

Buttercups Training Limited

Progress monitoring report

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Name of lead inspector: Saul Pope, Her Majesty's Inspector

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Buttercups Training Limited 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 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 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

Since the new provider monitoring visit, leaders have taken decisive action to improve the training that they offer. They have used their in-depth subject knowledge to develop standards-based apprenticeships at levels 2 and 3 that meet the needs of apprentices well. For example, apprentices on the level 3 pharmacy technician apprenticeship can attain General Pharmaceutical Council registration.

Communication is strong between the provider's staff and employers. Workplace mentors receive valuable training to help them carry out their mentoring role effectively. Line managers have a thorough understanding of their employees' progress, and are actively involved in reviews. On- and off-the-job training relates well to apprentices' workplace duties. Where short-term staffing issues make it difficult for apprentices to get their off-the-job training, tutors and employers work

proactively to make up the necessary time. Tutors make rational adaptations to curriculums to ensure that apprentices can continue to learn if their work plans change due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Apprentices benefit from good-quality careers information, advice and guidance. They are ambitious about a variety of career options beyond their immediate workplace. Where there have been opportunities to gain promotion during their programmes, careers staff have supported apprentices to fully understand the skills and qualities the new role will require.

Leaders have also improved tutor training. Tutors undertake a comprehensive in-house teacher development programme. They learn the basic elements of remote teaching before moving on to more complex theoretical topics. Training also focuses on the difference between teaching apprenticeship standards and frameworks. In a small number of cases, tutors have not made the expected progress on this programme.

Tutors are subject experts with considerable industry experience. They use apprentices' existing professional knowledge as well as their formal qualifications to plan their training programmes effectively. During lessons and reviews, tutors are both exacting and supportive. They use teaching activities well to engage apprentices and check their understanding, for example quizzes to check level 2 pharmacy services apprentices' knowledge of dispensing errors. Tutors frequently link theory activities back to the workplace through case studies and real-life examples.

Apprentices also study online using well-presented and engaging resources. Tasks relate directly to apprentices' workplaces, such as a focus on how apprentices use standard operating procedures in their pharmacies. While studying remotely, apprentices can easily access tutor support. In the majority of cases, tutors give apprentices clear guidance on improvements they should make to written work. They correct misconceptions and challenge apprentices to produce even better quality work. In a small number of cases, apprentices on both standards- and framework-based programmes have to wait too long to receive feedback.

Apprentices gain substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours as a result of their studies. At work, they use these effectively. Level 3 pharmacy technician apprentices that work in community pharmacies support patients with using inhalers and understanding the side-effects of medicines. Level 2 pharmacy services apprentices that work in hospitals can confidently deal with colleagues' queries about medicines. This allows pharmacists to delegate more challenging tasks to them than before.

Leaders have greatly improved pastoral support for apprentices. During pastoral checks, apprentices comprehensively cover safeguarding themes such as online safety and domestic abuse. Where apprentices show a vague understanding of these topics, tutors successfully focus on improving their knowledge. The small number of apprentices who are under 19 receive more detailed checks on their welfare.

Leaders have increased the focus on apprentices' well-being as a result of the pandemic. Tutors receive training to help them better support apprentices' mental health. Apprentices discuss their welfare during pastoral checks. They also access additional resources on stress management, and positive and negative emotions. Apprentices who struggle with their programmes due to personal issues receive additional support from tutors and the safeguarding team. They rightly feel that they are well supported.

Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from appropriate support. For example, tutors break down activities into smaller stages where this will support apprentices with dyslexia or autism.

Managers rightly focus on breaking down apprentices' apprehensions about their English and mathematics skills. Apprentices that need additional support with English and mathematics access good-quality resources to improve these skills. Over time they make improvements, such as with their use of English grammar in written assignments.

Most apprentices have a sound understanding of end-point assessment and feel well prepared for this.

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

- ensure that all apprentices receive timely feedback on their written assignments.

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