

Redsky Learning Limited

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

Unique reference number:	2539254
Name of lead inspector:	Chloe Rendall, 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

Redsky Learning Limited was inspected in February 2022. 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 resolving the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

Themes

How effectively have leaders improved their oversight of the quality of education, and has this led to improvements to the curriculum?

Reasonable progress

Leaders have taken effective steps to recruit managers with relevant experience who understand how to address weaknesses in apprenticeship provision. Heads of quality and funding and compliance have implemented new processes, such as a rigorous quality assurance cycle, to evaluate the quality of education and training. They use information from assurance activities to plan curriculum improvements. For example, managers hold monthly standardisation meetings with stretch coaches to evaluate the progress that apprentices make. This enables them to understand changes that are needed and plan for further improvements.

Managers have carefully revised the curriculum delivery model for all new apprentices. Stretch coaches sequence the curriculum according to what apprentices need to learn first before moving them on to assignments and assessments. For example, new level 3 team leading and/or supervisor apprentices tasked with giving presentations for their assignments are first taught the skills of presenting. This helps them to develop the knowledge and skills that they need to present project work to colleagues. However, a few level 5 operational and delivery manager apprentices remain unclear about the expectations of their programme and the overarching curriculum plan. Stretch coaches are supporting these apprentices with additional off-the-job training sessions to fill gaps in knowledge and skills and prepare them to move swiftly to gateway.

Leaders and managers have taken effective steps to improve attendance for the few apprentices studying functional skills English and mathematics. Staff at the subcontractor work well with stretch coaches to resolve issues with apprentices who experience problems with non-attendance to functional skills sessions due to work commitments. Leaders and managers have strengthened the relationship with the subcontractor and have a better understanding of each apprentice's progress. As a

result, the number of apprentices passing their examinations at the first attempt, particularly in English, has increased.

How effective have leaders' actions been in ensuring that all apprentices receive high-quality, impartial careers advice and guidance so that they understand the steps required to realise their aspirations?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers provide new apprentices with careers advice and guidance that is pertinent to their industry sectors. Coaches use information from sources such as the National Careers Service to discuss progression pathways with apprentices at the start of, and during, their programmes. As a result, most apprentices benefit from well-informed guidance about their next steps.

Managers deliver training to staff that improves their confidence in discussing career development opportunities with apprentices. They make it clear how stretch coaches have a responsibility to engage with apprentices and their employers to discuss progression beyond their apprenticeship. However, the attendance of coaches at training is not consistently high, and managers rely on coaches to follow up on what they have missed in their own time.

Stretch coaches use initial assessment questionnaires and skills scans well to identify apprentices' career aspirations. They consider the specific skills that apprentices need to develop to be better in their jobs and to progress in their careers. They plan meaningful training to meet these needs. For example, managers have engaged the support of a company director to deliver careers talks to apprentices on the level 5 operational/departmental manager (women in leadership) programme. Female apprentices receive helpful guidance on how to achieve their career goals in male-dominated employment industries.

Stretch coaches carefully plan the content of the motivation and leadership styles module to help level 5 operations and departmental manager apprentices identify their personal development goals. Apprentices benefit from learning how to self-assess their own performance to understand themselves better. Coaches use the findings of these activities in one-to-one sessions with apprentices to plan their potential next steps.

How successful have leaders' actions been in ensuring that the wider personal development curriculum for apprentices is clearly and consistently planned into all programmes?

Reasonable progress

Stretch coaches support apprentices well to consider their broader personal development. They use the skills scan and initial assessment of apprentices' aspirations to identify long-term goals. For example, level 5 coaching apprentices who identify the need to improve their confidence to help influence individuals in a

team revisit their skills scans to understand their progress and development in becoming more confident. During their one-to-one sessions with stretch coaches, they recognise that they need to be more reflective in their practice and keep a journal of their development over time. Apprentices understand that analysing their skills development with their coaches helps them to discover their own purpose, passion and vision for their lives.

Managers have recently introduced 'hot topics' to support stretch coaches by identifying themes to include in off-the-job training sessions and reviews. They provide coaches with helpful information and resources about a range of national and international events. For example, for National Volunteers Day, managers make links to Crisis UK to encourage coaches to promote the Christmas volunteering programme. However, staff do not consistently use this information in their discussions with apprentices to check their knowledge and understanding of how these topics might be relevant to them at work and in their lives.

Apprentices value the broader personal development opportunities that they receive. Stretch coaches on the level 5 operational/departmental manager (women in leadership) apprenticeship provide apprentices with additional training modules on topics such as negotiation and how to overcome issues in the workplace. They guide them to external agencies, such as the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, which can support them should they need assistance. For example, apprentices are taught about their rights if they experience bullying and harassment in the workplace. They use this knowledge to help them understand what constitutes inappropriate behaviour, and they know when they might need to report issues.

Have leaders taken effective action to ensure that stretch coaches support apprentices to make rapid progress and to catch up swiftly if they fall behind?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have instigated formal meetings with employers and stretch coaches to review apprentices' progress. They meet with them every month to discuss how well apprentices are progressing and identify actions that need to be taken when apprentices are at risk of, or are, falling behind. As a result, leaders have a better understanding of how well apprentices are working towards completing and achieving their apprenticeships and how successfully the actions of stretch coaches are helping apprentices to progress.

Leaders have restructured the role of the stretch coach and have recently appointed additional full-time coaches. Coaches are experienced in apprenticeship delivery and have the capacity and flexibility to respond more quickly to apprentices who need help with their assignment work. As a result, apprentices who are benefiting from the support of full-time coaches are making positive and swift progress through their apprenticeships. However, a very few level 3 team leading apprentices have only recently been assigned a full-time coach. They are making slower progress than their

peers and are only now benefiting from consistent support to help them manage their workloads and work towards completing their apprenticeships.

Stretch coaches work positively and respectfully with apprentices to understand their needs and the barriers that prevent them from achieving their apprenticeship. They are dedicated to improving the apprenticeship experience and embrace the changes that leaders and managers have identified. For example, stretch coaches deliver additional workshop sessions at the Leeds office to support apprentices to catch up if they are behind. As a result, most apprentices who were significantly behind their planned achievement dates are now on track to achieve in the coming months.

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