

Genius Solutions Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 1158450

Name of lead inspector: Carolyn Brownsea Her Majesty's Inspector

Inspection dates: 24-25 November 2020

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From October 2018, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision which began to be funded from April 2017 or after by ESFA and/or the apprenticeship levy. This provider received a monitoring visit under these arrangements and was found to be making insufficient progress against one or more themes.

On 17 March 2020, all routine inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. As part of our phased return to routine inspections, we are carrying out additional monitoring visits to new providers that were judged to be making insufficient progress against one or more themes at their previous monitoring visit and would have been due their full inspection up to or during the interim phase but have not received it because of the suspension of routine inspections. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements as outlined in the [interim phase operational note for further education and skills](#) and with reference to the further education and skills handbook and is focused on the themes set out below.

Genius Solutions Limited is a small independent learning provider. Prior to gaining approval to offer apprenticeships, it was a partner member of a learning consortium. At the time of the monitoring visit, the company has 18 standards-based apprentices. Of these, eight apprentices are working towards learning and development practitioner at level 3, six are working towards assessor/coach at level 4, fewer than five apprentices are working towards learning and skills teacher at level 5 and operations/departmental manager at level 5. Apprentices study additional qualifications alongside their apprenticeship, such as the level 5 diploma in education and training or qualifications in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL).

Themes

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?

Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers have not resolved the weaknesses found at the previous monitoring visit. While leaders have started to take actions to resolve some of the weaknesses, they have been too slow to make essential improvements to the quality of apprenticeships. Leaders and managers have not yet developed sufficiently effective plans to help those apprentices who are behind with their work catch up.

Leaders and managers do not plan apprentices' training well enough. Apprentices do not receive high-quality, off-the-job training. The training offered by the provider still does not meet the principles of apprenticeships. Managers cannot provide evidence that apprentices develop substantial new skills and knowledge because of their apprenticeship.

Staff are appropriately qualified for their roles. They have industry-specific experience and qualifications that support the teaching of the apprenticeship. Leaders' systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning are ineffective. Leaders do not use the information gathered during teaching observations to make sure assessors continue to improve their teaching skills. Leaders have not intervened quickly enough since the previous monitoring visit to put in place procedures that allow them to monitor the progress of apprentices. Although leaders and managers now meet monthly, they do not record the actions they have completed or will take. Consequently, leaders are not able to evaluate whether apprentices' progress is improving.

Too many apprentices remain unclear that they are studying an apprenticeship. Apprentices studying at levels 3 and 4 understand they are working towards relevant additional qualifications, such as TESOL. However, they are not familiar with the key components of their apprenticeship programme. Leaders have yet to put in place a strategy for careers information and advice beyond advertising job vacancies.

Too many apprentices do not receive timely and sufficient support to prepare them for their final assessment. Staff put too much emphasis on apprentices completing the additional qualifications, rather than preparing them for the requirements of their apprenticeship. Apprentices are not clear how to apply the knowledge, skills, and behaviours of the apprenticeship to their work.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? Insufficient progress

Leaders have a vision for apprentices to become confident, proficient, and resilient teachers and future leaders. Apprentices speak enthusiastically about how the diploma qualification allows them to build on their teaching practice, increase confidence and improve their research skills. However, too many apprentices and their employers do not understand the requirements of their apprenticeship. This means that apprentices do not have enough opportunities to develop wider skills relevant to their roles and their future plans. For example, apprentices do not develop sufficiently the skills to monitor and support their learners' progress.

Leaders and managers have put in place arrangements to identify the prior experience and qualifications of apprentices. They do not use this information to plan

or tailor learning to meet the specific development needs of apprentices or employers.

Although staff allow apprentices to determine the sequence of learning according to their employment context and prior learning, they do not support apprentices in this planning. Consequently, too many apprentices are making slow progress and have not completed their courses as planned.

Staff do not have an established routine of meeting with employers to review apprentices' progress. Staff are overly reliant on apprentices explaining course requirements and progress to their employers. Some apprentices and employers do not have sufficient awareness of the assessments required for their apprenticeship. Consequently, employers do not benefit from a detailed understanding of apprentices' progress.

Apprentices appreciate the introduction of online learning resources that staff have put in place as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. These enable apprentices to learn at times that suit their job role and work commitments. Since the previous monitoring visit, staff have introduced mathematics workshops to improve apprentices' data analysis within their research projects.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Reasonable progress

Leaders meet their obligations to safeguard adult apprentices. The designated safeguarding officer and deputy have completed appropriate training. Leaders have appropriate policies and procedures in place. Trainers know how to report concerns about the safety and welfare of an apprentice. To date, there have been no reported concerns. Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, staff contact apprentices frequently to monitor personal and welfare issues that may affect them.

Leaders have in place an up-to-date 'Prevent' duty action plan. They have made initial links with local agencies to increase their awareness of the local risks apprentices may encounter to improve support for them. They have not yet received information to inform trainers and apprentices of these risks.

Apprentices feel safe. They complete safeguarding training with their employers and, as a result, know how to keep themselves and the learners they work with safe. They are not able to recall the training they have completed as part of their apprenticeship.

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