

Aire Vocational Training Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	2691295
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

Ofsted undertakes to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency and/or the apprenticeship levy. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook', especially the sections entitled 'Monitoring visits' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

Aire Vocational Training Limited is an independent learning provider that received a contract to deliver standards-based apprenticeships in November 2021. There are currently 92 apprentices, 23 of whom are on level 2 early years practitioner, 54 on level 3 early years educator, nine on level 3 teaching assistant and six on level 5 early years lead practitioner. The majority of apprentices are aged 16 to 18.

Themes

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?

Significant progress

Leaders select apprenticeships that provide apprentices with clear routes of progression into careers in the early years education sector. They develop and sustain effective partnerships with employers who understand their responsibilities and commitments to an apprenticeship and their apprentices. Employers and mentors are fully involved in the training of apprentices and understand the progress that apprentices make.

Leaders carefully consider the recruitment of apprentices and assess which employer would best suit them. For example, leaders are very aware of the additional on- and off-the-job training needs of those apprentices who need to work towards achieving functional skills qualifications. They match these apprentices with employers who have the capacity to nurture them through their apprenticeship, such as being able to provide additional time for apprentices to attend extra English and mathematics sessions.

Leaders are highly considerate of staff well-being and workloads and ensure that apprentice caseloads are manageable. They recruit tutors and assessors who have extensive industry experience and knowledge of early years and children's education. Leaders strongly encourage staff to carry out relevant training and professional development and provide them with time to complete assessor and higher level qualifications. As a result, staff feel very well supported and highly valued.

Leaders and managers have a very thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. They make particularly effective use of advice and guidance provided by representatives from education and industry, whom they have invited to sit on an advisory board. As a result of this scrutiny and challenge, leaders are quick to amend apprenticeship delivery to improve further the high-quality training that apprentices experience.

Leaders are very aware of the social and economic inequalities in the Leeds region. They meet with early years employers to understand how they can help them and have taken the decision to provide employers with access to their online training resources. This enables employers' staff and apprentices to have equal access to education, which helps them to continue their professional development while reducing financial pressures in settings.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? Significant progress

Tutors provide apprentices with accurate and very helpful information about their progress and level of competency throughout their programmes and share this information with apprentices' mentors. They conduct informative reviews with apprentices and employers that are used to discuss apprentices' experiences and to plan learning that takes account of apprentices' current and changing roles and responsibilities in the settings where they work.

Apprentices acquire substantial new knowledge and skills through well-planned, on- and off-the-job training. For example, during reviews, tutors carefully go through feedback on work, making it clear what has been completed well and what apprentices can improve, such as making more references to sounds and colours when running an outdoor play activity.

Tutors use their expertise and experience to teach content that is current and informed by up-to-date research and legislation. For example, apprentices on the early years educator apprenticeship at level 3 benefit from being taught the key aspects of the early years foundation stage statutory framework. They use their training to plan activities for children to include age-appropriate stimulation for the development of children's speech, listening, cognition and awareness of their surroundings. As a result, apprentices take on greater responsibility for leading activities.

Tutors use initial assessment diagnostic tools very effectively to identify apprentices' starting points and to plan individual learning programmes. They use the information that they collect to enable them to understand the level of knowledge and skill that an apprentice already has to determine the specific content of training in relation to functional skills English and mathematics. For example, tutors discuss with level 2 early years practitioner apprentices the barriers to learning that they have, such as

struggling with number, fractions, grammar and punctuation. They then select and personalise training to help apprentices understand these concepts and improve their knowledge and skills over time.

Tutors prepare apprentices for their end-point assessments very well. During observations of their practice in the workplace, tutors ensure that apprentices practise communicating the context of what they are doing to develop their confidence in preparation for their professional discussion. As a result, apprentices approaching gateway are ambitious in their aspirations to achieve a distinction.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Significant progress

Leaders and managers take their responsibilities for safeguarding very seriously. All staff undertake advanced safeguarding training to level 3 and have a clear understanding of their duties and responsibilities to apprentices.

Leaders recruit tutors and assessors safely and in line with their safer recruitment policies and procedures. They undertake rigorous checks to assure themselves that staff are safe to work with apprentices and in early years settings.

Tutors monitor the welfare of apprentices in their caseloads effectively and report concerns immediately. Designated safeguarding leads follow up all welfare and safeguarding concerns thoroughly, ensuring that vulnerable apprentices are kept safe from the risks of harm and violence.

Tutors provide apprentices with extremely useful information about how to keep themselves and the children they work with safe. Apprentices have a high-level understanding of the risks of terrorism and radicalisation as staff embed content on these topics into training throughout the programme. They can very confidently explain contemporary risks, such as female genital mutilation, forced marriage and county lines activity. As a result, apprentices are well versed in what may constitute a potential risk to themselves and young children in their care.

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