

Inspection of Digital Marketing Mentor Ltd

Inspection dates: 7 to 10 June 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Digital Marketing Mentor (DMM) offers apprenticeships in disciplines related to the digital creative industry. Apprentices work in digital roles for a wide array of private and public sector organisations. In addition, DMM runs apprenticeship courses in floor laying for a small group of apprentices.

At the time of the inspection, there were 70 apprentices. A very small number of apprentices were aged under 18. A large number of apprentices follow junior content producer apprenticeships at level 3. Small but significant numbers of apprentices follow the level 2 floor layer, level 3 digital marketer or level 3 business administrator standards.

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

The large majority of apprentices have a positive attitude towards their courses. They speak highly of the strong communication between them, DMM's staff and their employers, for example during progress reviews. This helps them to make improvements at work, or to catch up if they fall behind with their courses.

Leaders work highly effectively with employers to ensure that apprentices benefit from challenging work activities. Mentors design curriculums that precisely meet both apprentices' and employers' individual needs. As a result, the large majority of apprentices gain substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours.

Apprentices benefit from valuable opportunities to develop their confidence during their courses. This enables them to communicate more professionally in a variety of work settings, such as when they share new ideas with their teams. Leaders and mentors provide apprentices with a rich curriculum for their broader personal development. This includes good-quality lessons on health-related topics such as depression and work, and on societal issues such as problem gambling. However, too few apprentices engage with this curriculum.

Apprentices rightly feel safe, both when they study and at work. They know how to work safely in their jobs, and why this is important both for themselves and for those around them.

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

Leaders focus the large majority of the curriculum on skills gaps in the digital creative industry. They recognise that a diverse range of organisations need staff with up-to-date digital creative skills. Leaders ensure that mentors plan highly individualised curriculums to meet these needs. In the few cases where they offer curriculums in unrelated subjects, such as the floor layer apprenticeship, leaders ensure that apprentices also benefit from well-planned training.

Mentors plan courses logically. For example, they teach topics such as search engine optimisation at a point when this will be most relevant to digital marketer apprentices at work. Mentors that teach floor laying start by teaching apprentices about sub-floor preparations and priming, before they move on to floor fitting. Employers value this approach because it enables apprentices to contribute more effectively at work. In a small number of cases, mentors do not use apprentices' start points effectively to plan their courses.

Almost all mentors continue to work in their industries as well as to train apprentices. Apprentices benefit highly from this. For example, when they plan curriculums, mentors use their knowledge to include additional focus on the most up-to-date industry practice. Mentors also teach apprentices cutting-edge skills and techniques in topics such as video editing.

In most cases, mentors assess apprentices' progress thoroughly. They use quizzes and reflective questions well to check apprentices' knowledge and skills, and use the outcomes of these to plan subsequent training. These mentors also provide thorough and constructive feedback on written assignments, which enables apprentices to make improvements to subsequent work. However, in a minority of cases mentors do not provide feedback that challenges apprentices to make such changes.

Apprentices produce both practical and written work that is of a good standard. For example, junior content producer apprentices use professional tools such as a clone stamp or dodge brush to edit photographs to a high standard. Apprentices then use the photographs in industry-standard promotional materials for clients. Those apprentices that study the floor layer standard demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the difficulties of removing flooring, and the tools they should use to overcome these.

Leaders have high expectations of both themselves and their staff. They focus closely and accurately on weaknesses, and on ways to make rapid improvements. Leaders' quality checks of teaching are thorough. They provide mentors with useful feedback on taught sessions, and set them challenging targets to improve their performance. Mentors value this approach. They feel that leaders have created a supportive environment in which to work.

Governors have substantial experience of the sectors in which DMM works, as well as teaching experience in related subjects. They focus sensibly on gradually increasing the number of apprentices that they work with, because they are rightly wary of the impact that rapid growth could have on the quality of courses.

Leaders ensure that all mentors complete at least basic teacher training qualifications. However, they do not focus on developing mentors' knowledge of the special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) that apprentices have. As a result, although apprentices with an identified SEND get plentiful additional one-to-one support from mentors, mentors do not focus enough on their specific needs, and how they can enable them to work more independently.

Apprentices receive careers information, advice and guidance from mentors, for example through useful seminars to help them improve their online job search skills and professional social media accounts. However, too few apprentices benefit from such support. In a significant minority of cases, apprentices do not have a clear understanding of the job roles they could apply for at the end of their courses.

The large majority of apprentices that successfully complete their courses only attain a pass grade. A few attain higher grades on sections of their final assessments. Apprentices who take functional skills qualifications as part of their courses achieve these at high rates.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have implemented suitable processes to deal with safeguarding concerns. They carry out appropriate safer recruitment checks on all staff. Staff with responsibility for safeguarding undertake suitable training. They log concerns appropriately and complete useful follow-up activities, such as work with employers to effectively support apprentices that have safeguarding concerns.

Apprentices know who to contact if they have any safeguarding issues. They value the emphasis that leaders place within the curriculum on topics such as domestic abuse and online safety. However, apprentices have only a limited understanding of the risk of sexual harassment at work.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that all apprentices with SEND benefit from high-quality support which meets their specific needs.
- Leaders should ensure that a high proportion of apprentices attain high grades in their final assessments.
- Staff should offer all apprentices thorough guidance about their possible next steps and career options.

Provider details

Unique reference number	2510861
Address	9 High Street Lutterworth LE17 4AT
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Website	https://digitalmarketingmentor.co.uk/
Principal/CEO	David Prescod
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the managing director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous monitoring visit 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.

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