

Lancaster Girls' Grammar School

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	2691904
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Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
Address:	Regent Street Lancaster LA1 1SF

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.

Lancaster Girls' Grammar School began to recruit apprentices funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency from 2019. At the time of the monitoring visit, the provider had fewer than five apprentices enrolled on the level 3 information communications technician apprenticeship. All apprentices are aged 18 and over.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Managers have devised an appropriate curriculum to meet the needs of the school and the apprentices. This allows apprentices to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to work as information communications technicians (ICT). Managers are aware that local and regional skills gaps for ICT technicians have led to school leaders struggling to recruit to these posts to support teachers and pupils.

Managers are aspirational for what apprentices can achieve. They offer apprentices three different curriculum pathways. These are support technician, network technician or digital communications technician. Apprentices choose their pathway depending on their aspirations and the needs of the school. Employers and tutors make sure that apprentices are aware of the career progression opportunities available to them. Apprentices successfully progress to higher education or degree apprenticeships.

Apprentices receive high-quality off-the-job training. This includes a weekly master class, individual tutorials and informative self-study materials. Apprentices are supported by workplace mentors effectively. Managers use feedback from apprentices to improve the quality of their training. For example, tutors alter the order topics are taught in to better align with the tasks apprentices complete at work.

Managers support apprentices with additional learning needs effectively. This means that these apprentices can access the full curriculum and make sustained progress in line with their peers. Tutors make purposeful interventions when apprentices struggle with any aspect of their learning. For example, they support apprentices to structure and manage their time.

Tutors are experienced ICT professionals. They have up-to-date specialist knowledge of network security, usability and cyber security. However, they have limited teaching experience and do not attend training to develop their skills. Tutors provide apprentices with constructive feedback. However, they set apprentices targets that focus on task completion rather than the core knowledge, skills and behaviours that apprentices need to develop.

An experienced governing body oversees the apprenticeship programme. However, they do not currently have a detailed enough understanding of the quality of training that apprentices receive.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices?

Significant progress

Tutors have developed an ambitious curriculum. They build apprentices' knowledge, skills and behaviours in a logical order. For example, apprentices initially learn about mobile operating systems and cloud services. They then move on to explore more advanced content such as networking and architecture of different types of computer systems.

Tutors use the information collected at the start of the programme to plan training to meet the needs of individual apprentices. Managers coordinate on- and off-the-job training effectively. Apprentices swiftly practise their skills when at work, which supports them in making an effective contribution in the workplace. For example, they prepare training materials for staff on the dangers of phishing emails. Leaders note that this has helped to reduce the number of staff who open suspicious emails.

Apprentices develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours as a result of their apprenticeship. They learn how to set up firewalls and multi-factor authentication. This ensures that the school operates safely online. Apprentices dismantle computers, identify problems, and then rebuild computers to meet the exacting needs of the school leaders, teachers and its pupils. They are well prepared for their final assessments.

For those apprentices who need English and mathematics qualifications, managers provide weekly lessons to help them develop the knowledge and skills they need.

Tutors develop apprentices' English and mathematical skills well. Apprentices improve their spelling, punctuation and grammar. In mathematics, they learn correct formulas to complete multiplication. They successfully pass their examinations.

Apprentices complete a range of additional qualifications. These include British Computer Society networking qualifications and Information Technology Infrastructure Library courses. These broaden apprentices' knowledge of the digital sector and how organisations' information technology services need to be aligned to business needs.

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

Leaders place a high priority on safeguarding. They use a comprehensive range of procedures to safeguard apprentices. They have clear processes in place to deal with safeguarding incidents. There have been no safeguarding referrals from the small number of apprentices on programme. Leaders use appropriate processes to ensure the safe recruitment of staff.

Leaders have appointed an experienced, well-qualified designated safeguarding lead (DSL). Deputy safeguarding leads support the DSL. They have expertise in several key safeguarding themes, including e-safety. DSLs have all received appropriate training. Tutors receive formal annual safeguarding training and frequent updates from the DSL.

Managers meet the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty. They have produced an appropriate risk assessment and action plan. This considers the importance of apprentices being able to recognise extremism. Apprentices feel safe. They appreciate the regular updates they receive about local risks and how to protect themselves.

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