

# Blue Lion Training Academy Limited

Monitoring visit report

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| <b>Unique reference number:</b> | 2626866  |
| <b>Name of lead inspector:</b>  | Emma Woods, Her Majesty's Inspector                        |
| <b>Inspection dates:</b>        | 9–10 June 2021   |
| <b>Type of provider:</b>        | Independent learning provider                              |
| <b>Address:</b>                 | 19 St Christopher's Way<br>Pride Park<br>Derby<br>DE24 8JY |

## 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.

Blue Lion Training Academy Limited started to train apprentices in 2020. At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 33 apprentices. Twenty-one apprentices study the level 4 improvement practitioner apprenticeship. The remaining apprentices study the level 3 digital marketer or junior content producer apprenticeship. All of the apprentices are aged over 18. Leaders work with a partner who completes the English and mathematics training on their behalf, although this is being phased out.

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 use their substantial experience of continuous improvement and digital marketing to meet employers' needs well. They use this experience, employers' input and partnerships with sector representatives to effectively inform the curriculum content and resources.

Leaders ensure that they meet the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. They carefully check apprentices' prior qualifications to ensure that they study a suitable apprenticeship.

Employers receive comprehensive information from leaders on their responsibilities to their apprentices. Consequently, they understand their role in apprenticeship training and are able to support them well. Leaders have systems in place to monitor apprentices' access to off-the-job training time and intervene quickly where there are any concerns.

Too many apprentices and employers are unclear about the requirements of the final assessments or grading requirements. Leaders and tutors do not ensure that

apprentices are aware of the standard of work required to achieve high grades. As a result, apprentices are uncertain about whether the work in their portfolios is good enough.

Leaders invest extensive time and resources to develop online learning platforms for apprentices and employers. Tutors and apprentices have only recently started to use the latest version, so it is too early for inspectors to judge its impact.

Leaders understand their strengths and areas for development, but their approaches to oversee the quality of training are informal. They recognise a formal approach will help them to identify precise actions for improvement. Tutors are well qualified, with teaching qualifications, professional accreditation and experience in the subjects they teach.

Leaders hold quarterly board meetings as part of their governance arrangements. Detailed updates on business performance include indicators relating to the quality of training. However, leaders are the only members of these board meetings, which limits the level of challenge taking place.

**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**

Apprentices develop a good range of new, occupationally specific knowledge, skills and behaviours. Most can recall what they have been taught and apply it to the workplace. For example, apprentice digital marketers use different strategies to harness the power of social media for marketing campaigns.

Tutors make effective use of a range of approaches to training, including live online lessons, one-to-one coaching, and individual study activities. They use good-quality electronic textbooks, activities and videos. Tutors sequence topics appropriately. For example, on the improvement practitioner course, they introduce topics following the DMAIC (define, measure, analyse, improve and control) model so that apprentices can apply what they learn at each stage of their own projects.

A small number of apprentices have more experience in their roles. In these cases, tutors do too little to modify the content or sequencing of topics in order to take into account what apprentices already know and can do.

Tutors do not make sufficiently effective use of assessment. They are not undertaking enough activities that allow apprentices to practice the skills they learn or to improve their recall of previously taught topics.

Tutors monitor apprentices' progress through questioning, reviews of their project work and discussions during coaching sessions. As a result, they understand the progress that apprentices make. If apprentices fall behind in their studies, this is identified quickly, and they are well supported to catch up.

Tutors and line managers link apprentices training and their on-and-off-the-job time to work-based projects effectively. For example, apprentices learn about stakeholder mapping in training sessions, they work on new meeting structures in their project and then they apply this in work.

Dedicated English and mathematics tutors support apprentices who do not have these qualifications to achieve them. However, tutors do not take enough of the opportunities to develop apprentices' broader English and mathematical skills in their wider training.

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

Following a recent review by the new Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), swift enhancements are being made to certain aspects of safeguarding arrangements. For example, there is a new comprehensive plan in place to extend staff safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training beyond the current internal induction training.

Safeguarding policies are adequate. They outline a clear referral process, which is understood by staff. The DSL knows the referral process to external agencies well, although there have been none so far. Apprentices know who to contact if they have any concerns about themselves or a peer. Leaders undertake appropriate staff recruitment checks and complete suitable risk assessments for 'Prevent' duty.

As part of their induction, apprentices watch and are tested on videos about British values, staying safe online and mental health awareness. These topics are not routinely revisited. As a result, apprentices can only recall a limited level of information about them.

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