

Inspection of Ginger Nut Media Limited

Inspection dates:

20 to 23 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Apprenticeships	Good
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Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good
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Information about this provider

Ginger Nut Media Limited (Ginger Nut Training) is a large national independent training provider based in Colchester, Essex. They teach apprenticeships in the business, information technology and marketing sectors. Teaching takes place across the country at employers' sites and tutors are based around the country. Teaching is predominantly online with a very small proportion of face-to-face sessions where required.

At the time of the inspection, there were 515 apprentices in learning of whom 103 were under 19 years of age. Most apprentices were studying at level 3 with a smaller proportion studying at level 4. There is a very small provision of level 2 in Customer Service. Most apprentices study level 3 business administrator and information communications technician.

67 apprentices were taking functional skills mathematics and 46 taking functional skills English. 30 apprentices were on a break in learning.

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

Apprentices enjoy the personalised approach to their learning and value the opportunity to be able to study around their work commitments and personal lives. Apprentices feel very well supported by their tutors, they are confident to talk to them and value the swift response they receive when they seek help.

Apprentices gain substantial new knowledge and skills on their apprenticeship programmes which help them to secure jobs and further their careers. In level 3 digital marketing, apprentices new to working in large companies were able to understand the importance of office etiquette, composing professional emails and behaving appropriately in the office environment. Apprentices learn how to be respectful and tolerant of others in the workplace.

Apprentices benefit from gaining additional qualifications to support their career development. On level 3, information communication technicians can acquire industry standard qualifications such as CompTIA A+ and level 3 digital marketer can complete a Google Analytics certification.

Apprentices mostly find the online teaching sessions and webinars interesting and interactive. However, a minority feel that there is too much reliance on videos and self-directed learning. A small number of apprentices would prefer to have less online learning and have more opportunities to share their ideas and experiences with their peers.

Apprentices feel safe in their workplaces. They understand the risks associated with working online. They benefit from e-learning modules on working safely such as awareness of avoiding suspicious websites, phishing risks and not disclosing confidential details or personal information. Apprentices know how to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy.

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

Leaders and managers have selected a relevant range of apprenticeship programmes to meet the needs of employers in the information technology, marketing and business sectors that they serve. They provide apprenticeships so that apprentices gain a basic understanding of the sectors in which they work.

Leaders have developed very strong relationships with employers who value highly the training that their employees receive. Leaders revise the curriculum that they offer frequently, to ensure that the apprenticeship programmes are up-to-date and relevant. In level 4 software development lessons, for example, tutors have introduced examples of how artificial intelligence is used within the industry, in response to employers' requests.

Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices receive appropriate time away from the workplace to complete their apprenticeship. The activities apprentices do off the

job aligns well with their job roles. Where appropriate, tutors change the sequence in which topics are taught, to meet apprentices' and employers' needs. In level 2 customer service, apprentices are taught about evaluating customer feedback early in the programme to support them in carrying out their job roles effectively. As a result, apprentices make a valuable contribution to their workplaces.

Leaders, employers and apprentices complete detailed training plans at the start of the apprenticeship. Employers consequently understand the requirements of the apprenticeship and provide high-quality support for apprentices in the workplace. Most employers attend apprentices' reviews so that they understand the progress that apprentices are making, help them to consolidate their skills and ensure that apprentices are well-prepared for their final assessments.

Tutors are well-qualified and experienced in the areas that they teach. A very high proportion have teaching qualifications or are working towards them. Tutors use their expertise skilfully to provide apprentices with a sound understanding of working in different sectors. In level 2 customer service, tutors provide apprentices with examples of customer complaints so that they can discuss how they would manage social media feedback, and maintain their brand whilst upholding their company's core values and culture.

Tutors assess apprentices' skills thoroughly at the start of their course. They plan apprenticeship programmes so that apprentices build on their skills sequentially and logically. In level 2 customer service, apprentices gain a detailed understanding of their roles and managers' expectations of them within the business. Apprentices then move onto more complex topics such as analysing customer feedback and customer satisfaction.

