

# Inspection of Instep UK Limited

Inspection dates: 23 to 26 May 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this provider

Instep UK Limited (Instep) is a national apprenticeship training provider that is based in Warrington, Cheshire. Instep received its own directly funded contract in May 2018.

At the time of the inspection, there were 1,035 apprentices studying levels 2 to 5 apprenticeship standards. Most apprentices study at levels 3 and 5. There were 453 apprentices on level 3 team leader or supervisor (team leader), 194 apprentices on level 5 operations or departmental manager (departmental manager), and 193 apprentices on level 5 coaching professional. The remainder study at levels 2 and 4.

Tutors and trainers provide apprentices with an online curriculum through group workshops and one-to-one coaching.

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

Most apprentices enjoy their courses and have high attendance at their training sessions. They are motivated and determined to succeed. Apprentices display high levels of respect towards their tutors, work colleagues and each other. They value the support they receive from provider staff and their employers. However, a few apprentices feel that their learning has been disrupted because of too many changes of tutors on a few programmes.

Most apprentices develop the knowledge and skills they need to be successful at work. For example, level 5 departmental managers learn important theory about emotional intelligence. They use this to adapt their behaviour to manage their staff successfully. As a result, they become trusted members of their teams at work.

Apprentices develop the self-esteem and confidence they need for work. For example, level 3 team leaders assertively manage conflict between staff. Level 5 departmental managers confidently deliver professional presentations at meetings.

Apprentices benefit from effective initial advice and guidance, which ensures that they start on the right programme. However, they do not always have sufficient knowledge or understanding of the wider range of progression routes available to them outside their organisation.

Apprentices know how to keep themselves safe. They know how to report any concerns they may have about themselves or others. However, a few apprentices do not know enough about the potential risks of radicalisation and extremism that they may encounter at home and work.

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

Leaders and managers have a sound rationale to meet the skills requirements of the employers they serve. They provide an ambitious apprenticeship curriculum that challenges most apprentices to achieve their full potential.

The curriculum is ordered in a way that apprentices can incrementally build their knowledge, skills and behaviours. For example, level 4 associate project managers initially learn about resource management and budgeting. After this, they learn how to complete complex aspects of project management, such as completing a risk management plan. Level 5 coaching professionals learn about the importance of reflective practice. After this, they learn about coaching theory and methods of communication before applying this learning when coaching staff. Consequently, apprentices build their skills over time in a meaningful way.

Trainers and tutors have the appropriate experience and qualifications to teach their subjects. Leaders provide staff with a range of effective training to develop their skills further, for example training to improve their digital skills when teaching remotely. As a result, most apprentices know more and remember more throughout

their programmes. However, leaders have not provided training for tutors and trainers to develop their teaching skills further so that all apprentices make good progress and complete their apprenticeships on time.

Most apprentices develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours as a result of their apprenticeships. For example, level 4 associate project managers create project milestone reports effectively. Level 5 coaching professionals learn the differences between coaching, mentoring and counselling. This helps them to coach colleagues at work successfully. Level 5 departmental managers successfully support and manage their teams through organisational changes. As a result, most apprentices make at least the progress expected of them.

Tutors and trainers use a range of effective strategies to teach apprentices. Apprentices complete work prior to their workshops. This prepares them well for the topic of the session. Tutors and trainers present information clearly and use technology effectively, for example screen sharing and managing breakout rooms. Tutors use examples from their own experience to bring teaching to life. They use appropriate questioning to identify gaps in apprentices' knowledge, consolidate learning and inform teaching. As a result, most apprentices retain information in their long-term memory. For example, level 3 team leaders recall key management theories in relation to decision-making and behavioural management of staff.

Tutors plan and coordinate on- and off-the job training effectively with most employers. This enables employers to routinely plan opportunities for apprentices to practise and hone their skills at work. As a result, most apprentices develop the skills they need to be successful at work. For example, level 3 team leaders successfully implement new systems to monitor staff performance accurately and increase productivity.

Most tutors and trainers provide helpful feedback to apprentices. They often challenge apprentices to expand their answers and give examples from their workplace. As a result, most apprentices' work improves over time.

Tutors and trainers ensure that apprentices are well prepared for their final assessments. For example, level 5 coaching professionals receive frequent opportunities to practise and hone their coaching skills with their peers. As a result, the large majority of apprentices achieve merit or distinction grades in their final assessments. All apprentices remain in employment at the end of their apprenticeships. A small number of apprentices gain promotion or go on to study at a higher level.

Most apprentices use their English and mathematical skills at work effectively. Level 3 team leaders and level 5 departmental managers produce well-formatted business reports. They successfully adjust how they speak to people at all levels in their organisation. Level 4 associate project managers accurately produce complex budget spreadsheets. Those apprentices who need to complete their functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics receive effective tutorials. As a result, the large majority of apprentices pass their examinations at their first attempt.

Leaders use a range of useful information to gain a thorough and accurate oversight of apprentices' progress. They set staff challenging targets to achieve, for instance timescales for feeding back on work. Leaders routinely monitor their progress against them. As a result, most apprentices are on target to complete their apprenticeships on time. However, a few apprentices have not completed their apprenticeships on time. Leaders have well-considered plans in place to help apprentices to catch up swiftly and complete their apprenticeship.

Board members receive a range of good-quality information from managers. This helps them to understand the strengths and areas they need to improve. Board members closely monitor the areas that need improving. They hold staff to account to make the necessary changes to improve the quality of apprentices' training.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders support a culture of safeguarding and protection within their organisation. They have put in place appropriate policies and processes to ensure that staff know how to keep apprentices safe. The designated safeguarding lead and deputies have the appropriate experience and training to carry out their roles effectively.

Leaders complete a range of appropriate checks when appointing new staff to make sure they are suitable to work with apprentices. All staff receive appropriate training on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty.

Apprentices know how to keep themselves safe online. For example, they routinely change their passwords, use blurred backgrounds during remote training, and do not open any suspicious emails.

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

- Leaders need to prioritise the swift completion of the few apprentices who have not achieved their apprenticeships on time.
- Leaders should ensure that they provide appropriate training for tutors and trainers to develop their teaching skills further so that all apprentices make good progress and complete their apprenticeships on time.
- Leaders should ensure that their careers guidance helps apprentices to understand the full range of next steps and career options available to them.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	2526587
<b>Address</b>	St James Business Centre Wilderspool Causeway Warrington WA4 6PS
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<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Andrew Murphy
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the corporate services director, 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.

## Inspection team

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