

Inspection of Gloucestershire Enterprise Limited

Inspection dates:

22 to 24 August 2023

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Apprenticeships

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

Information about this provider

Gloucestershire Enterprise Limited (GEL) is a not-for-profit social enterprise company based in Gloucester. It provides training to businesses in Gloucestershire in leadership, management and business skills. At the time of inspection, 60 apprentices were enrolled on apprenticeships at levels 3, 4 and 5. Most apprentices are employed in large local manufacturing and engineering companies with a small number working for smaller companies.

GEL first recruited apprentices in 2018. In its early days, it also recruited apprentices from public sector employers. In recent years, it has reduced the number of apprentices and focused on providing apprenticeships to local businesses. All apprentices are aged 19 and over.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Apprentices develop highly professional attitudes and behaviours as a result of the emphasis trainers place on these when designing and teaching the curriculum. Employers are extremely complimentary about the benefits to their businesses of the professionalism apprentices develop. Trainers also ensure that apprentices develop a keen awareness of their personal strengths and weaknesses, and how these can be harnessed or mitigated in their management role at work.

Apprentices quickly achieve high standards of professional communication. For example, level 3 apprentices learn and practise in lessons how to speak professionally about colleagues when discussing the culture and behaviour in their workplace. Apprentices apply their professional behaviours in the workplace extremely well by setting a good example to the staff they manage.

Apprentices have a significant impact on the companies they work for as a result of the skills and knowledge they develop. Employers provided inspectors with many examples of how their company has benefited from their apprentices' new knowledge. Trainers ensure that the projects apprentices carry out towards the end of their apprenticeship have a practical impact on their employers' business.

Apprentices and employers are highly complimentary about the quality of training provided by GEL staff. Apprentices enjoy their training because they are taught well and they recognise the benefits this has on their career. Many apprentices are promoted as a result of their success on the apprenticeship. Others progress to higher levels of study. A high proportion complete their apprenticeship with high grades.

Apprentices feel safe when attending training.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have dealt effectively with the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. They have done this by identifying clearly the actions they needed to take, acting decisively and monitoring the impact of their actions. They have an effective advisory panel that has been instrumental in bringing about improvements. The panel has clear terms of reference but, on occasions, the boundary between their advisory role, and the directors' operational roles, are blurred.

Apprentices at all levels are taught effectively by well-qualified and experienced trainers. Trainers successfully teach apprentices the principles that underpin the processes, practices and systems that they experience in their workplace. They use high-quality resources and helpful, engaging activities to reinforce the new knowledge. Trainers and assessors work successfully with employers to give apprentices the opportunities they need at work to put into practice the knowledge they gain.

At the beginning of the apprenticeships, trainers collect valuable information about their apprentices, the jobs they do and their career aspirations. They use this information well to plan curricula and training, and to provide individual support. The curricula allow learners to develop their use of English and trainers support apprentices well to successfully achieve English and mathematics qualifications. In a small number of instances, leaders have not developed the use of assessment sufficiently to ensure apprentices understand the progress they have made on some of the powerful knowledge they have been taught.

Leaders have developed a strongly collaborative and respectful culture in GEL. They extend this ethos into their training by ensuring that apprentices have a good understanding of equalities and the importance of developing positive, respectful cultures in the teams they manage.

GEL has a long history of training leaders and managers in Gloucestershire. They have strong links with local companies, particularly those in the engineering and manufacturing sectors. The apprenticeships they provide help to tackle a skills shortage in the local area. Several companies use GEL repeatedly to train their managers and a few told inspectors how the apprenticeships are integral to their succession planning.

Employers are strongly committed to the apprenticeships. They provide the workplace mentor that GEL require and most mentors attend training in mentoring provided by GEL. They provide time for their apprentices to study and complete apprenticeship work. In return, GEL leaders consider the company's business cycle when planning the curriculum. For example, one employer has particular pressures at the end of the month, so GEL reduce the demands on the apprentices at this time.

Leaders have not developed a way of reviewing the quality of their apprenticeships sufficiently. While there is no doubting the progress they have made to deal with the weaknesses identified by the previous inspection team, they have not set their own priorities sufficiently clearly. Nor have they considered sufficiently how to measure their success. The quality improvement plan lacks clear measurements of success and is not linked sufficiently to their self-evaluation. This raises the risk of important features being missed or insufficiently evaluated.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff overseeing apprentices' safety and welfare are suitably qualified. They refer apprentices to local support agencies where necessary and have the links with local and regional bodies that they need to keep up to date. Learners understand the support on personal matters that they can get from staff at GEL and value this. Apprentices learn about the 'Prevent' duty but this is not always related to the industries in which they work.

Policies and risk assessments do not take sufficient account of the age of the apprentices. They focus too heavily on safeguarding learners aged under 18. They do not reflect the age-appropriate support and guidance that staff provide for their adult learners.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that apprentices understand the progress they have made in securely learning and applying the knowledge they have been taught.
- Produce policies and risk assessments relating to apprentices' safety and welfare that are more appropriate to the needs of adults.
- Develop a system for monitoring and reporting on quality that leads to a targeted quality improvement plan and a self-assessment report that reflects the ambitions leaders have.
- Clearly define, and adhere to, the extent to which advisory panel members take an operational role in the business.

Provider details

Unique reference number	58505
Address	Unit 3 Twigworth Court Business Centre Tewkesbury Road Twigworth Gloucester GL2 9PG
Contact number	01452 733546
Website	https://www.glosenterprise.co.uk/
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Kervin Holt
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	18–20 August 2021

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the operations' director as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

Steven Tucker, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Caunter	Ofsted Inspector
Roger Pilgrim	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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