

City Gateway

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

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

City Gateway was inspected in January 2023. 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.

At the time of the monitoring visit, 12 apprentices were studying the level 3 business administrator apprenticeship. The vast majority of apprentices are employed in east London and the City of London. City Gateway no longer offers traineeship courses for new learners. At the time of the visit, five trainees remained on traineeships, studying employability skills and mathematics and/or English courses.

Themes

How much progress have leaders and managers made to make sure that apprentices are in suitable job roles, can apply their new learning, and work towards the successful achievement of their apprenticeship? **Significant progress**

Leaders and managers quickly revised how they recruit apprentices following the previous inspection. They work closely with employers to identify and match apprentices to relevant job vacancies and make sure that apprentices are suited to the job descriptions. As a result, all apprentices are working in suitable administration roles.

Apprentices have appropriate opportunities to apply what they learn in their training at work. For example, apprentices practise the research skills they learn in training by conducting research into their companies' vision and mission. Apprentices then analyse and present this information at work. Employers rightly appreciate the new skills that apprentices bring to their teams.

Managers and assessors support apprentices well to aim for high grades in their end-point assessments (EPA). Assessors introduce apprentices early on in their studies to what to expect in their EPA. Apprentices observe peers who are close to their final assessments practise their formal presentations. This helps apprentices understand the requirements of the assessments in advance and allows them time to prepare for them thoroughly. Since the previous inspection, a large majority of apprentices who completed their studies achieved high grades and half of them secured promotions at work.

What progress have leaders and managers made to provide apprentices with a personal development curriculum that develops their knowledge and skills beyond their vocational learning, including access to high-quality careers advice and guidance?

Reasonable progress

Since the previous inspection, trustees, leaders and managers have taken suitable steps in training staff to be able to give apprentices effective careers education, information, advice and guidance (CEIAG). For example, they have appointed and suitably trained careers coaches to support apprentices with conversations about their next steps. Staff provide apprentices with relevant careers information in a new CEIAG newsletter and online platform. However, leaders recognise that they still have work to do to make sure that all apprentices receive timely and ongoing careers advice and guidance.

Assessors teach apprentices well about fundamental British values in their weekly training sessions. They make the content relevant to apprentices' business administration programme. For example, assessors teach about the rule of law through topics such as data protection regulations, anti-bribery legislation and sexual harassment in the workplace. As a result, apprentices understand the important legislation and regulations that they must follow at work and why.

Assessors discuss topics such as healthy lifestyles and mental health support in their sessions with apprentices. External speakers give useful talks and workshops on topics such as terrorism, county lines and exploitation. However, staff make attendance at these sessions optional and do not reinforce these themes within training sessions. As a result, a minority of apprentices miss information and resources on these topics.

Staff organise interesting activities that help apprentices develop their interests beyond their vocational training. For example, a small minority of apprentices have taken up extra digital courses and attended events such as International Women's Day talks. However, because these events are not part of a planned curriculum, too many apprentices are not aware of these opportunities.

What progress have leaders and managers made to improve apprentices' attendance at their training sessions?

Significant progress

Leaders, managers and staff have high expectations of apprentices' attendance. They set these out clearly through a well-defined code of conduct, which apprentices understand well. Assessors make sure that apprentices appreciate the importance of attending their training and how this relates to expected professional workplace behaviours. Staff support apprentices well to help them attend. For example, leaders and managers have set up a food bank and breakfast club at the training site so that apprentices do not miss training because they have to work extra hours to buy food. Attendance rates for training have improved and are consistently high.

Leaders and managers efficiently track and monitor how well apprentices attend their weekly face-to-face training sessions. Leaders inform trustees about attendance levels, so that trustees can support leaders effectively to continue their work to improve them.

Leaders ensure that employers know in good time when apprentices need to attend their training. They make sure that employers release apprentices to attend training sessions and workplace appointments. Staff quickly inform employers if apprentices miss any sessions. They also ensure that employers allocate additional time for apprentices to catch up on learning if they have missed sessions due to pressures at work. As a result, apprentices do not fall behind in their apprenticeship.

What progress have leaders and managers made to make sure that trainees take part in work experience placements that help them apply their new employability skills?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have implemented suitable measures to support trainees to apply for relevant work experience opportunities. For example, staff have developed a useful online platform to inform trainees about the employment sectors that interest them. Trainees develop a clear idea of their potential next steps into employment.

Career coaches prepare trainees well to apply for work placements. They meet regularly and know trainees' career aspirations well. Coaches support trainees with one-to-one sessions and group interview practice that help them become more confident in conversations with unknown adults. Trainees can remember how to write a CV and the importance of being well prepared and presentable for interviews. Consequently, trainees have the skills they need to gain relevant work placements in local companies.

Coaches support trainees who want to gain work experience to find suitable placements well. For example, coaches have arranged work placements in marketing departments for trainees with ambitions to become marketing administrators. In these cases, trainees can practise their new employability skills in a placement that supports their chosen career pathway.

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