

Ebor Academy Trust

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.

Ebor Academy Trust is a multi-academy trust that consists of 24 schools across York, North Yorkshire, the East Riding of Yorkshire, and Hull. The apprenticeship programmes are managed and delivered by a dedicated apprenticeships team that is part of the central services section of the trust. Ebor Academy Trust began providing apprenticeships in September 2018. At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 19 apprentices studying the level 3 teaching assistant standard, seven apprentices studying the level 3 early years educator standard and three apprentices studying the level 4 school business professional standard. The large majority of apprentices are employed within Ebor Academy Trust.

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?

Significant progress

Leaders have a very clear strategy to deliver apprenticeships that will develop the skills and knowledge of support staff within the trust and the local area. They focus only on subjects in which the trust has expertise. Leaders work very well with subject experts from across the trust to create programmes that meet the needs of the schools. For example, leaders established a cross-organisation steering group to plan the curriculum for the early years educator standard.

Leaders recruit apprentices with integrity. They carry out rigorous initial assessments to check that apprentices are suitable for the programme. They make good use of the information that they gather from these assessments to plan training that is responsive to the skills needs and the interests of individual apprentices. For example, leaders support apprentices who have an interest in working with children

with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to spend time in a school with specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND to practise their skills.

Leaders have a strong understanding of the needs of individual apprentices. They carefully monitor the progress and development of each apprentice and take pertinent action to support those who are at risk of falling behind. Leaders provide laptops and training for apprentices who otherwise would be unable to complete and submit their assignments online.

Leaders and those responsible for governance have a clear awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the programmes. They actively seek feedback from external consultants and take purposeful action to address areas of weakness. For example, leaders acted decisively to change the delivery model for functional English and mathematics when the performance of subcontractors did not meet their expectations.

Leaders employ tutors who are highly qualified and have significant experience. They provide relevant training that helps tutors to update their subject knowledge, improve their teaching and understand the requirements of the apprenticeship assessment plan. As a result, apprentices receive meaningful teaching and know what to expect as they approach their end-point assessment.

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

Leaders plan an ambitious curriculum that enables apprentices to develop significant and very relevant new knowledge, skills and behaviours. Employers speak highly of the positive contribution that apprentices make in their school. For example, apprentices studying the school business professional standard take on extra responsibility for budget allocation.

Tutors and trust subject experts use their knowledge skilfully to plan and deliver a well-sequenced curriculum. They start by teaching apprentices about child development, which apprentices apply to their job role, before moving on to more complex topics. Apprentices know more and can do more as a result of their training. Those studying the teaching assistant standard put their knowledge of child development to good use when they plan meaningful activities for children of different ages.

Leaders work closely with headteachers to ensure that apprentices benefit from a well-integrated programme of on- and off-the-job training. They create meaningful opportunities for apprentices to spend time in different trust schools. For example, apprentices who work in rural schools exchange places with apprentices who work in city-centre schools.

Tutors support apprentices well to improve their skills in English and mathematics. They provide useful online resources and fortnightly tutorials for the small number of apprentices who need to gain qualifications in English or mathematics. Tutors provide individual guidance for apprentices who have already achieved qualifications in these subjects. This helps apprentices to continue to improve their English and mathematical skills and to apply their skills effectively in the workplace to support the children with whom they work.

Tutors give apprentices swift and helpful advice on how to improve their work. They prompt apprentices to consider how they can deepen and apply their knowledge. Apprentices act positively on this feedback, and as a result, produce work of a high standard. Apprentices studying the early years educator standard develop good questioning skills, which they use effectively when evaluating children's progress.

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

Leaders have developed a strong culture of safeguarding across the apprenticeship programmes. They place high importance on apprentices learning how to keep themselves safe and how to support the children with whom they work. They give apprentices useful information on a range of safeguarding topics, direct apprentices to appropriate social media sources, and reinforce key messages in taught sessions. As a result, apprentices keep their knowledge up to date and use it effectively in their job roles in order to make a significant contribution to the safeguarding of children.

Leaders benefit from expertise across the trust to implement safeguarding policies and provide training to staff on relevant topics, such as supporting vulnerable groups and staying safe online. Leaders follow safe recruitment practices when they employ new staff and fully comply with the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty. They make good use of information from external sources to keep their knowledge current.

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