

Inspection of First Intuition Cambridge Limited

Inspection dates: 21 to 24 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Apprenticeships	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

First Intuition Cambridge Limited is an independent learning provider, training apprentices since March 2017. It specialises in providing education and training to finance and accountancy apprentices in the East Anglia region.

At the time of inspection, First Intuition Cambridge Limited has 604 apprentices in training. Level 3 assistant accountant programme has 70 apprentices. The level 4 accountancy taxations technician qualification has 158 apprentices. The level 7 accountancy taxation professional is the largest programme with 376 apprentices.

Nearly a quarter of apprentices studying level 3 and level 4 qualifications are aged 16 to 18 years. The provider works with four subcontractors; three of who are within the First Intuition network. At the time of the inspection, there were no apprentices in receipt of high-needs funding.

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

Apprentices build excellent rapport with staff and employers. They benefit from mutual respect and being treated as adults. This helps them to take responsibility for their own learning. They develop important skills such as preparing to deal with difficult clients and prioritising work.

Apprentices look forward to attending their theory sessions with their tutors. They highly value the support they receive from their tutors in the development of their subject knowledge and skills. They receive extensive support from their tutors to help them prepare for their end-of-course assessment. This helps them achieve their aspirational career and personal goals.

Apprentices feel proud to be part of the accountancy profession. They highly value the learning they receive from their workplace mentors. Apprentices rapidly improve their skills. As a result, employers are confident to give significant and complex responsibilities to the apprentices.

Apprentices feel safe and rarely experience bullying, harassment or discrimination. They know how to report any concerns they may have. Apprentices feel confident that staff will seriously deal with their concerns should they arise. Apprentices are highly knowledgeable about online safety. They have a detailed understanding of data protection and anti-money laundering. Consequently, apprentices are confident and know how to keep themselves and their clients safe.

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

Leaders and managers work extremely effectively with employers to meet the skills needs of the financial services sector. Leaders offer different pathways for apprentices who want to specialise in accountancy subjects. This includes management accounting, auditing, forensic accounting and taxation. This helps employers train highly talented and specialist staff for their organisations.

Apprentices benefit from a detailed and effectively sequenced curriculum. Apprentices learn about basic accountancy concepts which they practise over time. They build on this by interpreting complex financial information. Apprentices are then able to prepare accurate reports for clients. This approach enables apprentices to learn and apply their knowledge and skills incrementally.

Apprentices benefit greatly from and value the experience and subject expertise of their tutors. Tutors use their subject expertise very well to enthuse, challenge and engage apprentices. Most tutors continue to work as accounting practitioners. As a result, apprentices secure current industry-standard financial knowledge in their lessons. For example, the most up-to-date auditing practices and an insight into how clients seek to plan their tax liabilities.

Apprentices make rapid progress through their qualifications. Tutors use highly effective teaching strategies to help apprentices learn and secure their knowledge. Tutors are very aware of the individual training requirements of apprentices. Tutors make excellent use of one-to-one training and group discussions in their sessions.

Tutors and coaches use assessment extremely effectively to check apprentices' ongoing knowledge and skills development. Tutors provide constructive, motivational feedback so that apprentices know how to improve further. Tutors help apprentices prepare thoroughly for their final examinations. Apprentices develop a range of useful strategies to manage their workloads. Tutors help apprentices to talk through the anxiety that many experience prior to taking their exams. Apprentices value discussing with their tutors how best to manage their individual circumstances.

Apprentices use and develop excellent English skills because of their training. The development of these skills is woven into the apprentices' learning programme. For example, apprentices write complex accounting reports in simple English for their clients. This helps clients to understand the reports and the further actions they need to take. Apprentices learn how to present ideas and information to their senior leadership team successfully.

Apprentices' behaviour and conduct are exemplary. Apprentices promptly develop the skills and behaviours needed to be successful at work. Apprentices develop their professional curiosity to a very high standard. They are highly effective in how they use their curiosity to check for any suspicious activities their clients may undertake, such as tax evasion. Consequently, apprentices make valuable contributions to their employers' business.

Apprentices develop excellent coaching and mentoring skills. They use these skills to mentor other apprentices who are new to their organisation. Apprentices are good ambassadors for the financial sector. They take part in events and projects in the communities where they live and work. They promote the benefits of apprenticeships to secondary school pupils at careers events.

Apprentices receive exceptionally good ongoing advice and guidance about careers in the wider financial industry. Apprentices are highly aspirational about their career options. They are very focused and clear about what steps they need to take to achieve their ambitions of working as tax consultants, auditors and management accountants.

Apprentices who have additional learning needs, rapidly become independent learners. Tutors and coaches help apprentices to develop their own strategies to manage any barriers to learning. This helps these apprentices to progress through their qualifications at the same rate or better than their peers.

Leaders have excellent oversight of the quality of education and training they provide. They constantly strive to maintain the highest standards and are highly reflective of their own practice. They use feedback from apprentices and employers to continually identify actions for improvement.

Governance arrangements are highly effective. Governors are experienced in education, apprenticeship training and the financial sector. They challenge leaders appropriately, share best practice in education and training, and drive improvement. Governors receive detailed and timely performance reports from senior leaders. Additionally, governors collect their own valuable feedback from tutors, employers and apprentices. This helps governors to have a thorough understanding of key strengths and areas for improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a culture of care and awareness through the education they provide. They ensure that everyone, including tutors, coaches and employers play their part effectively in keeping apprentices safe. Leaders continuously analyse welfare and well-being incidences to identify trends. This helps them to take swift actions to reduce such incidences. For example, leaders recognise the stress that apprentices experience in preparation for their examinations. Leaders have created several very effective resources to help apprentices ease their examination pressures. Apprentices, staff and employers have excellent knowledge of the safeguarding arrangements.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1278598
Address	35 Hills Road Cambridge CB2 1NT
Contact number	01223 360405
Website	http://www.firstintuition.co.uk
Principal/CEO	Amy Forrest
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	First Intuition Limited First Intuition Leeds Limited First Intuition Chelmsford Limited RELX (UK) Limited

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the managing 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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