

# Education and Skills Training and Development Limited

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

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**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

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## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

Education and Skills Training and Development Limited was inspected in July 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.

Education and Skills Training and Development Limited was established in 2015 as a specialist training provider in education and childcare. It has offered apprenticeships to levy-paying employers since 2017. Currently, there are 659 apprentices, with the large majority on apprenticeship standards at levels 2 to 5 for teaching assistants, early years educators and school business professionals. At the time of the inspection, 179 apprentices were enrolled on functional skills mathematics programmes. Apprentices are employed in schools and nurseries throughout England.

### Themes

**How successful have leaders been in identifying what apprentices know and can do at the start of their apprenticeship, and how effectively is this information used to create an ambitious curriculum?**

**Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers have improved the recruitment process for apprentices to ensure that apprentices and employers are fully informed of the expectations and rules of the apprenticeship programme. A training needs analysis is completed to ensure that the programme is relevant for both apprentices' and employers' needs. As a result, apprentices are recruited onto programmes and at levels that are relevant to their job roles and career plans.

Managers have improved the induction process for their apprenticeships. Using information from an intensive initial assessment, they take into account the prior knowledge and skills that apprentice have gained in the workplace, and use this information to tailor apprentices' learning plans. For example, if an apprentice has prior knowledge and skills in one element of the standard, then time allocated in the plan is moved to an element of the standard where the apprentice's skills and knowledge are not as strong, to allow for more training on those elements of the standard.

Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices benefit from support at work in the first few months of their programmes to make certain that the apprenticeship standard chosen is relevant. Every two weeks, a member of the business development team contacts the apprentice to check that the standard remains suitable. This means that managers are assured that apprentices are on the right programme and ensures that apprentices are able to complete the standard in the workplace.

Leaders and managers have improved the planning process for apprentices' learning. Tutors now have access to schemes of work designed to be entirely flexible throughout the apprenticeship programme. Tutors use these schemes very well to ensure that apprentices' programmes are individualised and meet their needs.

**How successful have leaders been in strengthening their oversight of the actions that staff take to safeguard apprentices, and have leaders ensured that apprentices are aware of local risks and threats to them?**

**Reasonable progress**

After the July 2022 inspection, leaders took well-considered action to make necessary improvements to arrangements for reporting and recording safeguarding concerns, and for ensuring that apprentices were aware of local safeguarding risks.

Leaders have taken effective steps to ensure that apprentices understand the difference between following the safeguarding procedures for reporting concerns about children in their schools or settings, and those for raising safeguarding concerns about themselves. This includes an understanding of how to contact the safeguarding lead. Leaders responsible for safeguarding also provide greater clarity for staff and apprentices about the process for raising concerns. As a result, apprentices now have a good understanding about how to raise any safeguarding concerns.

Very soon after the previous inspection, leaders introduced 'hot topic' discussions into apprentices' progress reviews and learning modules to enable apprentices to gain an awareness of local safeguarding risks, and how they can protect themselves and others. They require apprentices to complete a learning module within the first three months of the course to raise their awareness about the range of risks they may experience. This is followed up within nine months by a personal research project about risks relevant to their local area. As a result of the increased focus on local risks, apprentices improve their understanding. They learn how the risks can affect them, their peers and the children and families they work with. They also understand the steps that they can take to recognise risks and the actions to take to protect themselves. For example, through completing research into local risks, young female apprentices improve their understanding about the steps they can take to protect themselves from sexual harassment and drink spiking.

**How successful have leaders' actions been in ensuring that apprentices receive the high-quality teaching that they need to prepare them to pass their functional skills mathematics examinations?**

**Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers have recruited an experienced functional skills tutor to support apprentices who need mathematics training. The tutor provides individual support for apprentices who are struggling to pass functional skills examinations. However, the role was filled less than a month ago and, therefore, it is too soon to measure the impact.

Leaders and managers have improved the process for supporting apprentices who need to achieve mathematics functional skills qualifications. They have introduced a bespoke online system to improve the skills and knowledge that apprentices need to demonstrate when they take examinations. Apprentices report that they find the platform easy to use and navigate.

Leaders and managers have developed the standard schemes of work for all apprenticeship standards to include mathematics. They highlight opportunities to include mathematics training in lessons, including in the overall plans for learning. For example, when apprentices plan childcare settings on the early years educator apprenticeship standard, they are tasked to calculate in the space how many babies, toddlers and children can be accommodated and how many staff members should be allocated in the workplace setting.

Leaders and managers have implemented a schedule of functional skills sessions that apprentices who require support can access. Apprentices can log into as many of these lessons as they require. The topics covered include scale, averages and ratios. Apprentices report that they value the lessons provided. However, these lessons are very new and, therefore, it is too soon to measure the impact.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that apprentices consistently benefit from high-quality mathematics teaching. In a few instances, teaching practices do not take into account learners' prior knowledge of mathematics, and the content, therefore, is too difficult for the apprentices. As a result of this, a few apprentices are not progressing as quickly as they could in developing their mathematical skills.

**How successfully have leaders' actions ensured that apprentices receive impartial careers advice and guidance to enable them to make informed decisions regarding their long-term career goals and aspirations?**

**Reasonable progress**

Since the last inspection, leaders have taken effective steps to ensure that, before they start their programmes, prospective apprentices are provided with impartial careers advice about progression routes relevant to their chosen role. They use publications and information produced by organisations such as the National Apprenticeship Service and awarding bodies. These provide prospective apprentices with insights into career progression in their occupational area and what they need to do to progress to higher levels. This enables apprentices to make well-informed choices in relation to their longer-term career goals.

Leaders have recently established contact with the National Careers Service to provide an opportunity for all apprentices to speak to an impartial adviser. Since the relationship was established, around a third of apprentices have made use of this opportunity. In addition, the provider now employs three tutors to teach on the level 6 career development professional apprenticeship standard. These tutors are all members of the Career Development Institute and are qualified to provide impartial advice. Leaders use these tutors to prepare induction materials for prospective and new apprentices regarding careers guidance.

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