

Welcome Skills Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Jane Hughes, Her Majesty's Inspector

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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 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.

Welcome Skills Limited offers hospitality training to the Asian restaurant sector. Since 2017, Welcome Skills Limited has been offering a level 2 standards-based apprenticeship. It currently delivers the level 2 hospitality team member and production chef apprenticeships. There were 18 apprentices on programme at the time of the monitoring visit, 116 awaiting final assessment and, so far, six have achieved an apprenticeship.

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

Insufficient Progress

Leaders and managers have not acted quickly enough to make the improvements needed to ensure apprentices learn from a well-planned programme. Too many weaknesses identified at the previous monitoring visit remain. Too many apprentices have left the programme without completing. While just over a third of apprentices who left did so because of COVID-19 reasons, the remainder left prior to the pandemic.

Leaders have been too slow to implement effective quality assurance arrangements. Leaders and managers do not check the quality of trainers' online teaching sessions and assessment methods thoroughly enough. Managers have introduced new processes to track apprentices' progress and staff have improved how they record

apprentices' of-the-job training activities. However, managers still do not maintain a secure oversight of the progress that apprentices make.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that the principles of an apprenticeship programme are fully met. Too many apprentices do not spend enough time completing off-the-job training activities. Nor do they understand their entitlement to off-the-job training. Apprenticeship commitment statements still do not specify the hours required for this element of the programme.

Leaders and managers continue to work closely with the restaurant sector in the Bangladeshi community to help them recognise the importance of training. They have strong relationships in the community and are well respected by employers and apprentices.

Trainers are suitably qualified and experienced in hospitality and catering, and specifically in Asian cuisine. They use well-presented and professional resources to support those apprentices who are able to work independently. Presentations are clear and relate well to many of the topics within the apprenticeship standard. Most apprentices benefit from gaining additional qualifications in food hygiene and a small number gain other qualifications such as personal licencing.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? Insufficient Progress

Apprentices do not develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours. Trainers do not use the information they have about apprentices' prior skills to adjust how they teach the curriculum to meet apprentices' individual needs. Apprentices receive very little taught input that helps them build on what they already know and can do.

Many apprentices remain unclear that they are on an apprenticeship programme and do not know how the programme is structured. For example, a few apprentices think they are on a food hygiene course and struggle to explain new skills and knowledge they have gained.

Apprentices who do not confidently speak English do not understand how the English and mathematics qualifications fit into their programme. Assessors do not give them sufficient support to help them improve their ability to speak English. As a result, too many of these apprentices fail the professional discussion element of their final assessment. Of the apprentices who have stayed on the programme and are ready for their final assessments, a high proportion have achieved their English and mathematics qualifications.

Trainers do not plan and coordinate on- and off-the-job training well enough. They rely too much on apprentices completing workbooks, and reviewing and answering questions on food preparation videos. Too many apprentices do not remember what they have learned from these activities. Employers are not sufficiently involved in the programme, they do not know what progress their apprentices make.

Trainers have struggled to maintain effective communication with all apprentices during the restrictions imposed because of COVID-19. A minority of apprentices do not have the computing skills they need to maintain contact with their trainers using information technology. Trainers have not given them effective support to improve their skills in this area.

Too many apprentices do not receive sufficient support and help to prepare them for their final assessment. Too often, apprentices who have been put forward for their assessment do not know what to expect, or that they have had practice sessions in preparation for assessment.

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

Leaders, managers and staff promote the importance of safeguarding and well-being appropriately to their apprentices. In response to COVID-19, apprentices have received additional information about the correct procedures associated with working in dine-in and take-away restaurants. Apprentices have sufficient knowledge about how to keep safe and who to talk to if they have any concerns.

Leaders and managers have appropriate policies and procedures to safeguard apprentices. Leaders ensure that staff working with apprentices are safe to do so. They complete relevant training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. The dedicated safeguarding lead and deputy have appropriate qualifications and knowledge.

Leaders recognise that they need to do more to deepen apprentices' understanding of the dangers associated with learning online, and to support apprentices with mental health issues. Training has been arranged for staff on these topics, and online courses arranged for apprentices.

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