

# Busy Bees Education and Training Limited

Monitoring visit report

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<b>Name of lead inspector:</b>	Sharon Dowling, Her Majesty's Inspector
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<b>Address:</b>	St Matthews Shaftsbury Drive Burntwood WS7 9QP

## 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.

Busy Bees Education and Training Limited (BBET) is an independent training provider based in Burntwood, Staffordshire. Part of the Busy Bees Nurseries Limited, BBET was established in 2020 and has held a contract to provide apprenticeships since November 2020. At the time of the visit, 1428 apprentices were in learning. All apprentices were following apprenticeship standards, of which 617 were studying the level 3 early years educator, 246 were on the level 4 children, young people and families (residential care) practitioner, 171 were on the level 2 early years practitioner, 64 were on the level 5 early years lead practitioner, 63 were on the level 3 team leader or supervisor and 51 were on the level 5 children, young people and families (residential care) manager apprenticeship. The remaining apprentices were studying a range of apprenticeships from level 2 to level 5 aligned to the care and early years sectors in addition to business, management and catering apprenticeships.

### Themes

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

**Reasonable progress**

Leaders work closely with employers to support the development and implementation of training to respond to the ongoing recruitment issues in the early years and care sectors. Leaders have also developed apprenticeships in other vocational areas, such as the level 2 production chef apprenticeship, to meet the needs of employers in this sector. This apprenticeship allows nurseries and care home managers to develop a workforce that can create tasty and nutritious meals for children and for people in care homes.

Following a detailed review of the quality of training, leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their apprenticeship provision. They have put in place appropriate strategies to deal with most of the areas that need to be improved. For example, leaders have recruited new specialist teachers

and development coaches to support apprentices' acquisition of knowledge and skills on the level 4 children, young people and families (residential care) practitioner apprenticeship. These apprentices are now better supported to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that their employers require. Development coaches are better able to assist apprentices to catch up on their studies when they fall behind.

Leaders have not yet taken action to improve all aspects of their apprenticeship provision. They do not ensure that key processes involved in the effective delivery of an apprenticeship are in place. For example, workplace mentors are not sufficiently involved in progress reviews. This means that on too many occasions they are not aware of how their apprentices are progressing, or what support they need to provide to help them consolidate and master the skills they have learned.

Governance is ineffective. Leaders report into the Busy Bees Nurseries Limited board. However, the board members do not hold leaders to account to improve the quality of training that apprentices receive. Leaders recognise the need to implement an effective governance structure with members who will support and challenge leaders to rapidly improve the quality of apprenticeships that they provide.

Leaders have developed a range of strategies to support careers advice and the progression of apprentices, particularly in the care sector and at Busy Bees Nurseries Limited. However, the advice they receive does not fully reflect the wider opportunities that exist for apprentices outside of this sector.

**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**

Managers have designed a curriculum to enable apprentices to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours to support the development of the children and people in their care. For example, apprentices on the level 4 children, young people and families (residential care) practitioner apprenticeship improve their understanding of early childhood development and trauma to respond more effectively to the challenging behaviours of the young people in their care.

Development coaches sequence the apprenticeship appropriately to develop apprentices' knowledge and understanding of key themes and topics over time. Initial learning focuses on health and safety and safeguarding, which supports apprentices to understand and apply the policies and procedures in their settings. They then progress on to more complex topics. For example, level 3 early years educator apprentices subsequently develop the skills needed to manage challenging conversations with parents.

Leaders do not ensure that development coaches systematically develop apprentices' English and mathematical skills. In a few cases, apprentices achieve their functional skills too late in the apprenticeship. Consequently, a minority of apprentices do not progress to their final assessments on time.

Most apprentices participate in regular progress reviews, which include discussions about work completed through the online portal. However, development coaches do not place enough focus on identifying how effectively apprentices are developing new knowledge, skills and behaviours, or how they have applied them in their workplace since the last review. Workplace mentors are not always present at progress reviews. This restricts the development coaches' ability to plan on- and off-the-job training effectively, to enable apprentices to practise the skills they have learned in a workplace setting.

Apprentices produce written work at or above the expected standard. However, feedback on apprentices' work is not sufficiently developmental, which leads to apprentices not always fully understanding how well they are performing, or which aspects of their work needs to improve.

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

Leaders and managers have implemented appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures, which staff use effectively to support apprentices.

Apprentices feel safe at work and in learning. They have a good understanding of safeguarding and its application to their workplace. As a result, apprentices can use this understanding in their work with children and people in their care to keep them safe.

Apprentices are not always aware of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism specific to the areas in which they live and work. Designated safeguarding leads are progressing initiatives to improve the apprentices' understanding of safeguarding risks in the apprentices' locality and how they can best share that information, for example using 'Buzz', the provider's newsletter, and the online learning platform.

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