

# Wiser Academy Ltd

Monitoring visit report

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<b>Unique reference number:</b>	1278659
<b>Name of lead inspector:</b>	Montserrat Pérez-Parent, HMI
<b>Inspection dates:</b>	21–22 October 2020
<b>Type of provider:</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Address:</b>	Barrett House Savoy Close Andover Hampshire SP10

## 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 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.

Wiser Academy Ltd is an independent training provider specialising in financial services training. It offers standard-based apprenticeships at levels 2, 3, 4 and 5. At the time of the monitoring visit, there were approximately 90 apprentices in training. Most apprentices are studying senior financial services customer adviser, insurance practitioner or insurance professional apprenticeships. The rest are studying human resources or learning and development apprenticeships.

### Themes

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

#### **Reasonable progress**

Leaders appointed a new director of apprenticeships and a new head of apprenticeships whose role is to improve the apprenticeship provision. Managers worked closely with employers, trainers and apprentices to make sure they understood the improvements needed, following the previous monitoring visit. Employers now know the requirements of an apprenticeship and the work apprentices need to do to achieve it.

Most apprentices have learned new knowledge, skills and behaviours and have recently been making rapid progress towards the completion of their apprenticeship. Managers support employers to find time for apprentices to do their training around

the work pressures in their jobs. Managers and trainers provide apprentices who need to study functional skills qualifications with support to help them achieve their qualifications.

Managers now use lesson observations effectively to identify areas for improvement. Managers provide trainers with the support and training they need to improve. As a result, trainers have improved in the areas identified in their development plans. Trainers use questioning more effectively to check apprentices' learning. They have also reinforced the importance of professional standards and behaviours, leading to an improvement in punctuality of apprentices to lessons and their readiness for learning.

Leaders now know what progress apprentices are making through the monthly meetings they hold with apprenticeship managers. Managers provide most employers with monthly reports on the progress their apprentices are making. However, not all employers receive sufficient feedback on the progress of their employees, which hampers their ability to support them on their apprenticeship.

**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**

Most apprentices are learning substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours. Apprentices have improved what they do at work as a result of the new skills and knowledge they have learned. For example, apprentices slow down their pace when talking to vulnerable customers and make sure that they do not use jargon.

Trainers are well qualified and have a range of experience in the insurance and financial services sectors, which they use effectively in their teaching. They have used their expertise skilfully to develop training resources that are relevant to the apprentices' job roles.

Trainers make sure that their lessons, which they teach through a real-time virtual classroom, are interactive and interesting. Apprentices find their lessons beneficial and enjoyable and so they attend consistently.

Trainers use quizzes and mock examination questions effectively to test apprentices' understanding of the new knowledge they have taught in lessons. Apprentices make good use of current and past examples from their workplace to demonstrate learning.

Apprentices complete a range of activities as part of their training away from work that support the development of skills relevant to their job roles. They benefit from attending financial networking events or taking part in a mentoring scheme for disadvantaged individuals.

A few apprentices who were already experienced professionals when they started their apprenticeship have not gained substantial new skills and knowledge. Trainers support these apprentices to develop skills and knowledge beyond the apprenticeship. Trainers involve them in discussions of current topics, such as the business interruption loans, and draw on their individual expertise and experiences to support other apprentices and develop each other's knowledge.

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

Leaders and managers make sure that they have effective safeguarding arrangements in place and that apprentices are safe. Leaders and managers take suitable action to resolve reported incidents and keep detailed records of the actions they have taken to resolve them.

Managers have started to promote the health and well-being of apprentices in addition to their safety. They have introduced a monthly 'Wise Up' newsletter promoting topics such as sleeping and eating well, online safety and confidence at work, as well as safeguarding, the 'Prevent' duty and equality and diversity.

Leaders and managers do not have sufficient knowledge of the radicalisation risks in the areas of the country in which their apprentices work. They do not make apprentices aware of the risks local to them or those relevant to their industry.

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