

Inspection of The Recalvi Enterprise Limited

Inspection dates:

10–13 August 2021

Overall effectiveness**Requires improvement**

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

The Recalvi Enterprise Limited, trading as Apprenticeship Connect, was founded in 2012. Apprenticeship Connect has been providing apprenticeships from level 2 to level 5 through subcontracting arrangements since 2012 and became a prime-contract holder in May 2017. At the time of this inspection, there were 339 apprentices on programme. Approximately a quarter of apprentices were on the level 3 early years educator apprenticeship standard, a similar proportion were on the level 3 business administrator standard. The remaining apprentices were on standards in level 2 recruitment resourcer, level 2 early years practitioner, level 3 digital marketer, level 3 teaching assistant, level 5 operations manager, level 3 team leader, level 2 customer service, level 3 recruitment consultant and level 3 assistant accountant.

At the time of the inspection the apprenticeship programmes were taught entirely remotely.

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

Apprentices' experiences at Recalvi vary considerably, depending on the programme they are on. Leaders have not been able to ensure that apprentices on all programmes receive training that is of an equally high standard.

Most apprentices have positive attitudes to their learning. In online learning sessions apprentices are attentive, listen and contribute valuably to discussions. Apprentices feel happy to contribute to topical debates such as about racism and equality.

Tutors have high expectations about the standard of work which apprentices produce and challenge them to achieve high grades. Tutors build positive relationships with most apprentices which motivates them to achieve high grades. Apprentices appreciate the useful feedback they get on their work.

Apprentices on recruitment standards gain the skills to cope with working in a highly pressurised environment. Employers gradually assign them more responsibility. Apprentices gain the professional behaviours expected of them in the workplace. Early years apprentices show compassion and empathy when working with toddlers and babies. Digital marketing apprentices produce insightful campaigns. Many apprentices develop in confidence.

Apprentices studying teaching assistant, early years, business administration and functional skills courses do not appreciate the importance of handing in their assignments and a significant proportion are behind with their work. Apprentices on early years programmes struggle to complete their off-the-job training in work time.

Apprentices spend a lot of their study time working independently and this time is not sufficiently well-structured across business programmes. As a result, these apprentices are not always clear about what they are meant to be working on.

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

Since the start of the pandemic in March 2020, leaders have faced a number of challenges in order to maintain a high standard of education across their apprenticeship provision. While they have accurately understood their challenges, they have been too slow to put in place sufficiently effective measures to raise standards. This has led to too many apprentices leaving without completing their programmes.

In most subjects, including early years, teaching assistant and digital marketer, leaders have created curriculum plans that are logically sequenced. Consequently, apprentices learn essential and fundamental knowledge before applying their knowledge in practical and workplace tasks.

In most subjects, apprentices develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours as a result of their apprenticeship training. For example, teaching

assistant apprentices learn about specific educational theorists and their methods. In digital marketing, apprentices gain the skills to use online advertising programmes which are most beneficial to their employers, and build up knowledge to be able to do it. As a result, they become valuable employees.

In nearly all cases, tutors prepare apprentices well to succeed in their final assessments. In business courses, leaders build in opportunities for apprentices to practise the skills they will need for their assessments at key points in the curriculum. As a result, apprentices who achieve their qualifications typically achieve high grades. However, too often tutors teach multiple concepts without opportunities for apprentices to fully embed their knowledge before moving on to new topics. They do not check apprentices' understanding thoroughly enough. As a result, apprentices are not able to recall enough of what they are taught.

For apprentices with additional needs, tutors offer helpful individual coaching sessions after each online lesson and further functional skills support sessions. As a result, apprentices with special educational needs and/or disabilities gain confidence to contribute in lessons and at work.

In most subjects, including recruitment resourcer and digital marketer, tutors teach apprentices effectively about equality and diversity and how these issues are related to their work. For example, recruitment apprentices are able to identify language that they must not use in job descriptions or person specifications in order to comply with the law. Apprentices have a sound understanding of the importance of British values such as the rule of law. Apprentices recognise these qualities as key components in their work, and in how they treat one another.

Leaders do not involve all employers enough when planning, or throughout apprentices' programmes. Tutors and employers do not work together to plan opportunities for apprentices to practise skills that build on what they learn online. Too many employers of business apprentices do not take part in reviews of apprentices' progress.

Leaders have been too slow to recognise some of the challenges they face, and have only recently focused on improving the quality of teaching. Governance arrangements are underdeveloped, and leaders do not have sufficient support or challenge with their strategic decision-making.

Staff do not suitably consider all apprentices' prior experience or their aspirations to plan an individual curriculum to meet their needs. A few business administration and teaching assistant apprentices have already learned topics being taught, for example through previous sixth-form study or in a similar job role. As a result, too many learners leave their programmes early.

Leaders have a reasonable level of oversight of learners' progress on courses. They closely monitor learners' progress towards achieving their qualifications. A small minority of apprentices do not receive their full entitlement to off-the-job training. This is most notable for learners on early years apprenticeships. Leaders have been

slow to put in place appropriate functional skills teaching for apprentices. As a result, too many apprentices have passed their expected completion date without achieving their functional skills, and are delayed in taking their final assessments. Leaders have taken steps towards putting in appropriate support to help apprentices catch up.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that there are appropriate safeguarding, 'Prevent' duty, and staff recruitment policies in place, including those relating to young people. The designated safeguarding lead is knowledgeable and qualified, and undertakes regular refresher training. Leaders identify, record and monitor safeguarding concerns effectively. For example, during the pandemic leaders and managers identified learners and staff who were vulnerable and supported them appropriately. Leaders are aware of local risks and keep staff informed of these at team meetings and briefings.

Apprentices feel safe at work and when learning online. They can identify a trusted person in the organisation who they would go to if they have concerns about their safety or well-being.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that staff check apprentices' prior knowledge, experience and career aspirations and use this information to plan an individualised curriculum to meet their needs.
- Ensure that tutors teach apprentices to fully understand and remember key concepts before moving on to new topics.
- Work more closely with employers at every stage of the apprenticeship. Leaders should provide more opportunities for employers to influence curriculum design and further involve employers in progress reviews with apprentices.
- Leaders should develop their governance arrangements so that they gain beneficial support and challenge with their strategic decision-making.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1276410
Address	Warnford Court 29 Throgmorton Street London EC2N 2AT
Contact number	0203 8296 920
Website	www.apprenticeshipconnect.co.uk
Principal/CEO	Rafiq Adebambo
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	N/A

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous progress monitoring 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 visiting online learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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