

Inspection of Kaplan Financial Limited

Inspection dates: 14 to 17 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Apprenticeships	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Information about this provider

Kaplan Financial Limited (Kaplan) is part of Kaplan International Holdings Limited. It provides a wide range of programmes in the financial services and accounting sectors. The apprenticeship provision operates across multiple sites nationally. Training is provided through a mixture of face to face, on demand and live online sessions. Kaplan subcontracts specialist modules to seven subcontractors.

At the time of the inspection, there were around 11,500 apprentices enrolled on apprenticeship standards. Apprentices are on apprenticeship standards in the professional and business services sector or the financial services sector from levels 2 to 7. Three quarters of all apprentices study the level 7 accountancy and taxation professional apprenticeship.

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

Most apprentices have positive attitudes to learning. They are ambitious and motivated to learn. Apprentices use feedback from colleagues to develop their behaviours to become more successful at work. They routinely demonstrate the behaviours and attitudes their employers require in the workplace, becoming more independent when completing tasks at work.

Apprentices gain confidence and improve their communication skills as a result of their apprenticeship programmes. Finance assistant apprentices learn how to send professional emails and communicate effectively on the telephone with clients. As a result, a few apprentices secure additional responsibilities and gain promotions at work.

Data technician and business analyst apprentices receive useful support when they fall behind. Actions are put in place to help them catch up. As a result, they make good progress, and most pass exams on their first attempt. Conversely, level 7 accounting apprentices and a few apprentices at lower levels, do not receive effective support when they fall behind or when they fail examinations. They do not receive useful guidance from staff to know what they need to do to improve. Many accounting apprentices do not make the expected progress or complete their apprenticeship.

Most apprentices do not receive effective ongoing careers advice and guidance to help them make informed decisions about their next steps. In most cases, apprentices are directed to the internal careers site. A few apprentices who are ambitious to progress to higher qualifications do not receive guidance on how to access these programmes.

Apprentices feel safe and know how to stay safe. Data technician apprentices know the importance of data security. They take appropriate steps in the workplace to ensure data remains secure.

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

Senior leaders do not have an effective oversight of how well apprentices develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours as a result of their apprenticeship. The quality assurance arrangements do not sufficiently focus on evaluating the quality of education that apprentices receive. Half of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection remain. Leaders have not been swift enough to improve the quality of training that most apprentices receive.

Leaders develop apprenticeship programmes to meet the needs of employers in the financial services and business sector. They have nurtured effective links with a range of high-profile employers to provide apprenticeship training across the

country. As a result of these links, leaders recently introduced digital apprenticeships to address local and national skills shortages within the financial sector.

Leaders plan training to enable apprentices to incrementally build their technical knowledge. Business analyst apprentices learn about project planning by using snake diagrams before moving on to more challenging topics such as engineering requirements. Financial services apprentices develop advanced banking skills, such as risk management. They apply tools of risk management well when advising clients on appropriate financial services and products.

Apprentices develop new professional and technical knowledge as a result of their apprenticeship. Professional accounting apprentices learn about professional scepticism and dealing appropriately with challenging clients. They deal confidently with challenging situations and maintain positive relationships with colleagues and clients.

Tutors and talent coaches do not routinely use information gathered at the start of the apprenticeship and at the start of learning modules about what apprentices already know and can do. Most apprentices follow the same curriculum regardless of their prior knowledge and experience. As a result, apprentices with prior knowledge or experience do not progress through their apprenticeship as quickly as they could.

Most tutors do not use assessments effectively to identify gaps in apprentices learning. They do not correct misunderstandings or use the results of assessments to inform future learning. A few apprentices do not understand key concepts, with many carrying out independent research to gain this knowledge.

Most talent coaches do not focus sufficiently on the development of apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours. They do not consistently carry out effective reviews of apprentices' progress or set challenging targets. As a result, apprentices do not make the progress of which they are capable. However, talent coaches that work with credit controller apprentices, set challenging targets that improve apprentices' knowledge of topics such as financial regulations.

Managers and talent coaches do not effectively coordinate on- and off-the-job training for most apprentices. Too many employers do not fully understand the requirements of an apprenticeship and focus too much on the achievement of the professional qualifications. They do not ensure that apprentices have the opportunity in the workplace to practise the skills they learn during their training. As a result, a few apprentices on accountancy apprenticeships do not recall previous learning. However, business analyst and data technician apprentices regularly practise what they learn in the workplace. As a result, they pass their examinations and make the expected progress.

Leaders' management of subcontracting is effective. They choose partners based on subject and sector expertise that meets the needs of employers. Apprentices make swift progress in their professional qualifications and contribute effectively to their workplace.

Members of the advisory board are suitably experienced and qualified to carry out their roles. However, leaders do not provide them with sufficiently detailed reports to enable them to challenge leaders on the quality of education that apprentices receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure the safeguarding team receive appropriate training to carry out their roles. All staff receive regular training and updates to keep them up to date with the most current safeguarding topics. They receive training sessions from 'Prevent' coordinators to learn about emerging risks in different localities across the country.

Leaders deal with safeguarding referrals effectively. They accurately record and follow up concerns swiftly. Leaders work with a range of external agencies to provide appropriate support to apprentices when concerns are raised.

Apprentices receive information on safeguarding topics during induction such as how to protect themselves from radicalisation and extremism. However, these topics are not reinforced throughout the apprenticeship. The majority of apprentices cannot recall what they learned. A few apprentices receive useful safeguarding training through their employers.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should quickly establish robust quality assurance processes so that they make swift progress to improve apprentices' learning experience. They should ensure that they provide accurate and useful reports to the advisory board that include all information relevant to apprenticeships so that the board can provide effective scrutiny and challenge.
- Leaders should ensure tutors and talent coaches use information on what apprentices already know and can do at the start of their programme so that all apprentices achieve their potential and develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours on their apprenticeship.
- Leaders should ensure employers are routinely involved in the planning and coordination of on- and off-the-job training to support apprentices to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders should improve the careers information, advice and guidance that apprentices receive so they are aware of further study and career options available to them.
- Leaders should ensure tutors and talent coaches improve the use of assessments to put in place appropriate support so that misconceptions and gaps in knowledge

are rectified swiftly and effectively. Leaders should ensure talent coaches regularly review the development of apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours to support apprentices to make swift progress.

Provider details

Unique reference number	54838
Address	6th Floor St James' Building 79, Oxford Street Manchester M1 6FQ
Contact number	07803 050250
Website	www.kaplan.co.uk
CEO	Kathy Walton
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	24 to 27 July 2018
Main subcontractors	International Compliance Association Tolleys London Institute of Banking and Finance Institute of Risk Management Chartered Institute of Credit Management Aston University Birmingham City University

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of continuous improvement, 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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