

Inspection of Happy Computers

Inspection dates: 30 July to 2 August 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Information about this provider

Happy Computers Ltd is an independent learning provider based in east London specialising in information technology and leadership and management training, consultancy and coaching services. Happy Computers Ltd gained a contract to deliver apprenticeships in January 2018.

At the time of the inspection, there were 196 apprentices across four standards. Of these, 94 were on the level 5 operations or departmental manager standard, 49 on level 7 senior leader, 35 on level 3 team leader or supervisor and six on level 4 software developer. The vast majority of apprentices are adults.

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

Apprentices learn in well-managed and respectful environments in both face-to-face and online lessons. This is because tutors set clear expectations for participation and respectful communication at the beginning of each lesson. As a result, apprentices engage positively which leads to a productive online learning experience. Most apprentices have good attendance and attitudes to their studies and development. Leaders, managers and tutors suitably challenge and resolve non-attendance and engagement to promote a culture of responsibility and commitment to learning among apprentices.

Apprentices study a curriculum that meets their and their employers' needs well, particularly for those in the charity and local authority sectors. They learn significant new knowledge and skills incrementally throughout the programme. This is because staff work closely with employers to design each curriculum. Staff get to know the needs of employers' organisations in depth and accurately identify what apprentices already know and can do. They use this information to good effect to design bespoke curriculums. For example, level 5 operations or departmental manager tutors use case studies in their training related to charities. This helps apprentices to apply the business elements of the curriculum to the context in which they work.

Apprentices feel safe in learning and the workplace. Tutors teach apprentices well about the dangers and risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. Apprentices understand fundamental British values. Many apprentices work for large public organisations or charities where the service users are from disadvantaged backgrounds and at risk of exploitation, for example through modern slavery and people trafficking. Apprentices value the discussions they have with tutors and their peers on these topics during their training, which helps to further their knowledge of the rule of law, tolerance and respect.

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

Leaders and managers have a clear vision for the apprenticeships. Leaders integrate into each management apprenticeship the company's unique set of core management principles. Through the training, they aim to equip apprentices with the knowledge, skills and behaviours beyond conventional management models. They strive to support apprentices' professional development and the teams they work with to create happy workplaces.

Leaders and managers take suitable action continuously to improve the provision. This includes increasing the proportion of apprentices who achieve within the planned time. Following the previous inspection, leaders set clear expectations with employers and newly recruited apprentices at the very start of the programmes. They provide effective support to help apprentices who fall behind with their studies. This has contributed to a marked improvement in retention and timely completion for this academic year, including in English and mathematics qualifications. As a result, most apprentices complete their apprenticeship and the majority achieve a

distinction grade. However, leaders and managers have not set the same high expectations for apprentices in previous cohorts who have not achieved in the planned time. They have suitable plans in place to support these apprentices, but there remains a minority who are yet to complete their training.

Leaders and managers recruit well-qualified tutors with extensive sector experience. Tutors skilfully use their knowledge and expertise to teach the curriculum. They use a range of good teaching techniques that help apprentices gain new knowledge and skills. For example, during online lessons, tutors use breakout rooms very effectively to teach management apprentices about organisation culture theories. They set tasks for apprentices to apply what they have already learned and to reflect on their own organisation's culture.

Tutors give apprentices useful feedback on their written assignments. For example, they advise apprentices how to improve the standard of their work which includes accuracy of referencing and adding workplace examples. Apprentices, many of whom have been away from education for many years, find the feedback helpful to improve the standard of their work. Consequently, apprentices' written and practical work is of high quality. In a few instances, tutors of level 4 software developer apprentices provide feedback that is too generic and does not help individual apprentices improve the standard of their work.

Leaders provide a good range of development opportunities for tutors to help improve their teaching. This includes how to teach effectively through online video conferencing platforms. Tutors are trained in and use effective strategies to teach and support apprentices who have additional learning needs such as dyslexia. As a result, apprentices, including those who need extra help, receive good-quality teaching and support, make good progress and achieve well.

Leaders and managers provide apprentices with a variety of high-quality personal development resources through an e-learning platform. Resources include links to videos of guest speakers, podcasts, academic articles and advice on financial management, sustainability, healthy living and neurodiversity. As a result, apprentices are aware of how to improve their prospects and maintain their health and well-being.

Tutors provide apprentices with good-quality advice and guidance about their future careers. They support apprentices to write CVs and provide opportunities to meet with industry experts. As a result, apprentices are well informed about opportunities for progression in the industry and higher-level study. After their studies, most apprentices remain in their roles and gain greater responsibilities. A smaller number of apprentices gain internal promotions or move into new more senior jobs.

The board of directors and leaders know most of the strengths and areas for development well. They have suitable oversight of the quality of training and of apprentices' experiences. They understand how well the provision is performing and the areas that need improving. However, the board of directors and leaders do not have sufficient overview of the impact of that training, including what apprentices do

when they qualify, and a complete picture of those who do not complete in a timely way.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Continue to increase the proportion of apprentices who achieve within the planned time, and continue to support apprentices who are passed their planned time to achieve.
- Use management information to gain a more comprehensive overview of the provision and to improve any underperforming areas.

Provider details

Unique reference number	58502
Address	3rd Floor Robert Dolan House 9 Alie Street London E1 8DE
Contact number	020 7375 7300
Website	www.happy.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Henry Stewart
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	6 to 8 April 2022
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the apprenticeship 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

Joanna Walters, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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