

EMA Training Limited

Progress monitoring report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

EMA Training Limited was last inspected in August 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 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? Significant progress

Leaders have taken decisive action to resolve the areas of improvement from the previous inspection. They quickly reviewed the board structure and recruited a non-executive chair. Leaders, working with governors, took action to review and conclude the poorly performing subcontracted provision. Procedures are now in place to ensure that any future partnership work is subject to scrutiny by leaders and the board.

Governors now hold leaders to account through frequent meetings with detailed papers and performance information. This ensures that governors can challenge

leaders on the quality of apprentices' learning and progress. For example, employer feedback is analysed in detail and development actions monitored at the monthly board meetings.

Currently, due to national restrictions, all apprentices study remotely. The move to online learning has been managed very smoothly by leaders and managers. Leaders ensure that apprentices and staff have access to computers and resources at home. Apprentices attend almost all of their online classes, enjoy their studies and are very clear what they need to do to achieve. The vast majority of apprentices achieve merit or distinction grades. This continues to be the case despite the pandemic.

Trainers organise online classes extremely well and adapt the online environment to replicate the classroom as much as possible. Innovative use of break out rooms, group sessions, one-to-ones, activities and mock tests all make the learning experience enjoyable for apprentices. Trainers carefully plan to build up topics to ensure that apprentices understand them fully. For example, level 3 accountancy apprentices start with the threshold topic of book-keeping transactions and controls, which prepares them well for level 3 accountancy work.

Trainers, working with employers, plan in detail opportunities for apprentices to practise the knowledge and skills learned in online lessons at their workplace. Adjustments are made so apprentices working from home due to the national restrictions gain the same experience. For example, in digital marketing an assignment on 'what encourages website clicks and conversions' has really helped employers develop their portfolio. Apprentices are very confident in their roles and make significant contributions at work.

Leaders have recently introduced a new online system to enhance how trainers provide feedback and track apprentices' progress. It allows apprentices to see an overview of how they are progressing. This has been rightly well received by apprentices, particularly as they are studying remotely. However, in a very small minority of cases trainers do not use this system consistently well. This limits a small number of apprentices' opportunity to benefit from it.

Leaders and managers prioritise careers advice and guidance for apprentices. Apprentices are confident when applying for new roles or promotion. Reviews with mentors every six weeks support apprentices to produce detailed CVs and professional profiles online. Apprentices are clear on their next steps. The number who move on to higher levels of study or promotion is very high.

All apprentices are new to their employers and have often come straight from school. Due to the pandemic, leaders have developed a creative approach for them to apply for apprenticeships. They receive support from managers and mentors to create innovative and high-quality video applications to showcase their talent and skills. Employers are rightly impressed with these and find it helps them to employ the right apprentice for their business.

Managers, trainers and mentors take great care to understand the individual support needs of apprentices. Mentors have at least weekly contact with apprentices and this increases where apprentices require additional personal or study support. Mentors run online yoga and relaxation sessions to help apprentices cope with the challenges of national restrictions. Apprentices feel very well supported by their mentors and really value the time they have with them, and inspectors agree with this.

Apprentices have sufficient understanding of how to stay safe online and from extremist organisations on the internet. Where trainers cover these topics more routinely as part of the curriculum, using quizzes and debates, apprentices are able to apply their understanding to their workplace and wider lives in more detail.

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

- provide training to trainers and mentors so they can embed safeguarding themes into the curriculum so all apprentices gain a deeper understanding of these areas
- support trainers to consistently use the new online progress tracking system so that all apprentices can benefit from the information it contains.

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