initially. For example, a few apprentices had problems with access to and using online learning technology. Leaders recognise how working online has given tutors more time and greater flexibility in how they work with apprentices. This has resulted in more contact between tutors and apprentices.

Managers describe how they use technology to check their tutors' work. Tutors record all their activities with the apprentices. Managers sample these recordings, join in on webinars and monitor electronic progress documents. Internal quality assurance staff have frequent contact with apprentices. In addition, leaders state that they have daily virtual meetings with tutors to monitor closely the quality of their work.

Tutors identify apprentices' lack of motivation as the key challenge to ensuring continued progress. They recognise how the lack of face-to-face activities has had a negative impact on a few apprentices. In response, tutors provide shorter, more regular online sessions with their apprentices. Tutors believe they are now able to spend more time with the apprentices as they do not have to travel.

Leaders and managers state that they have focused more on ensuring that apprentices get appropriate careers information advice and guidance. Tutors now discuss next steps and career planning at each review with apprentices.

How are leaders ensuring that learners are safe and well informed about potential risks, including from online sources?

Leaders and managers say that they provide relevant and frequent safeguarding and online safety training to their staff and apprentices. For example, tutors and apprentices say that they received training in mental well-being and effective working from home techniques. This has allowed them to develop better coping strategies during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Tutors say they have frequent contact with their apprentices. They discuss how apprentices are coping in their personal and professional lives. As a result, apprentices comment that they are well supported.

Tutors say that they use webinars and monthly quizzes to reinforce safety. They discuss restrictions relating to Covid-19 to help apprentices apply the new rules to their own lives. For example, an apprentice's discussion with their tutor helped them understand how to safely join a new social group to support their mental well-being.

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