

Davies Learning Solutions

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

Unique reference number:	1276474
Name of lead inspector:	Jane Hughes, Her Majesty's Inspector
Inspection dates:	11 and 12 January 2023
Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
Address:	5th floor 20 Gracechurch Street London EC3V 0BG

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Davies Learning Solutions was inspected in December 2021. 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 addressing the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

The majority of apprentices at Davies Learning Solutions complete all their learning online.

Themes

<p>What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices on the level 6 insurance professional standard benefit from a curriculum that is implemented consistently well and supports apprentices to develop their knowledge and skills?</p>	<p>Reasonable progress</p>
--	-----------------------------------

Leaders and managers have taken positive steps to improve the experience of the level 6 insurance professional apprentices. They have invested significantly in the resources to support the programme. They have increased the number of staff across the business and staff to develop and amend the curriculum. Leaders have rightly focused on ensuring there are sufficiently experienced coaches to teach and support apprentices. Leaders have reduced the high turnover and caseloads of coaches. As a result, apprentices benefit from more frequent contact with their coaches and less disruption than reported at the previous inspection.

Leaders work closely with employers to ensure the curriculum meets their needs. Leaders and curriculum managers have restructured the curriculum well and continue to make sensible changes based on the needs of the sector. This ensures that apprentices develop the relevant knowledge and skills they need to apply to and be successful in the workplace.

Coaches are subject experts with considerable experience in the insurance sector. Most implement the curriculum consistently well through a range of high-quality group and one-to-one coaching sessions with apprentices. Coaches and apprentices work collaboratively together to agree and set meaningful targets at progress reviews. Most apprentices have a clear understanding of their progress.

Most coaches give apprentices good support to put their portfolio of evidence together. They give apprentices clear advice on how to improve their written work. For example, coaches teach apprentices how to apply business models appropriately to their work when they write about how insurance brokers respond to external change. As a result, apprentices produce high-quality portfolios of work. However, a very small number of apprentices, who have been on the programme for a long time, have not received the same level of support. As a result, they are not as motivated to make sufficient use of the new resources available to them.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that the assessment of apprentices' prior knowledge and experience is used appropriately to ensure apprentices are recruited on the right programme and that they understand the commitment to complete the full apprenticeship? Significant progress

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have strengthened the recruitment process for apprentices. Apprentices undergo a thorough and comprehensive assessment of their suitability to join the programme. There are many opportunities for staff to discuss the content of the programme. This includes the commitment expected of apprentices and of their line managers. Through the initial briefings, discussions around job roles and responsibilities, personal development and career pathway discussions and induction apprentices receive detailed information about what to expect on their programme. As a result, the proportion of apprentices that remain on their course has increased and is now high.

Coaches use their experience and expertise to have deep and meaningful conversations with apprentices, to assess their prior knowledge and skills. They question apprentices effectively to challenge them about what they already know and can do. They use the results of these discussions and assessments very effectively to ensure apprentices are on the right level of course. On the level 6 programme, coaches adapt the content of the programme appropriately, particularly for those apprentices who have previously completed university education. Coaches ensure apprentices do not duplicate prior learning. They check apprentices are suitably challenged in their new learning.

The majority of apprentices understand the commitment they need to complete the full programme. They are very committed and motivated to achieve. Apprentices appreciate the time staff at the provider spend with them at the start of the programme to inform them of expectations. The vast majority of apprentices enjoy their learning. Apprentices develop positive professional relationships with their coaches. Coaches work closely with apprentices to ensure they understand how to navigate the online sessions and systems so that they start their learning promptly.

What progress have leaders, managers and staff made in supporting apprentices to complete their programme and achieve high grades in their final assessments? **Reasonable progress**

Since the previous inspection, leaders have put in place more resources to help apprentices complete their programme and prepare for their final assessments. This includes a well-resourced online platform. Coaches support and prepare apprentices effectively to complete their final assessments. They have frequent discussions with apprentices about what to expect. Apprentices benefit from frequent mock-assessment sessions. They practise professional discussions about their knowledge, skills and behaviours. The majority of apprentices feel well informed about their final assessments. They know what to expect and how to achieve high marks. Almost all apprentices who take their final assessments pass. A high proportion achieve the highest marks.

Leaders, managers and coaches have high aspirations for their apprentices. They make this very clear to apprentices right from the start of their programme. Coaches set clear expectations about the standard of apprentices' work. They ensure apprentices know how to produce written work that will help them achieve high marks. Coaches direct apprentices early in their programme to complete extra reading and research. This ensures that apprentices have a deep understanding of topics. As a result, apprentices are equipped with the level of knowledge they need to gain high marks in their final assessments.

The proportion of apprentices who achieve their apprenticeship has improved since the previous inspection. However, this remains too low. Leaders have made positive changes to the recruitment process and the curriculum design. However, it is too early to see the full impact of these changes.

What progress have leaders and managers made in providing apprentices with effective impartial careers advice and guidance? **Reasonable progress**

Leaders have successfully introduced a range of useful careers guidance activities for apprentices. This includes specific career discussions between apprentices, coaches and apprentices' line managers. During progress reviews, coaches use their knowledge about the sector to have meaningful conversations with apprentices about their next steps. Coaches make useful suggestions to help apprentices understand the potential careers available at their workplace. For example, coaches suggest apprentices shadow colleagues in other departments, such as in underwriting or marketing, to understand the purpose of these functions and job roles within the company.

Coaches and apprentices discuss and agree a very helpful career personal development plan at the start of the programme. Apprentices use this plan to help them set long-term career goals and aspirations. Coaches link specific resources and set tasks at the end of one-to-one discussions with apprentices that will help them reach these goals. Coaches support apprentices well to apply for promotion and to prepare for interviews. Many apprentices have been promoted since the start of their programme.

Most apprentices have access to a good range of resources to support them to understand about the potential opportunities outside of their company. Resources are clear and of good quality. They give apprentices useful, impartial information about the different types of careers in the sector.

Most apprentices benefit from the recent changes to the careers guidance curriculum. For example, apprentices attend the 'connect and learn' workshops, where they receive useful careers guidance and meet apprentices from other companies. As a result, many apprentices understand the range of opportunities available to them in the insurance sector. However, a minority of apprentices on level 3 programmes and a few level 6 apprentices recruited some time ago do not have a detailed understanding of the wider opportunities available to them.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023