

Excellence-Solutions Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	1270908
Name of lead inspector:	Saher Nijabat, 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

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.

Excellence-Solutions Limited (ESL) is a small independent training provider based in Leyton, east London. ESL trades as Candor Professional Beauty Academy. ESL has taught courses since 2013 and currently teaches adult learning programmes as a subcontractor. This provision was not in scope on this monitoring visit.

ESL has received funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency to teach apprenticeships since 2017. They began delivering apprenticeships on their direct contract in April 2021.

At the time of the monitoring visit, ESL were training 14 apprentices. There were seven apprentices studying the level 3 dental nurse standard, five on the level 2 early years practitioner standard, and another two on the level 3 early years educator standard.

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 responded to the skills shortage for well-trained and qualified employees in the dental nursing and early years sectors effectively. They have worked closely with experienced professionals from these industries to design curricula which meet employers' needs very well. For example, apprentices on the level 3 dental nurse course learn about the legal and ethical responsibilities associated with their clinical work. Employers value the contribution apprentices make to their businesses.

Leaders took the sensible decision to delay enrolments to ensure they had the right resources and staff with relevant subject knowledge and sector experience to teach their apprentices. Apprentices make good progress, stay on their programmes and are on track to complete their apprenticeships on time.

Leaders have put in place suitable arrangements to ensure that they meet the requirements of an apprenticeship. Applicants undergo a robust recruitment and selection process before starting their apprenticeship. Staff prepare apprentices well for their interviews. As a result, apprentices are successful in gaining employment in job roles well suited to their programme.

Leaders work effectively with employers who fully understand their commitment to their apprentices. Employers make appropriate arrangements so apprentices can apply their learning in the workplace. They ensure apprentices receive their off-the-job training time to complete their learning.

Leaders do not have a sufficiently detailed oversight of the quality of their apprenticeship provision. While they use a range of quality assurance activities, they do not routinely evaluate and discuss their findings to inform improvement plans. They have not yet used their board of advisers to give them an objective view of the performance of their apprenticeships. Consequently, they have a limited understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement in the apprenticeship provision.

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

Leaders have designed well-sequenced curricula through which apprentices quickly gain the knowledge, skills and behaviours essential for their job roles. For example, dental nurse tutors first teach apprentices how to clean equipment and set up treatment tables before teaching them about different dental treatments and charting. As a result, apprentices are prepared well for work within a few months of starting their apprenticeship.

Tutors make effective use of a variety of strategies to teach apprentices online. They use explanations, work-based examples, demonstrations, images, and videos to introduce new knowledge. Apprentices revisit recordings of prior lessons to deepen their knowledge and understanding. As a result, apprentices consolidate and remember what they have been taught.

Apprentices who are new to their roles develop substantial new skills, knowledge and behaviours while studying their apprenticeship. For example, apprentices on the level 2 early years practitioner course acquire the knowledge and skills they need to carry out risk assessments. They can correctly recall and explain key knowledge, such as the importance of not covering babies' faces when they are lying down or sleeping to minimise the risk of sudden infant death syndrome.

Tutors do not provide helpful feedback to apprentices on how to improve the quality of their written work consistently. In most cases, apprentices' written work is not

detailed, suitably structured or well presented. Consequently, their written work is not of an expected standard.

While apprentices are aware that there is a final assessment as part of their programme, too many do not understand the nature of the activities involved. Leaders have not planned any mock assessments until much later in the course. As a result, apprentices are not well prepared for their final assessments.

Apprentices benefit from online study resources and drop-in sessions with their tutors to develop their knowledge of English and mathematics. Most apprentices make appropriate progress towards achieving the qualifications they need in these subjects to complete their apprenticeship.

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

Leaders have put in place suitable arrangements to safeguard apprentices. They ensure that designated safeguarding leads are appropriately trained for their role. They carry out the necessary pre-employment background checks on staff to ensure they are safe to work with apprentices.

Apprentices feel safe. They feel comfortable speaking with different individuals within the provider about any concerns they have about their own or others' safety. Staff deal with safeguarding concerns appropriately.

Apprentices develop their knowledge of safeguarding topics such as 'Prevent', online safety and safe working practices. Tutors relate these topics to apprentices' jobs. For example, tutors teach dental apprentices the different ways to control the spread of infection. Consequently, apprentices grow in confidence in their knowledge of how to correctly sterilize dental instruments and equipment to safeguard patients.

Leaders have been slow to establish suitable links with external agencies, such as the local authorities and the police, to develop a clear understanding of the different risks that apprentices may face in their local areas.

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