

Inspection of Aspire Development (UK) Ltd

Inspection dates: 7–10 December 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
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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

Aspire Development (UK) Ltd (Aspire) is an independent learning provider based in Halifax. Aspire provides two apprenticeship standards for recently appointed or aspiring team leaders and managers. All apprentices are adults who are employed by the ten employers with which Aspire currently works. Most of the employers are large and operate across England. Most apprentices study in employer-specific cohorts, but Aspire has recently implemented an open programme. This caters for apprentices from employers that do not have enough apprentices for a discrete cohort.

At the time of the inspection, there were 212 apprentices. Just over two thirds were enrolled on the level 3 team leader or supervisor apprenticeship standard. The remainder were enrolled on the level 5 operations or departmental manager apprenticeship standard.

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

Apprentices participate in well-planned lessons and training activities that are taught by knowledgeable tutors who are well qualified and skilled in the subjects that they teach. As a result, most apprentices make good progress in developing the leadership and management knowledge and skills that they need to achieve the apprenticeship, be successful in their work and progress to the next steps in their careers.

Apprentices respond very well to the high expectations set by tutors. They develop a good awareness of the behaviours and attitudes that they need to adopt and apply in their work to be successful. For example, they know the importance of respecting and listening to the views and opinions of others.

Apprentices develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours that are relevant to their job roles and employers' businesses. For example, team leader apprentices learn how to manage potential conflict in the teams that they lead during the busy Christmas period, and reorganise responsibilities to ensure the fair distribution of workloads. As a result, apprentices become more effective in supervising others and managing processes and teams. Apprentices' business improvement project work makes a positive difference to their employers' businesses.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance are ambitious to ensure that the apprenticeships they provide enable apprentices to be successful in new roles in their companies and gain more responsible and better paid jobs. Leaders work well with employers to design apprenticeships that meet employers' business needs and circumstances. For example, apprentices who work permanent night shifts for one employer can engage in a programme that is taught at times that fit well with their shift pattern.

Leaders set clear expectations about the appropriate recruitment of apprentices. They manage prospective apprentices' and employers' expectations well. This ensures that apprentices are recruited with integrity. Managers use apprenticeship commitment statements well to set clear expectations for all parties involved in the apprenticeship.

Subject specialist leaders set out a clear curriculum intent for the two apprenticeship programmes. Tutors sequence and teach the curriculum effectively. Team leader apprentices initially learn self-awareness and emotional intelligence skills so that they can use and apply their theoretical knowledge in workplace situations. Operations and departmental manager apprentices develop their personal effectiveness and people management skills early in the programme.

Tutors are knowledgeable and experienced in business and in training and coaching. They maintain their knowledge and skills through an effective programme of

professional development. They use their knowledge and experience well when planning and teaching lessons to engage apprentices and enable them to learn new knowledge effectively. Tutors identify where apprentices have additional support needs, such as dyslexia, and support these apprentices effectively by adapting lessons and training materials.

Tutors use assessment effectively so that apprentices understand what they have achieved and where they need to develop further their knowledge and skills. For example, during workshop activities, tutors support apprentices to evaluate their work to develop and refine their presentation and discussion skills.

Tutors ensure that apprentices improve their English and mathematical skills through their learning. For example, apprentices develop their English skills when communicating with customers about complaints. They develop mathematical skills when presenting statistical analyses in reports. Until recently, a few apprentices who needed to achieve functional skills qualifications struggled to do so. Managers recognised that they needed to improve their approach to functional skills and have appointed a new specialist tutor to address this need.

Apprentices' attendance at face-to-face and online learning sessions is good. Apprentices behave and engage well in their learning and work. They have a positive attitude and take effective steps to be successful and to support their peers.

Staff prepare apprentices well for future success in training and employment by providing careers guidance that is relevant to their employment, alongside unbiased information about potential next steps. Apprentices have a good awareness of what their employment and career development options are.

Tutors incorporate effectively into all their sessions topics relating to citizenship. Apprentices also study a module on safety and well-being. Tutors promote British values well during induction and through apprentices' modules of study. As a result, apprentices understand the importance of these values at work and in their wider lives.

Most employers play an active part in reviewing the progress that apprentices make. They work closely with tutors to identify aspects of apprentices' learning that need further development. However, in a few cases, apprentices' line managers and workplace mentors are not involved sufficiently in reviews. This limits their awareness about the progress that their apprentices are making and the on-the-job training and support that they could provide to help them.

Leaders take effective steps to monitor the quality of the training provided and its impact on apprentices. They regularly review the progress that they are making in implementing actions to improve the quality of their apprenticeships.

A current priority for leaders is to reduce the proportion of apprentices who leave their programmes early and without completing. To achieve this, leaders have improved the rigour of the recruitment process. Prospective apprentices now receive

clear information about the high expectations and challenges of the apprenticeship by attending 'discovery sessions' prior to committing to the programme. These changes have been successful in reducing the proportion of apprentices who withdraw without completing. However, this remains an area that requires further improvement.

In a few cases, tutors do not connect the content of the curriculum well enough to the off-the-job learning that they set for operations managers to complete outside taught sessions. This inhibits the ability of these apprentices to use off-the-job learning to embed their learning into long-term memory.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The leaders and managers responsible for safeguarding carry out their duties diligently. They ensure that all staff participate in regular safeguarding, well-being and 'Prevent' duty training. Staff have a good awareness of the process for reporting and recording any safeguarding and well-being concerns.

Apprentices feel safe. They know how to raise any concerns that they have regarding safeguarding and well-being. Leaders ensure that tutors provide apprentices with information that helps them to understand and know how to recognise and protect themselves from risks of extremist behaviours and actions. As a result, apprentices have a good awareness about this.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Continue to implement and strengthen actions to ensure that newly recruited apprentices are fully committed to, and capable of, meeting the challenges of the apprenticeship, so that the proportion of apprentices who leave early continues to reduce.
- Ensure that all apprentices benefit from off-the-job learning activities outside taught sessions that more closely correlate with the content and sequence of the curriculum, so that it supports them to embed this content into their long-term memory.
- Ensure that all line managers are fully involved in reviews of apprentices' progress so that they understand the progress that apprentices are making and how they can provide on-the-job training and support to help apprentices to make good progress.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1278655
Address	Holmfield Mill Holdsworth Road Halifax HX3 6SN
Contact number	07759 365743
Website	https://www.aspiredevelopment.co.uk/
Principal/CEO	Allison Wheatly
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

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

Inspection team

Malcolm Fraser, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Cath Jackson	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kevin Dowson	Ofsted Inspector
Jaswant Mann	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Osmaston	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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