

Involve Selection 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

Involve Selection Limited was inspected in May 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.

Involve Selection Limited (also known as Vocate Training), joined the register of apprenticeship training providers in July 2019. It delivers apprenticeships across Sussex and the wider south coast region. At the time of the visit, there were 49 apprentices in training. Of these, 19 apprentices were studying business related apprenticeships at level 2 to level 4 in recruitment, sales or business and administration, 14 were studying the level 3 digital marketing standard, and 16 were studying a range of level 3 and level 4 software and hardware related apprenticeships.

Themes

What progress have leaders made to improve the governance arrangements to ensure that they are held to account for the quality of apprentices' education and that actions are put in place to rapidly improve the quality of apprentices' training where required.

Reasonable progress

Since the previous inspection, leaders have put in place positive changes to governance. Leaders have completed a careful internal review. They have introduced useful governance meetings, with input from 'critical friends', who provide appropriate challenge and further strengthen their strategic oversight. Members of the group review effectively leaders' actions against the activities identified in the quality improvement plan, such as improving the quality of questioning and feedback to apprentices.

Although they have faced extenuating circumstances outside of their control, leaders are now well advanced with plans to appoint an external head of governance, who will bring further independent support and challenge.

What progress have leaders made to ensure skills coaches plan and sequence the curriculum, including English and maths skills, effectively, to ensure apprentices learn new knowledge, skills and behaviours which build on their starting points.

Significant progress

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have made significant progress in how well skills coaches plan and sequence the curriculum. Leaders ensure that there is a robust process to identify apprentices' previous knowledge, skills and behaviours. Staff carry out a thorough assessment of the employer needs and the job role. Trainers and skills coaches then use this information skilfully to provide highly effective, tailored programmes that support apprentices to develop their skills, knowledge and behaviour quickly.

Leaders sequence training logically, so it builds on what apprentices know and can do. For example, sales and digital marketing apprentices learn the basics of businesses first, moving on to the fundamentals of sales and what it means to sell, before developing content for adverts.

Leaders and managers ensure that employers engage effectively in coordinating on- and off-the-job learning. Staff work closely with employers to design training that is relevant, timely and meets employer's business needs. For example, sales apprentices learn about style guides before learning about products because products were changing, and marketing apprentices learn about writing case studies because that was the urgent business need.

Staff identify apprentices' previous knowledge and skills in English and mathematics through a careful assessment at the start of the apprenticeship programme. Well-qualified staff use their experience to help apprentices to develop their literacy and numeracy skills further and apply these to their roles successfully. For example, apprentices now use their knowledge of percentages to set targets for marketing campaigns and develop their literacy skills by writing newsletters and presentations. All apprentices who are taking functional skills qualifications achieve them.

What progress have leaders made to ensure that trainers and skills coaches have clear oversight of the progress apprentices are making, so that they can quickly identify any issues and put measures in place for any apprentices who fall behind.

Reasonable progress

Leaders have quickly improved their processes for tracking apprentices' progress. Leaders now review apprentices' progress closely at supportive weekly meetings. As a result, they swiftly identify apprentices falling behind and ensure that skills coaches put in place effective action plans, which help them get back on track. Skills coaches now have clear oversight of the progress each apprentice is making. Apprentices

have frequent, helpful discussions with their employers and skills coaches, where they review progress and set time-bound goals for achievements. Coaches provide helpful additional support for apprentices, such as useful one-to-one coaching sessions between training events and welcomed extra tuition for those approaching functional skills exams or end-point assessments. These actions are having a positive impact on almost all apprentices' progress. As a result, very few apprentices are now past their planned end date.

What progress have leaders made to ensure that apprentices have a wider understanding of safeguarding and are provided with relevant information linked to topics including bullying, sexual harassment and consent.

Reasonable progress

Since the previous inspection, leaders have strengthened and expanded apprentices' training around safeguarding. Skills coaches now carefully follow up on safeguarding topics, such as online safety and keeping safe from radicalisation, during progress reviews, to ensure apprentices' understanding.

Apprentices have benefited from helpful equality, diversity and inclusion training, which has enabled them to check if their workplace is safe and inclusive. Most apprentices, especially those who have started recently, confidently recall teaching they have received on safeguarding, county lines, sexual harassment and workplace bullying. However, a very small number of apprentices do not recognise how to apply their learning or consider how these topics impact on their individual safety.

Leaders have piloted helpful resilience training to support the mental health of sales and marketing apprentices working in high stress, target-driven settings. They rightly recognise the wider application and usefulness of this. However, leaders' plans to introduce this have not yet been completed.

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