

College of St Mark and St John

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	133866
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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 College of St Mark and St John uses the trading name Plymouth Marjon University. The university started training their first apprentices in February 2023, working with employers in Plymouth and in the southwest region. The university offers higher level apprenticeships in health and social care and in nursing. All apprentices are over the age of 19.

At the time of the visit, there were 76 apprentices. Of these, 42 were studying the level 5 assistant practitioner apprenticeship, 15 were studying the level 5 nursing associate apprenticeship, 12 were studying the level 6 registered nurse apprenticeship and seven were studying the level 6 youth worker apprenticeship.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers work well with local partners and employers to ensure they have a clear understanding of the skills needed locally and regionally. They work effectively with employers to design apprenticeships in key areas of need, such as health and social care. For example, leaders and managers have developed pathways for training apprentices in learning disabilities and mental health. In this way, leaders and managers provide opportunities for local people to improve their skills and for employers to develop their workforce.

Leaders and managers ensure they meet the requirements of apprenticeship provision. They have clear processes in place to ensure employers are aware of their responsibilities and together they recruit apprentices with integrity. Leaders and managers work well with employers and apprentices to plan the curriculum and tailor it for apprentices' and employers' needs. For example, leaders and managers adapt the assistant practitioner apprenticeship curriculum to meet the needs of different hospital departments. Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices frequently meet with their coaches and employer mentors to discuss the progress apprentices make and to set appropriate developmental targets. Leaders and managers ensure

that on- and off-the-job training is well coordinated through training plans and purposeful communication. Coaches identify any gaps in learning so that these can be reinforced in lessons.

Leaders and managers use a variety of data and key metrics, such as retention and apprentices' feedback, to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses. They have clear reporting structures in place to ensure those with responsibility for governance have an appropriate overview of the developing apprenticeship provision.

Leaders and managers do not yet evaluate the overall strengths and weaknesses of apprenticeships collectively. They recognise rightly that this would be a useful exercise to identify broader areas for development specifically related to the quality of apprenticeships.

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**

Leaders and managers ensure apprentices are taught by a well-qualified, highly experienced and skilled teaching team. Teaching staff undertake professional development in industry. This enables them to add valuable context when teaching apprentices to enrich their learning.

Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices use high-quality industry-standard resources to practise their skills and develop their confidence. For example, apprentices use patient simulation equipment to practise different procedures and scenarios and to prepare well for their assessments. Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices with additional needs receive the support they need, including adaptations and additional resources.

Leaders and managers ensure apprentices are on the right programme for them by checking their pre-existing experience and skills. Teachers use this information well to plan teaching to ensure apprentices develop substantial new knowledge and skills. For example, nursing apprentices learn how to perform deeper wound cleaning. They practise these skills and become confident to treat patients, thereby contributing to reducing patient waiting time.

Teachers use helpful strategies to support apprentices to learn. For example, youth worker apprentices are taught how to create games and resources for use in youth settings. Apprentices use these to discuss important issues with young people, such as knife crime. As a result, apprentices become more knowledgeable and confident to discuss community tensions.

Teachers encourage apprentices to reflect productively on their learning. Apprentices use real examples from their work to show their development of high standards of knowledge, skills and behaviours over time. Teaching staff and employers provide apprentices with useful feedback on their work. More recently, coaches have made

improvements to using this feedback to set appropriate targets for apprentices to achieve. As a result, apprentices know what progress they are making on their apprenticeship and what they need to do to develop further.

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

Leaders and managers ensure that apprentices have access to appropriately qualified and trained staff within the university to support any safeguarding concerns. The members of the safeguarding team record any concerns reported, and the appropriate actions to take. However, they do not record whether these actions have been taken.

Leaders and managers ensure that all staff receive mandatory 'Prevent' duty training and updates. However, all staff do not routinely receive training on wider safeguarding, unless they work in related roles.

Apprentices learn about safeguarding at induction, in the context of their work, and through additional employer training. As result, they develop a clear understanding of safeguarding.

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