

Inspection of All Spring Media Limited

Inspection dates:

15 to 17 June 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Apprenticeships

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

All Spring Media Limited (ASM) is an independent training provider specialising in creative and digital media training and is based in Chesham. ASM started teaching apprenticeships as a subcontractor and has been directly funded since 2017. ASM offers a range of standards-based apprenticeships to over 40 different employers across the country. These range from small employers to large businesses in the film and media sector.

Since the new provider monitoring visit, ASM has expanded the number of apprenticeships it offers from two to seven and has significantly increased the number of apprentices it has recruited. At the time of the inspection, there were 167 apprentices in training, two thirds of whom had started in the previous six months. There were 117 apprentices studying level 3 apprenticeships: 61 on broadcast production assistant, 31 on junior content producer, 14 on assistant accountant, six on business administration and five on advertising and media executive apprenticeships. There were 39 apprentices on the level 4 apprenticeship in media production coordinator. The remaining 11 apprentices were studying the level 7 apprenticeship in creative industries production management. Most apprentices are under 25 years of age.

ASM does not work with any subcontractors.

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

Most apprentices do not benefit from training that is planned carefully and sequenced around their different job roles so that they can develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need and apply them at work quickly. Many broadcast production assistant and junior content producer apprentices are working in environments that do not relate fully to the training they receive. They feel rightly frustrated that they take part in training sessions that pay little regard to what they are working on in their jobs in television studios or broadcasting. Conversely, they do not have the opportunity to put into practice at work some of what they have learned on their training, and a few worry that they may not pass their final assessments.

Apprentices develop appropriate workplace behaviours for the industry, such as how to behave professionally when encountering celebrities at work. Apprentices benefit from talks from guest speakers, who provide them with useful insights into the film industry and help them understand the challenges and barriers they may find in their careers. For example, apprentices heard from an award-winning producer who started their career sweeping floors at a film studio. Apprentices learn to manage the pressure of producing high-quality broadcast products and services in live environments.

Apprentices value highly the opportunity that the apprenticeship gives them to work in the creative media sector. Most enjoy their jobs and have high aspirations to succeed further in the industry. Many apprentices enjoy their learning, find it useful and attend their lessons well. A small minority of apprentices, who do not see the relevance of their training to their roles and future careers, are not motivated to attend their training, which limits their progress.

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

Leaders, managers and advisory board members have not ensured that they have the necessary staffing capacity and expertise in place to cope with the recent growth in the number of apprentices they have recruited. Leaders acknowledge that the increase in apprentice numbers, compounded by some staffing issues, has impacted negatively on their ability to keep up with functions such as quality assurance. As a result, leaders and managers are not aware that the quality of the training they provide has declined and they have not got an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their provision.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that staff plan and teach a curriculum that is ambitious for all apprentices. Leaders have a clear rationale for their creative media apprenticeships, which provide a paid way for young and diverse talent to enter the film and media industries. They use their extensive knowledge of the industry and their well-established networks effectively to identify adaptations to the curriculum. For example, they have introduced training on podcasting. However, leaders and managers do not have such a well-considered rationale for other apprenticeships

they have recently introduced in response to employer demand, such as assistant accountant and business administrator. Leaders struggled to recruit suitable and experienced staff and they acknowledge that curriculum planning and sequencing in these areas are not effective enough to provide high-quality teaching to apprentices.

Staff do not use the information they collect about apprentices' starting points to plan an effective training programme that is tailored to apprentices' existing knowledge and relevant to their job roles and career aspirations. All apprentices receive the same training regardless of their development needs and job roles. As a result, apprentices with some prior knowledge do not make the progress of which they are capable. For example, staff do not plan camera training around the different levels of technical ability of broadcast production assistant apprentices. While radio-based apprentices enjoy learning about camera skills, they do not see the relevance of this training to their job roles and struggle to find opportunities to apply what they have learned at work.

Leaders and managers do not involve employers enough in the planning of the training for their apprentices or in the review of the progress apprentices are making. Apprentices' line managers do not routinely attend review meetings with apprentices and their assessors or get specific enough feedback on what apprentices are covering in their training. As a result, apprentices' line managers cannot assign apprentices to relevant tasks to enable them to consolidate what they have learned in their training when they are at work.

Too many apprentices have a poor learning experience. Their training consists of a succession of sessions taught by a variety of trainers and external speakers. The lack of structure in the planning and insufficient communication between all those involved result in duplication of content. This is a source of frustration for apprentices. Too many apprentices do not respond well to the remote training sessions, which they find overly long and with little opportunity for interaction. For example, broadcast production assistant apprentices have limited opportunities to develop their practical skills or to work in role plays or scenarios with other apprentices.

Trainers and assessors have extensive and current subject knowledge of the creative media and broadcasting industries, although few have teaching or training qualifications. They use their expertise to provide apprentices with valuable insights into the industry's working practices. For example, accountancy assistant apprentices learn from specialists in film accountancy production how the roles of accountant and production assistant are linked.

Most apprentices value highly the training they receive at work, which allows them to experience different professional environments and to receive professional feedback on their work from experts in their field. For example, broadcast production assistant apprentices benefit from being involved in filming political interviews at Westminster and learn about the role of a shooting editor. Apprentices who work in radio receive useful critiques by radio station managers on the sound quality and content length of broadcast products they have produced.

Apprentices in broadcasting roles improve the standard of their technical and creative skills, which helps them build their profile at work. Most apprentices who complete their studies achieve their apprenticeship. A small proportion of these achieve distinction grades.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders do not ensure that all staff receive appropriate and timely training on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. They do not complete suitable checks when appointing new staff to be confident that apprentices are safe.

The safeguarding officer, who is responsible for conducting safeguarding investigations, is not adequately trained to deal with safeguarding or 'Prevent' duty concerns, should these arise. The deputy safeguarding lead is appropriately trained in the responsibilities of the role.

Leaders and managers have not identified the risks of radicalisation and extremism specific to the media industry or to the different areas across the country where apprentices live and work. As a result, apprentices cannot describe the risks they face in their roles or how to keep themselves safe from these.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders and managers should ensure that they use the information they collect about apprentices' starting points and job roles to plan an ambitious and individualised curriculum that allows apprentices to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need for their jobs and to apply them promptly at work.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that employers are involved in planning the training for their apprentices and reviewing the progress they are making through their training.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that apprentices' line managers attend review meetings and know what apprentices are studying on their training, so that they can support apprentices and assign them to relevant tasks that enable them to consolidate their learning at work.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that their self-assessment process is rigorous and identifies accurately the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of their apprenticeships. They should ensure that they set actions in their quality improvement plan to tackle the weaknesses identified and urgently improve the quality of the training that apprentices receive.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that all staff receive training in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty that is appropriate and relevant to their job roles and refreshed in line with the timescales stated on their policies.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that they carry out suitable checks when appointing new staff to ensure they are safe to work with apprentices.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1278677
Address	Old Drill Hall Bellingdon Road Chesham Buckinghamshire HP5 2HA
Contact number	07802 790866
Website	www.allspringmedia.co.uk
Managing director	Martina Porter
Provider type	Independent training provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the quality manager, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the new provider monitoring visit 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 and watching recordings of remote 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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