

The Educationwise Academy Ltd

Monitoring visit report

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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 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.

The Educationwise Academy Ltd (TEAL) recruited its first apprentices in August 2019. At the time of this inspection, there were 90 apprentices working towards standards-based apprenticeships, 49 studying level 3 community sport and health officer, 10 studying level 3 rail engineering technician, 10 studying level 3 team leader/supervisor, eight studying level 2 lean manufacturing operative and seven studying level 5 operations / department manager. A small number of apprentices study on level 2 community activator coach, level 2 rail engineering operative and level 4 assessor coach apprenticeships

During the COVID-19 (coronavirus) national lockdowns TEAL moved their face-to-face learning sessions online so that apprentices were able to continue with their studies. The impact of COVID-19 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?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have worked hard to plan and deliver a well-organised programme of training that meets the apprenticeship requirements. They are diligent in ensuring that employers and apprentices are fully aware of the requirements of an apprenticeship.

Apprentices are recruited with integrity. Leaders and managers work well with employers to tailor the curriculum to meet employers' specific needs and their workforce requirements. Employers in the rail industry place significant importance on developing their apprentices, providing them with opportunities to take on more responsibility and gain promotions, which helps them to meet staff succession planning targets.

Managers ensure employers know what their apprentices are learning, and in what order. This means employers can plan opportunities for their apprentices to practise the skills and knowledge they gain during off-the-job training at work. For example, rail apprentices apply their off-the-job learning when using diagnostic software on railway points. Team leader apprentices learn how to plan and chair a meeting and develop the communication skills required to manage conflict.

Leaders and managers have a detailed understanding of the key strengths and areas for improvement of the apprenticeships they offer. They use this information well to improve the quality of apprentices' experiences. Managers use standardisation meetings effectively to enable trainers to identify and share good practice from face-to-face and online teaching sessions.

Leaders recognise the value of additional scrutiny and challenge. They recently established a governing board comprising of three senior company leaders and one external consultant. At the time of inspection, the board had met only once, and it is, therefore, too soon to judge its effectiveness.

Trainers are well qualified and highly experienced in their subject areas. They skilfully provide apprentices with expert knowledge of the industries in which they work. As a result, apprentices benefit from high-quality and interesting teaching.

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

Leaders and managers ensure that trainers have the pedagogical expertise to provide apprentices with high-quality training. Most training resources are of a good quality. The majority of apprentices use these effectively during on and off-the-job training. For example, rail apprentices use virtual reality headsets that enable them to practise wiring tasks in a safe environment.

Trainers develop apprentices' knowledge and understanding well during lessons, through effective use of recap, questioning and assessment. Community health and sports officer apprentices demonstrate a good understanding of their community roles and can describe strategies to increase the accessibility of sport and the need to engage local residents.

Trainers work well with employers to ensure that apprentices improve their practical skills at the right times in their apprenticeships and add value to the workplace. For example, rail engineering apprentices firstly learn basic signalling and points systems, and community support and health officer apprentices study the importance of safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty at the start of their apprenticeships.

Trainers provide apprentices with detailed feedback, using oral recordings, video messaging and written comments, which they link carefully to the apprenticeship standards. The feedback helps apprentices to continually improve their skills. For example, apprentices know how to use correct spelling and grammar when writing and how to achieve a higher grade in their written assignments.

Trainers have developed a range of useful vocational learning activities, which help apprentices develop their English, mathematics and digital skills. For example, community health and sports officer apprentices complete an online sports activity funding application, which includes written explanations and budgetary information.

A minority of apprentices studying the lean manufacturing operative's apprenticeship do not always receive sufficient time for the off-the-job training. Consequently, apprentices sometimes need to undertake their studies in their own time. However, this has not impacted on the progress that apprentices' make in learning new knowledge.

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

Leaders ensure that apprentices feel safe and practise safely at work. They place a high priority on making sure apprentices know how to, and whom to, report any safeguarding concerns. Leaders ensure that all staff have received relevant safeguarding training, such as, the 'Prevent' duty. As a result, they have a good understanding of current safeguarding practices. Staff use this information well to help apprentices to understand how to keep safe.

Leaders and managers complete appropriate checks of all staff to ensure they are suitable to work with apprentices. Leaders ensure that apprentices working in schools are checked appropriately and are safe to work in such settings.

Trainers work effectively with apprentices to develop their knowledge and understanding of issues such as county line and female genital mutilation. One apprentice explained how their increased knowledge and awareness enabled them to better protect the children they work with.

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