Inspection of Mercuri International (UK) Limited

Inspection dates:	10 to 13 December 2024

Overall effectiveness	**Good**
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

Mercuri International (UK) Limited is an independent training provider based in Stratford-upon-Avon. The provider started to deliver apprenticeships in September 2019. It offers apprenticeships across England, predominantly in marketing and sales, and business management. At the time of the inspection, there were 75 apprentices across six different apprenticeships from levels 2 to 5. The largest is the level 4 sales executive apprenticeship, with 46 apprentices, followed by level 5 operations manager apprenticeship with 10 apprentices. Most of the teaching is remote. Thirteen apprentices are aged under 19. The provider does not work with any subcontractors.

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

Apprentices enjoy learning in the positive and calm online learning environment created by learner development coaches (coaches). Apprentices value the support and encouragement that coaches provide. They demonstrate positive attitudes to their learning. They are motivated to succeed and become increasingly resilient.

Apprentices develop their confidence. Level 3 team leader apprentices learn the differences between coaching and mentoring and use these methods to support and develop their team members. Apprentices feel more open to trying new tasks and taking on more responsibility and projects at work.

Apprentices are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They learn about fundamental British values and the importance of equality and inclusivity in the workplace. Level 4 sales executive apprentices become more considerate of the diverse group of stakeholders they work with. They know how to take account of people's different religious and cultural rituals when they make sales calls to them.

Apprentices feel safe and learn how to safeguard themselves. Level 4 sales executive apprentices learn how to keep themselves safe while lone-working. Level 5 operations manager apprentices learn about the potential risks in their local area and consider their travel route to work during the darker winter months to keep themselves safe.

Young apprentices attend lessons on healthy relationships. Lessons include topics such as the types and signs of abuse, harassment at work and the importance of consent. However, apprentices are unable to talk confidently about what they have learned in these lessons and how it will help them develop healthy relationships.

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

Leaders, governors and managers have clear oversight of the quality of education that apprentices receive. Governors have significant experience in further education. They support leaders and managers to make effective use of data and closely monitor apprentices' progress and the quality of teaching that apprentices receive.

In the first cohorts of apprentices, the proportion who remained on their apprenticeship was too low. Leaders have taken action to reduce the number of apprentices who leave their course early. They closely monitor apprentices' progress and swiftly identify any who are at risk of falling behind. Leaders, managers and coaches are quick to put in place support to help apprentices identified as being at risk. The proportion of apprentices who achieve their apprenticeship has improved markedly. Most apprentices now stay until the end of their training and do not leave early.

Leaders have a clear rationale for the curriculums they offer. The curriculum offer is aligned well to meet the needs of local, regional and national employers in sales and

marketing and business management. Through the off-the-job training, apprentices develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to fulfil the requirements of the roles they are in. Apprentices are predominantly in roles such as sales, customer service, business administration, team leader and management. Most apprentices remain in employment with their employer once they have achieved their apprenticeship, and most gain a promotion because of the knowledge, skills and behaviours they have gained.

Coaches use effective teaching strategies that help apprentices to learn. In level 3 team leader, coaches use effective teaching methods to help apprentices recall and practise their previous learning on democratic and autocratic leadership styles. Apprentices can select and apply different leadership styles and understand the benefits to get positive results from their workplace team.

Coaches provide apprentices with special educational needs and/or disabilities with the help they need. Where required, coaches offer additional lessons, apprentices develop planning ahead strategies and exam relaxation techniques. As a result, apprentices' anxieties are reduced, and they feel supported and persevere with their studies.

In most instances, coaches use assessment effectively to check what apprentices have learned and plan further teaching. In functional skills mathematics, coaches assess apprentices' knowledge and skills frequently. They use this information to build on learning, such as being able to solve increasingly complex formulas. Where coaches identify gaps in apprentices' knowledge and skills, coaches plan further teaching of key concepts. Apprentices make good progress in mathematics. Almost all apprentices achieve their qualification on their first attempt.

Coaches provide feedback to apprentices on their written work. In most cases, apprentices improve their work. However, coaches do not tell apprentices what they need to do to achieve distinction grades. Consequently, too many apprentices do not achieve the grade of which they are capable.

Apprentices develop useful new knowledge, skills and behaviours that their employers value. Level 4 sales executive apprentices learn about professional sales etiquette, sales terminology and how to make effective sales calls. They improve their productivity at work and routinely achieve sales targets.

Coaches provide most apprentices with useful careers education, information, advice and guidance. Level 3 team leader apprentices explore their future career ambitions and further study options. Apprentices know the professional memberships that are available to them on completion of their apprenticeship. However, they are less well informed of the benefits of these memberships on their future professional development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure apprentices understand what they need to do to get distinction grades so that a higher proportion can achieve this.
- Ensure younger apprentices understand how to develop healthy relationships.

Provider details

Unique reference number	2625231
Address	Unit 16, Shottery Brook Office Park Timothy's Bridge Road Stratford-Upon-Avon CV37 9NQ
Contact number	0330 9000 800
Website	https://mercuri.co.uk/
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Karen Hyde
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	18 to 21 October 2022
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the quality manager and operations lead, 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

Rachel Clark, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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Deb Whiston	Ofsted Inspector
Greg Dugdale	Ofsted Inspector

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