

Redsky Learning Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	2539254
Name of lead inspector:	Cath Jackson, 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 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.

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, 88 apprentices are on standards-based programmes in team leader/supervisor at level 3 and operations/departmental manager at level 5. Approximately three quarters 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?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have a clear strategy for the curriculum that they offer and ensure that it fully meets the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. Managers monitor apprentices' training closely and quickly bring any issues to the attention of the employer. Staff and employers ensure that apprentices are well prepared for their end-point assessments. Apprentices receive good-quality on- and off-the-job training that helps them develop substantial new skills, knowledge and behaviours.

Leaders work closely with employers to devise bespoke training in leadership and management that meets the needs of their businesses well. For one large employer,

managers developed an apprenticeship that supported women into leadership in areas where female representation was previously low.

Leaders ensure that employers provide apprentices with ample opportunity to use their new knowledge, skills and behaviours in the workplace. Employers give apprentices demanding projects to manage and coach them to meet the increased challenges they face in their roles. Apprentice team leaders in a busy call centre were able to draw on their training to prioritise and deal with significant increases in call volumes due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Managers support apprentices who have specific needs to enable them to make good progress. For example, they make flexible arrangements for apprentices who are pregnant and offer support with coping strategies for apprentices with dyslexia.

Leaders have improved their quality processes since the last monitoring visit. They are realistic in their self-assessment and have taken actions to address key areas for improvement. Managers have recruited new stretch coaches, who are well qualified and experienced, to help to drive improvement. Leaders have introduced effective external scrutiny by appointing non-executive board members to provide challenge and hold leaders to account. These measures have begun to have a positive impact on apprentices' performance and progress.

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

Stretch coaches draw on their subject expertise to make useful connections between different management theories and to teach apprentices how these apply to project management. They support apprentices to develop the skills they need to lead and manage teams in their workplaces. For example, stretch coaches encourage apprentices to think about communication theory and what can happen if important messages are misinterpreted.

Apprentices value the way that stretch coaches help them to prioritise aspects of their work and to become more strategic. Professional discussions with coaches support apprentices to develop their managerial role and help them to prepare for their end-point assessment. Apprentices are able to use examples from their workplace to illustrate their understanding of concepts. For example, they explore the difference between issue and risk in project management.

Employers rightly value the frequent contact that they have with leaders and managers to monitor the progress of apprentices. Leaders work with employers to put contingency arrangements in place if apprentices should fall behind during particularly busy times.

Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices receive appropriate careers advice at the start of their apprenticeship so that they are on the right programme for their needs. Apprentices have a personal development plan, which they revisit and review at regular intervals with stretch coaches. This supports apprentices to become more strategic about their career options and helps them to develop the confidence to apply for and gain promotion in their job roles.

Most apprentices produce work of a high standard. They are confident in using the English and mathematics skills that they require for their job roles. In a very few cases, the feedback that stretch coaches provide to apprentices about their progress is not precise enough. Consequently, a small number of apprentices are not clear enough about what they need to do to improve their work to the required standard.

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. They meet the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty and have a 'Prevent' risk assessment and action plan. Staff and apprentices receive appropriate training in safeguarding, online safety and the 'Prevent' duty. Stretch coaches cover current issues relating to safeguarding appropriately in the curriculum for their apprentices.

Apprentices say that they feel safe. They understand the risks of radicalisation and extremism in their daily lives and at work. They can recognise when individuals may be at risk of being radicalised and know what to do if they are worried about someone. Stretch coaches reinforce key messages about safety in discussions with apprentices and their employers during monthly reviews.

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