

The Colleges' Partnership Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	2654234
Name of lead inspector:	Roger Pilgrim, Ofsted Inspector
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Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From October 2018, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision which began to be funded from April 2017 or after by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and/or the apprenticeship levy. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook', especially the sections entitled 'Monitoring visits' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

The Colleges' Partnership Limited (TCPL) was formed in 2005 to provide training to the British army. It gained a contract to provide apprenticeships in 2020. Before this, it solely operated as a subcontractor to other providers. At the time of the monitoring visit, six apprentices were in learning on the level 3 network cable installer apprenticeship. In addition, a number of apprentices were following level 5 learning and skills teacher apprenticeships that were out of scope for this inspection.

Themes

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?

Significant progress

Leaders have a very clearly defined purpose and strategy for developing their own direct apprenticeship provision, based on filling national and regional skills gaps. TCPL has strong, relevant expertise built up through training network cabling apprentices as a subcontractor to other providers. It has made good use of this experience and adopted a measured and well-considered approach to its new directly-funded contract. It has chosen to grow its apprenticeship programme slowly to ensure that it firmly establishes the quality of its provision.

Leaders have very effective working relationships with employers. Their knowledge of employers' requirements has usefully informed the development of their programmes. As a result, they have put in place a curriculum that meets employers' needs well and also fully meets the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. Apprentices benefit from high-quality on- and off-the-job training that allows them to make rapid progress in developing new knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Leaders recruit well-qualified and experienced managers and tutors. They ensure that tutors maintain their professional expertise through regular update training.

Leaders understand fully the strengths and weaknesses of their apprenticeships. They evaluate performance thoroughly and use their evaluation perceptively to

identify challenging targets for improvements to the provision. Leaders carefully monitor the progress of all learners and provide support swiftly so that learners who fall behind catch up quickly.

Governance and oversight are highly effective. Governing board members are very experienced and know TCPL very well. Board members closely scrutinise leaders on, for example, the progress of apprentices and the effectiveness of safeguarding measures. They provide regular and effective challenge for leaders.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? Significant progress

Leaders and managers have developed a highly effective curriculum which ensures that apprentices learn rapidly what they need to become more proficient in their jobs. Network cabling apprentices, who begin their course with little prior knowledge of cabling, are quickly able to plan and install cable routes, fix appropriate connections and test the new installations.

Managers give careful consideration to the planning and teaching of qualifications and specialist skills that form part of the apprenticeship. Apprentices benefit strongly from the skills and expertise of tutors and mentors. Network cabling apprentices profit from the expert guidance they receive from work-based mentors when working on site. Apprentices remember and apply their new knowledge and skills well. Effective planning of the curriculum and monitoring of apprentices' progress ensures that apprentices are extremely well prepared for the assessments at the end of their programmes. Managers and tutors establish high aspirations in their apprentices. They strongly encourage and help apprentices to achieve distinctions in their apprenticeships.

Apprentices improve their written English skills and complete assignments to a high standard. Improvements in their English grammar enable network cablers to write clearer reports at work. These apprentices substantially improve their mathematics through the measuring and calculations they carry out when planning cabling installations.

Apprentices are highly motivated and demonstrate enthusiasm for what they are learning. They have a clear understanding of how to apply their new knowledge and skills in their current job roles and future careers. Apprentices receive helpful and impartial individual advice throughout their apprenticeship on what they should do following their apprenticeships.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Significant progress

Leaders place a high priority on safeguarding apprentices. They manage safeguarding arrangements extremely well. They implement detailed policies and procedures that staff follow closely. As a result, they safeguard learners effectively.

Apprentices feel safe. Leaders have designed the curriculum to ensure that apprentices learn to work safely early in their programme. For example, apprentices working in network cabling receive training near the start of their apprenticeship that ensures that they work safely in confined spaces and on ladders.

Leaders meet the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty well. Staff responsible for safeguarding are highly experienced and have good links with local and national organisations. As a result, they ensure that they and their apprentices are well informed of the local and national risks of extremism.

Leaders carry out comprehensive background checks when appointing new staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with apprentices. All staff are trained in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. This training is updated annually.

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