

Inspection of E.J.Markham & Son Limited

Inspection dates: 3–5 August 2021

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good

Apprenticeships **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

E.J. Markham & Son, trading as the Markerstudy Group of Companies (the 'Group'), was established in 2001 and is based in the UK. The Group acts as an umbrella organisation comprising a network of companies operating in the insurance and automotive windscreen repair industries. These companies employ over 3,000 staff in locations across the United Kingdom. Senior Group managers decided to offer directly delivered, levy-funded apprenticeship provision from May 2017.

At the time of the inspection, 21 apprentices were on standards-based programmes. There were 18 apprentices on level 3 automotive glazing technicians and three on the level 2 in customer service apprenticeship. The company has training premises in Chesterfield and provides apprenticeships for a range of businesses all owned by the Markerstudy Group across the country. The company subcontracts the teaching of functional skills to Runway Training.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Automotive glazing apprentices benefit from training in a wide range of the Group's automotive glazing repair sites across the country. They use state-of-the-art equipment to develop the technical and practical skills that they need to be highly effective in their job roles.

Trainers are highly experienced automotive glazing technicians. They use their experience well to motivate apprentices to develop the necessary skills and professional attitudes. Leaders recruit promising young apprentices with a passion for practical work. They have high aspirations for apprentices, many of whom have little previous experience of paid employment.

Trainers provide glazing technician apprentices training in calibrating and fitting vehicle windscreens, using specialist tools to complete the task to exacting standards. Customer service apprentices participate in extensive job rotation, which prepares them to apply their new skills across the Group's businesses. As a result, most apprentices develop skills and behaviours which enable them to make a valuable contribution to their employer's business.

Apprentices feel safe and know how to stay safe. Trainers and workplace supervisors support apprentices lacking confidence to engage confidently with colleagues at work and become an effective member of their team. Apprentices report high levels of enjoyment and satisfaction with their training, especially with the support they received during the pandemic.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have successfully designed a high-quality automotive glazing technician apprenticeship. It addresses an industry wide skills shortage, an ageing workforce, and an increasing reliance on technical and specialist automotive glazing technology. The careful design and sequencing of the curriculum helps apprentices develop advanced technical skills and knowledge that meets their employer's needs.

The few apprentices on the level 2 in customer service, most of whom are school leavers, benefit from a well-designed curriculum that builds their confidence to develop customer service skills through exposure to a wide range of business settings. As a result, almost all these apprentices go on to develop the behaviours, vocational skills, and confidence to step onto the first rung of a career with the company.

Managers have structured the curriculum well to ensure that automotive apprentices learn, practice, and understand the basics of health and safety, customer service and glass repair and replacement early in their programmes. Apprentices continue to practise and hone these basic skills throughout their apprenticeship.

Apprentices' prior knowledge and skills are identified effectively at the start of the apprenticeship. Automotive glazing apprentices, who have had experience in the industry, have their skills and knowledge further assessed to ensure that the apprenticeship will meet their needs. Effective assessment and developmental feedback during the course help apprentices rapidly improve the standard of their work and gain more confidence.

Automotive apprentices complete extensive off-the-job learning that enhances their skills and knowledge effectively. Trainers visit apprentices each month to monitor and report on progress. They provide training and coaching, including with the use of 'dead glass', to practise the repair and replacement of car side windows. Off-the-job training is not always well defined or recorded. Consequently, a few apprentices are unclear about the amount of time they can spend during the working week on learning new skills and knowledge away from their normal duties.

Apprentices are recruited with integrity to genuine job roles. Most decide to stay on with the Group after their apprenticeship. Leaders ensure that apprentices receive sufficient time away from their job to develop new skills, knowledge, and behaviours.

Trainers design and deliver well-planned teaching and training activities that encourage apprentices to retain knowledge and develop skills securely over time. Apprentices quickly become adept in using leading-edge technologies, for example when fitting windscreen-mounted Advanced Driver Assistance Systems that require accurate calibration.

Trainers do not develop further the English and mathematics skills of apprentices who already have a level 2 qualification in these subjects. As a result, apprentices do not enhance or develop further their skills in these subjects.

Apprentices have a reasonable grasp of how they will be assessed at the end of their apprenticeship, with a high proportion of customer service apprentices achieving a distinction grade in 2020. Trainers make apprentices aware of the progression routes available to them after they complete their studies. Most intend to remain employed within the Markerstudy Group and the large majority do so.

Leaders and managers work well with trainers to improve the quality of training. Self-assessment is accurate and well informed by stakeholder feedback and visits to online lessons. Managers' monitoring of the subcontractor responsible for delivering functional skills is good.

Governance has been strengthened and is now effective. Directors scrutinise the performance reports presented to them and offer criticism and feedback to senior managers to help them improve the company's apprenticeship programme.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers prioritise the safety of apprentices. Managers keep a register of safeguarding incidents. It shows that they deal with incidents swiftly and appropriately. The company has a designated safeguarding officer and a deputy. All staff are appropriately trained.

Leaders have appropriate policies for safeguarding, including the 'Prevent' duty, which they update regularly. However, apprentices' understanding of radicalisation and extremism and of British values is limited. Few are able to identify the relevance of these topics to their work or home life.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Managers should ensure that English and mathematics for apprentices who already have a qualification at level 2 in these subjects are better integrated with the vocational curriculum so that they can develop their confidence and aptitude.
- Managers should provide apprentices with better guidance on off-the-job training so that they are clear about how much time they can spend each week on learning new skills and knowledge while away from their normal work duties.
- Managers and trainers should reinforce apprentices' understanding of British values and the dangers of radicalisation so that they better understand the relevance of these issues in the context of their work and home lives.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1276509
Address	Markerstudy House Bessels Green Sevenoaks Kent TN13 2QB
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Website	https://www.markerstudy.com
Principal/CEO	Kevin Spencer
Provider type	Employer
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	Runway Training

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the apprenticeship programme manager, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including observing learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff, and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Jai Sharda, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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