

22 June 2022

Tom Rees
Executive Director
Ambition Institute
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Dear Mr Rees

Lead provider monitoring visit (LPMV) of Ambition Institute

Following my visit with Michael Wardle, Chris Stevens, Tracey Reynolds and Katherine Douglas, Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), on 10 to 12 May 2022, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the LPMV findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you have taken to date.

This inspection was the first LPMV since the start of your delivery of the early career framework (ECF) and national professional qualification (NPQ) programmes. It was carried out under Part 8 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that, at this time:

Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action towards ensuring that the ECF training and NPQ professional development are of a high standard.

The lead provider should take further action to:

- provide support to facilitators and trainers to use their expertise to contextualise what early career teachers (ECTs) and participants on NPQ programmes are learning.

I am copying this letter to the Department for Education.

This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

Jo Evans
Her Majesty's Inspector

Context

Ambition Institute works with delivery partners that are spread across all regions of England. There are 42 delivery partners in total. Twelve deliver ECF, five deliver NPQ programmes and 25 partners deliver both. The ECF training and the NPQ programmes are also delivered by central, Ambition Institute-led provision. There are eight delivery partner leads. These are staff from Ambition Institute who work with delivery partner leaders. They support key aspects of the relationship between the lead provider and delivery partners. This includes induction, quality assurance and training.

There are a total of 14,615 participants on the ECF programme. Ambition Institute delivers all six of the current NPQ programmes. There are 8,666 participants across these programmes.

Report

- Leaders have carefully designed a curriculum that maintains fidelity to the ECF and ensures that content will be delivered exclusively and comprehensively. They have set out opportunities for flexibility where this is appropriate. For example, mentors are able to take into account the prior experience of ECTs when setting next-step targets. Leaders have produced a wide range of high-quality exemplification materials that are used to contextualise aspects of the training. These are linked to specific subjects, settings and phases.
- Mentors benefit from a comprehensive training package. They are well-equipped to provide effective support for ECTs. Leaders ensure that mentors understand the rationale for the curriculum design, how to use the interactive learning platform and, most importantly, the process of instructional coaching. There is a shared understanding that mentors are helping ECTs on a journey from novice to expert with an emphasis on revisiting and practising what has been learned.
- Leaders ensure that the training curriculum for NPQ programmes is ambitious. The planned sequence of learning is organised so that participants build on their existing knowledge and skills within and across the programmes. There are carefully planned opportunities to link what is being learned to participants' own settings. This allows participants to apply, in their current roles, the knowledge and skills they gain in training.
- Delivery partners are very positive about working with Ambition Institute. They consider communication to be a strength and feel well supported to deliver the programmes. Many delivery partner leaders report that the lead provider has responded well to initial issues with the delivery portal and learning platform to ensure that these systems run as smoothly as possible.
- Leaders work closely with delivery partners to ensure that the ECF training and NPQ programmes are consistently well delivered. This includes support and training for facilitators, co-delivery of training sessions and regular meetings about implementation. One delivery partner summed up the views of many others by saying, 'Ambition Institute is responsive, supportive and

reflective.’ An example of this approach is linked to exemplification materials and delivery partner requests for additional resources and guidance linked to specific subjects, phases and settings. Leaders have plans to extend bespoke guidance for facilitators and trainers so that they can confidently use their own knowledge and experience to enhance the support they provide for the ECTs they work with.

- Leaders have set out a rigorous approach to checking the quality of all aspects of programme delivery. This is a phased approach. Following initial checks on ‘mobilisation’, leaders are now gathering information on the quality of training and reviewing how well the programmes are improving ECTs and NPQ participants’ practice. This information is shared with those responsible for governance, including trustees.
- Governance provided by Ambition Institute’s trustees through the ‘education and impact’ committee is ambitious. It has high expectations about the impact of delivery for ECTs, school leaders and pupils. Committee members hold leaders to account and provide appropriate levels of challenge and support.
- The lead provider engages with stakeholders well. This begins with induction, and includes opportunities for testing curriculum materials, being part of user feedback groups and responding to surveys. Leaders take deliberate action to help make the workload manageable. They continue to make adaptations to the learning platform to aid this further.
- Stakeholder responses to Ofsted’s inspection survey were very positive. Most ECTs and NPQ participants reported that the programmes are building on what they already know. This was supported by school leaders, who said that their staff are able to apply what they are learning. The comment ‘the lead provider programme is excellent and has made a huge difference to the confidence and practice of our current ECTs’ is typical of many responses received.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the lead provider’s work, scrutinised documents and met with lead provider representatives. They also met with delivery partner leaders and facilitators, ECTs, mentors and NPQ participants to discuss the ECF training and NPQ programmes. The lead inspector met with some trustees and the chief executive officer.

Inspectors visited some training sessions and viewed training materials. They also met with the central staff team at Ambition Institute, including curriculum designers, programme leaders, delivery partner leads and facilitators.

Inspectors took account of the responses of delivery partner leaders, ECTs and NPQ participants, mentors and school leaders to Ofsted’s inspection survey about the ECF training and NPQ programmes.