

Cliffe House Day Nurseries Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	2741629
Name of lead inspector:	Rachel Angus, His Majesty's Inspector
Inspection dates:	31 January and 1 February 2024
Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
Address:	Cliffe House Day Nursery Featherbank - Out of School Club Horsforth Leeds LS18 4SZ

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Ofsted undertakes to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision funded 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.

Cliffe House Day Nurseries Limited began to offer apprenticeships in early years in January 2023. At the time of the visit, there were 12 apprentices working at a Cliffe House nursery setting, of whom seven were on the level 3 early years educator programme and five on the level 2 early years practitioner programme. Five of the apprentices were under 19 years of age. The provider works with Logical Training Limited to provide functional skills qualifications to the small number of apprentices who need to achieve them.

Themes

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

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have created an apprenticeship programme to meet their need to recruit high-quality, well-trained early years professionals. They have begun their recruitment of apprentices cautiously and, although they have ambitious future plans, they recognise that these will need to be implemented in carefully managed stages.

Leaders have made sensible arrangements for external scrutiny of their developing apprenticeship provision. They work with another company that provides checks to ensure that leaders are meeting the requirements of an apprenticeship. Staff at this company also help managers to understand the strengths of their provision and which aspects require further development.

The staff who provide the apprenticeship training are experts in the early years sector and have teaching and assessing qualifications. Managers are aware that they need to ensure that all staff involved in the apprenticeship programme benefit from professional development about effective curriculum planning and teaching strategies.

Leaders use an external company to provide the teaching of functional skills in English and mathematics so that the small number of apprentices who need to achieve these qualifications benefit from expert tuition. Apprentices who are working towards a qualification in English are developing their reading and writing skills, which they use effectively when developing activities for the children with whom they work. Leaders' plans for the teaching of mathematics mean that apprentices are too close to the end of the apprenticeship before they start to study the content of the qualification.

All staff know the apprentices very well, and they monitor the progress that apprentices make closely through frequent review meetings attended by both apprentices and their managers. Leaders ensure that the nursery managers commit to the apprenticeship training and support the apprentices. This enables apprentices to develop the skills that they need to become valued employees and to be included in the staffing ratios as soon as they have developed their competence in key aspects of working with children.

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
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Assessors plan off-the-job training carefully to ensure that the curriculum builds on the fundamental topics in early years such as safeguarding children, health and safety and what to do when the children become unwell. They then provide one-to-one coaching to deepen apprentices' knowledge of topics such as devising appropriate activities for children of different ages. Assessors encourage apprentices to become confident to lead circle time. Apprentices are encouraged to make sure that they use what they know about children's interests when planning circle time and to hold the activity outdoors as well as inside to maximise their skills in this aspect of their work with children.

Staff respond well to the feedback that nursery managers and room leaders provide about the training that apprentices need. Assessors amended the content and timing of the safeguarding training when they received the feedback that it was not planned early enough in the apprenticeship and that the content was not precise enough to meet fully the competency requirements.

The assessments that assessors set are effective in ensuring that apprentices can demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Apprentices produce work of an appropriate standard that demonstrates their increasing understanding of theories relating to early years education. For example, apprentices demonstrate how they help to support children moving from one age-based room to another. Assessors ensure that apprentices know what they need to do to improve their work but, in a few instances, do not explain why apprentices have done well.

Staff correct any spelling or grammatical errors in the work that apprentices produce. However, apprentices do not currently receive any planned support to maintain and develop their skills in English or mathematics so that they can improve their report writing and the support that they provide to develop children's numeracy and literacy skills.

Assessors use initial assessment well to identify apprentices with special educational needs and/or disabilities. They ensure that assessors provide appropriate support to apprentices who need it.

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

Leaders have created a comprehensive set of policies that demonstrate their commitment to safeguarding their apprentices. The designated safeguarding lead has completed suitable training for the role, and all heads of room in the nurseries who work with apprentices have completed training to increase their awareness of safeguarding in further education.

Staff who work with apprentices have their suitability to work with children checked, and managers ensure that references are taken and subsequently checked by telephone.

Leaders emphasise the importance of good mental health among their apprentices. To support this, assessors, managers, deputy managers and staff representative at each setting have gained mental health first-aid qualifications.

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