

Randstad Solutions Limited

Progress monitoring report

Unique reference number:	1278672
Name of lead inspector:	Gerard McGrath, Her Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	Employer
Address:	450 Capability Green Luton LU1 3LU

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Randstad Solutions Limited received a new provider monitoring visit in December 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

Senior leaders and managers have made further improvements to the quality of the apprenticeship programme since the previous visit while also carrying out significant changes to their core business. Senior managers report that changes to the recruitment sector arising from Brexit, and the current government restrictions, have resulted in many apprentices having to work from home, and a redistribution of apprentices' job responsibilities. A few apprentices have been made redundant.

Senior managers and leaders undertook a detailed review of their provision, in discussion with the ESFA. Senior leaders agreed that the current apprenticeship programme no longer meets the needs of their business. They took the strategic decision to withdraw from directly providing the apprenticeship programme, once the remaining apprentices complete their learning. Senior managers stopped recruiting

new apprentices in June 2020. Therefore, the number of apprentices has reduced dramatically from over 200 to the current eight.

In order to provide effective support to current apprentices, managers reviewed the content of the apprenticeship programme, moving all training provision online. Apprentices and training staff report that the quality of learning resources and the rates of progress made by apprentices have improved since the reduction in the number of apprentices and the move to online learning.

Assessors make good use of blended learning to prepare apprentices for their lessons. They use virtual breakout sessions to support group work, role play and peer assessment. Apprentices say that the 'spotlight' online videos of likely workplace scenarios are particularly beneficial to refer to when working from home, and in the absence of colleagues to whom they would have turned for support.

Assessors use a range of assessment techniques effectively to identify apprentices' skills gaps and further training requirements. As a result, apprentices are making rapid progress in their knowledge and skills development. Apprentices submit reflective logs of their work activities, and voice recordings of client calls. Assessors listen in on client calls, using their reflections of what they hear to lead professional discussions with apprentices to assess their new learning and skills.

Assessors are skilled in relating theory to the workplace, which helps apprentices to understand the theory and apply it to their learning effectively. Assessors encourage apprentices to use group sessions to identify their areas for further development and to discuss strategies for improvement with their peers. Apprentices value these discussions, which support the development of their knowledge, skills and workplace behaviours.

Assessors provide useful support for apprentices to improve their English and mathematics skills further. Assessors highlight necessary corrections in punctuation and help apprentices to understand how to use mathematics in their everyday work and life, for example using percentages in order to calculate clients' costs accurately.

Assessors provide limited guidance to apprentices on what they need to do to achieve high grades at their final assessment. Apprentices know roughly when their final assessment will take place, but they are unaware of what they need to do to achieve higher grades.

Branch managers report that they are fully involved in the apprentices' learning and help them make effective progress in their learning. They ensure that apprentices receive their dedicated allocation time for study. Branch managers also provide testimonies on apprentices' competencies and feedback on how they can improve further.

Apprentices have a good understanding of safeguarding and the principles of equality and diversity. They are able to apply their learning to work tasks effectively. For example, apprentices are confident in ensuring that applicants with disabilities

are encouraged equally to apply for job vacancies. Where they work in education recruitment, they have a good understanding of the importance of 'Keeping children safe in education'.

Apprentices now have a better understanding of the potential risks arising from radicalisation and extremism. Assessors make good use of the available resources through the Educare system to inform the apprentices about these topics. Branch managers and assessors discuss relevant topics with apprentices during their regular meetings.

Branch managers and assessors help apprentices to develop their career plans; these focus strongly on progression within the company and apprentices are aware of internal progression routes. They have insufficient understanding of wider and longer-term career progression and how further training could support their ambitions.

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

- ensure that future strategic plans for a curriculum meet the reasonable needs of apprentices as well as the needs of the business, before offering future training programmes
- ensure that assessors provide apprentices with detailed information on their final assessment and how they can achieve high grades
- ensure that managers and assessors provide apprentices with impartial information, advice and guidance on the next steps in their employment, education and training.

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