

The Best Connection Group Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 2674164

Name of lead inspector: Mark Parton, Her Majesty's Inspector

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 July 2022

Type of provider: Employer

Address: Unit 1 Topaz
Topaz Way
Bromsgrove
Worcestershire
B61 0GD

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From October 2018, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision which began to be funded from April 2017 or after by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and/or the apprenticeship levy. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook', especially the sections entitled 'Monitoring visits' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

The Best Connection Group Limited is an employer-provider of apprenticeships. The company is based in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire and has a dedicated training centre in Halesowen, Birmingham. It specialises in the development of recruitment consultants and began training apprentices on a direct contract in July 2021. At the time of the inspection, there were 59 adult apprentices following the level 3 recruitment consultant standard, five studying the level 3 business administrator standard, and exactly five undertaking the level 2 customer service practitioner standard. The provider does not subcontract any of its provision.

Themes

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have a clear rationale for the apprenticeships they offer. Leaders have rightly focused upon a small range of apprenticeship standards to meet both the company's and the national need for high-quality recruitment consultants.

Leaders and managers ensure the programmes they offer fulfil the requirements of an apprenticeship. Nearly all apprentices receive their full entitlement to off-the-job learning. Where this is not the case, leaders and trainers act swiftly to intervene and rectify. For example, individualised plans are produced to ensure apprentices are given additional support in receiving their entitlement.

Leaders recruit apprentices with integrity. Leaders take clear and sensible actions to confirm candidate suitability. For example, apprentices undertake a rigorous four-week onboarding period to ensure the programme offered meets their personal development needs.

Leaders and managers have an effective oversight of apprentices' performance. Leaders develop clear and coherent methods to assess apprentices' progress from

their identified starting points. Leaders ensure apprentices' progress is reviewed frequently and thoroughly. Leaders put in place well-thought-through measures to support those who fall behind in their learning.

Leaders and managers appropriately evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of their provision. They have a suitable understanding of the areas that require further improvement. For example, leaders recognise too few apprentices have a clear enough understanding of the career progression opportunities available to them.

Leaders ensure that staff are suitably qualified to provide training programmes to a high standard. Leaders ensure trainers undertake regular and worthwhile professional development to improve their teaching practice.

Leaders have in place effective governorship arrangements. The board members have a wide range of expertise and talents, including financial and recruitment sector knowledge. This knowledge is skilfully utilised to hold leaders and managers to account.

Leaders have successfully put in place processes to prepare apprentices for their end-point-assessments (EPA). As a result, apprentices achieve well and nearly all apprentices gain the grade of which they are capable in their EPA.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? Reasonable progress

Apprentices benefit from being taught by trainers who are well-qualified, motivational, and knowledgeable. As a result, apprentices develop positive attitudes to work and feel well supported in their learning.

Trainers use information gathered at the start of the apprenticeship to generate detailed individual learning plans. These plans are logically sequenced, and tasks apprentices undertake become suitably more complex over time. As a result, apprentices quickly gain the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in their job roles.

Trainers work with managers effectively to ensure apprentices get the opportunity to practise their new knowledge and skills. These opportunities enable them to consolidate and deepen their learning. Apprentices can fluently remember the learning that has taken place previously and how it helps them in their job roles.

Trainers use a range of effective assessment activities to check apprentices' understanding. For example, once learning has taken place, trainers set knowledge question exercises to assess their understanding frequently. During teaching sessions, trainers cleverly recap learning via effective questioning. As a result, trainers are confident that apprentices grasp key concepts.

Trainers set clear targets and monitor apprentices' progress well. They ensure apprentices receive detailed and helpful feedback that enables them to develop their skills further. Consequently, apprentices learn well over time and recognise what they need to do to improve.

Trainers do not routinely support apprentices to continue to develop their English and mathematics skills. Trainers do not put in place sufficiently tailored plans to teach apprentices the English and mathematics skills they need to be successful in their apprenticeship and working life. As a result, apprentices too often make slow progress in their English and mathematics skills development. Too many apprentices need to retake their functional skills examinations to be successful.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have put in place appropriate and well-defined safeguarding policies. Leaders complete a range of appropriate checks when appointing new staff to ensure they are suitable to work with apprentices. Leaders diligently follow their robust policies for safer recruitment.

The designated safeguarding lead has a clear understanding of the requirements of the role. They are suitably trained alongside their deputy. Leaders have implemented suitable reporting procedures for safeguarding concerns. Concerns are followed up swiftly and with professionalism.

Leaders focus thoroughly upon apprentices' well-being. For example, apprentices have access to a trained mental-health first aider or a personalised counselling service, if needed.

Apprentices undertake suitable safeguarding training during their initial induction and targeted training in relation to the recruitment sector. As a result, they know how to keep themselves and colleagues safe; they clearly understand how to report any safeguarding concerns.

Apprentices have a well-developed knowledge of the risks associated with modern slavery and the dangers of hidden labour exploitation. However, leaders acknowledge, apprentices do not have a sound enough understanding of the risks associated with their locality.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2022