

UK College of Business Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Sue Hasty, Her Majesty's 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.

UK College of Business is an independent learning provider based in north London. The company gained a contract in April 2020 to teach apprenticeships. They offer standards-based apprenticeships across a range of subjects and levels to non-levy paying employers.

At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 60 apprentices in learning. Thirty-two apprentices were studying the level 3 junior content producer apprenticeship. Eleven apprentices were studying the level 3 fundraiser apprenticeship, six were studying accountancy apprenticeships across levels 2, 3 and 4, and 10 were studying leadership and management apprenticeships across levels 4, 6 and 7. One apprentice was studying the level 4 cyber security technologist apprenticeship.

The majority of apprentices are aged 19 and over, and 13 apprentices are aged 16 to 18.

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

Leaders have not ensured that all of their apprenticeship programmes fully meet the requirements of an apprenticeship. The experience of apprentices varies markedly in different programmes. While staff complete commitment statements for apprentices, they do not use these effectively to map out a programme for each apprentice, based on their starting point. Staff do not identify adequately the support needed for apprentices in improving their knowledge of English and mathematics. In their reviews of apprentices' progress, too often staff do not include reflections by the apprentice and their employer.

Leaders do not check thoroughly that apprentices' job roles fully meet the requirements of the apprenticeship standards. For example, in fundraising

apprenticeships, a few apprentices spend only half their time working on fundraising activities. In junior content producer apprenticeships, apprentices mainly undertake work on their employers' websites and social media accounts. Apprentices do not have sufficient opportunities to gain wider workplace behaviours, such as building relationships with external clients and responding to their needs.

Leaders did not ensure that appropriate staff were in place before offering apprenticeships. For example, until very recently, teachers of a significant proportion of apprentices have also been the apprentices' line managers and employers. Consequently, in a few instances, apprentices do not have a well-developed understanding of the work they do for their job and the work they do for their qualifications.

Leaders do not have a realistic overview of the strengths and areas for improvement in the quality of teaching. Leaders' feedback on teachers' performance does not help teachers understand what they can do to improve their practice.

Leaders have selected suitable apprenticeships that meet the needs of small businesses. They identify appropriately the available job opportunities within the local area. In response, leaders developed the level 3 junior content producer and dental practice manager apprenticeships.

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

During training sessions, teachers plan courses that help most apprentices build appropriate knowledge and skills over time. For example, apprentices learn how to design content for websites and how to write an online blog. Apprentices on the level 7 senior leader apprenticeships apply the skills and knowledge they learn in their workplace effectively.

In online lessons, teachers cover the correct content for each subject. For example, fundraising apprentices learn about the history of fundraising, the different types of activities involved to raise funds and how to write funding bids. However, too often, teachers do not check well enough apprentices' understanding of what they have learned before moving on to new topics. They do not give apprentices enough time to ask questions if they haven't understood what is being taught. As a result, apprentices become confused when teachers introduce new knowledge too quickly.

Teachers' feedback on apprentices' coursework is not helpful enough. Teachers grade apprentices' work without referring to what the grade means. Teachers' written feedback does not give apprentices precise enough detail on what they can do to improve the standard of their work.

Leaders have not prepared apprentices effectively for their final assessments. For example, a few apprentices that have reached this stage have not yet gained their qualifications in English and mathematics. A small minority of apprentices have not had sufficient support from teachers to practise for their assessments.

Teachers review apprentices' progress regularly. However, teachers do not use these reviews effectively to discuss apprentices' standard of work, or what they need to do next. Consequently, most apprentices are not clear on how well they are progressing.

Teachers are suitably qualified and have relevant subject expertise. However, leaders do not provide teachers with effective support to improve further their online teaching skills.

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

The safeguarding lead and deputy safeguarding lead are not appropriately trained for their roles.

Leaders do not have suitable policies in place for the safeguarding of young people. The safeguarding policy refers to outdated guidance. Leaders have not fully outlined how they would respond to allegations of sexual harm and sexual violence in their policies.

Leaders have not thoroughly assessed the risks to their apprentices associated with radicalisation and extremism. They have taken steps toward identifying the factors they need to consider. However, they have not set out the actions they need to take to reduce such risks to their apprentices.

Apprentices do not receive sufficient information on how to keep themselves safe. Teachers do not routinely revisit these topics at progress reviews. Consequently, apprentices cannot recall how to keep themselves safe when working and learning online.

Apprentices told inspectors that they feel safe. They would talk to their tutor if they had a concern about their safety.

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