

# Inspection of First Intuition Bristol Limited

Inspection dates: 12 to 15 July 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

First Intuition Bristol Limited is a small independent learning provider that specialises in teaching accountancy programmes, mainly across the South West. They are a franchise of the larger First Intuition Group. At the time of the inspection, they had 384 apprentices, all studying apprenticeship standards in finance. Most apprentices are over the age of 19. They teach three apprenticeship standards: level 3 assistant accountant, level 4 accountancy/taxation technician and level 7 accountancy/taxation professional. Most of the apprentices study level 7 accountancy/taxation professional. The provider works with one subcontractor.

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

Apprentices develop the knowledge and skills needed to become financial professionals. They study a curriculum that teaches them the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to do well in the accounting sector.

Apprentices develop wider skills that are essential to the workplace and appropriate to their level of learning. For example, apprentices at levels 3 and 4 develop skills in teamwork. Those studying at level 7 learn how to become reflective practitioners.

Apprentices perform well in examinations. Most achieve their end-point assessment, and some gain high grades. Many progress through their apprenticeships, moving from level 3 to level 7. At level 7, when they have completed their apprenticeship, all stay with their employer, with some gaining a promotion.

Apprentices are keen to learn and are motivated. Their attendance at sessions is mostly high, and they take pride in their work. They are respectful to tutors, coaches, visitors and each other. However, apprentices at level 7 report feeling stressed due to their high workload.

Leaders have not made sure that the curriculum for English is sufficiently detailed for level 7 apprentices. This results in a few apprentices not gaining the skills they need to achieve well in their apprenticeship and working life.

Tutors have not made sure that apprentices quickly learn the knowledge or skills they need to close any initial gaps in learning. A few apprentices do not get the opportunity to practise new learning in the workplace. This slows apprentices' progress in learning the content of the curriculum, and reduces their long-term recollection of new knowledge.

A few apprentices with additional educational needs, do not get the essential support they require. Too often, apprentices have to take responsibility themselves to gain the support they need. This often results in them not making the progress they are capable of and can limit their potential.

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

Leaders have created a level 4 curriculum that helps apprentices to gain the new knowledge and skills needed to become an accounting technician. For example, they worked carefully with an employer, to understand their barriers to recruiting apprentices who are school leavers. As a result of this, leaders embedded a level 3 qualification into the level 4 apprenticeship. This gives apprentices the foundation knowledge needed to access the level 4 curriculum confidently.

Leaders tailor the level 7 curriculum to the employer. For example, they partner with employers to map their purpose and values to the apprenticeship standard. Tutors

use the employer's terminology when teaching, reviewing documentation, or setting work. Coaches complete joint induction sessions at the employer's site. Consequently, apprentices relate learning easily to the workplace. They also gain a better understanding of key terminology and technical language.

Leaders have constructed a well-thought-through skills development programme. They have designed a curriculum that helps apprentices develop a toolkit of techniques that they can use in their professional lives. At levels 3 and 4, apprentices develop skills in teamworking and confidence in working with people they do not know. They practise these skills in the workplace as revision activities and revisit them in progress reviews. For example, apprentices at levels 3 and 4 talk about how they have used time-management techniques to improve their performance at work. Apprentices at level 7 become more reflective over time. They consider how they could do things differently in pursuit of improvement. However, for a few apprentices, the teaching of this curriculum is not aligned with the activities they are undertaking at work. As a result, those apprentices are not able to embed their learning swiftly into their workplace, reducing their ability to gain a deeper understanding.

Coaches use a range of assessment methods effectively in order to ensure apprentices embed key concepts. They use activities such as workplace development tasks to check apprentices' understanding. For example, coaches set apprentices tasks around the completion of value-added tax returns. They review the tasks to see how apprentices apply their understanding of theories of indirect taxation into practice. Apprentices receive detailed and useful feedback that helps them to make good progress in learning the curriculum. Consequently, apprentices understand precisely what they need to do to improve.

Leaders have not put in place an effective English curriculum for level 7 apprentices. For example, diagnostic testing is undertaken at the start of the apprenticeship. However, this is not used to plan, tailor or sequence the order in which apprentices learn content or complete activities. Often apprentices describe a self-directed study approach using online tools. This has resulted in a few apprentices reaching the end of their programme and not having the English knowledge and skills they need to pass their apprenticeship.

Tutors do not use the assessment apprentices undertake at the start of their programs effectively. Apprentices undergo assessments in current knowledge and skills, English and mathematics. However, tutors do not use this information to plan learning that quickly addresses any gaps in knowledge or skills. For example, coaches identified that apprentices needed support with problem-solving. However, a few apprentices had to wait a few months to undertake the course designed to help them learn this skill. As a result, they could not perform at work to the standard of which they are capable.

Most apprentices stay on their apprenticeships once they start. Those that stay on the apprenticeship typically achieve their end-point assessment, some with high grades. Apprentices at level 4 mostly stay within the financial sector, and a few gain

a promotion. For example, an apprentice undertaking an audit junior role has been able to progress to more complex tasks, such as using financial audit regulations while working on more intricate audits. Most apprentices progress from level 3 apprenticeship to level 4. Many studying at level 4 progress to level 7 apprenticeship standards. All apprentices who complete the level 7 apprenticeship remain with their employer.

