

Inspection of EMA Training Limited

Inspection dates: 18 to 21 July 2022

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

Information about this provider

EMA Training Limited (EMA) is an apprenticeship provider based in Derby. Many of EMA's apprentices are school leavers, or young people in the initial stages of their careers. They study courses in accountancy, payroll administration, digital marketing or information technology technical support. Since the last inspection, EMA has stopped offering train driver and conductor apprenticeships.

At the time of the inspection, 223 apprentices followed apprenticeship standards at EMA. Many of these apprentices studied the assistant accountant standard at level 3, or the professional accounting or taxation technician standard at level 4. Smaller but significant numbers of apprentices followed level 3 payroll administrator, digital marketer or information communications technician standards. Around 10% of apprentices were under the age of 18.

Most apprentices study at EMA's main site in Derby. Smaller numbers study at a satellite centre in Nottingham. Payroll administrator apprentices, who are based across the county, study their courses via online learning platforms.

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

Apprentices at EMA enjoy their studies, and highly value the new knowledge, skills and behaviours that they gain. They access high-quality, modern facilities while they study. Apprentices comment that the environment at EMA is respectful and supportive.

Apprentices benefit from leaders' work with employers to plan their curriculums. They study courses that fit very well with their job roles, and include useful additional professional qualifications.

EMA's staff build positive and productive relationships with apprentices. Trainers provide high-quality support with time management and professional communication, so that apprentices integrate successfully into their new workplaces. They grow in confidence to quickly become active team members. Apprentices communicate well with external customers, and confidently deliver presentations in high-pressure situations.

The large majority of apprentices develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to move on to further study, or progress into more responsible jobs at work. For example, almost all apprentices that study the level 3 assistant accountant standard continue their accountancy studies at level 4.

Apprentices, including those under the age of 18, rightly feel safe when they study at EMA. They know who to contact if they have a concern, and have a good knowledge of key safeguarding topics, such as sexual harassment in the workplace.

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

Leaders have sensibly focused the curriculum on industries where there are local or national skills shortages, such as a local need for accountancy staff, and a national skills shortage in the digital technical and creative industries. Leaders do not work with employers who show a lack of commitment to apprenticeship training.

Trainers plan course content effectively. They adapt the order of topics they teach, and alter content so that they meet apprentices' needs well. Level 4 professional accounting or taxation technician apprentices first learn how to prepare and draft company accounts, before they practise producing full accounts.

Trainers identify areas where apprentices need extra input, and take appropriate action. For example, having identified that younger apprentices need additional support to develop appropriate workplace behaviours, they include more content on interpersonal skills for these apprentices.

In almost all cases, trainers and mentors have high-level qualifications and recent experience in relevant industries. Apprentices learn about contemporary workplace

practices, and benefit from studying challenging real-life scenarios and examples. They rightly value the high levels of knowledge that their trainers and mentors have.

Trainers use highly-relevant teaching materials. Level 3 infrastructure technician trainers use well-planned project briefs to teach apprentices about the technology available to support remote workers. Trainers also present new information clearly. This helps apprentices to gradually gain new knowledge in complex topics, such as tax legislation for those that study accountancy.

During lessons, trainers use frequent and appropriate assessment tasks, such as quizzes, to check new knowledge and skills. When trainers identify that apprentices do not have a sufficiently detailed knowledge, they adapt subsequent teaching materials or revisit topics.

Mentors work well with apprentices' line managers to ensure that apprentices get opportunities to practise new skills at work. For example, apprentices that study digital marketing benefit from plentiful opportunities to practise coding as part of their jobs, which helps them to become more fluent coders.

The large majority of apprentices achieve their qualifications. They produce good-quality written assignments. As a result of their studies, apprentices perform very effectively at work. Level 3 digital marketer apprentices vastly improve their companies' social media presence. Level 3 assistant accountant apprentices independently complete sales ledger tasks, or import data into software packages. They understand key terminology that relates to their profession, and carry out complex mathematical calculations.

Apprentices study in an atmosphere that is highly inclusive. Those with specific needs get the help they need, so that they can progress. For example, the small number of apprentices with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive help that enables them to study more independently.

Staff at all levels provide excellent support for apprentices' health and well-being. Mentors place a considerable emphasis on ensuring that apprentices practise self-care, and live healthy lives. Curriculums include training on how to be more resilient during stressful situations, ways to deal with negative emotions, and yoga and relaxation classes. Trainers use highly engaging, well-planned quiz activities to teach apprentices about fundamental British values.

Apprentices receive relevant careers information, advice and guidance throughout their courses. Staff use a well-planned 'talent pool' to develop prospective apprentices' employment-ready skills, as well as to find courses that best meet their skills needs and aspirations. Apprentices receive frequent and effective guidance from mentors about their next steps.

Apprentices behave very well while at EMA's learning sites. They are studious, and demonstrate a passion for both their studies and their jobs. Almost all apprentices attend their sessions at high rates, and arrive to classes punctually.

Leaders have created a work and study culture that is reflective, and open to change. They accept governors' well-considered challenges and are appropriately self-critical because they want to provide the best possible education for apprentices. They are very supportive of staff, and provide trainers and mentors with good-quality opportunities for continuous professional development.

Leaders do not make good enough use of either management information or strategic planning tools to monitor and improve performance. For example, they do not monitor apprentice attendance rates thoroughly enough, and do not prioritise key areas for improvement. As a result, they set themselves too many actions for improvement, which they do not achieve within planned timeframes.

Trainers and mentors do not make sufficient use of the information that they have about apprentices' starting points, such as the existing skills that apprentices have. They do not use this to plan or review the initial stages of apprentices' studies.

Although many apprentices complete their courses successfully, only a small number gain the highest possible grades.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders place a high priority on ensuring that apprentices are safe, and that they get helpful support when they disclose a safeguarding concern. They ensure that appropriate safer recruitment checks are in place.

During courses, trainers and mentors cover safeguarding topics well. For example, they use local incidents to emphasise the importance of procedures such as 'run, hide, tell'. As a result, apprentices have a thorough knowledge of topics such as local extremism risks, and the dangers of being groomed when online.

Governors receive appropriate briefings about safeguarding issues. They scrutinise EMA's approach to safeguarding well, and use board meetings to hold leaders to account about safeguarding matters.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that a greater proportion of apprentices achieve high grades.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that tutors take full account of apprentices' starting points when they plan and review learning.
- Leaders should use management information to monitor and improve the quality of the curriculum that EMA offers.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1278626
Address	Progress House 4 Siddals Road Derby DE7 6DX
Contact number	01332 371666
Website	https://www.ematraining.co.uk/
Principal/CEO	Tracey Mosley
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	29–30 August 2019
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the chief executive, 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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