

Aspire Development (UK) Ltd

Progress monitoring report

Unique reference number:	1278655
Name of lead inspector:	Sarah Lonsdale, Her Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
Address:	Holmfield Mill Holdsworth Road Halifax HX3 6SN

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Aspire Development (UK) Limited received a new provider monitoring visit in November 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 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 and managers have improved the way that they work with employers to plan and provide apprenticeships. They involve employers in programme delivery to help ensure that learning relates to the context of the organisations where apprentices work. For example, employers provide sessions on managing change and share case studies from within the business. As a result, apprentices develop a deeper understanding of how to manage change effectively in the workplace.

Staff quickly implemented an effective remote learning programme and seamlessly changed the approach to teaching in response to the COVID-19 restrictions. They

reviewed the content of the curriculum to ensure that workshops helped apprentices to build their knowledge over time. For example, they redesigned topics about human resources and taught these alongside people management skills. This enabled apprentices to develop knowledge of basic management principles for use when supervising staff. Tutors used subsequent lessons to teach coaching techniques so that apprentices were able to understand how they could improve the performance of their teams.

Leaders and managers have taken action to improve the approach to teaching English and mathematics. Since September, they have planned a functional skills curriculum for new apprentices that identifies workshops that these apprentices need to attend, based on gaps in their knowledge. However, managers and tutors have not implemented these changes quickly enough. This has meant that their actions have had limited impact in supporting apprentices who have been on programme for some time to catch up with their learning. Consequently, around a quarter of all current apprentices have made slow progress in the development of English and mathematics skills.

English and mathematics tutors provide online workshop sessions for new cohorts of apprentices to develop the knowledge and skills that these apprentices need early in their programme. Apprentices benefit from access to online learning modules and resources to help develop their knowledge. However, tutors do not assess apprentices' understanding of new topics well enough to identify further areas for development and to accelerate their progress.

On the level 5 operations manager apprenticeship, tutors teach a well-planned curriculum. They assess thoroughly apprentices' starting points and thoughtfully sequence taught sessions and independent learning activities. Apprentices develop new knowledge and skills and apply these in increasingly complex situations in their learning and at work. For example, apprentices successfully relate what they have learned about change management to previous learning about management models, such as Tuckman's stages of team development.

On the level 3 team leader apprenticeship, tutors carefully consider apprentices' prior knowledge, experience and career aspirations when planning the programme. They design effective learning activities that enable apprentices to demonstrate their new skills in the workplace. For example, apprentices explain what they have learned about different styles of communication. They use this knowledge successfully to reflect on how their own communication impacts on people in their team and, subsequently, to adapt how they deal with different situations.

Vocational tutors plan online lessons effectively to enable most apprentices to engage well and interact enthusiastically with tutors and their peers. They use careful questioning to check apprentices' understanding of the basic principles of topics before moving on to more advanced activities that enable apprentices to apply their knowledge and skills.

Tutors provide appropriate support to apprentices to enable them to engage in learning and make positive contributions to their workplace. They are aware of apprentices' individual needs during the national restrictions and adapt their delivery accordingly. For example, they are flexible with deadlines that they set for apprentices who are required to home school their children.

The majority of apprentices gain promotion or take on extra responsibility as a result of their training. However, for a few apprentices who are not new to their jobs, it is difficult to determine how the apprenticeship supports their career development or helps them with their next steps at work.

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

- ensure that all apprentices who are behind on their English and mathematics programmes are supported to quickly catch up with their learning in readiness for examination
- ensure that English and mathematics tutors assess apprentices' understanding effectively to help identify what apprentices can and cannot do and what they need to do next
- improve the approach to recruitment and ongoing careers guidance to ensure that apprentices who are not new to their jobs have clear progression pathways from their apprenticeship.

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