

# Learning and Development Bureau Ltd

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

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# Monitoring visit: main findings

## Context and focus of visit

Learning and Development Bureau Ltd (LDB) was inspected in June 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 addressing the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

LDB is an independent learning provider based in Kent. At the time of the monitoring visit, LDB had 100 standards-based apprentices. Of these, 37 apprentices were studying adult care apprenticeships from levels 2 to 5. There were 14 apprentices enrolled on level 4 children, young people and families practitioner, 13 on level 4 data analyst, 9 on level 4 business analyst and 6 on level 5 children, young people and families manager. Very small numbers of apprentices were enrolled on level 3 mortgage adviser, level 4 insurance professional and level 5 HR consultant partner.

LDB does not work with any subcontractors.

## Themes

### **What progress have leaders made to ensure employers are sufficiently involved so that they can support apprentices to apply new learning?**

### **Insufficient progress**

Leaders do not manage their relationships with employers effectively. For example, in a small minority of cases, employers are not aware their staff are apprentices and leaders and managers are not aware that apprentices have left their employer or are no longer engaging with their apprenticeship. As a result, too many employers are not able to support their apprentices appropriately.

Trainers do not work effectively with employers to ensure that most apprentices can apply what they have learned in the workplace quickly. For example, although trainers describe what apprentices have learned in their review meetings with employers, they do not identify specific knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to improve. They do not discuss how apprentices can apply their training at work. Consequently, apprentices are slow to apply new knowledge and skills in their job roles.

Since the last inspection, leaders have recognised that they need to ensure employers benefit from improved information about the knowledge, skills and behaviours their apprentices are developing. They now ensure that trainers inform employers in review meetings what apprentices have done in their training. Trainers ask most employers what skills their apprentices need to develop. However, trainers do not work with most employers to ensure apprentices apply new learning at work effectively.

**What progress have leaders made to ensure that all teaching is at least good and trainers plan a curriculum that is ambitious for all apprentices?** **Insufficient progress**

Since the last inspection, leaders have increased their observations of online teaching sessions, where nearly all teaching takes place. They are working to develop the teaching skills of staff by enrolling them on LDC's own level 5 learning and skills teacher apprenticeship. However, in most online teaching sessions, trainers do not establish suitable learning environments or check apprentices' understanding sufficiently. Trainers make few checks on apprentices' understanding. As a result, apprentices make too slow progress in teaching sessions.

Leaders state that staff now use initial assessment to identify apprentices' suitability for their training programme and to tailor their learning based on their existing skills and knowledge. However, in nearly all cases, staff do not take apprentices' previous learning or goals into account when designing their learning programmes. Consequently, nearly all apprentices do not benefit from an ambitious curriculum that enables them to make swift progress.

A few apprentices benefit from studying part of their qualifications at a higher level to help them work towards higher grades. For example, a few level 2 adult care worker apprentices study an optional level 3 unit on diabetes care. As a result, these apprentices progress faster due to trainers' adaptations of their learning to meet their needs.

**What progress have leaders made to ensure that apprentices benefit from careers advice and guidance so that they can make well-informed choices about their next steps?** **Reasonable progress**

Trainers now support most apprentices appropriately by checking their career goals at the start of their apprenticeship and continuing to discuss their next steps during their apprenticeship. For example, level 2 adult care worker apprentices discuss their plans to progress to mental health nursing and other nursing roles with their trainers. Level 4 data analyst apprentices benefit from guidance from their trainers on career

options, such as working in the medical sector or as a data scientist. As a result, most apprentices benefit from appropriate guidance from their trainers on their next steps.

Leaders have started to implement plans to improve careers advice and guidance for apprentices further. For example, they have appointed a member of staff as a careers officer and given them training in careers information, advice and guidance. A few apprentices benefit from individual careers advice sessions with them. Consequently, it is too early to see the full impact of these plans.

**What progress have leaders made to ensure that governors are focused on holding leaders and managers to account for the quality of education? Reasonable progress**

Leaders continue to work with a governance board that includes suitably experienced external governors. Governors are now beginning to challenge leaders and have identified a small number of areas for improvement. For example, governors have challenged leaders to improve further the number of apprentices who achieve their qualifications successfully and to improve the assessment of apprentices who speak English as a second or other language. As a result, governors are holding leaders to account successfully in these areas.

Leaders have appointed an additional member of the leadership team to the governing body as a governance officer who has encouraged governors successfully to question and challenge leaders on the quality of education. However, governors have not yet focused sufficiently sharply on LDB's most significant areas for development, such as leaders' management of their relationships with employers. Consequently, although governors are now supporting leaders to improve the quality of their provision, it is too early to see the full impact of this.

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