

The Procurement Academy Limited

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

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Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

The Procurement Academy Limited was inspected in April 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 successful have leaders been in identifying what apprentices know and can do at the start of their apprenticeship and how effectively is this information used to create an ambitious curriculum? Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have developed effective processes that they use when recruiting apprentices. Staff carry out a range of activities to clarify what apprentices know and can do, and their reasons for wanting to enrol onto an apprenticeship. Prior to enrolment, apprentices, with their employers, undergo an initial enquiry, a professional discussion, a skills scan and initial assessments in English and mathematics. This information is used to establish their suitability for the apprenticeship programme.

Leaders and managers make good use of the information collected about apprentices at the start of their programmes to inform the learning and the sequencing of the apprenticeship. Staff plan and sequence the programme with employers to ensure that apprentices develop the skills, knowledge and professional behaviours that employers specifically need. Staff identify employer requirements and consider this alongside apprentices' initial skills assessments to identify gaps and plan an individualised curriculum.

Employers value the training and support that their apprentices receive. Staff work alongside the apprentice and the employer to develop a bespoke training plan, which is individual to each apprentice and designed based on their skills and needs. Training plans are reviewed collaboratively at regular intervals. This includes during tripartite reviews when individual plans are reviewed, discussed and amended. As a result, apprentices receive frequent, helpful feedback and understand what is expected of them to achieve the apprenticeship standard.

How successful have leaders' actions been to develop the personal development curriculum so that apprentices improve their recall of topics linked to their personal safety and well-being?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have developed an appropriate wider curriculum, which meets the needs of their apprentices and the specific sectors in which they work. Staff deliver a range of topics at the start of the apprenticeship and return to these at frequent intervals throughout the programme. They cover topics such as online safety, radicalisation and extremism, and ethical working within the procurement industry.

Leaders and managers ensure that staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Staff have developed working relationships with relevant external partners, and the designated safeguarding lead liaises frequently with the regional Prevent coordinator. Leaders and managers remain up to date on current concerns and local issues, and share this information with their apprentices. For example, they facilitate discussions in training sessions and progress reviews on topics, such as knife crime and online radicalisation. They also post relevant information through their online classrooms.

Apprentices feel safe. They know who to contact in the provider should they feel unsafe, and are aware of the risks associated with their job role. Apprentices complete a wide range of modules, which includes harassment and bullying, whistle-blowing, online safety and the risks of radicalisation. As a result, they are aware of local risks, including county lines and the potential of grooming. They understand the signs that may indicate that someone is not safe. They are confident that if they report concerns to the provider, these will be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately.

How successful have leaders been in increasing engagement with employers to inform the content of study and meet employers' needs?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have taken effective and sustainable actions to improve communication and engagement with employers. They fully involve employers in the recruitment process and provide frequent updates on their apprentices' progress. Staff liaise closely with employers during the programme through progress reviews and catch-up meetings, and ensure that employers are fully aware of the content of their apprentices' programme. For example, leaders and managers grant employers full access to their apprentices' online classroom, so they can see how their apprentices are doing and monitor their progress.

Leaders and managers have taken swift action to review and refine their employer engagement processes. They have improved the ways in which they involve the employer at all stages of the apprenticeship. New procedures ensure that employers are fully engaged and consulted throughout the programme. As a result, employers

understand and value the training and support that their apprentices receive and would recommend the provider to others. Employers are able to identify and recognise their apprentices' progress, and this has led to apprentices being given additional responsibilities and career growth opportunities.

Leaders and managers are starting to build and secure positive working relationships with the employers with whom they work. They ensure that employers understand clearly their responsibilities in relation to the apprenticeship programme. They clarify and confirm the employer's commitment through a thorough recruitment process, which makes clear the requirements and expectations of the employer, such as providing off-the-job training.

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