

Qualia Aesthetics Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Ian Frear, Her Majesty's Inspector

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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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 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.

Qualia Aesthetics Limited is an independent learning provider that began training learners in digital marketing, business and human resources in 2014. It secured its own directly funded contract through the Education and Skills Funding Agency to provide apprenticeship training in digital marketing in June 2021. The provider currently offers one apprenticeship standard. At the time of the inspection, there were fewer than five apprentices enrolled on the level 3 digital marketer standard. All apprentices are located in West Yorkshire.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Leaders have designed a rich and ambitious curriculum that enables apprentices to develop the new knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to succeed in the digital marketing industry. They actively recruit apprentices furthest from the labour market and particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Apprentices gain a wide range of highlyvalued and sought after digital skills through training that includes understanding client needs, cyber security, marketing and business analytics.

Leaders work closely with a range of regional partners and national networks to plan a curriculum to meet the skills needs of the digital marketing industry. They understand well the needs of businesses in the area and the skills deficits within the local economy. Leaders provide local businesses with a range of effective support to enable them to understand the potential benefit to their business of investing in digital marketing apprentices.

Leaders have employed staff with highly valued skills and experience in the education and marketing sector. Staff are experienced end-point assessors for digital marketing apprenticeships. They use their experience to identify best practice and adapt their own

teaching methods accordingly to prepare apprentices adequately for their final examinations.

Leaders conduct useful quality assurance activities, such as observations of teaching, and hold frequent standardisation events to check the content and design of the curriculum. However, in a few instances, the results and actions identified by leaders following observations are not acted on quickly enough to improve the quality of teaching.

Leaders do not delegate tasks, such as administration and networking, well enough. They spend too much time focusing on overly complicated systems and processes that slow their ability to grow and develop a sustainable apprenticeship offer. Consequently, despite the need for skilled digital marketing workers, apprenticeship numbers are low.

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

Teachers conduct effective initial assessments that explore in detail the knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices have before they begin their apprenticeship. Apprentices reflect deeply on how the learning and skills to be developed through the apprenticeship are relevant to their job role. This helps teachers to ensure that apprentices are recruited to the right programme and at the right level.

Teachers provide apprentices with well-structured learning and assessment activities, covering topics, such as equality, diversity and safeguarding, that are relevant at home, at work and for life in their community. Apprentices apply what they learn to operate safely online when preparing and evaluating digital media content. They respond sensitively to negative online posts about their company and seek appropriate permissions when using photographs in marketing campaigns.

Teachers work closely with employers to prepare apprentices fully for working in digital marketing. Teachers and employers carefully identify meaningful opportunities for their apprentices to lead marketing campaigns. Apprentices routinely use complex marketing software to identify seasonal trends to ensure that products are released at the right time to maximise the impact of sales through targeted campaigns.

Apprentices work in stimulating and demanding work environments that help them to develop personal and professional behaviours beyond those expected within the apprenticeship standards. They have attended film premieres to represent their company and dealt sensitively and appropriately with the exacting demands of high-profile public clients, such as professional actors.

Teachers help apprentices to develop, improve and apply in the workplace new skills that they learn in English and mathematics. Apprentices accurately use data about their employer's social media content and use marketing tools to increase customer footfall,

turnover and higher profits for their employers.

Teachers ensure that apprentices record their off-the-job training diligently. However, too many apprentices record examples of daily work activities as their off-the-job training and do not describe well enough how those activities contribute to the development of new knowledge, skills and behaviours.

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

Leaders have established an effective culture of safeguarding. They are appropriately qualified and have detailed knowledge of the local risks in West Yorkshire. Leaders ensure that staff receive frequent and relevant training about county lines, cuckooing and knife crime. Staff are also trained in mental health and well-being, so they clearly understand the challenges faced by young people.

Apprentices feel safe. Staff frequently revisit well-contextualised and thought-provoking 'hot topics' about online safety, cyber security and the importance of keeping passwords protected. The training provided for apprentices ensures that they know how to stay safe and protect themselves from having accounts hacked and being groomed online.

Leaders ensure that staff are safe to work with apprentices. Leaders take references from at least two employers, ensure that staff have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check when they start working at the provider, and ensure that staff are eligible to work in the United Kingdom.

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