

GENII Engineering and Technology Training Limited

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

Unique reference number:	51952
Name of lead inspector:	Paul Cocker, His Majesty's Inspector
Inspection dates:	19 and 20 April 2023
Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
Address:	Blackwood Road Lillyhall Industrial Estate Workington Cumbria

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

GENII Engineering and Technology Training Limited was inspected in March 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.

Genii Engineering and Technology Training Ltd (GenII) is based in West Cumbria and was established in June 2000 by five international companies, AMEC, BNFL (now Sellafield Ltd), CORUS (now TATA), Iggesund Paperboard and UCB Films (now Innovia Films). It provides training for its founding companies, as well as for the wider Cumbrian business community. It is now a wholly owned subsidiary of the City and Guilds of London Institute.

At the time of the inspection, there were 1,363 apprentices studying levels 2 to 6 apprenticeship standards, including a small number of apprentices who are on legacy apprenticeship frameworks. The large majority of apprentices study at levels 2 and 3. The remainder study at levels 4 to 6. There were seven adults on level 2 traineeship programmes business administration specialisms.

Themes

To what extent have leaders and managers been successful in ensuring that they effectively coordinate on- and off-the-job training that allows apprentices to practise, improve and master their knowledge, skills and behaviours at work?

Reasonable progress

Following the previous inspection, recently appointed leaders and managers have taken the necessary action to redevelop the curriculum for all apprenticeships. They have started to ensure that apprentices are able to practise what they have learned on their apprenticeship and apply them in a work environment. At the time of the visit, they had redesigned around a quarter of all apprenticeships, with the remainder due to be rolled out in September 2023.

Leaders and managers have collaborated closely with employers to devise curriculums to meet employers' expectations and apprentices' aspirations. They have developed 'training programme descriptors' which outline the additional knowledge,

skills and behaviours that employers require beyond those set out in the apprenticeship standard. These descriptors, along with the knowledge, skills and behaviours detailed in the standard, have been incorporated into the curriculum. They are ordered in a logical way to ensure that apprentices have ample opportunities to practise these skills throughout the apprenticeship.

Employers feel that the consultative approach to the planning of the curriculum has helped them to understand the importance of the coordination of on- and off-the job learning. Apprentices now receive well-planned and timely opportunities to regularly practise, improve and master new knowledge, skills and behaviours in preparation for putting them into practice at work.

How effective have leaders' actions been to rapidly improve the governance arrangements and ensure that leaders are held to account for the quality of learners' and apprentices' education and training?

Reasonable progress

Leaders have been successful in recruiting a governance board that has the skills, experience and gravitas to hold senior leaders to account, and to swiftly improve the education and training that learners and apprentices receive. Governors have supported the recently recruited leadership team with resources and time to make the changes to culture and staffing, to ensure effective learning is at the heart of the organisation's improvements.

The governance board has been successful in changing the culture of the organisation. It has developed a culture of trust and innovation. Governors and staff have moved away from the disproportionate focus on finance and achievement targets, which inspectors identified at the inspection, to one of improving the quality of learners' and apprentices' learning experiences.

Staff and employers spoke to inspectors about the tangible changes that have occurred since the inspection. Staff feel that they are now listened to, and their extensive technical expertise is considered when designing new curriculums. Staff now embrace the feedback that they receive on how to improve their teaching practice. It is too early to see any impact of these changes.

Leaders and the governance board have made wide-ranging changes to curriculums. They have reduced the number of apprenticeships that they offer by more than a third. Leaders acknowledged that the apprenticeships that they no longer provide were not appropriately taught or resourced. They have reinvested this resource to meet their core objectives of providing high-quality education and training in the engineering, manufacturing and nuclear sectors.

Leaders and governors have taken steps to rectify the weaknesses identified at the

inspection through the creation of a post-inspection action plan. However, they are not using the plan to adapt and refocus their objectives as they uncover additional areas that need to be improved. This means that leaders and governors are not always able to hold staff to account to improve learners' and apprentices' experiences as quickly as they could.

What progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that that careers guidance helps learners and apprentices to understand the full range of next steps and career options available to them?

Reasonable progress

Leaders have recruited new members of staff to form a provider-wide learner/apprentice services hub at the Blackwood Road centre. Recently recruited staff have started to provide careers education, information, advice and guidance and welfare support for apprentices. However, those who do not attend the Blackwood Road centre do not have access to any of these services.

The learner/apprentice services team has started to nurture relationships with external organisations to expose learners and apprentices to guest speakers from a range of industries. The topics that guest speakers discuss are based on careers education and furthering the personal development opportunities that are available in their local communities. The learner/apprentice services team has recently introduced careers round table discussions between apprentices and employers to explore the development opportunities in the sectors in which they work to enrich apprentices' learning experiences.

The student services team has started to carry out 'careers conversations'. This initiative is aimed at encouraging every learner and apprentice to have confidential, career-focused conversations with a designated member of the provider's learner/apprentice service team. It is too early to identify the impact that this initiative is having on learners and apprentices.

What progress have leaders and managers made to improve their oversight of the quality of education across their provision so that actions are put in place to rapidly improve the quality of learners' and apprentices' training?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have started to develop an appropriate process to improve the quality of education and training that learners and apprentices receive. They have developed a two-tier approach to enhance the teaching skills of tutors and support staff throughout the organisation. Firstly, they have invested in a teaching

academy to ensure that staff, coming with vital industrial experience, can develop their teaching skills to meet the exacting standards expected by leaders and employers. The second tier has been to implement a new ungraded observation of teaching, assessment and support for tutors and support staff. The emphasis of this new system is to provide tutors with supportive feedback on how to make incremental improvements to enhance their teaching, assessment and support practices. Where themes are identified across the organisation, structured continuous professional development days have been organised for all staff to attend. Tutors and support staff are appreciative of the support they now receive to improve their practice.

While the new systems to help tutors and support staff to improve their practice are in their infancy, there are early signs that they are starting to have a positive impact on apprentices' knowledge and skill development. Apprentices speak positively of the feedback and support that they now receive from their tutors, which is starting to help them to improve the standard of their work. They now understand how what they learn relates to the tasks they will complete at work, and which aspects of their work need to be improved to achieve their potential.

While leaders' new initiatives are starting to show a positive impact, they acknowledge that other monitoring and improvement strategies to identify and improve learners' and apprentices' skill development are not yet fully effective. For example, the scrutiny of completed work is not yet used effectively to identify where learners and apprentices are not making the progress in their studies that they should. This prevents quality improvement managers from swiftly intervening to help tutors to improve the teaching practice for future apprentices.

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