

Learning Skills Partnership Limited

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

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Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Learning Skills Partnership 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.

Themes

How much progress have leaders and managers made in implementing effective actions to improve the quality of education across all apprenticeship programmes? Reasonable progress

Leaders have taken effective action to improve their management and reporting structures. They have appointed four senior managers to lead apprenticeships and outlined clear areas of responsibility that set high expectations of staff. Leaders have implemented a rigorous performance management process and have released staff from the organisation when performance has been below the required standards.

Leaders and managers have devised thorough action plans to enable them to monitor the improvements needed across apprenticeship programmes. They review progress against their improvement actions frequently, and both governors and senior leaders hold managers to account for their actions through an effective meeting structure.

Leaders and managers have reorganised how the construction curriculum is taught to provide time for staff and apprentices at the end of their modules to assess and review learning. They have recruited external markers to support tutors with assignment marking. However, in a few instances apprentices have found the feedback from assessment confusing. Managers have taken action to address this by training external markers and ensuring that tutors provide apprentices with clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work or grades.

Leaders have implemented a new electronic recording system and updated reporting procedures to monitor better the progress that apprentices make. They have revised the arrangements for reporting to governors to make clear the source of the data that they present, enabling governors to scrutinise more effectively the information provided.

Leaders and managers understand what they need to do to improve the quality of education so it is consistently high across their apprenticeship programmes. They have identified areas of focus for quality reviews such as finance and accounting and

the construction curriculum to continue to improve provision and increase the proportion of apprentices who achieve high grades. Managers are working on increasing apprentice satisfaction regarding assessment and communication, and they monitor the impact of their actions through regular surveys.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that tutors plan and deliver a high-quality and ambitious curriculum for apprentices across all programmes? Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers make good use of findings from quality assurance activities to identify accurately what tutors need to do to improve their practice. Managers plan helpful training and development such as a series of useful workshops on topics including feedback, progress reviews and end-point assessment. Staff value the support from their managers and senior leaders and appreciate being able to work with colleagues to develop their practice, such as in the use of presentation tools and online learning resources.

Managers and staff conduct effective curriculum reviews to update course content and teaching resources. On construction programmes, sector experts work alongside the quality team to update the content of tutor-delivered presentations. They have improved the use of videos and case studies to help emphasise key learning points. Staff have planned more independent research and group discussion activities for when apprentices become more experienced to enable them to practise their skills and apply their knowledge to work-based scenarios.

Staff in the quality team carry out effective lesson visits and provide helpful guidance to tutors on how to improve the quality of their teaching. They identify useful tools and teaching strategies that tutors can use to assess apprentices' understanding more effectively. For example, they suggest where more tutor explanation would help share important knowledge with apprentices before introducing workplace scenarios to test apprentices' knowledge and skills in problem-solving at work.

Managers have appointed experienced staff to work as champions to support the development of teaching practice among their peers. These staff have identified key topics of interest and have created training resources to introduce tutors to new concepts. For example, champions have created videos on how to use interactive quizzes in teaching sessions to assess apprentices' understanding during online lessons.

Leaders and managers have put in place support for tutors to improve their approach to assessment. They review assessment feedback and make suggestions on how tutors can improve. However, a few tutors still do not provide consistently helpful feedback to apprentices to encourage them to improve their work and strive for high grades.

How much progress have tutors made in using assessment to identify accurately what apprentices know and can do and to inform apprentices about what they need to do to improve their work and develop their skills? **Reasonable progress**

Managers and tutors have successfully addressed previous concerns relating to issues with timely assessment and feedback. Most apprentices now receive timely and helpful feedback on their assignments, and they appreciate this improvement. Business and professional apprenticeship tutors use verbal feedback well to support apprentices to develop their knowledge and identify how they apply this in the workplace. They provide helpful guidance on how apprentices can improve their professional discussions.

Most tutors use assessment effectively to ensure that apprentices know what they have done well and what they could do to improve. However, apprentices on construction-related programmes do not receive consistently high-quality feedback on their assignments from external markers. Tutors help to mitigate the impact of this by providing comprehensive verbal feedback during one-to-one reviews with apprentices. Leaders and managers are aware of these issues and have conducted training with external markers to make clear the expectations for quality of assessment and feedback.

Tutors use assessment successfully in lessons to identify what apprentices can remember. On the quantity surveying technician apprenticeship, tutors ask probing questions of apprentices to check that they know how to achieve net zero in construction. They bring in aspects of health and safety when discussing scaffolding to check that apprentices have remembered important rules and regulations. As a result, apprentices make good contributions in lessons by sharing their knowledge through the individual projects they work on.

Managers and tutors ensure that employers are committed to the apprenticeships. Apprentices' managers take an active part in progress reviews and associated assessments, ensuring that on- and off-the-job training is well coordinated. For example, employers arrange for apprentices to get more experience working with customers on the trade desk, as tutors have identified that this would better prepare apprentices for forthcoming assessments.

How much progress have tutors made in developing apprentices' mathematics skills to prepare them for examination and end-point assessment? **Significant progress**

Managers and functional skills tutors have rapidly improved the delivery model for functional skills teaching and examinations. Functional skills tutors have devised an effective approach to teaching mathematics using an online functional skills tool, an apprentice resource site and a weekly mathematics club. Apprentices now have more

frequent one-to-one sessions with tutors to focus predominantly on gaps in their mathematical knowledge.

Staff promote the importance of functional skills very effectively and emphasise the need for good attendance in sessions. They have ensured that both the apprentice and employer commit to increasing engagement with this part of the apprenticeship. Subsequently, the proportion of apprentices engaging with mathematics sessions and learning resources has improved significantly since the previous inspection.

Functional skills tutors provide very effective support in one-to-one sessions on aspects of mathematics that apprentices find difficult. They teach apprentices useful techniques for tackling complex questions, which successfully prepares apprentices for examinations. For example, tutors provide helpful mathematical techniques for apprentices tackling questions on working out the area of a patio at work. They remind apprentices how to use formulas correctly to calculate the areas of shapes such as rectangles and circles.

Functional skills tutors successfully support vocational tutors to develop their own English and mathematics skills through training sessions and the opportunity to sit the examination. Tutors value discussions about different approaches to use when supporting apprentices to develop their mathematics skills.

The small number of apprentices who need to achieve their functional skills qualifications this year are making good progress in developing their knowledge and skills. Apprentices achieve their qualifications in a timely manner, and the proportion who pass first time is high. There are currently no apprentices being prevented from completing their apprenticeship because they need to achieve their functional skills qualifications.

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