

Warwickshire Garage and Transport Group Training Association Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	2625360
Name of lead inspector:	Stuart Collett, Her Majesty's Inspector
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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 Education and Skills Funding Agency 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.

Warwickshire Garage and Transport Group Training Association Limited is a non-profit distributing, private training provider based in Leamington Spa, Warwickshire. The provider has held a contract to deliver apprenticeships since 2019. At the time of the visit, there were seven apprentices in learning across both frameworks and standards. Three apprentices were following the motor vehicle service and maintenance technician (light vehicle) standard at level 3, two were studying the automotive maintenance and repair heavy goods vehicle framework at levels 2 and 3, one apprentice was following the heavy vehicle service and maintenance technician standard at level 3 and one apprentice was following the vehicle damage mechanical, electrical and trim (MET) technician standard at level 3.

During the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic, the provider was able to continue teaching its apprentices through a variety of methods, only cancelling face-to-face training where this was a requirement of restrictions at that time.

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 have chosen a curriculum which supports the needs of the motor vehicle repair industry in the local area. They have focused the apprenticeship offering mostly on small independent garages. They continue to develop these relationships to broaden apprenticeship opportunities in the sector for young people in Coventry and Warwickshire.

Leaders have built strong relationships with employers which they use well to ensure that apprentices receive a well-coordinated programme of on- and off-the-job training. They use commitment statements effectively to ensure both employers and apprentices understand the plan for teaching of the apprenticeship and ensure that apprentices receive their entitlement to time away from the workplace to complete their studies.

Leaders have appointed appropriately qualified and experienced staff to teach apprentices and to offer mentoring and pastoral support. They have separated the roles of teacher, mentor and workplace coach to three different staff, ensuring that apprentices and employers have regular contact from each and rapid access to support, should they need it.

Leaders routinely monitor the progress apprentices are making. They have developed appropriate arrangements to help apprentices who fall behind with their work and need additional support to catch up, including extra one-to-one support from both their mentor and workplace coach.

Leaders are held to account by a board of directors, each experienced in the motor vehicle industry. However, the current arrangements do not include sufficient independent scrutiny of the quality of education apprentices receive. As a result, the board are unaware of the steps which need to be taken to improve this.

Leaders and those in the governance role, the board of directors, have a clear understanding of the other key areas for development and the future needs of apprentices and their employers, for example the development of apprentices' skills in maintenance of both hybrid and electric vehicles and the need for new, dedicated workshop space. They have developed an ambitious strategy to address these needs. However, the impact of this cannot yet be seen.

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

Training coordinators use a range of activities well to establish the starting points of apprentices and to inform their training plan. Most apprentices start their learning with little vocational experience. As a result, they follow the same plan of learning in the early stages of their apprenticeship to develop a thorough understanding of common vehicle principles before moving on to more specialist teaching.

Assessors visit apprentices in the workplace regularly and comment on progress, assess practical skills and set suitably challenging targets. The outcome of these visits is the basis for regular reviews with training coordinators, which make clear links to skills development, assessment of progress and further target setting. As a result, employers and apprentices have a clear understanding of progress towards

the vocational element of their apprenticeship and make good progress against the delivery plan.

Most apprentices develop significant new skills which allow them to undertake additional responsibilities in the workplace. For example, some apprentices are now working independently on large servicing projects and specialist machinery, including forklift trucks.

Apprentices regularly produce work which demonstrates the development of skills and knowledge at the required level. However, the feedback apprentices receive on their work is often limited to praise and is not sufficiently developmental. As a result, apprentices are not encouraged to deepen their knowledge and are not always sufficiently challenged to make the progress of which they are capable.

Managers do not yet have a clear plan for teaching English and mathematics qualifications to the small number of apprentices who need to complete them. They rely too heavily on ad-hoc opportunities to develop these skills, such as planning teaching of these subjects to cover absences of vocational teachers. As a result, there is no structured development of apprentices' skills and knowledge in these areas, and apprentices are not clear on the progress they are making towards completing these qualifications.

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

Leaders have appointed a suitably qualified and experienced designated safeguarding lead who contacts all apprentices regularly and provides them with the relevant, up-to-date information they need to keep themselves safe.

Managers use their links with local enforcement agencies and safeguarding groups to offer apprentices information which is relevant to them. For example, apprentices attended a talk on road safety by the local police. As a result, apprentices receive useful information in the context of their apprenticeship and where they live and work.

Mentors make links to recent issues to give context and develop apprentices' awareness. For example, following an increase in knife crime locally, apprentices' understanding was explored and further developed through conversation during progress reviews.

Apprentices have a limited understanding of topics such as the risks associated with radicalisation, extremism and online activity. Their knowledge is not yet well enough developed and many find it difficult to identify a link between what they learn and how it applies to their daily lives.

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