

Linden Management (UK) Limited

Progress monitoring report

Unique reference number:	1278590
Name of lead inspector:	Sharon Dowling, Her Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
Address:	1 Darwin Court Sherwood Energy Village New Ollerton Newark NG22 9FE

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Linden Management (UK) Limited received a new provider monitoring visit in February 2019. At that time, inspectors made progress judgements under three themes.

This monitoring visit focused on the extent to which leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to provide education and training in the current circumstances. It was undertaken as outlined in the [operational note on visits carried out from January 2021](#) and with reference to the further education and skills handbook.

These visits are to help learners, parents, employers and government understand how providers are meeting the needs of learners in this period, including those with high needs and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, inspectors carried out this monitoring activity remotely. As a result, the range of evidence available to inspectors was narrower than would be the case during an on-site inspection. Therefore, this report provides a more limited level of assurance.

The impact of COVID-19 has been taken into account in the findings and progress judgement below. Inspectors did not evaluate leaders' response to COVID-19 during the spring and summer of 2020, although the provider was open to all learners, as there were no national expectations regarding remote education.

Theme

What progress are leaders and those responsible for governance making to ensure that staff teach a curriculum and provide support to meet learners' needs, including the provision of remote/online learning?

Reasonable progress

Leaders have developed effective relationships with employers. They work closely to ensure that the standard selected is the most appropriate for the needs of the employer and the apprentice. Trainers carefully select the curriculum to enable apprentices to develop the substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to succeed in their job role and to progress to their next steps.

Leaders have implemented a board of governance. This includes an experienced external member who is an employer with a background in training. However, the board only met once prior to the start of the first national lockdown, and as a result, the effects of this arrangement cannot yet be seen.

Since the previous visit, leaders have made changes to staffing and responsibilities to create a framework to drive improvement. Managers have implemented a revised quality assurance process that supports the close tracking of the progress of apprentices. They meet frequently with assessors to identify actions to support apprentices' achievement. Managers observe face-to-face and online sessions. Feedback links well to how apprentices develop new knowledge and skills.

Leaders effectively manage subcontracted provision to ensure that apprentices receive the employer-led specialist training they require, as well as meeting the requirements of the standard for the team leading apprenticeship.

Trainers use a range of initial assessment tools to understand the starting points of apprentices, including their previous vocational experience. They use these to inform conversations with the apprentices and employer about the apprenticeship. However, this does not always translate into a clear and logically sequenced learning plan for the apprentice which takes into account their individual needs.

Apprentices benefit from frequent training workshops and progress reviews. They undertake scenario-based training as a group and learn from each other's experience and knowledge. In early years, apprentices participate in group online sessions and trained for working with babies. Employers were able to see a clear improvement in their working practice.

Trainers use a range of questioning within professional discussions, assessing and developing the apprentices' understanding of knowledge. They use a variety of methods to provide apprentices with feedback on the progress they make. Oral feedback is detailed and includes suggested improvements. Written feedback requires improvement. Grammar and spelling mistakes are not corrected routinely, and apprentices would benefit from suggestions about how to improve their work. Targets set by trainers for apprentices are not sufficiently developmental. They do not highlight the incremental steps the apprentice needs to take to reach or exceed their full potential.

Apprentices are effectively supported to develop their skills to support progression in the workplace. For example, employers state that the knowledge and skills developed during the team leading or supervisor apprenticeship have been instrumental in supporting their employees' progress to leadership roles.

Trainers continue to work with furloughed apprentices or those who cannot be assessed in the workplace. While practical assessment for light goods vehicle apprentices is not possible due to social distancing requirements, learners are supported to complete knowledge assessment. Practical driving skills will be prioritised once restrictions are lifted.

Managers and trainers discuss progression opportunities for apprentices within their workplace. However, they do not routinely provide careers advice and guidance beyond that linked to internal progression with their current employer.

Leaders have embedded safeguarding and the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism into the core of the business, defining clear lines of reporting and ongoing monitoring at all levels. They support employers and apprentices with initial training on the process and provide ongoing updates on emerging themes and threats.

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- ensure that trainers use apprentices' prior experience and skills to develop a clear and logically sequenced plan which takes into account their individual needs
- ensure that tutors use feedback to identify clearly what apprentices need to do to improve their work and set challenging targets to support apprentices to meet their full potential
- ensure that apprentices gain a wider understanding of the career opportunities available outside their employers' organisation.

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