

Inspection of Captiva Learning Ltd

Inspection dates: 25 to 28 October 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Captiva Learning Ltd (Captiva) is an independent learning provider based in east London. They teach standards-based apprenticeships to apprentices across the country. Since the new provider monitoring visit in November 2019, the level 7 senior leader standard has come into scope for inspection. Leaders at Captiva have also added the level 4 assessor coach standard.

Most teaching takes place online. A very high proportion of apprentices work in the education sector in senior leadership roles. Because of this, apprentices' learning was severely disrupted during the pandemic. Inspectors took the impact of COVID-19 into account during the inspection.

At the time of the inspection, 147 apprentices studied the level 3 team leader and supervisor standard, 202 apprentices studied the level 4 assessor coach standard, 366 apprentices studied the level 5 operations or departmental manager standard, and 1,133 apprentices studied the level 7 senior leader standard.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Most apprentices have a positive experience studying at Captiva. They enjoy thoroughly the teaching they receive from staff who have very similar employment backgrounds to their own. They like the high-quality lectures given by experts in the sector. Apprentices describe them as 'truly inspiring' and engaging.

Apprentices value the one-to-one support they get from teachers, particularly when they need additional help to complete their studies.

Apprentices benefit from course content that is highly relevant to their job roles. They gain new skills and knowledge that they apply regularly at work, such as managing budgets. On the senior leader standard, apprentices become more assertive when identifying and delegating tasks to staff. On the assessor coach standard, apprentices use their newly acquired coaching techniques to improve the way they communicate with their teams. As a result, a substantial number of apprentices successfully gain promotion into senior leadership positions.

A few apprentices do not have sufficient information about the time commitment required to complete the course. They find the workload intense. As a result, they struggle to take time out of work to complete their coursework by the deadlines set.

Apprentices appreciate greatly the weekly safeguarding briefings they receive from leaders. They feel safe in learning and at work.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have designed ambitious and challenging apprenticeship programmes. They have planned content that matches very well with the knowledge, skills and behaviours apprentices need at different levels in their organisation. Apprentices across all standards learn about new topics in a clear and logical order that increase in complexity and depth over time. Apprentices on the levels 3, 5 and 7 standards all learn about leading and managing people, finance and operations. At level 7, teachers extend apprentices' knowledge further by including subjects such as strategic decision-making. Apprentices apply the knowledge they have learned to lead highly critical projects that shape the direction of their school.

Leaders have focused extensively on improving the quality of education apprentices receive. They have carefully evaluated the structure of programmes and made changes for more recent groups of apprentices. For example, on the senior leader apprenticeship, leaders have stopped offering a masters-level qualification. Instead, apprentices now study for a diploma qualification. Leaders run sessions over two half days rather than one full day. This better meets the needs of school leaders. As a result, while a few apprentices on earlier courses did not complete their apprenticeship within expected timescales, newer apprentices make good progress and are on track.

Employers value the positive contribution apprentices make to their businesses and education settings. For example, on the senior leader standard, apprentices have implemented improved marketing plans. Apprentices have worked successfully with parents and staff to increase the number of new children enrolled, helping to secure the future viability of the school.

Teachers and mentors have a good range of appropriate experience and qualifications. They use their teaching skills well to reinforce new topics and build on apprentices' prior learning. For example, when teaching about financial strategies, teachers refer to previous concepts taught such as situational analysis. Apprentices recall proficiently the theoretical models learned which they use to solve problems at work.

In most instances, teachers and mentors check apprentices' understanding of new knowledge thoroughly. They use open and probing questions well to ensure that apprentices fully grasp new ideas such as project management business tools. On the level 5 standard, teachers facilitate discussions in lessons so that apprentices link theories to workplace practices capably. In a minority of cases, teachers do not use sufficiently the information they have on apprentices' starting points. Consequently, a few apprentices wait too long to gain the skills they need most urgently.

Leaders have designed an extensive range of high-quality learning materials and resources. Apprentices benefit from access to recorded lessons, video clips and podcasts. Apprentices often relisten to lessons and re-read articles to help them prepare for work tasks such as management meetings and writing operational plans.

Most teachers provide apprentices with detailed and timely feedback on their coursework. For example, they give apprentices clear guidance on how to improve the content and structure of assignments and how to reference work correctly. Most apprentices produce high-quality, well-presented and thoroughly researched written work. Of those apprentices that complete their programme, a high proportion achieve merit or distinction grades.

Mentors hold effective and regular reviews with apprentices, which mostly involve apprentices' line managers. Mentors skilfully coach apprentices to reflect on their learning and its impact on their working practices. Reviews help apprentices to identify their progress and plan their next learning goals. Mentors give good support to apprentices that need to catch up. For those that are past their expected end date, leaders have put in place detailed action plans that they monitor closely. In a minority of instances, feedback at progress reviews is too brief and reviews are overdue.

In progress reviews, mentors do not focus sufficiently on improving apprentices' knowledge of English and mathematics. As a result, the small number of apprentices that need to achieve qualifications in these subjects do not value this learning.

Teachers and mentors create an inclusive learning environment. They teach topics

that promote equality and diversity effectively. For example, on the senior leader apprenticeship, teachers now include discussions on the gender pay gap in schools. Female apprentices benefit from the additional support of women-only monthly group sessions where they discuss what they have recently learned. They develop the confidence to take on new challenges such as speaking at national conferences and on the radio.

Apprentices receive advice about their career options at the start of the programme and appropriate points in progress reviews. Mentors encourage apprentices to seek out progression opportunities. They help apprentices gain the knowledge they need to broaden their career aspirations. Apprentices learn to identify the transferrable skills they have, which can help them to move into sectors outside of education. A minority of apprentices receive advice that lacks meaning. Consequently, these apprentices do not have clear plans for their next steps.

Governors challenge and support leaders rigorously. They have a suitable range of backgrounds and a wealth of highly relevant experience in education and training. At quarterly meetings, governors discuss usefully the opportunities and threats to the apprenticeship provision. They are knowledgeable about the critical issues that affect the quality of education apprentices receive.

Governors have a thorough oversight of the provision. They become closely involved in monitoring leaders' work when necessary. For example, governors hold fortnightly meetings with leaders to check that apprentices make the progress expected of them. Governors have ensured that apprentices from earlier cohorts now have a date for their end-point assessment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have appointed several very experienced and well-qualified staff in safeguarding roles. The designated safeguarding lead and a deputy have previously held safeguarding roles in schools. They keep detailed records of ongoing safeguarding concerns which they review at fortnightly meetings. Leaders keep governors well informed of safeguarding cases.

Leaders train teachers and mentors very effectively in highly pertinent safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty topics such as sexual harassment in the workplace and the rise of far-right extremism. Staff feel confident to discuss these with apprentices in progress reviews. Apprentices have a very detailed understanding of how these issues relate to the work they do in schools.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders must ensure that mentors support apprentices and their line managers to plan sufficient time for apprentices to complete their studies within agreed deadlines.

- Leaders must make sure that they have taken all necessary steps to enable apprentices recruited more recently to achieve their apprenticeship within expected timelines.
- Leaders should ensure that teachers are trained to teach knowledge of English and mathematics to the same high standard as the rest of the curriculum so that the small number of apprentices that need to achieve English and mathematics qualifications do so in a timely way.

Provider details

Unique reference number	2526597
Address	4 Cam Road London E15 2SN
Contact number	02082219098
Website	www.captivelearning.com
Principal, CEO or equivalent	David Cobb
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of delivery operations and curriculum, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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