

Instep UK Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	2526587
Name of lead inspector:	Alison Humphreys, Her Majesty's Inspector
Inspection dates:	30—31 March 2021
Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
Address:	Somerford Business Court Holmes Chapel Road Somerford Congleton CW12 4SN

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.

Instep UK Limited (Instep) is a national training provider that is based in Congleton, Cheshire. Instep received its own directly funded contract in May 2018. At the time of the visit, there were 1,185 apprentices on apprenticeship programmes between levels 2 and 5. Over half of all apprentices follow standards-based provision in level 3 team leader/supervisor or level 5 operations/departmental manager. The remaining apprentices study across a range of sectors, including retail, customer services, and food and drink. One hundred and ninety-four apprentices were on a break in learning due to COVID-19 (coronavirus) restrictions.

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 work closely with employers to develop and provide innovative apprenticeship programmes. For example, they include topics such as how to write effective business proposals. This allows managers to upskill their workforce and allows them to make an effective contribution to their employers' business.

Leaders ensure that staff are appropriately qualified to provide training programmes to a high standard. Trainers and tutors are industry experts with significant experience in leadership roles at a senior level. They benefit from regular training to improve their teaching and keep up to date with industry innovations and practice. As a result, apprentices benefit from relevant industry expertise in their training.

Leaders monitor apprentices' progress closely through monthly reviews with tutors. Tutors use the outcomes of these meetings to inform the next steps in training and put actions in place. Apprentices who fall behind receive individual support from tutors to help them catch-up.

Leaders and managers do not have an effective oversight of plans to help apprentices who are making slow progress to catch up. Leaders took the strategic decision to enrol 214 apprentices from four training providers. The vast majority of these apprentices have not completed their apprenticeship on time. Managers are putting plans in place to support apprentices to complete.

A few apprentices have not received their planned off-the-job training hours due to COVID-19 restrictions. Leaders make regular contact with employers' senior managers and put new plans in place quickly. For example, employers are sharing the workload of apprentices with other colleagues and mandating specific days for apprentices to catch up on their apprenticeship.

In March 2021, Instep UK changed ownership and appointed a new chair to the board. They recognise the need to recruit members to the board to further improve the quality of training that apprentices receive.

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**

Tutors use information about apprentices' prior knowledge and experience to plan their training. They regularly review how well apprentices progress on their programme. Tutors identify gaps in knowledge and put actions in place to help apprentices catch up.

Trainers teach topics in a logical order to progressively build apprentices knowledge, skills and behaviours. At the start of the programme, apprentices learn the differences between management and leadership before moving on to dealing with conflict. Apprentices use this new learning to improve team performance in their business.

Apprentices develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours. They explain enthusiastically about the new knowledge, skills and behaviours they are learning and how they apply this in their jobs. For example, apprentices use time management techniques and prioritisation to improve their efficiency at work.

Managers use a range of information to identify and support those apprentices with additional learning needs. Trainers and tutors have a detailed understanding of the adjustments they need to make in sessions to support apprentices learning. They adapt online resources for apprentices with visual impairments and adapt teaching approaches for those who have dyslexia. This reduces barriers to learning for apprentices and supports them to make progress on their programme.

Trainers and tutors work collaboratively with employers to plan apprentices' final assessment projects. These link to employers' strategic priorities, so they impact positively on the business. For example, apprentices on the operational departmental

management apprenticeship complete projects that focus on developing the culture within their teams. Employers talk positively about the impact this is having on the culture of the business.

The quality of feedback that apprentices receive does not consistently support their development. For example, not all tutors provide apprentices with information on what they can do to improve the quality of their written work. As a result, a few apprentices do not produce work to the standard of which they are capable.

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

The designated safeguarding lead has received appropriate training to carry out their role effectively. All staff benefit from regular training and updates in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Where safeguarding concerns arise, these are logged and followed up swiftly.

Apprentices benefit from additional support and individual learning programmes to support their welfare. Apprentices who are struggling due to redundancy and balancing work and home life receive additional visits from their tutor. They complete online courses on mental health and managing stressful situations. As a result, they remain on programme.

Apprentices feel safe and know who to contact if they have safeguarding concerns. They understand safeguarding protocols for working online, such as using blurred backgrounds during calls.

Apprentices receive training at induction and in training sessions on the potential risks of radicalisation and extremism. However, too many apprentices do not understand these concepts or how they relate to their work and personal lives.

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