

# The Spencer Academies Trust

Monitoring visit report

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<b>Name of lead inspector:</b>	Emma Woods, His Majesty's Inspector
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<b>Type of provider:</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Address:</b>	George Spencer Academy Arthur Mee Road Stapleford Nottingham NG9 7EW

## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of the 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.

The Spencer Academies Trust is a multi-academy trust of schools across the East Midlands, with a particular focus on Nottingham and Derby. Spencer Apprenticeships was established in 2021. At the time of the visit, 31 apprentices studied the level 3 teaching assistant apprenticeship standard. Almost all apprentices work for the trust. Leaders plan to recruit more apprentices from outside of the trust in the coming year. Around three-quarters of apprentices are adults.

### Themes

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

#### **Significant progress**

Leaders have a clear rationale for their apprenticeship offer. There is a strong alignment to their purpose as a multi-academy trust. They have used their wide-ranging expertise to quickly establish a very effective curriculum to train teaching assistants.

Leaders take time to understand the needs of individual schools and incorporate them into apprentices' training. Additionally, leaders ensure that the curriculum is broad enough to prepare apprentices well for a career in education. For example, apprentices learn about primary and secondary education irrespective of the age range of the children they work with.

Apprentices are fully supported by their headteachers and workplace mentors. Managers provide mentors with comprehensive training. They understand apprentices' studies and ensure that their on- and off-the-job training time is relevant and productive.

Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices understand what to expect in their final assessments. Trainers conduct relevant mock activities and revision sessions. Apprentices know how to achieve the grades they aspire to.

Managers have suitable processes in place to identify if apprentices require additional learning support. In the few instances that this is required, trainers and employers make suitable adjustments to meet apprentices' needs.

Leaders and managers undertake appropriate activities to evaluate the quality of apprentices' studies. They frequently survey apprentices, mentors and headteachers to gather feedback on the impact of training. Managers oversee apprentices' progress through useful monthly assurance activities and one-to-one sessions with trainers. Leaders and managers quickly resolve any areas for improvement they identify.

Internal and external governors have relevant experience to undertake their roles. During termly meetings, they receive detailed information from leaders on the apprenticeship programme. They know the curriculum strengths and areas for development well. They provide useful support to leaders to help them continue to drive improvement.

**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**

Managers and trainers plan apprentices' courses very well. They study a broad range of valuable topics beyond the core curriculum. For example, apprentices learn about a child's full literacy journey, not just that of the age range they support. As a result, apprentices develop deep knowledge, which they use to support teachers and children. They are rightly highly valued members of staff in their schools.

Managers and tutors carefully consider apprentices' starting points. They use the information they gather effectively to plan apprentices' studies. For example, younger apprentices with less knowledge of work spend more time learning professional standards and workplace behaviours.

A team of well-qualified tutors are further strengthened by expert facilitators from across the trust. They teach valuable sessions on specialist subjects, such as special educational needs and/or disabilities. Training sessions are well planned. During sessions, tutors use a range of effective techniques, such as on-the-spot tests and peer discussion, to assess apprentices' learning. This supports apprentices to recall key concepts in detail.

Tutors provide feedback to apprentices frequently and effectively. They translate this feedback into carefully constructed targets and work-based activities. Mentors provide apprentices with lots of useful guidance and support. This helps apprentices to continually improve their work and develop their knowledge and skills.

Apprentices who study functional skills in English and mathematics benefit from individual learning plans and one-to-one teaching sessions. Tutors prepare high-

quality resources and assessments, which they use well. As a result, apprentices' knowledge of these subjects improves over time.

Managers acknowledge that the number of apprentices who need to study functional skills is increasing with new cohorts. This means they need to reconsider how they teach these subjects. They have suitable plans in place to make the changes as needed.

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

Leaders and managers create a safe environment and culture. Apprentices know how to report safeguarding concerns and are confident they will receive support.

Leaders carefully adjust trust policies and procedures to accurately reflect the needs of apprentices. A dedicated safeguarding team offers effective support and expertise to apprentices, mentors and staff.

Younger apprentices know how to keep themselves safe. They gain a good grasp of online safety, relationships and healthy living topics.

Leaders meet the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty. They follow appropriate approaches to safer recruitment. The designated safeguarding lead and all staff complete relevant safeguarding training.

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