

McArthur Dean Training Limited

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

Unique reference number:	53280
Name of lead inspector:	Hayley Lomas, His Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
Address:	Old Custom House Market Place Hull HU1 1RS

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

McArthur Dean 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.

McArthur Dean Training Limited is an independent learning provider with its main premises in Hull and training centres in Scunthorpe and Grimsby. At the time of this monitoring visit, there were 127 apprentices. The highest proportion were enrolled on level 2 and level 3 apprenticeships in business administration, customer service and accounting. The remainder were on level 4 professional accounting and level 5 operations manager apprenticeships. There were 16 learners aged 16 to 18 enrolled on an employability study programme at level 2.

Themes

How much progress have leaders made in providing learners with information, advice and guidance that ensures they are enrolled on an appropriate course?

Reasonable progress

Leaders provide learners with useful information about the programmes that they are applying for before starting. This information ensures that the programme is the most appropriate one for learners, will enable them to achieve their desired outcome and will lead them to the next phase of their learning journey. Learners are invited to attend an interview where staff take the time to understand their aspirations, gather helpful information about their previous school or college attendance and ask the learners to complete initial assessments for English and mathematics. The results of these assessments determine the suitability of the programme as well as providing some initial information for staff about the learners' starting point.

Tutors have carefully designed the study programme as a replacement for traineeships. The purpose of the programme is to develop learners' employability, interview and communication skills. Learners also continue to improve their English and mathematics skills. A high proportion of learners who complete their programme move on to a positive destination.

Staff ensure that apprentices receive appropriate information, advice and guidance from tutors before they start their programme. Apprentices know what is included in their programme and the commitment required. Those apprentices who progressed from traineeships benefited from work experience, which helped determine the most suitable apprenticeship and employer to meet their needs and interests.

Employers are fully involved in the onboarding process, ensuring that the apprentice is a good fit for their company. Staff at the provider ensure that apprentices are matched well to the company, in terms of skills and personality. Employers appreciate the time that staff take to get the matching right.

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that teaching is appropriately demanding and of high quality? **Reasonable progress**

Since the last inspection, leaders have provided staff with the opportunity to follow a range of online teaching courses, which has enabled them to improve the quality of their teaching and increase their understanding of the importance of information, advice and guidance. As a result, staff have made positive changes to the programmes that they offer, while recognising there is still more to do.

Teachers support learners to produce work that is of the required standard for their level. They provide helpful feedback, which often identifies spelling and grammatical errors. When learners are not successful at assessment, teachers help them to understand what they need to do to improve before being reassessed.

Assessors conduct helpful review meetings with apprentices and their managers. These meetings identify what apprentices have learned both in training and at work. Apprentices also have the opportunity to discuss how they are applying their new knowledge and skills in the workplace. Employers value the contribution that apprentices make at work. On completion of the apprenticeship, a high proportion of apprentices secure permanent roles and go on to gain promotion.

Tutors on the study programme provide a welcoming and lively atmosphere for learners. They demonstrate a high level of care for learners and take an interest in their ambitions. For example, tutors select job advertisements related to learners' career goals and support learners to identify the skills required for the job and how these are linked to the skills they are learning through their study programme. Learners work together harmoniously, making good contributions in classroom discussions. Attendance is high, and behaviour is good.

Tutors in face-to-face teaching sessions make good use of information about apprentices' workplaces to illustrate topics being discussed, such as different ways to communicate. They use effective questioning techniques to check and to extend understanding.

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that learners receive independent careers advice and guidance? **Reasonable progress**

Tutors provide learners and apprentices with impartial careers advice and guidance at the start of their programme and throughout their training. Staff invite guest speakers in to talk about their career journeys and job roles in addition to

representatives from the National Careers Service. This ensures that learners and apprentices understand the range of job opportunities available to them.

Tutors make good use of the progress review process to make apprentices aware of their possible next steps, including the option to progress to higher-level apprenticeships or change job roles. Frequent discussions with apprentices, which include their employer, help apprentices to understand how they can develop their career after completing the apprenticeship. As a result, apprentices are clear about their short-term and long-term career goals. For example, a number of apprentices on the accountancy programme have aspirations to gain chartered accountant status, with the view to running their own practice.

Tutors ensure that learners on study programmes are clear about their next steps and how they can start their careers. Many learners have had negative educational experiences previously, and tutors help build their confidence about what careers they can aspire to, either through apprenticeships, employment or further training. As a result, learners' motivation increases, which is reflected in their efforts to attend more frequently and improve their punctuality. Learners feel positive about their future.

How much progress have leaders made in evaluating all aspects of their provision and taking appropriate action to improve the provision?

Reasonable progress

Leaders have taken action to improve the provision since the last inspection. They are now more focused on enhancing the quality of their provision and providing the best possible education for learners and apprentices. Leaders have developed provision that meets local employment needs in the professional services sector. Since the traineeship contract came to an end, they have replaced it successfully with a small study programme that helps younger learners develop the confidence, employability skills and motivation that they need to be able to move on to their next steps. Although the retention and achievement of learners on these programmes is too low, leaders are taking proactive steps to tackle this.

Leaders have continued to conduct a range of useful quality assurance activities to ensure that the programmes they offer are of a suitable quality. Activities include reviews of the quality of teaching through lesson walks, scrutiny and updating of the schemes of learning and evaluations of learner feedback both during and at the end of training. The information gathered through these activities results in the identification of actions for staff to take to enhance the quality of their teaching. Leaders provide staff with helpful feedback on all aspects of their performance, such as how to engage learners and apprentices more effectively in group activities. As a result of leaders' actions, the quality of teaching is generally high across apprenticeships and study programmes. Leaders are currently implementing actions to improve the quality further.

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