

Prospects Training International Limited

Progress monitoring report

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Name of lead inspector:	Emma Woods, 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

Prospects Training International Limited (PTIL) was last inspected in March 2021. 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 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 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

PTIL trades as Geason Training and is part of the Speedy Group of companies. Since the last inspection, a newly organised leadership team reviewed the strategy for PTIL. As a result, leaders and managers are in the process of closing down the company. New apprentices are recruited to Geason Apprenticeships, a sister company. Current apprentices are being supported to complete their apprenticeship before the company closes.

Weaknesses identified at the last inspection have been sensibly prioritised by leaders. COVID-19 restrictions, along with closing courses, has slowed progress in a few areas. Trainers now use the information they have about most apprentices' experience to plan the curriculum. Property maintenance apprentices, experienced in their roles, have relevant individual plans that focus on developing new skills and knowledge. For example, they learn to carry out specialist paving techniques which are not a standard part of the apprenticeship.

Apprentices currently study remotely due to COVID-19 restrictions. They have at least monthly one-to-one sessions with their trainers through phone calls or video conferencing. When required, and safe to do so, construction trainers visit the workplace to help apprentices develop essential practical skills that are difficult to develop online. For example, apprentices who need support with drawing or plastering techniques. A small minority of apprentices do not have frequent training and report extended periods where they are not contacted by trainers.

In the more successful lessons, trainers adapt their teaching well in response to apprentices' needs. Gaps in apprentices' knowledge are used to inform tutorial discussions. For example, construction apprentices revisit topics on internal and external gas meters which they find challenging to understand. In less effective sessions, trainers focus solely on the evidence apprentices could use to demonstrate various competencies and they lose focus on the knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices need to develop.

Plans to train trainers to provide effective feedback were delayed due to COVID-19 restrictions. Training has since occurred, but the quality of feedback remains variable. The majority of trainers provide timely feedback which is detailed and helps apprentices to improve the standard of their work. However, a minority of apprentices receive limited informal feedback and they have to wait too long for detailed guidance on how to improve.

Following the last inspection, trainers made changes to how they prepare apprentices for final assessments. Apprentices now complete mock activities and discussions with trainers which prepare them well for exam conditions. Trainers are creative with arrangements for final assessments in light of national restrictions. For example, they build pop-up assessment centres for property maintenance apprentices to complete final assessments at work. The vast majority of apprentices who reach their final assessments pass the course. A small minority achieve distinction grades.

Leaders and managers quickly appointed staff with responsibility for careers guidance after the last inspection. Trainers have developed their understanding and are able to offer appropriate careers support to apprentices when asked. This needs extending to all apprentices as too many still do not receive impartial careers advice and guidance.

Leaders and managers provide useful monthly safeguarding updates to staff, including how to support apprentices with online safety. Apprentices have an adequate understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They know who to contact if they require any support or have concerns about their well-being. Apprentices are aware of the protocols they should follow, such as having professional backgrounds when attending online sessions.

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

- ensure apprentices receive timely and detailed feedback that helps them to improve the standard of their work
- improve careers advice and guidance so all apprentices are able to make considered choices about their future careers.

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