

The Management Academy Ltd

Progress monitoring report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

The Management Academy Ltd (TMA) received a new provider monitoring visit in July 2018. 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 [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?

Significant progress

TMA apprentices are supply chain practitioners, and operational or departmental managers. They undertake standards-based apprenticeships.

TMA staff take great care to ensure that line managers fully understand the need to provide their apprentices with time to focus on their studies. As a result, line managers release apprentices from work for lessons or project work. This helps apprentices to complete their studies on schedule.

Trainers provide potential apprentices with thorough explanations of what they can expect from their programmes. Apprentices report that their actual experiences closely match these explanations. While they find their studies demanding, all current apprentices cope well and make good progress.

Training staff review apprentices' existing knowledge and skills before they enrol them. Apprentices undertake diagnostic mathematics tests, provide examples of their writing, and rate themselves across a range of vocational knowledge and skills. Line managers also rate the competence of their apprentices. Trainers combine the information that this provides with their detailed knowledge of apprentices' workplaces to plan projects that address gaps in apprentices' skills.

Most of the time, trainers set clear, specific and challenging targets for apprentices. Apprentices find that these targets help them to focus on the most important areas in which they need to develop. However, for a minority of apprentices, targets are not as helpful. They are not tailored to apprentices' individual needs and are too vague to be useful.

Prior to pandemic restrictions, apprentices attended day-long face-to-face training sessions once per fortnight. These lessons were supplemented by individual and group work that apprentices completed during the weeks when they did not have lessons.

Training staff planned the content and sequence of face-to-face lessons well. They considered carefully how to relate the apprenticeship standards to the specific skills and knowledge required by apprentices' employers. They planned individual lessons well, and apprentices report that they were taught well.

Since the introduction of pandemic restrictions, trainers have replaced face-to-face lessons with twice-weekly hour-long online lessons supported by group project work and written tasks.

Trainers provide online lessons that are interesting, interactive and informative. They spent a considerable amount of time at the start of pandemic restrictions trialling technology platforms and interactive tools that they now deploy effectively. As a result, apprentices are extremely satisfied with the quality of remote learning.

Trainers provide revision sessions, mock tests and professional discussions that help to prepare apprentices well for their final assessments. As a result, apprentices are confident about these assessments. Those apprentices who have already completed written exams have been successful.

Following criticism at the new provider monitoring visit, managers arranged for lessons to be observed by an external consultant to ensure that they provided an impartial view of quality. These observations resulted in some helpful feedback for trainers. However, this activity was only undertaken once and there have been no impartial observations in the last year.

Apprentices rightly value the support and guidance that they receive from TMA staff. During COVID-19 restrictions, trainers have increased the frequency with which they contact apprentices. They check on apprentices' well-being and provide them with guidance and support. Trainers contact apprentices who are furloughed even more

frequently because they understand how isolated apprentices can feel when they are away from the workplace.

Managers and trainers provide extensive support for apprentices who are experiencing significant changes in their workplace. For example, they support apprentices who have to reapply for their jobs by training them in interview skills and helping them to complete job applications. When apprentices are made redundant, trainers provide extensive support to help them to secure employment and complete their studies.

Apprentices have an appropriate understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They know whom to contact if they require any support or have concerns about their well-being. Leaders and managers ensure that staff receive training on how to spot things that may be of concern while teaching online, such as signs that may indicate domestic abuse.

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

- ensure that where staff provide targets for apprentices, these are clear, specific and individual to the apprentice
- implement processes to check the quality of teaching, whether it is face-to-face or online.

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