

# Inspection of The Procurement Academy Limited

Inspection dates:

5 to 7 April 2022

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Apprenticeships

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

## Information about this provider

The Procurement Academy received a contract for the direct delivery of apprenticeships on behalf of levy-paying employers at the beginning of 2020. It delivers the level 4 commercial procurement and supply standard at study centres in Doncaster, Leeds and Nottingham. At the time of the inspection, there were eight apprentices currently on the programme and a further six awaiting their final assessment. All apprentices are aged 19 or over. The Procurement Academy does not subcontract out any of its delivery.

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

Apprentices benefit from useful employment advice from staff, but only when they ask for it. Staff support apprentices well to prepare for interviews and to make the most of their mandatory membership of the procurement professional body to seek out new opportunities. Most apprentices are clear about what they want to do next. However, leaders and staff do not routinely provide information, advice and guidance to the few apprentices who do not have such a clear plan.

Apprentices receive appropriate information on a range of safety and well-being themes. Leaders produce leaflets with 'at a glance' information on topics, such as mental health awareness, addiction, extremist behaviour and risks associated with radicalisation. Staff expand usefully on these topics in their review meetings with apprentices. Apprentices recognise the application of this information to their job roles. However, too few can recall sufficiently what they have learned.

Apprentices attend their study days well. They are motivated to learn and enjoy sharing ideas with their peers and professionals from other organisations. Apprentices who work in the public sector benefit from hearing about the application of procurement theory in the private sector.

Apprentices develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours which they apply effectively in their workplace. Staff support apprentices well to develop their understanding of supplier relationships and their skills in managing stakeholder meetings. As a result, apprentices increase their confidence in the workplace and take on responsibility for bigger procurement contracts.

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

Leaders now take appropriate steps to ensure that the programme they offer meets the requirements of apprenticeship provision. For example, they now consider the whole apprenticeship standard rather than focusing on the chartered institute of procurement and supply diploma. As a result, apprentices who have joined the programme recently make quicker progress in developing knowledge, skills and behaviours than those who started the programme earlier.

Leaders recruit staff who have high levels of knowledge and experience of procurement. Staff put this expertise to good use and plan effectively the content of apprentices' study days. For example, staff teach apprentices about ethical procurement and the implications of Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic for supply chains.

Leaders and staff do not make adequate use of information that they have about what apprentices know and can do to plan a curriculum that is specific enough to the needs of individual apprentices. Staff monitor closely the knowledge, skills and

behaviours that apprentices develop, but apprentices receive the same taught programme regardless of their individual strengths and weaknesses.

Leaders work effectively with employers to identify appropriate workplace tasks that enable apprentices to practise their skills and behaviours. They ensure that review meetings involve employers. At these meetings, apprentices, their employer and provider staff discuss opportunities for on-the-job training such as shadowing colleagues in meetings. However, leaders do not consult employers when they plan the content and sequencing of the off-the-job training that apprentices complete.

Staff teach apprentices skilfully. They provide workplace examples to help apprentices to see the application of theoretical models, and they plan for frequent repetition so that apprentices can remember more of what they have learned. Apprentices understand well the different stages of the procurement cycle and the legal aspects of contracting.

Leaders and staff do not plan a suitable curriculum for the very small minority of apprentices who need to achieve functional skills qualifications in English and/or mathematics. They make arrangements for apprentices to sit the necessary examinations but do not identify or plan strategies to address gaps in apprentices' knowledge and understanding. Leaders intend to change their approach to the scheduling of provision leading to functional skills qualifications, but they have not yet been able to do this.

Leaders and staff know individual apprentices well. They monitor closely the progress that apprentices make. Leaders intervene appropriately when apprentices fall behind or do not get the support that they need in the workplace. For example, when apprentices do not have the opportunity to develop their skills and behaviours, leaders liaise with employers to identify suitable new roles.

Staff have high expectations for apprentices' behaviour at the study days. Staff operate these sessions as an extension of the workplace. Apprentices behave professionally and treat each other with respect.

Leaders carry out suitable checks on the quality of training that apprentice receive. They visit training sessions and listen to what apprentices have to say about their training. Leaders provide feedback to teaching staff and identify things that could be done differently in the future. For example, during periods of COVID-19 restrictions, apprentices gave feedback on the use of breakout rooms for additional discussions on study days that were delivered online, which staff then implemented.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders implement a range of suitable policies linked to safeguarding and well-being at work. For example, they have drawn up guidance on online safety and social

networking, bullying and harassment, and the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty. While these documents contain relevant information, some is too generic and not tailored to the needs of staff and apprentices at this provider.

Leaders and staff complete appropriate safeguarding training. Leaders make effective use of information that they receive from external sources to keep themselves and staff up to date with risks that apprentices might face. For example, leaders recently researched and delivered a comprehensive presentation to raise the awareness among staff of sexual abuse and harassment.

### **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Make better use of information about what apprentices know and can do, to plan a curriculum that is ambitious for individual apprentices and targeted to their curricular goals.
- Increase engagement with employers to inform the content of the study days and to ensure that the curriculum is relevant to employers' needs.
- Enhance and implement plans to improve the support that apprentices receive to improve their knowledge and understanding in readiness to sit functional skills examinations in English and mathematics.
- Create opportunities for all apprentices to access information, advice and guidance about the opportunities available to them after their apprenticeship.
- Continue to develop the personal development curriculum so that apprentices improve their recall of topics linked to their personal safety and well-being.
- Review the content of policy documents to make sure that it is contextualised to meet the needs of staff and apprentices at The Procurement Academy.

## Provider details

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<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Philip Chippindale
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	N/A

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the operations and finance director, 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

Andrea Shepherd, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Karen Anderson	Her Majesty's Inspector

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