Leaders set high expectations for apprentices at the start of the apprenticeship. They use the links to professional codes of conduct, to reinforce and embed their expectations. Apprentices are punctual and their attendance is mostly high. Coaches track the few apprentices who do not attend, and they inform employers quickly of any absence. They support apprentices to catch up on any work that they miss and, where possible, book them into the next training day available. As a result, most apprentices achieve well.

Apprentices take pride in their achievements. They are ambitious and motivated to achieve their professional qualifications and apprenticeship. They are respectful of each other, tutors and coaches. They enjoy the learning community in the classroom. Leaders celebrate the success of those apprentices who perform well. However, leaders have not taken into account the amount of study time level 7 apprentices need to do well on their apprenticeship. Apprentices report that they are regularly completing studies before work, after work, in the evenings, and on weekends. This has resulted in apprentices at level 7 feeling stressed.

Coaches teach apprentices appropriate topics around bullying and harassment. They integrate teaching about fundamental British values and how to keep safe into their sessions well. They support apprentices to understand healthy relationships in the workplace. This includes what constitutes an inappropriate workplace conversation. Coaches refer to workplace policies and procedures when discussing with apprentices where to go if they have a concern. As a result, apprentices have a good understanding of these topics. They know where and who to go to if needed.

Apprentices understand the opportunities they have for a career in the companies in which they work. They know that coaches can provide them with guidance on career options if they ask for it. However, leaders have not ensured that apprentices systematically receive impartial careers advice. As a result, apprentices are not routinely informed about the range of opportunities for a future career, which their apprenticeship opens up to them.

Leaders identify apprentices with dyslexia well. They use a range of methods, including self-disclosure and assessments, to identify this. However, they do not ensure that apprentices consistently receive the effective support they need. For a small number of apprentices, the responsibility is on themselves to make the appropriate adjustments. In a few cases, tutors do not know what adjustments they should make to help their apprentices. This results in apprentices making slower than expected progress.

Leaders have progressed well in how they manage and develop the provision since the previous new provider monitoring visit. They have defined clear areas of responsibility for each member of the senior leadership team. They use leadership meetings to report on individual areas of responsibility. They now review the quality of the apprenticeships, using a good range of key performance indicators. These go beyond financial and examination performance. They include indicators relating to safeguarding, destinations, apprentice views and progress. However, leaders need to continue with this development. There are many examples to support strengths in their self-assessment. Yet occasionally, they pay too little attention to the areas for improvement, for example the impact of the curriculum structure on apprentices' workload and the systematic identification and development of apprentices' English skills. As a result, leaders are not fully clear on where they need to focus their attention.

Leaders have continued to develop their arrangements for external scrutiny and challenge. They have created established links with other First Intuition providers. They use these links to learn in areas such as safeguarding and quality improvement. They also receive useful critical feedback and challenge from an external governor. This has resulted in leaders having an improved understanding of quality assurance processes.

Leaders' management of subcontracting arrangements is effective. They only work with one specialist provider. This provider enhances the apprenticeship provision by providing specialist tax tutoring for apprentices. Leaders have been working with the subcontractor for several years. They have developed a good relationship with clear lines of reporting and communication. They complete appropriate annual due diligence checks. They use a range of activities, such as session visits, apprentice feedback, and surveys, to assure themselves that apprentices receive high-quality teaching. As a result, apprentices are happy, and they do well in their taxation exams.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding lead is appropriately trained. They have put in place comprehensive records that report on the welfare and any safeguarding concerns of apprentices. They communicate well with staff to ensure that they meet the welfare needs of apprentices. They keep themselves up to date by linking with a good range of national and local agencies. All staff undergo relevant training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. They complete this at the start of their employment.

Leaders have in place appropriate safer recruitment checks. They check for the right to work, and they use references, along with conducting interviews. Leaders have implemented an effective process for the monitoring of staff's mandatory training. They also record the disclosure and barring service checks on this log.

Leaders produce regular, useful information for apprentices' welfare and for keeping safe. The articles in an apprentice newsletter have relevant, up-to-date discussion points that are used during reviews. Tutors also integrate safeguarding topics into the curriculum. Through these actions, apprentices develop their knowledge of these areas well.

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

- Leaders need to continue to develop their monitoring of all aspects of the apprenticeship provision. This is to ensure that they recognise and address all areas where improvements are needed.
- Leaders must make sure they provide effective support to all apprentices who identify with an additional need. They must ensure that coaches and tutors know and put into place the support mechanisms needed to help their apprentices meet their potential.
- Leaders need to make sure they use the information gathered about apprentices at the start of the programme. This is to create a curriculum plan that closes gaps in knowledge quickly. At level 7, this must transfer to the creation of an English curriculum that teaches the knowledge and skills apprentices need, based on the results of the diagnostic tests completed at the beginning of the apprenticeship.
- Leaders need to work closely with apprentices and employers to coordinate on- and off-the-job learning. This is to ensure that apprentices have the opportunity to practise in the workplace the skills they develop on the 'Skills Days' swiftly.
- Leaders must provide routinely all apprentices with clear information, advice and guidance about career opportunities. This is to ensure that apprentices recognise the career pathways available to them as a result of their apprenticeship.
- Leaders should review the level 7 apprenticeship to ensure that apprentices have the time they need to complete their studies without placing excessive pressure on them.

## Provider details

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<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Jim O'Brien
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Tolley Tax Training

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director of apprenticeships, 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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