

Achieving Excellence UK Ltd

Progress monitoring report

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Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Achieving Excellence UK Ltd received a new provider monitoring visit in February 2019. 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

Since the previous monitoring visit, leaders and managers have revised their self-assessment processes to evaluate their performance better. They set clear targets and actions which link well to their areas for improvement. Managers have improved the way they assess apprentices at the start of the programme. They use these assessments effectively to identify gaps in apprentices' skills for English and mathematics. Assessors then provide individualised teaching support to apprentices early on in their programme and set specific exercises towards improving their areas of weakness. Most apprentices approaching their final assessments have already achieved their English and mathematics qualifications.

Staff discuss apprentices' job roles thoroughly at the start of their apprenticeship to ensure they are on the right course and identify relevant on-the-job training opportunities. Staff use this information well to put together effective assessment plans. Assessors, who have extensive sector experience, expertly draw upon their knowledge to teach apprentices substantial new skills and knowledge related to their job roles. Apprentices use their newly learned skills well at work. Employers recognise the improvements apprentices have made due to their learning and value their positive contributions to the workplace.

Managers work effectively with assessors to logically sequence and structure the curriculum for all programmes. For example, they design the team leader supervisor curriculum to develop apprentices' knowledge around self-awareness, effective communication and setting development goals. Assessors then focus on teaching in-depth knowledge of specific areas, such as human resources and finance. Consequently, apprentices develop deeper knowledge over time.

In the group and one-to-one teaching sessions, assessors skilfully share screens, use explanatory power points and play case review videos to support professional discussions. They use break out rooms well to manage group work effectively. Assessors check the knowledge and understanding of apprentices well through questioning, discussions and marking their work. Most apprentices produce good quality work and use research and reflective practice well to demonstrate their competence.

Assessors provide encouraging feedback on apprentices' work and identify knowledge gaps well. However, they do not check apprentices' work carefully enough and often miss opportunities to correct spellings, punctuation and grammatical errors. Assessors do not consistently check the work of apprentices who have failed examinations. As a result, apprentices continue to make similar errors in future assignments and tasks.

Leaders have improved communications with employers in order to update them on apprentices' progress. As a result of pressures upon employers during the pandemic, assessors have struggled to involve them in reviews of apprentices' progress. In a minority of cases, assessors have not been able to keep employers fully informed of their apprentices' progress. The targets they set apprentices do not focus sufficiently on helping apprentices develop skills and behaviours related to their work.

Assessors provide suitable opportunities for apprentices to extend their learning beyond the qualification requirements through extensive research and set higher-level work as extension activities. Assessors encourage early years practitioners on level two programmes to apply their knowledge of safeguarding policies and procedures to explore how they would implement them as room leaders or managers.

Apprentices benefit considerably from the one-to-one support for their studies and well-being. Assessors hold extra sessions and effectively implement rapid action

plans for apprentices who have fallen behind to enable them to catch up. Despite the delays caused by COVID-19 related restrictions, most apprentices have completed their programme.

Staff frequently share information with apprentices on safeguarding, well-being, COVID-19 and mental health. Assessors encourage apprentices to take frequent breaks when learning online and to go for walks for destressing. Assessors also signpost apprentices to appropriate external support on issues, including debt management and grief counselling.

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

- involve employers more effectively in apprentices' progress reviews to ensure targets are set, which include information on how to develop specific knowledge, skills and behaviours
- ensure assessors check apprentices work carefully, in particular for those who fail examinations, and provide helpful feedback, including in the use of spelling, punctuation and grammar.

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