

# Gordon Franks Training Limited

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

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<b>Address:</b>	St James House St James Place Birmingham West Midlands B7 4JE

## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

Gordon Franks Training Limited (GFT) was inspected in February 2020. 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 addressing the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

Gordon Franks Training Limited is an independent learning provider based in the West Midlands offering apprenticeships, education programmes for young people, and traineeships. This visit focused on the apprenticeships. At the time of the visit, there were 156 learners following apprenticeships. The provider offers a mix of apprenticeship frameworks and standards, with the large majority of apprentices following level 2 or level 3 standards in early years, and business administration.

The impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) has been taken into account in the findings and progress judgements below.

### Themes

**What progress have leaders made in developing a curriculum which ensures apprentices build knowledge, skills and behaviours over time that link to work activities?**

**Reasonable progress**

Managers have implemented a number of changes to improve the quality of the apprenticeship training. Although there are early indications that these changes are having a positive impact on apprentices' development of new knowledge, skills and behaviours, it is too soon to see the full impact.

Leaders have changed the staffing structure to separate teaching and assessment, creating a greater emphasis on the teaching of new knowledge and the link between that knowledge and the workplace.

Managers have carefully reviewed, planned and redesigned the curriculum. For example, in childcare they are clear on which skills need to be taught first, for example health and safety, safeguarding, and professional development. Employers state that they understand the curriculum that is taught and how this reflects their individual workplace situations.

Curriculum managers and assessors have reviewed and recently implemented a comprehensive onboarding process to improve the identification of apprentices' starting points.

Assessors share the individual learning plans with employers at the start of the apprenticeship and these plans are now being adjusted to reflect the employers'

needs. For example, they have brought forward a unit on working with learners with special educational needs and disabilities, as this is where the apprentices were starting their rotation in the nursery.

The revised curriculum includes taught sessions, independent learning sessions and activities. Teachers encourage apprentices to complete their independent learning and practice tasks to ensure they do not have any gaps in their knowledge, skills and behaviours.

**What progress has been made to use the starting point of apprentices, to identify individual learning goals and use those goals to plan the curriculum and close gaps in learning?**

**Reasonable progress**

Apprentices are required to self-assess their knowledge, skills and behaviours by answering questions and providing examples of their experience linked to the skills, knowledge and behaviours in the apprenticeship. For example, in early years, – as part of the skills scan – apprentices are asked to provide examples of how they have worked with partnership colleagues and parents/carers. Following the recruitment stage, assessors quickly meet with apprentices to review the skills scan. Assessors challenge apprentices on their self-assessment, if needed, to agree the learning plan and set targets. As a result, staff, apprentices and employers have an accurate view of the skills that recently recruited apprentices have at the start of their programme. As this new assessment was put in place in April, it is too early to see the impact of this on apprentices' learning.

Assessors frequently meet with apprentices and employers to review the skills scan assessment. Through doing this, assessors gain feedback from apprentices and employers on how well they are improving their skills, knowledge and behaviours during the apprenticeship.

Apprentices value the support they receive from the team at GFT. For example, assessors have supported apprentices well to change their work setting when they identified that they were not developing the skills and knowledge they would need to work in a nursery. Once in the correct setting, apprentices are thriving in the workplace, and employers value their skills highly.

Learners towards the end of their apprenticeship are well supported to achieve. They describe the recent change of focus to a stronger link between the knowledge element and implementation in the workplace as being helpful in their preparation towards the end-point assessment. This has allowed them to give greater context to recent presentations made to managers and colleagues where they work. As a result, workplace mentors are seeing a noticeable increase in their confidence over recent months.

**What progress has been made to improve feedback to apprentices so that it is timely, and it supports apprentices' understanding of the improvements they need to make, and it**

**Reasonable progress**

## **supports rapid progress towards them reaching their full potential?**

Managers have introduced a range of feedback activities to support apprentices. As a result, apprentices can identify quickly areas where they need more support, and they access this support to ensure they continue to make progress against their learning goals. For example, in business administration – at the end of taught sessions – apprentices, assessors and employers receive a session-review form that outlines the activities completed, the apprentice's contribution to the session, and actions to link to workplace development.

Apprentices make strong links between taught sessions and independent learning to their workplace development. For example, in early years, apprentices receive additional resources and discussion with their assessors to develop their understanding of working with children with special educational needs, such as autism spectrum disorder. They have used their skills and knowledge in these topics to talk to parents about gaining assessments for children.

Apprentices who have moved on from level 2 to level 3 can identify the differences in their level of study and the requirements for them, both in their assignments and at work.

Assessors have high aspirations for apprentices. Apprentices are aiming to gain a distinction at end-point assessment; they understand what they need to do to achieve the highest grades.

Employers state that they are involved in the feedback and reviews of apprentices' progress. Apprentices benefit from feedback from employers. For example, business administration apprentices approaching the end-point assessment present to their colleagues and managers at work, who provide feedback to support improvement prior to the final presentation.

Employers and apprentices appreciate the way in which managers and staff from the provider work with them. Employers state that they benefit from having apprentices in the workplace and value them highly.

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