Tutors help apprentices to understand new concepts skilfully. In level 3 business administration, they set pre-reading, provide links to websites and video clips so that apprentices are prepared fully for their taught sessions. Tutors use quizzes and probing questioning to check apprentices' recall of their prior knowledge and skills. As a result, apprentices can recall what they have learned and apply new theories to different workplace situations. In level 4 software developer, tutors ensure that apprentices' understanding of testing for errors or reliability is revised frequently. Apprentices first learn about the role of testers and quality engineers. Apprentices then learn how to communicate and how to present feedback to colleagues if testing colleagues work. Apprentices subsequently progress to complex skills such as creating test criteria and full testing plans for system integration.

Tutors teach online lessons confidently. They use a range of relevant online platforms to ensure that teaching is interactive and interesting. Tutors are mostly adept at using online questioning, chat functions and breakout rooms to promote discussion and to check learning. Tutors ask apprentices to share their screens so that they can critique each other's work. In level 3 data technician, apprentices share pivot tables with the group to gain feedback on their work from peers. In a very small minority of lessons, particularly where tutors use videos or externally produced webinars, tutors do not check apprentices' learning thoroughly enough.

Consequently, tutors in a small minority of cases do not know how well apprentices have understood the concepts taught.

Tutors are ambitious for their apprentices. They encourage them to take on projects within their workplaces to support their businesses and gain real work experience. Level 3 data technician apprentices working in a large travel company, take part in projects to automate travel information sent to customers related to their marketing preferences. Apprentices benefit from access to a wide range of learning resources, including specialist webinars, which they can access to further their learning.

Tutors provide apprentices with helpful feedback on their work. Apprentices understand what they do well and what they need to do to improve their work. As a result, they make good progress, and their work improves over time. Apprentices produce high standards of work which at least meet the level of the apprenticeship that they are working on and in a small proportion the quality of work exceeds the level of the apprenticeship.

Tutors support apprentices, including those with special educational needs, diligently. Tutors identify apprentices with additional learning needs early in their programmes. Tutors develop personalised strategies for apprentices so that they can complete assignments confidently. As a result, apprentices with special educational needs achieve their qualifications and gain high grades, in line with their peers.

Tutors develop apprentices' English and mathematics skills systematically during their apprenticeship. In level 3 business administration apprentices calculate percentages and ratios when analysing statistics on company targets. Tutors make clear the importance of checking spelling, punctuation and grammar and proofreading work before submitting it. In reviews, tutors set apprentices targets to complete online activities to improve their English skills.

Tutors provide apprentices with useful careers advice and guidance during reviews. Tutors support apprentices to identify how the transferable skills that they gain on their apprenticeship can help them to apply for different roles. Apprentices learn how to use social media sites confidently to seek employment. Leaders have recently taken steps to improve careers advice and guidance, particularly for those apprentices aged 16 to 18. However, it is too early to see the impact of this.

Leaders consider tutors' workload effectively and tutors feel supported by their managers. Leaders are proactive in supporting staff wellbeing and mental health. Leaders provide staff with access to a range of health services, including confidential counselling support. They offer additional leave for charitable work, provided a wellness garden and provide support for staff to handle external responsibilities or domestic duties. As a result, staff enjoy their work and feel valued and supported in their workplace.

Governors have the relevant experience and knowledge to carry out their roles effectively. They understand the strengths and weaknesses of the provision thoroughly. They receive frequent detailed reports on leaders' progress against

previous actions. As a result, they can support and challenge senior leaders to continually improve the quality of education and training.

Most apprentices who complete their apprenticeship achieve their qualification, particularly at level 3, and a high proportion of apprentices gain merit and distinction grades. Of the small proportion of apprentices on level 4 data analyst, too few achieve their qualifications. Leaders have taken appropriate actions to rectify this. Most apprentices continue to be employed in their current job roles or gain promoted posts.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that apprentices, particularly those who are aged under 19, receive impartial careers advice and guidance so that they have a good understanding of the careers that are available to them on completion of their apprenticeship.
- Ensure that tutors check carefully apprentices' understanding of new knowledge and skills, particularly when using videos and externally produced webinars.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1276527
Address	37 Queen Street Colchester CO1 2PQ
Contact number	020 7495 5110
Website	www.gingernuttraining.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Phil Warnock
Provider type	Independent Learning Provider
Date of previous inspection	17 and 20 September 2019
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the 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

Lynda Brown, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Steve Kelly	His Majesty's Inspector
Penny Fawcus	His Majesty's Inspector
Jaswant Mann	Ofsted Inspector
Claire Griffin	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Conibear	Ofsted Inspector
Caroline Williams	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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