

Westcountry Schools Trust (trading as The Learning Institute)

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	2497161
Name of lead inspector:	Steve Lambert, HMI
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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 the 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 Learning Institute is a training organisation based in Roche, Cornwall and is part of Westcountry Schools Trust. It specialises in providing apprenticeships to schools within the trust. At the time of this monitoring visit, six apprentices were studying the level 3 standards-based apprenticeship in either business administration or team leading.

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?

Reasonable progress

Leaders ensure that the courses they offer meet the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. They have worked closely with school leaders to provide appropriate apprenticeships and plan carefully a curriculum that will enable the apprentices to support the work of the schools within the multi-academy trust.

Leaders work effectively with school leaders to recruit suitable apprentices onto apprenticeships. Apprentices learn substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours, which they apply directly in their job roles. Apprentices' managers rightly appreciate the valuable contribution that apprentices make to their school.

Leaders have recruited tutors with considerable experience in the education sector. Tutors share this knowledge with apprentices freely, which enriches their learning. However, leaders do not have an effective process for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching. For example, leaders do not routinely observe training sessions. Consequently, they do not provide tutors with sufficient support and feedback to enable them to make further improvements in the quality of their training.

Leaders work closely with school staff to ensure that they are fully aware of their apprentices' programmes of study. Leaders and school managers meet monthly to

plan how apprentices can apply the knowledge and skills they have learned in the workplace.

Tutors meet frequently with apprentices to review the progress they have made in learning new skills and knowledge. As part of the review process, tutors set apprentices targets. However, these focus on the completion of tasks or workbooks, rather than the skills that apprentices need to develop further. Consequently, apprentices do not always recognise the skills they have developed over time.

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

Tutors teach the curriculum in a logical and well-sequenced order. Tutors identify effectively what apprentices know and can do at the start of their course. They use this information well to help plan the learning that apprentices need to complete. They teach apprentices key topics at the start of the course, such as the purpose of an organisation's vision and mission. They build on this initial learning well, so that apprentices understand more complex concepts. However, tutors do not always provide apprentices with enough guidance on the depth and breadth of knowledge they should be gaining through independent learning. As a result, apprentices do not gain a deep enough knowledge and understanding of all topics.

Apprentices value the opportunity to develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours relevant to their job roles. Tutors and workplace mentors work together successfully, helping apprentices to increase their knowledge and confidence at work. Apprentices know how to manage projects effectively. They understand the importance of storing information securely, in line with relevant legislation.

Most apprentices understand what they need to do to achieve their apprenticeship, including how to complete their final assessments successfully and how to achieve higher grades. Leaders and managers hold tutors to account for the progress apprentices make. When needed, tutors develop detailed action plans to support individual apprentices to catch up and complete their apprenticeship within the agreed time frame.

Tutors and mentors are correcting apprentices' errors in English and mathematics, but not ensuring that apprentices improve their English and mathematical skills further. This means that apprentices simply go on repeating mistakes and their development of essential English and mathematical skills is slow.

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

Leaders and managers ensure that their safeguarding arrangements for apprentices are effective. They conduct appropriate checks at the start of the apprenticeship to ensure that apprentices are suitable to work with children. Leaders manage

safeguarding practice well, and review and update their safeguarding policies annually. Apprentices receive helpful support when needed from provider and school staff, which includes support for their well-being.

Apprentices have an appropriate knowledge of safeguarding and health and safety. They receive information from their employer and, during their course, study a module in safeguarding. Tutors ensure that the content of this curriculum reflects well the knowledge that apprentices need to work in schools.

While apprentices say that they feel safe, tutors do not always check apprentices' knowledge of safeguarding during their progress reviews. Too often, tutors check whether there have been any safeguarding incidents at work, but do not assess apprentices' understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

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