

Inspection of Pareto Law Limited

Inspection dates:

29 November to 2 December 2022

Overall effectiveness**Good**

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

Pareto Law Limited (Pareto) was formed in 1995 as a sales training and sales recruitment business. It began to provide apprenticeships under its own direct contract in January 2018. Currently, there are 825 apprentices in learning. Of these, 371 are on the level 4 sales executive, 310 are on level 3 IT technical salesperson, 112 are on level 3 team leader or supervisor and 31 are on level 5 operations or departmental manager. Pareto has recently expanded its portfolio to include digital apprenticeships in response to employers' requests. These include level 3 programmes in data technician, software development technician and IT solutions technician. Level 4 programmes will also be available in network engineer, software developer and data analyst. There are fewer than five apprentices on these programmes.

Most apprentices are aged 19 and over. Thirteen are under the age of 19. Apprentices are based in various locations across the country. Training and support sessions take place online and at Pareto's premises or apprentices' place of work.

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

Apprentices are enthusiastic about their learning. They engage fully in interactive training sessions and productive progress reviews with skills coaches. Apprentices leave sessions with a clear sense of what they have achieved and what they need to do before their next workshop.

Apprentices gain substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours. Level 3 IT technical salesperson apprentices learn how to structure sales calls and use technical tools effectively. They swiftly apply this learning to their workplace. Level 3 team leader apprentices develop their first line management skills, including people management and communication. This gives them increased confidence in their roles, and they volunteer to support managers to interview and recruit new colleagues to their businesses.

Apprentices are ready for the next stage of their education and training. Most find that their training supports their career progression very well. Many apprentices gain promotion because of their apprenticeship programme.

Managers work effectively with employers to plan, develop and adapt the curriculum. They make swift changes following employer feedback. Curriculum leaders on the level 4 sales executive apprenticeship developed two separate pathways for account managers and business development managers. These better match apprentices' work roles.

Managers develop apprentices' character and confidence very effectively. They meaningfully integrate fundamental British values into training sessions about effective leadership skills. They consider, for example, the importance of negotiation, healthy debate and respectful challenge.

Apprentices feel safe and well supported. They know how to report any concerns they have. Apprentices particularly value the opportunities they have to discuss work issues with skills coaches.

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

Leaders have developed an ambitious curriculum that meets local and national skills priorities. Trainers meet with employers and apprentices to ensure the curriculum meets the developmental needs of apprentices. This includes a focus on apprentices' delegation skills and how they can develop confidence when they work with direct reports. Managers, trainers and skills coaches sequence the curriculum effectively so that it develops the knowledge, skills and behaviours of apprentices over time. Apprentices develop into more successful leaders, managers and salespeople because of their studies.

Training sessions are well structured and delivered by industry specialists who provide a focused environment for learning. Skills coaches and trainers have expert

knowledge in the subjects that they teach. They give real life examples from the workplace to link theories to everyday work environments. This helps apprentices to understand new concepts and to deepen their knowledge over time. On the level 4 sales executive apprenticeship, trainers ensure that key concepts like cadence, the structure of messages and handling objections are clearly taught. This allows apprentices to understand and apply the skills and the behaviours required when prospecting new customers.

Apprentices produce work of a good standard and their work improves over time. This is in terms of their knowledge, understanding and application of leadership and management concepts and their ability to write accurately and professionally. Most apprentices, even those near the start of their programme, are aware of the requirements of their final assessment. Training prepares them well for this as they participate in role plays and professional discussions.

Skills coaches and trainers check apprentices' understanding of what they have been taught. Apprentices benefit from monthly reviews with skills coaches to revisit topics and reflect on their progress. Leaders have recently introduced an online system to further support apprentices with additional learning needs. These apprentices achieve as well as their peers. Apprentices know what progress they have made over time, what they can do well and what they need to improve. However, in a small number of cases, skills coaches do not always provide clear enough feedback to apprentices on how they can improve their work.

Too many apprentices leave their programme early. Leaders have taken actions to improve the recruitment and induction process. This has led to significantly more apprentices being retained. Apprentices develop detailed knowledge across the curriculum, and almost half of those who complete their apprenticeship achieve high grades in their final assessment. However, first time pass rates have declined on the level 4 sales executive apprenticeships.

Leaders ensure that trainers follow a standardised approach when introducing training sessions. Trainers clearly discuss the ground rules for the day and establish the objectives for the session, drawing on apprentices' pre-reading. As a result, apprentices arrive at sessions knowing what to expect and start working immediately on arrival.

In progress reviews, skills coaches use 'hot topics' to debate issues in contemporary society with apprentices. For example, they explore sexual harassment, as presented in a newly released film, and LBTQ+ and women's rights in Qatar during the football world cup. Staff place a strong focus on creating an inclusive culture and embedding principles of equality and diversity. Apprentices treat each other with high levels of respect.

Apprentices discuss their career development with skills coaches during progress reviews. They feel that their learning is helping them to develop in their role and to achieve promotion. They approach job applications and interviews with more

confidence. Managers recognise that there is still some inconsistency in the quality and impartiality of careers advice and guidance offered by skills coaches.

Leaders understand what they need to do to improve. They produce comprehensive self-assessment reports and undertake a range of quality assurance activities to evaluate and improve the quality of training. These are well-designed and maintain a strong focus on apprentices' progress. Managers take swift actions to respond to any concerns they have.

Managers ensure that skills coaches have a more manageable workload and that new members of staff are better supported. Staff benefit from extensive professional development opportunities. Staff value the opportunities they have to develop their teaching skills.

Leaders and managers have successfully established a governing body. This includes external and highly experienced governors from educational backgrounds. Governors use their experience to challenge leaders to make rapid improvements to the quality of training. For example, governors advised leaders to step back from the further recruitment of apprentices until the management team was restructured and quality systems were fully embedded.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that the arrangements for safeguarding are effective. They use comprehensive safe recruitment procedures to make sure staff are suited to work with apprentices. Skills coaches promote apprentices' well-being and safety through discussion at induction and during progress reviews. This includes the importance of online safety and the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and assistant DSL have received appropriate training. In addition, each geographical region has a local safeguarding officer. These local officers develop external agency links and provide relevant resources for apprentices.

Apprentices know how to raise any concerns. Managers keep a detailed log of reported incidents and the actions they have taken to intervene and support apprentices.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders and managers should intervene swiftly if they have concerns about apprentices' progress so apprentices can continue and be successful in their studies.

- Leaders and managers should ensure that all apprentices receive a consistently high standard of feedback from skills coaches. This should outline what apprentices can do well and what they need to do to improve further.
- Leaders and managers should advance their plans to provide apprentices with impartial careers advice and guidance. This will allow apprentices to fully understand the various career options available to them on completion of their apprenticeship.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1280313
Address	49 Church Street Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 1AX
Contact number	0333 242 7291
Website	www.pareto.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Ben Drain
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of quality 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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