

# Inspection of First Intuition Limited

Inspection dates: 7–10 December 2021

## Overall effectiveness

**Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Apprenticeships

**Outstanding**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

## Information about this provider

First Intuition Ltd (First Intuition) was set up in 2007 to teach students professional accountancy courses. In May 2017, it gained a direct contract to provide apprenticeship training funded by the apprenticeship levy. At the time of the inspection, First Intuition had 824 apprentices, all of whom were on a range of accountancy apprenticeship standards from levels 3 to 7. Almost all of the apprentices are over the age of 19. The largest programme was the level 7 accountancy with 667 apprentices.

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

Apprentices rightly value the high-quality training they receive from First Intuition. They benefit from expert tuition from specialists in the various areas of accountancy, supplemented by professionally produced study materials. Apprentices put into practice the knowledge that they gain in their daily work with highly prestigious accountancy firms. As a result, they feel confident and enthusiastic about their future career opportunities.

Apprentices develop an excellent breadth and depth of knowledge, skills and behaviours through their apprenticeship, for which many are rewarded by increased levels of responsibility at work. Apprentices talk confidently about how they are being trained to be financial professionals. This has led to apprentices covering their line managers' responsibilities or mentoring more junior auditors.

Coaches work closely with employers to ensure that the work apprentices do at First Intuition matches closely with the tasks they undertake for their employer. This includes being mindful of the times of the year when apprentices are particularly busy, such as the financial year-end, or deadlines for tax returns. This results in apprenticeship programmes that are all slightly different, and reflect each apprentice's working environment.

Apprentices feel very well supported by staff at First Intuition. Through their frequent high-quality interactions with coaches and tutors, apprentices develop their confidence and preparedness for their future.

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

Leaders have a clear vision to support individuals to gain career opportunities in the finance sector. They have responded extremely well to the changes in the finance sector from one that was primarily a graduate-entry career to one that increasingly attracts school leavers. This has led to the introduction of apprenticeships at levels 3 and 4.

Leaders have created apprenticeship programmes that are ambitious for their learners. Leaders work highly effectively with employers to establish their needs in terms of knowledge, skills and behaviours. They use this information to create programmes with the appropriate professional accountancy qualifications based on the apprentice's job role integrated into the apprenticeship.

Leaders work effectively with subcontractors and franchisees who teach specific technical aspects of the apprenticeship. They use nationally recognised specialists to teach apprentices the complex issues of tax. Leaders and managers have extended their quality assurance processes to include subcontractors. As a result, they ensure that subcontractors work to a high standard.

Staff and governors have good oversight of the quality of the apprenticeship provision. Governors receive frequent updates on the quality of teaching. Governors are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and developments within the sector. They use this knowledge to hold leaders and managers to account for the provision.

Tutors use their excellent subject knowledge to teach a curriculum that enables apprentices to build their knowledge effectively over time. For example, level 7 apprentices first learn the principles of financial accounting and company valuation, before learning how to apply these techniques in a strategic financial environment. Consequently, apprentices can manage complex activities confidentially. Apprentices' learning is supplemented by a range of high-quality teaching materials, such as course notes, webinars and videos. Employers praise the new knowledge and skills that apprentices develop through their studies.

Coaches frequently discuss with apprentices their development of personal and professional behaviours. Their focus is on developing apprentices to become finance professionals who can work as part of a team and solve problems, as well as have excellent technical accountancy skills. First Intuition's Impact Skills programme enables apprentices to develop their understanding of a range of wider skills to be used in the workplace. These include having difficult conversations and managing people.

Tutors provide apprentices with detailed and helpful feedback on their work and use their feedback to challenge apprentices to improve their high-standard work even further. Apprentices benefit from model answers as part of their feedback. They use this information confidently to assess why their answers are incorrect. As a result, apprentices understand what they do well and how they can improve their work.

Leaders provide appropriate support for the small minority of apprentices who need to gain a qualification in mathematics as part of their programme. All learners gain the mathematics qualification they need.

Staff provide effective support for apprentices with special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, staff use assistive technology to good effect. They provide extra time and support when working with apprentices with additional needs. As a result of the good support provided, apprentices with additional needs achieve their qualifications at the same rate as those without.

Apprentices develop a detailed understanding of fundamental British values during their programme, and how these values apply to their jobs and lives. For example, with reference to press reports of bullying and sexual harassment within the accountancy sector, apprentices are able to discuss confidently the ramifications of such behaviours. Using scenarios, such as a client offering to pay for a holiday if the accounts were changed, apprentices were able to discuss the ethical and legal implications of these real-life situations.

Coaches work with apprentices during reviews to discuss their career aspirations and provide helpful support to apprentices as they prepare for their next steps within the accountancy sector. As a result, apprentices either secure permanent employment at the end of their apprenticeship or go on to further study. However, for those apprentices who decide that the financial services sector is not for them, access to suitable careers guidance is less well developed.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have taken the necessary steps to create a culture of safeguarding. Apprentices feel safe at work and in their learning. If an issue were to arise, apprentices would contact the safeguarding team and have confidence that they would receive excellent support.

Leaders have ensured that all staff who work with learners have received appropriate safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training and have in place a clear and well-understood mechanism for staff to raise any concerns.

Leaders have underpinned their approach to safeguarding with appropriate policies and processes. They have taken the necessary steps to ensure that the staff whom they appoint are safe to work with their learners.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	1278665
<b>Address</b>	Conway Mews London W1T 6AA
<b>Contact number</b>	0207 323 9636
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.firstintuition.co.uk">www.firstintuition.co.uk</a>
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Martin Taylor
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent Learning Provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	First Intuition (Bristol) First Intuition (Cambridge) First Intuition (Reading) Mercia Group Limited RELX (UK) Limited

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of education, 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 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

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