

IPS International Limited

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

Unique reference number:	52533
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Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

IPS International Limited (IPS) was inspected in July 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.

IPS is an independent learning provider based in Rochester, Kent. It provides training and education for apprentices and adult learners at level 2 to level 5. At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 416 apprentices and 14 adult learners in learning. Of these, 123 apprentices were studying level 3 maintenance and operations engineering technician, 33 apprentices were studying level 3 heavy vehicle service and maintenance technician and 25 were studying level 3 engineering technician. Approximately one-quarter of apprentices were aged 16 to 18 years old. Of the adult learners, seven were studying level 3 diploma in adult care, five were studying level 3 diploma in children's learning and development and two were studying level 5 diploma in leadership and management for adult care.

IPS works with one subcontractor, Electrical Academy LTD. They provide level 3 installation and maintenance electrician apprenticeship training to 66 apprentices.

Themes

What progress have leaders made to make sure apprentices studying functional skills in English and mathematics make swift progress and achieve their qualifications? **Reasonable progress**

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have established robust processes to record apprentices' English and mathematics achievements. They use this information effectively to make sure apprentices are helped by tutors to make good progress. As a result, leaders and managers have significantly reduced the number of apprentices failing to achieve their apprenticeship in the time planned.

Leaders make sure staff assess apprentices' English and mathematics skills accurately at the start of their training. They have clear plans for apprentices to use online resources, so they improve their skills from the start of their training. It is too early to judge the impact of these plans.

In lessons, tutors provide clear and effective explanations of concepts so apprentices develop new knowledge. Apprentices know how to solve multistep problems in mathematics. They are confident in their use of punctuation and grammar when

writing emails and reports. Most apprentices are secure in what they learn and can apply their knowledge to different problems.

Tutors assess apprentices' knowledge appropriately and provide them with helpful feedback so they know how to improve their work. For example, tutors demonstrate alternative methods for calculating percentages which apprentices use correctly. Apprentices benefit from the feedback tutors provide, and as a result, most achieve their functional skills assessment at the first attempt.

Though tutors record the English and mathematics topics apprentices know and can do, they do not record the tasks they set apprentices to improve consistently well. As a result, they do not make sure all apprentices complete these tasks as expected.

Leaders have established a staff group to monitor the progress of apprentices studying English and mathematics and make improvements to provision. They now offer qualifications from the same awarding organisation which provides staff with high-quality and standardised resources and effective staff training opportunities to improve teaching and assessment. They have plans in place to share good practice in teaching English and mathematics between tutors. It is too early to see the full impact of the work of this group.

What progress have leaders made to make sure apprentices benefit from careers information, advice and guidance that helps them make informed decisions about their next steps? Reasonable progress

Since the previous inspection, leaders have produced a clear careers strategy and improvement plan which they are beginning to implement. They have introduced careers talks from qualified advisers which most apprentices attend. They have piloted careers sessions with motor vehicle apprentices in which they discuss their ambitions and goals with staff who have human resources experience. Leaders have scheduled reviews for tutors to discuss careers planning with apprentices. Leaders have clear plans in place to implement their careers strategy fully from September 2024.

Tutors make sure apprentices train at the right level and on programmes that enable them to fulfil their career aspirations. When apprentices enrol on their training, staff assess their skills and prior experience accurately and discuss their career aspirations such as working as an electrical engineer. Apprentices are enrolled on training that provides them with the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to fulfil their career ambitions.

Tutors and employers provide effective careers information, advice and guidance which most apprentices value. Installation and maintenance electrician apprentices learn about self-employment. Apprentices training to be heavy vehicle service and maintenance technicians know that the knowledge and skills they are learning are transferable to plant machinery and cranes. A small number of first-year engineering apprentices do not value the careers advice they are given as it is provided too early

in their training. Most apprentices have a clear understanding of what they will do next.

What progress have leaders made to make sure staff and employers work together effectively so apprentices make rapid progress? **Reasonable progress**

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have improved how they monitor and review apprentices' progress. They share and discuss apprentices' progress with employers and agree on actions for further development. For example, in engineering, managers provide employers with detailed reports about the specialist engineering knowledge and skills apprentices have acquired. Most employers know the progress their apprentices are making.

Leaders and managers work closely with employers to make sure training is well planned and meets their needs. In engineering, apprentices practise bench fitting and turning techniques to help them develop the skills for their jobs. Maintenance and operations technicians working for an automated food packaging company learn how to find faults in the robots they work with. Most apprentices apply what they learn in the classroom and workshop competently in their jobs. Employers value the knowledge and skills that apprentices develop as a result of their training.

Leaders make sure apprentices benefit from good-quality training when this is subcontracted to another provider. They make sure subcontractors review apprentices' progress accurately, so employers know how well apprentices are doing. They make sure apprentices are well supported by staff to keep on track with their training. Most apprentices in subcontracted training make good progress, including in English and mathematics.

Leaders and managers make sure most employers understand fully the training model apprentices follow. However, a small number of engineering employers do not know when their full-time first-year apprentices will complete their training and return to the workplace. As a result, most employers are prepared to support most apprentices in their training.

What progress have leaders made to ensure learners and apprentices know how to protect themselves from the risks of radicalisation and extremism? **Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers make sure that most apprentices learn about the dangers of radicalisation and extremism at the beginning of their apprenticeship. Tutors discuss these themes with apprentices along with other useful personal development topics during their full-time or block release training. Managers send apprentices and learners information each month to support their personal development, including about the dangers associated with radicalisation and extremism. Most apprentices and learners know about specific risks prevalent in the local area, such as increasing

cases of extreme right-wing hate crimes and a recent attack on a local religious setting. Most apprentices and learners have a well-developed understanding of the risks of radicalisation and extremism and how to protect themselves.

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