

KnowledgeBrief Limited

Report following a monitoring visit to a 'requires improvement' provider

Unique reference number:	1278615
Name of lead inspector:	Jane Hughes, His 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

KnowledgeBrief Limited (KnowledgeBrief) was inspected in July 2021. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in addressing the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

Apprentices at KnowledgeBrief complete all their learning online.

Themes

What progress have leaders and managers made in providing learners and apprentices with a curriculum that develops their knowledge and skills beyond their vocational qualifications, including the achievement of English and mathematics qualifications?	Significant progress
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Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have completely changed the English and mathematics curriculum. They quickly recognised the need to prioritise the support for apprentices near to completion. Apprentices received focused support, which helped them achieve their qualifications. Apprentices now benefit from a range of ways to complete their learning to meet their individual needs. For example, they attend short, intense courses, one-to-one support, or online learning. The vast majority of apprentices achieve their English and mathematics qualifications.

Leaders and managers responded quickly and decisively to improve the personal development curriculum. They successfully implemented a good range of additional resources to support apprentices. They have put in place a wide range of workshops for apprentices to access online in order to help them gain a deeper and wider understanding of leadership. For example, apprentices attend extra learning about conflict management and financial forecasting.

Leaders have also put in place lots of extra and useful resources in a range of topics not related to leadership. For example, leaders have devised relevant content and workshops about how to maintain a healthy work-life balance, the impact of self-harm, alcohol misuse, safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Many apprentices attend these workshops. There is also a well-thought-through programme of guest speaker sessions in place.

Apprentices recognise how the development of their wider skills helps them in their professional and personal life. For example, apprentices use their recently gained

coaching skills with their employees at work. They also use these with their families and during their volunteering activities outside of their work.

Apprentices benefit from useful discussions about their next steps in their progress reviews. During reviews, skills coaches talk to apprentices about how to achieve their personal goals. Apprentices hear about the types of opportunities available to them through the external guest speaker sessions.

What progress have leaders and managers made in providing skills coaches with continuous professional development so that they use assessment effectively and check apprentices' understanding of topics thoroughly? Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers place a high priority on developing skills coaches' teaching and assessment skills. They ensure coaches have access to the right support and training to help them improve. Coaches frequently attend a range of relevant training activities. As a result, they have a very good understanding about the importance of effective assessment.

Coaches suitably assess what apprentices know and can do at the start of their training. They mostly use this information effectively in order to identify specific personal areas for improvement for apprentices. However, coaches do not always use this information consistently well. As a result, they do not always create sufficiently personalised goals for apprentices to work towards.

Coaches use a range of assessment methods successfully during their online sessions with apprentices. Coaches use directed questioning, quizzes and group discussions in breakout rooms. In group sessions, they check what apprentices remember from previous learning. For example, in English sessions apprentices recall and recap accurately their understanding of simple and complex sentences.

In one-to-one sessions with apprentices, coaches challenge apprentices to reflect on their learning. They encourage apprentices to self-assess accurately against the apprenticeship standards. Coaches test apprentices' understanding through exploring how they apply their knowledge in the workplace.

The assessment team assesses apprentices' work promptly and frequently. The majority of apprentices receive helpful feedback on where they can improve. The standard of apprentices' work across the leadership programmes is generally high and at the expected standard for the level of study.

Apprentices develop a good understanding about the topics they study. For example, apprentices learn about many different leadership analytical tools and techniques. They frequently apply their new learning in their workplace. Many apprentices state that they have significantly improved their understanding of emotional intelligence.

Apprentices benefit from high-quality resources that are available to support their learning and assessment. Coaches link the topics apprentices study to helpful wider reading, research and videos.

What progress have leaders and managers made in evaluating the apprenticeship programme and how well do they use the outcomes from their evaluation to make improvements?

Significant progress

Leaders and managers very quickly established effective methods to evaluate the success and quality of the apprenticeship programme. They introduced a range of useful reports to help them understand the progress apprentices make. They have set up a variety of ways to collect and analyse feedback from apprentices and employers. They pay close attention to how the programme impacts on apprentices professionally and personally. They also consider sufficiently the business impact for employers.

Leaders and managers use the results of their quality assurance activities very well. For example, they identified that too many apprentices left their programme early as the content taught was too theoretical and rigid. Leaders completed an extensive review of the curriculum and made bold changes. They have removed the requirement for some apprentices to achieve an accredited leadership qualification. As a result, apprentices benefit from a curriculum that links more closely to their workplace. They complete highly relevant work-related projects. They have more opportunity to apply their learning at work.

Apprentices really like the new approach. The proportion of apprentices who remain on their course is now high. Many apprentices gain promotion and take on more responsibility as a result of their studies. The proportion of apprentices who complete their programme is improving. A high proportion achieve a high grade in their final assessments.

Senior leaders have strengthened the membership of the governing board. This has increased their capacity to scrutinise the effectiveness of the programme. They place a strong focus on quality improvement. This permeates through to the operational team, whose members respond quickly to areas for improvement that are identified. They put in place detailed and thorough improvement action plans. This includes effective support for skills coaches when they need help to improve their practice.

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