

Lotus Education Ltd

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	2654139
Name of lead inspector:	Jules Steele, 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

Starting in October 2018, Ofsted began 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 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.

Lotus Education Limited (Lotus) began providing standards-based apprenticeships at Level 3 in 2021. At the time of the monitoring visit, 33 apprentices were in learning, most were over the age of 19. No apprentices were in receipt of high needs funding.

Lotus is based in a head office in Hertfordshire and provides education and training to dental nurses across the country. Most apprentices are in dental practices in the east of England. Apprenticeship training is provided wholly online and funded through the apprenticeship levy.

Themes

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

Insufficient progress

Leaders have not planned an effective apprenticeship programme. No apprentices will complete their apprenticeship in the time planned. To date, few reviews of apprentices' skills development have occurred. Managers have yet to ensure that apprentices receive their entitlement to off-the-job learning. Apprentices who need to gain an accredited English and/or mathematics qualification have not received any teaching input.

Leaders and managers do not have staff with appropriate expertise to provide a programme of training that meets the requirements of an apprenticeship. For example, staff do not have the skills to provide the English and mathematics training that many apprentices need. The proportion of staff who have left Lotus is high. Apprentices have experienced many changes in teachers and assessors. This has impacted negatively on their learning. A significant proportion of apprentices have left their apprenticeship early.

Leaders and managers have weak oversight of the quality of education and training. They do not have any quality assurance mechanisms in place. Managers are unable

to identify what aspects of training are good or less so. Managers are unable to identify promptly the elements of training apprentices must complete. For example, managers do not know what assessments require marking by tutors, or what assessments apprentices have yet to submit.

Managers have been too slow in communicating final examination requirements to apprentices. Apprentices have a limited understanding of what they need to do to be successful. Apprentices believe they are too far behind in their learning. They told inspectors that they do not expect to complete their apprenticeship on time.

Governance arrangements are weak. No one holds leaders to account for the quality of education and training. Leaders do not benefit from external reviews of quality. Leaders work with an external partner. This partner provides guidance and training on funding and compliance requirements.

<p>What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices?</p>	<p>Insufficient progress</p>
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Teachers and assessors lack ambition for apprentices. They do not develop apprentices' skills and knowledge beyond the apprenticeship. Tutors only set work that meets the criteria of individual units. For example, completing a table to illustrate adhering to effective infection control methods.

Tutors do not provide learning that motivates or stimulates apprentices. Tutors frequently fail to check apprentices' understanding. Apprentices use recordings of lessons to consolidate their understanding. However, assessors accept apprentices catching up on missed lessons as off-the-job learning.

Tutors do not use assessment effectively to check and inform ongoing learning. They fail to mark written work promptly. Tutors fail to provide feedback that enables apprentices to improve and achieve high grades. Consequently, apprentices lose motivation in their learning and, subsequently, leave the apprenticeship before completion.

Staff fail to communicate with employers on the progress apprentices are making. Staff do not involve employers in planning training or in progress reviews. Staff do not capture apprentices' learning and skills development at work. This contributes to the slow progress apprentices make.

Staff do not ensure that apprentices continue to develop their English and mathematics skills. Many apprentices have accredited level 2 qualifications in English and mathematics. However, their initial assessments show the need for further improvement in their skills to support their career development going forward.

Teachers provide effective teaching resources to help apprentices remember new learning. Apprentices make effective use of these resources. Learning activities include the importance of disinfecting, how to prepare for applying a crown and a tooth extraction. Apprentices reflect appropriately on their new knowledge and skills through their use of a learning journal.

Employers help apprentices to gain the skills they need to succeed as competent dental nurses. Employers are supportive and fully involved in the learning apprentices do at work. Apprentices feel valued by their employer. Employers provide expert witness testimonies. These show how apprentices apply their learning effectively at work. Apprentices enjoy good professional development in the workplace. They learn about safeguarding patients and gain first-aid certification.

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

Leaders and managers have yet to establish a culture of safeguarding.

They have not ensured that apprentices have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe at work and in their personal lives. Leaders and managers have not made sure that training covers the basic expectations of keeping apprentices safe. Apprentices do not learn about the potential risks they face working in clinical practice. For example, training does not include identifying the signs of coercive control. Leaders have not recognised that apprentices are at risk of developing extremist views and ideologies.

The designated safeguarding lead is suitably qualified. Most staff have had recent and relevant training in keeping apprentices safe in education. Safe recruitment practices are in place and adhered to.

Apprentices adopt safe working practices and feel safe at work. They know how to carry out infection control procedures to keep patients healthy.

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