

Inspection of The Procurement Academy Limited

Inspection dates:

21 to 23 August 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

The Procurement Academy Limited is an independent learning provider specialising in training in commercial procurement and supply. Training takes place at venues across Yorkshire and the East Midlands.

At the time of the inspection, there were five apprentices on the level 4 commercial procurement and supply apprenticeship and a further three awaiting their final assessment. Apprentices complete the chartered institute of procurement and supply (CIPS) level 4 diploma as part of the apprenticeship. All apprentices are aged 19 and over.

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

Apprentices have positive attitudes towards their training. They value the knowledge and expertise of their tutors and enjoy training alongside fellow procurement professionals from a variety of industries. Apprentices attend their sessions well and are motivated to achieve.

Tutors enable apprentices to build new knowledge and skills and to apply them successfully in the workplace. They repeat activities to help apprentices to recall theoretical procurement concepts and use workplace scenarios that enable apprentices to apply their knowledge and practise their skills. For example, apprentices use their knowledge of transactional and strategic partnerships to manage supplier relations more effectively and to reconcile issues when certain goods cannot be procured.

Apprentices quickly grow in confidence as a result of their training. They develop their understanding of the systems and processes underlying commercial procurement and learn how to have difficult conversations with the professionals with whom they work. For example, apprentices can better interrogate and challenge perceptions around effective practice in supply chain management. Most gain promotion during their training or soon after completion.

Apprentices understand the relevance of fundamental British values to their work and personal lives, including the risks posed by radicalisation and extremism. They discuss current events to explore the implications of extremist behaviours and recognise that compliance with law is fundamental to ensuring the safety and well-being of all.

Apprentices feel safe due to the care and expertise that staff provide. They complete short courses on topics such as cybercrime to help them to stay safe online. They learn about ethical procurement to understand better the risks of bribery and corruption, including how, for example, corporate gifts may be perceived in various industries. Staff signpost apprentices to online resources to help promote positive mental health and well-being, particularly through periods of adversity.

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

Leaders have a clear intent to provide high-quality training that develops knowledgeable and proficient procurement professionals. They work closely with professional and regulatory bodies to ensure that training is current and responsive to the needs of the procurement industry in both private and public sector organisations.

Staff engage purposefully with employers to plan training that meets business needs. They visit employers to gain an understanding of the workforce skills that employers need and make adaptations to the curriculum accordingly. For example, they modify the curriculum for apprentices working in public sector organisations to

include more specialised content, such as sustainable procurement, at the request of employers. As a result, apprentices develop successfully the knowledge, skills and behaviours that employers need to help their businesses to grow.

Tutors and coaches use initial assessment well to design content that builds on apprentices' existing skills and knowledge. They use the information that they gather to individualise training plans and they review apprentices' progress with employers to ensure that any gaps are addressed. As a result, apprentices make good progress in developing their knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Tutors sequence training logically and interleave previously taught content to deepen apprentices' knowledge and skills. They use the Kraljic Matrix throughout the curriculum to teach apprentices how to identify and minimise procurement and supply risks. Apprentices use the matrix successfully and with increasing precision when assessing, in a range of various contexts, the supply of products and services in their workplaces.

Leaders and tutors ensure that apprentices with additional learning needs are well supported to achieve in line with their peers. They modify training materials to support apprentices with dyslexia and ensure that any reasonable adjustments are provided to those that require them, such as additional time in examinations.

Tutors teaching face-to-face sessions use a variety of methods to assess accurately apprentices' knowledge and skills, including questioning, multiple choice tests and extended written work. However, assessment of learning in the online sessions provided for the very few apprentices who miss face-to-face teaching is less effective. In these sessions, tutors do not use questioning effectively, to check apprentices' understanding of what has been taught.

Tutors assess apprentices' written work accurately and provide precise feedback that enables apprentices to improve beyond the required standard. However, they do not encourage apprentices to act on this feedback to achieve high grades.

Tutors and coaches coordinate apprentices' on-and off-the-job training effectively. Apprentices learn about asset management and apply this knowledge when completing workplace projects. They undertake shadowing opportunities to broaden their understanding of procurement in different departments within their organisations. As a result, they are well prepared to apply their knowledge and skills in different contexts beyond their immediate job roles.

Leaders and managers have taken sensible actions to improve and sustain the quality of their provision since the previous inspection. They have established rigorous recruitment and onboarding processes and have redesigned aspects of the apprenticeship to support more apprentices to remain on programme and to achieve. Apprentices who require functional skills qualifications are now supported earlier in their apprenticeship to achieve them. As a result, most apprentices remain on programme and achieve well, with a few achieving high grades.

Leaders provide effective support and challenge to each other to drive improvement. They have designed processes that enable swift and effective actions to be taken to improve provision where the need is identified, including visits to teaching sessions and capturing apprentice and employer feedback. However, leaders do not use their reviews of teaching well enough to identify specific training to develop tutors' knowledge and currency in the craft of teaching.

Coaches discuss progression opportunities with apprentices in reviews and when apprentices ask for it in taught sessions. As a result, most apprentices have clear plans for their next steps, which for most is to progress to the CIPS level 5 advanced diploma. However, leaders do not support all apprentices to gain a good understanding of the future career opportunities available to them in the wider procurement and supply industry or how they can access these.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that apprentices act on the feedback that they receive to improve their work to a higher standard and to achieve higher grades.
- Ensure that all apprentices receive sufficiently well-planned careers information, advice and guidance throughout their programme.
- Identify accurately how tutors can further develop their teaching skills and provide appropriate training and development opportunities.

Provider details

Unique reference number	2626874
Address	15 Queen Square Leeds LS2 8AJ
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Website	www.theprourementacademy.com
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Philip Chippindale
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Dates of previous inspection	5 to 7 April 2022
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the training manager, 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

Alison Dennis, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Philippa Firth

His Majesty's Inspector

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