

LDN Apprenticeships Ltd

Progress monitoring report

Unique reference number:	1276252
Name of lead inspector:	Gayle Saundry, Her Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

LDN Apprenticeships Ltd received a new provider monitoring visit in January 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?

Significant progress

Since March 2020, leaders have successfully introduced a new online teaching model in which apprentices learn from a range of high-quality resources. Skills coaches now teach apprentices via effective online group lessons and conduct comprehensive online reviews with individual apprentices and their line managers.

Leaders work effectively with skills coaches to design and sequence the curriculum for each programme. For example, they sequence the publishing curriculum to teach the knowledge and skills apprentices need through all of the different stages of the publication life cycle. As a result, apprentices develop knowledge of the full end-to-end process from commission to publication. Leaders have recently set up employer

advisory boards that they use to good effect to gain insights from sector specialists. Leaders use these insights to determine the content of the curriculum.

Apprentices benefit from coaches with extensive sector experience who help them to learn the skills and knowledge they need for their careers. Apprentices are very positive about their experience at LDN and can articulate fluently the new knowledge and skills they have gained. Their managers also recognise the skills apprentices have developed. For instance, managers recognised that business analyst apprentices exhibited increased confidence in applying different business methodologies with customers. At the end of their course, a large proportion of apprentices secure permanent positions with their employers.

Apprentices have frequent high-quality skills coaching sessions in which they discuss the knowledge they have learned, and then receive feedback from their skills coaches and line managers. In conjunction with apprentices' line managers, skills coaches support apprentices to set appropriate targets for what they need to do to improve. This supports apprentices to make swift progress.

Skills coaches assess the knowledge of apprentices very well through questioning, group discussions and quizzes. Skills coaches provide detailed and helpful feedback on apprentices' work. Apprentices use this feedback to improve the quality of their work, which is good. Coaches provide targeted feedback, where appropriate, to support apprentices to achieve outstanding criteria.

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their apprenticeship provision. They gather frequently the views of their apprentices and employers. Where an area for improvement is raised, leaders discuss the issue at board level and take actions in order to improve. Leaders assess the quality of skills coaches' work through regular meetings in which they discuss and review their work. Historically, leaders gathered a good amount of first-hand evidence of how skills coaches were performing. While this has been reduced during the pandemic and the transition to online teaching, leaders recognise the need to reintroduce this level of quality assurance in the near future.

Apprentices benefit from access to good support for their studies and for their well-being. Through their rigorous recruitment process, staff identify any additional needs that apprentices may have at the start of their course. This helps staff to tailor their teaching so that apprentices get the support they need to make progress. For example, apprentices improve their skills in English and mathematics by completing exercises targeted towards improving their areas of weakness. Skills coaches ensure that discussions around the effective use of English and mathematics at work feature prominently during apprentices' reviews.

Apprentices feel safe and most have a good understanding of how to stay safe, including online. Apprentices know who to contact should they have any concerns. Staff work closely with apprentices under the age of 18 and their parents and carers to check on apprentices' welfare and how they are getting on at work.

From the very beginning of their course, a small minority of apprentices do not understand how they will be assessed at the end of their apprenticeship. While apprentices typically intend to remain with their employer following their final assessment, leaders do not ensure that all apprentices are aware of the full breadth of opportunities available to them at the end of their course.

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

- ensure that all apprentices understand how they will be assessed at the end of their apprenticeship so that they are able to prepare effectively.

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