

Leigh Academies Trust

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	2627055
Name of lead inspector:	Peter Cox, Her Majesty's Inspector
Inspection dates:	6 and 7 October 2021
Type of provider:	Independent learning provider Apprenticeships Centre Strood Academy
Address:	Carnation Road Rochester ME2 2SX

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From October 2018, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision that began to be funded from April 2017 or after 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.

Leigh Academies Trust Apprenticeships is an independent learning provider. The organisation provides training to support staff, primarily within schools that are part of the Leigh multi-academy trust. At the time of the monitoring visit, 21 apprentices were studying the level 3 business administration standard, 19 were studying the level 3 teaching assistant standard, four were studying the level 2 property maintenance standard, and four were studying the level 3 engineering standard. There were also 10 apprentices who had completed the level 3 engineering framework who were awaiting certification. The organisation uses a subcontractor, OSAT Ltd, to teach the level 2 property maintenance operative standard.

Themes

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

Significant progress

Leaders and managers have skilfully designed the curriculum so that apprentices working as school support staff become better at their jobs and improve the quality of education within the organisations in which they work. Leaders have carefully aligned the curriculum with the specific needs of the multi-academy trust. They work successfully with external business organisations, such as Kent Chamber of Commerce, to ensure that programmes meet wider regional economic needs.

Leaders and managers are highly ambitious for their apprentices to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need for their current and future roles. Apprentices are equally ambitious. They are committed to their studies and look forward to gaining additional responsibilities as a result of their training, which many do.

Leaders make sure that their programme meets the requirements of apprenticeships. Staff check that all apprentices receive their entitlement to off-the-job training, which

helps apprentices to make rapid progress in their studies. Leaders use highly effective, robust systems to ensure that apprentices are recruited with integrity.

The highly experienced board of trustees is well informed about the quality of education and robustly challenges and supports leaders. Trustees and leaders understand the strengths and weaknesses in detail. Leaders take sensible actions to resolve issues successfully and quickly. For example, they now use new enrolment processes to improve the quality of information they receive from apprentices and employers. Leaders use effective procedures to manage the quality of subcontracted provision successfully.

Leaders and managers make sure that staff are appropriately qualified and highly experienced. Leaders provide useful individualised professional development for staff. For example, staff with teaching assistant apprentices completed additional training on dysgraphia to better support apprentices who may encounter this learning difficulty.

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

The vast majority of apprentices, including those with additional support needs, develop the skills and knowledge they need to become better at their jobs quickly. For example, teaching assistant apprentices use their knowledge of education, health and care plans to become adept at working with vulnerable children. Employers give apprentices additional responsibilities as a result of their training. For example, employers confidently allow engineering apprentices to give equipment demonstrations to students.

Staff carefully identify apprentices' prior experience, knowledge and qualifications to ensure that they are on the correct programmes. Training staff in engineering and teaching assistant apprenticeships carefully tailor teaching to meet the training needs of apprentices and employers. For example, engineering staff introduced milling, turning and programming in greater depth to better meet employers' needs.

Well-qualified and experienced staff provide high-quality training for apprentices. They give most apprentices useful and purposeful feedback. Apprentices understand how to improve their work, and many do. For example, business administration apprentices now relate their work to their individual roles more consistently.

Staff use sensible processes to identify apprentices who may be at risk of falling behind. Where this occurs, staff intervene to help them catch up quickly, which the vast majority do.

Staff help apprentices effectively to develop the literacy skills they need for their job roles. They teach apprentices to write professionally. For example, business administration apprentices become increasingly skilful at writing professional emails and letters. However, staff do not support apprentices as well to develop their numeracy skills.

Staff support apprentices effectively to prepare for the assessment at the end of the apprenticeship. They provide useful and impartial information so that apprentices understand their next steps.

Staff within business administration do not provide consistently useful feedback to all apprentices. As a result, some apprentices do not clearly know what they are doing well and what they need to do to improve further. Staff within business administration do not provide all employers with the information they need to support their apprentices' training. Consequently, a few apprentices make slower progress than their peers.

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

The experienced and well-qualified designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and staff use suitable policies and processes to help keep apprentices safe. The DSL works closely with external agencies, such as the Kent Adult Safeguarding Board, to understand regional risk. The DSL has taken appropriate steps to meet the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty.

The DSL completes robust checks of all staff, including subcontractors, to ensure that they are safe to work with apprentices. All staff, and members of the board of trustees, complete safeguarding training. Consequently, they know how to identify and support an apprentice who may be at risk.

Apprentices feel safe. They complete general safeguarding training and know how to make a disclosure if necessary. Not all apprentices know about local risks or understand how to keep themselves safe from radicalisation.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2021