

1st 2 Achieve Training Limited

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

Unique reference number: 2625245

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

1st 2 Achieve Training Limited was inspected in August 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, there were 54 adult learners and 54 apprentices in learning. All adult learners were on a Skills Bootcamp studying level 3 construction. Forty-four apprentices were studying apprenticeship standards in the level 3 business administrator (BA), five apprentices were studying the level 3 multi-channel marketer (MCM), three apprentices were studying level 3 digital marketer (DM), one apprentice was studying the level 2 customer service practitioner, and one apprentice was studying the level 2 hairdressing professional. Around two thirds of apprentices were 16 to 18 years of age.

Themes

What progress have leaders and managers made to rapidly improve the quality assurance and quality improvement arrangements, including the effective use of data, so that the actions implemented swiftly improve the quality of apprentices' training and ensure that apprentices remain on programme and achieve their apprenticeships on time?

Reasonable progress

Immediately following their previous inspection, leaders significantly reduced the recruitment of apprentices to focus on improving the quality of education. This key decision has resulted in improvements to leaders' quality improvement and quality assurance arrangements, as well as their effective use of data.

Leaders' quality improvement plan is honest and accurate. They regularly update this plan to demonstrate the impact of their actions to improve the quality of apprentices' training.

Managers have improved the quality of tutors' one-to-ones. They now discuss in greater detail about apprentices' individual progress. This helps managers to quickly identify any apprentices who are making slow progress. Currently, all apprentices are making their expected progress.

Leaders improved their quality assurance activities. They now check the quality of tutors' progress reviews more thoroughly, as well as the feedback and careers information, advice and guidance tutors give to apprentices. This provides leaders with accurate information on areas of strength and weakness within the quality of education.

Leaders ensure that tutors benefit from relevant training. For instance, training on how to effectively plan and coordinate on- and off-the-job training and how to provide high-quality careers information, advice and guidance to apprentices. Leaders accurately identify in their improvement plan that these aspects are steadily improving.

Leaders and managers collate and use data more confidently and efficiently than before. They now have the support of a new governor with expertise in data management and information systems. Leaders know what their achievement rates are in comparison to previous years and other providers nationally. They know the progress that apprentices make.

As a result of these improvements, the number of apprentices who stay on their apprenticeships has increased significantly from the previous year, and the number of apprentices who achieve their apprenticeships has increased slightly from the previous year and is now just above other providers nationally.

To what extent have leaders and managers improved the planning and coordination of on- and off-the-job training with apprentices and their line managers to ensure that apprentices develop and practise the new knowledge, skills and behaviours that they learn in their off-the-job training in the workplace?

Reasonable progress

Following their previous inspection, leaders identified a few employers who did not consistently attend their apprentices' progress reviews. Managers swiftly met with these employers. They firmly reinforced their expectations for employers to routinely attend apprentices' progress reviews to plan with the tutor the specific skills that their apprentice needs to practise at work. Most employers responded positively. For the few who did not, leaders ceased to work with them. Leaders placed these apprentices with alternative employers. Because of this, all apprentices are now on track to complete their apprenticeships on time.

At the previous inspection, not all apprentices benefited from having a workplace mentor. Now, leaders ensure that all apprentices have mentors who routinely participate in their apprentice's progress review. Mentors ensure that apprentices receive appropriate opportunities at work to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours. Apprentices studying level 3 MCM diligently incorporate photographs and videos into marketing campaigns on social media for their customers. They create and update blogs on their employer's website. Apprentices studying level 3 BA work

in different departments across the organisation. They shadow staff in payroll and attend other departments' team meetings. This increases their knowledge of the functions of other departments and their general knowledge of the business.

Apprentices confidently deal with customers' technical queries. However, while tutors discuss with mentors what skills apprentices need to practise at work, they do not formally plan this so that mentors know specifically what skills to focus on in line with what apprentices are learning in their training. Leaders have imminent plans in place to rectify this.

How well do tutors ensure that learners receive effective feedback to help them to understand what they have done well and what they need to do to improve the quality of their work? Reasonable progress

Most tutors now provide effective feedback to apprentices. They provide helpful annotated comments on apprentices' work that tells them to understand what they have done well and what specifically they need to do to improve their work. Apprentices appreciate this feedback and acknowledge that this has helped them to improve their work over the course of their apprenticeship.

There are still a small minority of instances where tutors give feedback that is congratulatory and describes what the apprentice wrote about, rather than what they can do to improve the standard of their work. Leaders have identified this through their quality assurance processes and include this in their improvement plan.

Following the previous inspection, leaders quickly provided tutors with several training sessions on how to provide effective and developmental feedback to apprentices. Leaders continue to provide this focused training to those tutors who need it.

To what extent have leaders and managers improved the careers guidance for apprentices to help them to make informed decisions about their next steps in education, employment or training? Reasonable progress

Leaders and tutors have improved the quality of careers guidance for apprentices. For example, tutors discuss with level 3 DM apprentices, professional recognition with the Chartered Institute of Marketing, a potential degree or additional digital courses. Most apprentices know what their next steps are. They are keen to progress within their organisations or complete a higher-level apprenticeship. A few aspire to study at university.

At enrolment, tutors discuss with apprentices what they already know about the roles that they are moving into and where these might lead. During the apprenticeship, tutors routinely refer apprentices to various external specialist

organisations, such as the National Careers Service. As apprentices approach their final assessments, tutors discuss their next steps with them, for instance other apprenticeships and university degree courses in business management. This provides apprentices with a range of information to help them make informed decisions about their next steps in education, employment or training.

Tutors routinely discuss apprentices' next steps during progress reviews. Employers support apprentices' aspirations to progress within their organisation. If they wish to pursue a career, for example, in finance or human resources, they spend time with the relevant staff who can give them the information they need to help them make appropriate career decisions.

Tutors provide apprentices with a range of resources to access. For instance, guidance on how to write a curriculum vitae and short videos with tips on interview techniques and helpful links to information about available choices after completing an apprenticeship.

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