

E. J. Markham & Son Limited, trading as Markerstudy Limited

Progress monitoring report

Unique reference number:	1276509
Name of lead inspector:	Russ Henry, Her Majesty's Inspector
Inspection dates:	17–18 February 2021
Type of provider:	Employer
Address:	Markerstudy House Bessels Green Sevenoaks Kent TN13 2QB

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

E. J. Markham & Son Limited received a new provider monitoring visit in January 2019. At that time, inspectors made progress judgements under three themes.

This monitoring visit focused on the extent to which leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to provide education and training 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

Most apprentices at Markerstudy are either existing employees who are moving into new roles, or school and college leavers. They follow programmes in customer service, learning and development, team-leading and automotive glazing. For the most part, apprentices currently work and study at home, but automotive glazing apprentices attend their workplaces and training sessions in person.

Training staff plan and structure programmes carefully and organise topics in a sensible sequence. In most cases, trainers have identified the specific skills,

knowledge and behaviours that apprentices need to develop, although they do not always describe these clearly in planning documents.

Trainers plan lessons that train apprentices in the knowledge and skills required for success in their roles. Apprentices have opportunities to practise their practical skills in the workplace on a daily basis. However, training staff often do not plan for the systematic reinforcement of apprentices' knowledge. This deprives apprentices of opportunities to develop a fluent recall of theoretical subjects. As a result, not all apprentices are able to explain easily the themes that they have studied.

Prior to the current pandemic restrictions, apprentices in customer service, learning and development, and team-leading followed programmes that included day-long training sessions around once a month. This was supported by study tasks for them to complete during work time. When restrictions came into force, staff adapted these programmes for remote study. They now provide training through short webinars, supported beforehand and afterwards by activities such as reading, watching videos, conducting independent research and reviewing case studies. The training materials that they use are of an appropriate standard, and apprentices find this approach to study effective.

As was the case at the time of the new provider monitoring visit, apprentices receive immediate oral feedback on their work. They find this helpful. Trainers have improved the quality of written feedback and most is clear and precise. This enables apprentices to see what they need to improve. However, written feedback is not always timely, and this means that apprentices are unable to take immediate action to improve their work.

Those apprentices who are recruited from outside the organisation are allocated a mentor to support them with their work and study. This arrangement works well. Trainers, mentors and line managers share information about the progress of apprentices, and this helps them all to provide appropriate coaching and support. Line managers take a very active interest in their apprentices' studies and help apprentices to develop their skills in the workplace.

All those involved with apprentices, including trainers, mentors and managers, care about their success and well-being. Apprentices appreciate this, with several describing how the organisation feels almost like a family. They say that staff make contact with them on a frequent, often daily, basis to check on their welfare and to provide any support, either personal or academic, that they may need.

Training staff are aware of the potential risks to apprentices' well-being that may arise during pandemic restrictions. Where they have concerns for an apprentice, they take appropriate actions to resolve them. Managers are able to cite specific examples of how they have provided help to young apprentices and their families.

The extent to which apprentices have received guidance about online safety varies. When apprentices join their programmes, trainers provide them with information

about staying safe, but they have not reinforced this during the current pandemic restrictions, when many apprentices have been working remotely.

At the time of the new provider monitoring visit, the reports that managers used to inform directors about the strengths and weaknesses of programmes lacked the depth and detail that directors needed to monitor trends and patterns effectively. This remains the case. Reports lack sufficient information, either about individual apprentices or groups of apprentices, that directors need to support and challenge training staff.

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

- managers' reports on the effectiveness of apprenticeship programmes contain the information that directors need to provide effective support and challenge
- training staff provide apprentices with frequent opportunities to recall and reinforce their knowledge
- all apprentices receive useful information about staying safe and well while working remotely.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021