

# Accountancy Learning Limited

Progress monitoring report

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<b>Name of lead inspector:</b>	Steven Tucker, Her Majesty's Inspector
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<b>Type of provider:</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Address:</b>	Southernhay Lodge Banfield Crescent Exeter EX1 1QT

## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

Accountancy Learning Limited (AL) received a new provider monitoring visit in September 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**

Leaders have maintained the strengths that inspectors identified during the previous monitoring visit and have dealt with many of the areas for improvement. They continue to review and develop the valuable range of online and text-based learning resources. Leaders and tutors have adapted the support they provide to apprentices in the light of restrictions on face-to-face teaching. As a result, many apprentices continue to improve their knowledge, complete professional qualifications and become valued employees. However, leaders have not dealt effectively with some areas for improvement that inspectors identified. Those responsible for governance do not have a clearly defined role and, most significantly, trainers do not plan and teach a curriculum that suits each of their learners.

Apprentices have access to resources that allow them to study independently. Apprentices have found this particularly helpful in recent months as they juggle homeworking with other family and work commitments. The resources are mostly well-presented and comprehensive, particularly those that learners use to study for their accountancy qualifications. These include tests and quizzes that allow apprentices to check what they have remembered and to practise for their forthcoming examinations. Resources to teach apprentices about staying safe are not of the same high standard.

Tutors provide regular and timely support to their apprentices. During lockdowns, this has been provided online or by telephone. Under normal circumstances, apprentices also attend a weekly drop-in learning session. Apprentices are particularly positive about the support from their tutors in the drop-in sessions. Tutors use these sessions well to respond to apprentices' queries and to help apprentices understand how to write better answers to questions they struggled to answer in tests.

Most apprentices gain significant new knowledge and skills through the training and support they receive in the workplace. For example, an employer has arranged for a level 2 apprentice to learn how to 'cash up' and deal with customer accounts before shadowing staff in another branch. The apprentice is quickly developing the knowledge they need to build a career in accountancy.

Employers are highly supportive of their apprentices. They are complimentary about the support their apprentices receive when they attend the drop-in sessions and receive useful information and guidance on the requirements of the apprenticeship from AL.

Tutors have found that more apprentices have faced difficulties with their mental health and motivation during the pandemic. Therefore, they regularly contact apprentices to check on how they are and, when necessary, refer them to a partner organisation for support. One tutor has benefited from specialist mental health training and has passed information to other tutors so they can better support their apprentices.

Tutors do not plan a curriculum that places enough emphasis on all aspects of the apprenticeship. They concentrate on the professional qualifications but do not plan, teach or assess enough of the behaviours and skills their apprentices should develop. Employers do not contribute sufficiently to the planning of the curriculum. Therefore, tutors do not take sufficient account of apprentices' job role or prior experience when deciding what to teach, the order in which it should be taught and how apprentices could apply their new knowledge in the workplace.

Tutors rely too heavily on apprentices deciding when they need help and choosing the pace at which they learn. They are not sufficiently pro-active in checking that apprentices are learning or challenging them to complete work. Tutors set too many

targets for apprentices to complete a specific unit or piece of work for their professional qualification and few targets that challenge apprentices to become better accountancy professionals.

Tutors expect apprentices to be highly self-motivated. Most are, but some are not, and tutors do not use effective teaching strategies to support these apprentices. As a result, some apprentices become demotivated, struggle to cope and fail to complete their work by the deadlines they have agreed. A significant minority of apprentices are beyond the date by which they should have completed their apprenticeship.

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

- train and support tutors to use methods of teaching and assessment that help apprentices remain motivated and complete their apprenticeships on time
- work closely with employers to design an apprenticeship in which drop-in sessions, tuition, individual study for qualifications and training in the workplace link together to support apprentices to develop quickly new knowledge, skills and behaviours
- identify a clear role for those responsible for governance and ensure that these people challenge and support senior leaders.

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