

Education and Training Skills Ltd

Progress monitoring report

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Name of lead inspector:	Steven Tucker, Her Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	Not for profit organisation
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Education and Training Skills Ltd (ETS) was last inspected in March 2019. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

This monitoring visit focused on the extent to which leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances. It was undertaken as outlined in the [operational note on visits carried out from January 2021](#) and with reference to the further education and skills handbook.

These visits are to help learners, parents, employers and government understand how providers are meeting the needs of learners in this period, including those with high needs and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, inspectors carried out this monitoring activity remotely. As a result, the range of evidence available to inspectors was narrower than would be the case during an on-site inspection. Therefore, this report provides a more limited level of assurance.

The impact of COVID-19 has been taken into account in the findings and progress judgement below. Inspectors did not evaluate leaders' response to COVID-19 during the spring and summer of 2020, when the provider was not open to all learners and there were no national expectations regarding remote education.

Theme

What progress are leaders and those responsible for governance making to ensure that staff teach a curriculum and provide support to meet learners' needs, including the provision of remote/online learning?

Reasonable progress

Leaders have dealt with many of the weaknesses identified during the previous inspection and are making progress on others. As a result, the apprenticeships are largely meeting the needs of employers and apprentices.

Throughout the pandemic, trainers have continued to develop apprentices' skills and knowledge and to help them to be successful in their final assessments. Apprentices due to complete their training in the last few months have done so.

A majority of apprentices are on apprenticeships in emergency call handling run by Devon and Cornwall Police. These are new apprenticeships since the previous inspection and do not have the weaknesses inspectors found in ETS's defunct health and social care provision. Through the partnership with Devon and Cornwall Police, ETS draws on the police's very specific knowledge when designing the apprenticeships. For example, the police's knowledge of, and insight into the knowledge apprentices need about safeguarding and extremism are highly developed and integrated well into the apprenticeship curriculum.

Leaders monitor the quality of apprenticeships closely, including the apprenticeships they subcontract to Devon and Cornwall Police. They use data and feedback from apprentices and trainers well to monitor apprentices' progress. When necessary, they make changes to the curriculum and the support they provide to apprentices.

Leaders regularly review their apprenticeship curriculums and are mostly successful in ensuring that these are well suited to apprentices' jobs. For example, emergency call handling apprentices need additional support as they begin to deal with the realities of emergency calls from members of the public. Leaders have identified that the support the apprentices receive from supervisors and mentors is variable. Leaders have recently revised the curriculum with the aim of improving this support.

Trainers have adapted their resources and workshops so that apprentices can learn remotely. Apprentices are complimentary about the workshops they attend and the learning resources they use. They explain clearly what they have learned and the relevance to their jobs. Leaders provide trainers with the professional development they need to support learners. For example, some trainers who are qualified teachers lacked experience of teaching on an apprenticeship. Leaders supported them to take assessor qualifications and to learn more about the requirements of an apprenticeship. This training has helped trainers to improve the support they provide and their focus on improving apprentices' progress. However, it does not focus enough on developing their teaching skills.

Leaders no longer recruit apprentices who will gain little from an apprenticeship. They have achieved this by developing partnerships with employers who are committed to apprenticeships and by checking that potential apprentices do not already have the skills and knowledge taught on the apprenticeship. However, a small number of apprentices in supervisory roles do not follow a curriculum that challenges them to develop enough new knowledge.

Leaders ensure that apprentices receive enough training and employers provide time for their apprentices to complete their studies. However, leaders have yet to ensure that all the training they provide contributes sufficiently to apprentices' progress. For example, inspectors were unable to establish what apprentices learn from shadowing colleagues since trainers do not always set clear learning objectives and apprentices do not record, reflect on or evaluate what they have learned from these activities.

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- ensure that work shadowing helps apprentices acquire, record and reflect on new knowledge and skills
- provide trainers with further training to develop their teaching skills, so that they can implement the curriculum using the teaching methods that best meet their apprentices' needs
- ensure that the curriculum for all apprentices enables them to develop substantial new knowledge and skills relevant to the sector in which they are employed.

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