

The Academy of Leadership & Management Ltd

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 2741645

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Inspection dates: 31 January and 1 February 2024

Type of provider: Independent learning provider
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of 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 Academy of Leadership & Management Ltd (ALM) is an independent learning provider based in Largs, Scotland. Set up in 2011 as a private company to provide training for local government and private sector companies, ALM has been training apprentices since October 2022. The provider offers apprenticeships in business administrator at level 3 and teaching assistant at level 3 in the north west of England. At the time of the monitoring visit, there were fewer than five apprentices in learning. A few apprentices were under the age of 18. The provider works with one employer.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Leaders have a clear strategy and rationale to provide apprenticeships that meet identified skills gaps for business administrators and teaching assistants in the north west of England. They work closely with an employer to co-create personalised training programmes that meet the needs of the employer and apprentices. These programmes include qualifications and courses beyond the apprenticeship. For example, teaching assistant apprentices complete additional qualifications in British Sign Language to support children in the classroom. Business administrator apprentices complete courses in information technology that enable them to take on extra responsibilities.

Leaders work closely with the employer to identify the most appropriate apprenticeships that meet the needs of the business and enable apprentices to move into a variety of roles, including those with additional responsibilities or promotion.

Leaders frequently discuss the progress that apprentices make. They rightly recognise the need for a more stringent approach to the monitoring of apprentices' progress when the number of apprentices increases. They have very recently

purchased a commercial management information system to help them to assess formally the progress apprentices make. This is yet to be implemented.

Leaders and managers have introduced rigorous processes to monitor the quality of the apprenticeships. Observations of training, reviews of apprentices' assessments and the subsequent feedback provided by tutors, and auditing of apprentices' off-the-job training records contribute to evaluating and improving the quality of education and training.

Leaders accurately identified that too many apprentices leave the programme early. They reviewed recruitment and induction processes and have recently introduced a more thorough recruitment process. This includes a longer initial phase when apprentices shadow colleagues across all departments in their workplace. These new processes will be implemented when the next cohort of apprentices is recruited.

Governance arrangements are in place. Currently, company directors oversee the quality and finances of all aspects of the organisation, including commercial courses and apprenticeships. Plans are in place to establish a governing body solely for apprenticeships. This will include recruiting external governors with experience and expertise in the further education sector. These plans are yet to be implemented.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? Reasonable progress

The level 3 business administrator and level 3 teaching assistant curriculums provide apprentices with substantial new knowledge and skills, combined with workplace practice, that enable them to add value to their employer. For example, business administrator apprentices confidently apply their learning as they complete project management activities, and teaching assistants support children's educational development through the application of their knowledge of child development.

Tutors work closely with the employer and apprentices to design and plan the order in which the different topics are taught. In response to employer feedback, teaching assistant apprentices now complete the well-being unit much earlier in the apprenticeship.

As a result of what they learn on their apprenticeship, apprentices develop their confidence and communication skills. For example, business administrator apprentices accurately identify and use formal language with external stakeholders and less formal communication styles with colleagues.

Following assessment, apprentices use the precise feedback provided by tutors to extend their knowledge and skills. Apprentices think carefully about the feedback and routinely act on it to improve the quality of their work.

While tutors frequently meet with apprentices in the workplace, their employer is not routinely informed about the progress that apprentices make.

Apprentices are not informed of the requirements of the final assessment early enough in their training. Apprentices have only recently been made aware of the distinction grade and, as a result, most apprentices are working towards pass grades.

Apprentices have a good understanding of their potential next steps with their employer. They are aware of the roles available to them on completion of the apprenticeship. Apprentices do not receive sufficient information about opportunities outside their current employer.

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

The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSL are suitably qualified and have significant experience and expertise in the role. Staff benefit from frequent updates about safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty.

Apprentices feel safe. Tutors provide apprentices with safeguarding training, including online safety and protecting themselves from the threats of radicalisation and extremism. Apprentices are taught how to keep themselves and the children they care for safe.

The DSL records and monitors all concerns raised. The DSL has effective links with a range of external agencies and refers cases to external agencies swiftly and efficiently.

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