

Skillwise Training UK Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 2554066

Name of lead inspector: Andrea Dill-Russell, Her Majesty's Inspector

Inspection dates: 16 to 17 March 2021

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: 4 Beacon Court
Great Barr
Birmingham
B43 6NN

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 the Education and Skills Funding Agency and/or the apprenticeship levy. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the *Further education and skills inspection handbook*, especially the sections entitled 'Monitoring visits' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

Skillwise Training UK Limited (Skillwise) was founded in 2006 as a training provider catering for sports coaching and physical training. It evolved to offer training in more subject areas following a restructure in 2016. Skillwise started to provide levy-funded apprenticeships in 2018. At the time of the inspection, 91 apprentices were on the level 3 team leader/supervisor, level 3 business administration and level 3 customer service standards-based apprenticeships. There were fewer than five apprentices enrolled on level 4 business administration framework apprenticeships. Skillwise does not use subcontractors to deliver training.

The impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) has been taken into account in the findings and progress judgements below.

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

Senior leaders recognise that the move from face-to-face to remote teaching has been problematic. Although tutors frequently check on apprentices during review meetings, they do not provide regular off-the-job training sessions. Too many apprentices have had few or no teaching sessions since they started their apprenticeship. For example, too often business administration apprentices work on their own to research theories, so that they can complete their work. As a result, most apprentices are making slow progress on their apprenticeship.

Senior leaders do not use quality assurance processes well enough to ensure that they have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching. They identified that quality assurance processes were overly focused on compliance and have plans in place to rectify this. They have recently recruited to key management positions for quality. These newly recruited managers have begun to realign processes. However, it is too early to see the impact of these changes.

Senior leaders provide frequent training for tutors. However, with the exception of training to ensure tutors have a good understanding of safeguarding topics, training is overly focused on the completion of paperwork and not on the teaching skills of tutors. Most tutors have experience in the industry and an introductory qualification to teaching. Leaders have rightly identified that the quality of teaching and training is not consistently good.

Senior leaders have taken a sensible approach to growing the business. They have identified their skills and expertise carefully in particular subject areas and work with employers who are seeking apprenticeships in these subjects.

Senior leaders and staff recruit apprentices with integrity. They work closely with employers to provide advice and guidance and to evaluate apprentices' skills. They use the information well to match apprentices to the right subject and level of apprenticeship. Employers are positive about the way in which leaders and staff from Skillwise work and communicate with them.

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

Tutors work with apprentices to evaluate their starting points in detail. However, they do not use this information well enough to plan off-the-job training to ensure that apprentices are able to improve over time. Tutors do not ensure that apprentices receive the high-quality teaching they need to enable them to develop the new and relevant skills and knowledge they need for the workplace.

Prior to the first national lockdown, tutors taught apprentices face to face over the period of a day. They have adapted their approach to teach topics through short online presentations. However, tutors have not considered well enough the different approaches required when teaching remotely. On a minority of occasions, tutors cover too much content during sessions. Apprentices do not have the time within sessions to understand the context of the topics taught and how this applies to their assignments or their workplace. For example, level 3 team leader/supervisor apprentices do not understand the differences between weaknesses and threats when completing a SWOT analysis. Too many apprentices are not able to recall what they have learned or demonstrate how they can apply this in their work.

Tutors do not routinely assess what apprentices have learned. Tutors do not require apprentices to complete work which relates to the theories taught in their training. They are not able to evaluate the gaps in apprentices' knowledge. Too many apprentices, including those who have been on programme for 12 months, have submitted only one piece of written work. As a result, most apprentices make slow progress on their programme.

Tutors do not ensure that apprentices understand what they need to study to be successful on their programme. Tutors do not provide teaching sessions or support to ensure that apprentices improve their vocational, English and mathematics skills and knowledge. As a result, tutors do not ensure that apprentices improve sufficiently the skills and knowledge they need to be successful on their programme.

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

Leaders and staff provide good support for apprentices. They provide apprentices with the opportunity to undertake mental health first-aid training when they start their programme. Apprentices demonstrate an understanding of how they can use the knowledge they have gained to support others in the workplace. Tutors review apprentices' well-being during reviews. Most apprentices know who to report their concerns to with regards to safeguarding and well-being.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy designated safeguarding officer are well qualified. The DSL ensures safer recruitment procedures are in place and maintains a single central register. Staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty, as well as completing training to become mental health first-aiders.

Most apprentices are over the age of 19. On the few occasions where staff recruit younger apprentices, the DSL liaises with parents, employers and local safeguarding boards to identify areas for concern. Senior leaders record and monitor carefully the small number of concerns raised with regards to apprentices' well-being.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021