

Inspection of Redsky Learning Limited

Inspection dates:

8 to 11 February 2022

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

Redsky Learning Limited has delivered training in leadership and management since 2004. It began providing levy-funded apprenticeships in October 2018 to develop apprentices' leadership skills, predominantly for large, high-profile, blue-chip companies across the country. Apprentices are located nationally, with most based in London, the North East and the Midlands. At the time of this inspection, 209 apprentices were on standards-based apprenticeships. Of these, 48 apprentices are studying team leader standards at level 3. There are 128 apprentices studying operations manager standards at level 5, with 49 of these following a 'women in leadership' programme. Nine apprentices are enrolled on level 5 coaching professional standards. All apprentices are aged 19 and over.

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

Apprentices struggle with excessive workload and, too often, unexpected changes to their job role delay them from completing the work required to complete their apprenticeship successfully.

Stretch coaches carry out reviews to confirm what apprentices have done and can do, but they do not set specific or precise enough targets to help apprentices to improve. For too many apprentices, reviews of their progress are infrequent and too brief. Stretch coaches do not do enough to hold apprentices or their employers to account for the progress that apprentices make and, consequently, too many apprentices are making slow progress.

Apprentices develop a secure understanding of equality at work. They learn the importance of positive workplace cultures to create a productive and diverse workforce. For example, level 3 team leading apprentices working in human resources understand the potential for conscious and unconscious bias during recruitment processes. Apprentices know it is important to avoid terminology and language that could cause offence to clients from other countries where there is a different approach to the use of business language compared to the United Kingdom.

Apprentices say that they are safe. They complete training that provides them with underpinning knowledge about online safety, sexual abuse and safeguarding in business. Apprentices also learn about the signs of bullying and harassment that they need to be aware of at work, including how to report instances if they were to occur.

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

Leaders have not done enough to ensure that staff's workload is manageable. They rightly acknowledge they have not ensured that staff benefit from a healthy work-life balance so that they can perform effectively and consistently at work. For example, staff with high caseloads often work excessive hours, including at weekends, to meet the demands placed on them by leaders. This has a negative impact on the quality of education experienced by too many apprentices.

Leaders do not have a thorough enough oversight of the quality of teaching that apprentices receive, including for the few apprentices who need to achieve their mathematics and English qualifications. For example, leaders do not know that the quality of apprentices' off-the-job training is not consistently high, that progress reviews are not consistently effective and that apprentices do not spend enough time devoted to their studies.

Stretch coaches do not routinely provide apprentices with impartial careers advice and guidance. Many apprentices are ambitious and aspire to take on enhanced leadership roles. Although apprentices' personal development plans focus on the

ways in which they need to develop themselves as leaders, stretch coaches do not ensure that apprentices receive sufficient guidance on how to achieve their aspirations.

Leaders have very recently introduced 'social dilemma' topics to bolster the wider personal development curriculum for apprentices. Stretch coaches have started to include training that might impact apprentices and their teams at work such as conversations about incels and radicalisation, the impact of rising fuel prices and raising awareness of the threat of drink spiking when out socialising. A few apprentices recall these discussions from training completed at the start of their programme. However, it is too early to see the full impact of the inclusion of these topics in the curriculum.

Stretch coaches are highly qualified and use their wide-ranging industry experience to facilitate useful workshops. They make good use of breakout rooms when working online to promote discussions about leadership and use subsequent 'study hubs' to clarify misunderstandings or answer questions that apprentices may have. Apprentices value working with other apprentices who they did not previously know, and they appreciate the additional, helpful feedback from their peers, such as the critique of presentations that they give in study hubs.

Stretch coaches use a variety of effective assessment methods, including professional discussions, which help apprentices to develop their communication skills well. Most apprentices use the feedback that they receive from their stretch coaches to improve the level of detail in assignments and how they apply coaching theories at work, such as implementing the 'GROW' model. A few apprentices produce work of a very high standard that applies pertinent leadership theory to the workplace.

Leaders have developed effective long-term working relationships with employers to develop leadership and management skills for their employees. They have planned a curriculum with, and for, predominantly large employers to service their companies' career and staff development needs. For example, leaders have created a level 5 coaching professional programme to develop staff in a range of settings.

Leaders have recently improved the recruitment processes at the provider to ensure that apprentices receive effective advice and guidance before they sign up for their apprenticeship. Staff conduct 'curiosity sessions' for potential apprentices and their workplace supervisors so they understand the workload and study commitments of the apprenticeship. As a result, those apprentices recruited more recently are clear about the expectations of the apprenticeship before they start their programme.

Board members have been actively challenging and improving the direction of the business over the past 18 months, with a clear focus on improving the quality of education. However, it is too early to determine the full impact of their decisions and actions. Board members rightly acknowledge that there is more to do to ensure a consistently good quality of education for all apprentices. For instance, they know that all members of staff need a clear and comprehensive training and development

plan so that they have the teaching and assessment skills needed to be effective in their role.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have clear systems, policies and procedures in place. In the very few instances where safeguarding concerns are raised, leaders respond decisively to ensure that issues are dealt with and recorded appropriately.

The provider has a designated safeguarding lead who ensures that staff complete safeguarding training when they first start working at the provider. Subsequent update training, including information disseminated from the links that leaders have with regional safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty coordinators across the country, highlights the potential risks to apprentices in their respective locations.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that stretch coaches routinely set and review specific targets so that all apprentices make swift and sustained progress and catch up if they fall behind.
- Ensure that all apprentices receive high-quality, impartial careers advice and guidance so that they understand the steps required to realise their aspirations.
- Ensure that the wider personal development curriculum for apprentices is clearly and consistently planned into all programmes.
- Ensure that leaders have clear oversight of the quality of education for apprentices and take actions that have a positive impact on improving quality, including for those apprentices studying towards mathematics and English qualifications.
- Ensure that staff have sufficient time and a manageable workload, so they are able to provide a consistently high quality of education for all apprentices.

Provider details

Unique reference number	2539254
Address	8 Saw Mill Yard Holbeck Leeds LS11 5WH
Contact number	0330 088 1117
Website	www.redskylearning.com
CEO	Diane Coolican
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	Twenty Twenty Learning

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of apprenticeship programme delivery, 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.

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