

The Procurement Academy

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector:	Cath Jackson, Her Majesty's Inspector
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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 Procurement Academy provides levy-funded apprenticeships in locations that include Leeds, Doncaster, Sheffield, Manchester and Birmingham. Currently, 27 apprentices are on the standards-based apprenticeship in commercial procurement and supply chain at level 4. All apprentices are aged over 19.

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

Leaders and managers have not ensured that the training they provide fully meets the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. Leaders have devised the curriculum around a recognised qualification, the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply (CIPS) level 4 diploma in procurement and supply. However, the curriculum does not focus sufficiently on developing the substantial new skills and behaviours that apprentices need for their roles in procurement and supply.

Leaders do not communicate well enough with employers about apprentices' on-the-job training. Employers create opportunities for apprentices to develop their skills in the workplace, but managers and tutors do not recognise or routinely record the significance of these opportunities for their apprentices' development. Managers do not discuss skills development in their review meetings with apprentices. As a result, they do not have a clear oversight of how well apprentices are developing their workplace skills and behaviours.

Leaders do not assure the quality of teaching well enough. They have moved all teaching online during the pandemic but have not provided tutors with guidance on how to teach online effectively or how to check apprentices' learning. Leaders have

recruited teaching staff with appropriate subject expertise, but do not have sufficiently rigorous processes in place to assure themselves of the quality of teaching and learning.

Leaders lack sufficient oversight of apprentices' progress across the range of skills and behaviours that apprentices need to be successful in their roles. Reviews of apprentices' progress are infrequent and insufficiently thorough. Managers review and keep a record of apprentices' completion of modules and examinations, but do not measure how well apprentices acquire the skills and behaviours that they need. As a result, they do not know how well apprentices are developing the skills and behaviours that are important in their roles, including English and mathematics skills.

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 and managers do not plan learning effectively. Tutors do not use the information that they have about apprentices' starting points to plan how to rectify gaps in apprentices' knowledge and understanding. Tutors and managers do not set precise enough targets for apprentices to help them to apply their knowledge as their training progresses. This results in a lack of direction for apprentices. It impedes apprentices' ability to understand what they need to do to make significant progress in developing the range of skills and behaviours that they need for their roles.

Tutors place too much emphasis on the CIPS level 4 diploma as the core element of apprentices' knowledge and entitlement to off-the-job training. They do not support apprentices to link and apply their knowledge to the skills and behaviours that they need for their role. Tutors do not record or share with managers information about the progress that their apprentices make other than completion of elements of their diploma.

Tutors do not provide sufficiently clear or useful feedback on apprentices' submitted assignments. Too often, apprentices receive unhelpful feedback or suggested answers that do not provide them with the relevant support that they need to identify their own areas for improvement. As a result, they struggle to identify how well they have performed or to understand what they need to do to improve their work. This means that they make slower-than-expected progress in the development of their knowledge and skills.

Tutors are not involved in preparing apprentices for the assessments that they need to complete, other than their CIPS level 4 diploma. Too many apprentices say that they are unaware of the assessment requirements of their apprenticeship other than their CIPS diploma examinations. As a result, they are poorly prepared for their apprenticeship end-point assessments.

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

Leaders do not ensure that staff identify, help or protect apprentices who may need early help or who are at risk. Managers do not place enough emphasis on safeguarding during reviews. They do not monitor apprentices' well-being adequately. As a result, leaders and staff cannot be assured that apprentices feel safe.

Leaders have not ensured that apprentices are safe when working from home, including during the COVID-19 pandemic. Apprentices have not received appropriate guidance around safe working practices and staff do not routinely monitor them to check how safe they are. Tutors have received appropriate training on their responsibilities under the 'Prevent' duty. However, apprentices cannot recall learning about the risks of radicalisation and extremism or potential industry-related threats.

Leaders do not pay enough attention to how safe apprentices are in the workplace. They regard administrative roles as low-risk in terms of physical safety. However, they have not considered other risks that apprentices may be exposed to, such as bullying or stress.

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