

Whitehead-Ross Education and Consulting Limited

Monitoring visit report

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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 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.

Whitehead-Ross Education and Consultancy Ltd (WREC) enrolled 106 trainees in 2021/22, all studying towards a traineeship programme. Of these trainees, 64% are adults and 36% are aged 16 to 18. Most of these trainees have few qualifications and face many social and personal barriers to learning. At the time of this inspection, there were 42 trainees in learning. The traineeship provision at WREC aims to prepare these trainees for employment or further education.

WREC have learning sites for traineeship provision in Brighton, Newquay, Swindon, Weymouth and Worcester.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Leaders have developed a clear vision for the provision of traineeships. Partnership working is highly effective. Leaders make good use of, and work well with, a range of key stakeholders. For example, leaders use the insights they gain from employers, further education institutions and local authorities to inform the curriculum. Leaders use these links well to help identify skills needs in the locations of their learning sites. For example, at its Swindon site, there is a focus on the construction industry to help meet an identified skills gap.

Leaders ensure that their provision meets the principles, requirements and expectations of the traineeship programme. The majority of employers speak positively about the employability skills gained by trainees. For example, employers within website design, and technology, praise the positive attitudes and behaviours that trainees adopt when at a work placement.

Leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement of their provision. They use this information well to improve the quality of their trainees' experiences. For example, standardisation meetings are held

frequently to share good practice. Leaders have appointed 'subject experts' to help support the improvement of English and mathematics teaching practice. However, it is too early to know the impact that these appointments have had on learning.

Leaders have appointed governance committee members with very high levels of experience and expertise in working with young people and adults. The committee meets frequently and has a good focus on the strategic direction of WREC and the quality of the provision.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that learners benefit from high-quality education that prepares them well for their next steps?

Reasonable progress

Tutors use information about what trainees can do to plan learning and skills development. They work very carefully and sensitively to build the confidence of their trainees. This helps to engage trainees in their learning prior to undertaking a work placement.

Tutors support trainees to identify what they need to do to improve their skills effectively. They work well with trainees to help them to develop the skills they need to move towards their next steps. However, not all trainees progress into employment or further training at the end of their training plan.

Most trainees benefit from meaningful work placements as part of their traineeship. Trainees develop good levels of employability skills through well-planned training. These add value to their work placement and benefit employers. They become more self-assured and develop positive attitudes towards learning. In a minority of instances, trainees do not undertake a work placement that is in their preferred industry.

Trainees enjoy their training and they develop positive relationships with staff. However, attendance to lessons is too low. Whilst early indications suggest that overall attendance is improving, attendance to English and mathematics lessons is not yet consistently high enough.

Leaders recognise the importance of having sufficient knowledge and skills within their staff base to be able to meet the needs of trainees with special educational needs. However, in a minority of instances, tutors are not able to inform employers as to how best to support their trainees when they are at their work placement. Leaders have plans in place to ensure that their trainees receive the specialist support that they are entitled to.

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

Leaders ensure that the health, safety, welfare and safeguarding of trainees is a high priority. For example, managers ensure that robust pre-placement checks are undertaken prior to trainees attending their placement. Suitably trained designated safeguarding leads deal promptly with any disclosures and ensure that trainees receive appropriate and timely support.

Leaders ensure that staff are appropriately vetted prior to the start of their employment. All staff complete frequent safeguarding and Prevent duty training. They maintain vigilance over any changes in trainees' behaviour that may indicate that they need intervention. For example, leaders identified a need for staff to undertake training in mental health awareness to support their trainees effectively.

Leaders and managers ensure that tutors teach their trainees how to keep themselves safe. Trainees know who to contact at WREC should they feel unsafe. Leaders have plans in place to expand their curriculum to ensure wider safeguarding matters are also taught.

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