

Inspection of Oxford Energy Academy Limited

Inspection dates: 21 to 23 June 2022

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

Information about this provider

Oxford Energy Academy Limited (OEA) is a training provider based in Witney who specialises in plumbing and heating. They started offering apprenticeships as a prime provider in late 2017. OEA offer apprenticeship standards in plumbing and heating and electrical installation at level 3. At the time of the visit, 111 apprentices were on the programme, nine were studying electrical installation and the remainder, plumbing and heating. Apprentices work with 62 employers spread across the local area and the South East region.

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

Apprentices benefit from a very well-resourced and productive learning environment which has a good range of modern and older appliances that apprentices come across in their work. This enables apprentices to gain useful experience that helps them to meet the needs of their customers.

Apprentices have access to additional opportunities which extend their knowledge beyond the requirements of the apprenticeship and enhance the skills they take to the workplace. For example, apprentices achieve qualifications in using lift platforms and working at heights. Teachers support apprentices to complete the construction skills certification card which enables them to work on a range of different sites.

Apprentices value the highly knowledgeable and appropriately trained teachers and staff. They feel well supported in their learning and their well-being and know that they can speak to any member of staff if they have any concerns. Staff model professional behaviours throughout their work and treat apprentices with respect. As a result, apprentices are consistently polite, courteous and display a wide range of personal attributes which grow as they gain confidence. Employers value the impact of the apprenticeship on apprentices' confidence and ability to communicate with customers, vendors and other contractors.

Apprentices value the opportunity to celebrate their work and achievements. OEA leaders arrange a celebration event where parents, friends, family and employers can see what apprentices have learned. Leaders celebrate apprentices' and staff's achievements through entering, and in the past winning, local business awards such as apprentice of the year.

Apprentices feel safe in training and at the workplace and feel that staff take seriously any concerns that they report.

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

Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision to be the preferred provider for apprenticeships in the plumbing industry for the local and regional area. They have planned and implemented a curriculum that is relevant and systematically develops the knowledge and skills of apprentices to meet the needs of employers.

Teachers ensure that the curriculum is taught in a sensible order that includes a mix of theoretical learning which underpins the practical learning. For example, apprentices complete health and safety training in the early stages of the course. More complex learning such as writing method statements is taught later on. Teachers use their knowledge and experience to carefully support apprentices to learn the most up-to-date information possible. They use real-life examples to illustrate complicated concepts and ask apprentices to reflect on how they will use their learning in their workplace. As a result, apprentices often bring new knowledge to the employers who appreciate this. For example, a teacher who had attended recent training on an update to wiring regulations was able to share this during a relevant session with electrical installation apprentices.

Staff carefully identify apprentices' skills and knowledge at the start of the programme and use these to plan the programmes for each apprentice. They use assessment effectively to understand the progress apprentices make and identify their next steps. Apprentices use the meaningful and purposeful feedback to improve their work and gain higher grades. Teachers use a range of detailed exercises with clear assessment briefs to ensure that apprentices have securely remembered their learning.

Apprentices value the one-to-one time that they have with their teacher. They closely review their progress, discuss any issues that they might have with work or

with their training and gain additional learning such as how to keep themselves safe from the threats of extremism and radicalisation. As a result, most apprentices make good progress in achieving their targets and qualifications. Apprentices produce work of a consistently high standard and can demonstrate what they have learned in the workplace.

Apprentices are well prepared for their next steps. They understand well what is involved in their end point assessment and what they need to do to achieve. Most apprentices receive useful careers information, advice and guidance throughout the programme and at the end which helps them to consider their career or educational options. For example, at the end of the programme apprentices value the pack of information about becoming self-employed and future training options.

Leaders and managers closely monitor the progress of apprentices and take swift action should any fall behind or need additional support. Leaders have useful quality assurance processes including observations of training, surveys and visits from the governors. As a result, they know their strengths and weaknesses well. However, leaders do not monitor closely enough the progress that they make on improving their weaknesses. As a result, the actions they set are not tracked closely enough to ensure that improvements are successful and fully achieved.

Leaders do not routinely engage with employers to plan the curriculum of the apprentices. Most employers do not generally take part in progress reviews. As a result, these employers do not know enough about what their apprentices are learning. Therefore, they cannot effectively continue to help develop apprentices' knowledge and skills further through on-the-job training.

Leaders have in place highly effective governance arrangements. Governors are suitably experienced and qualified and provide effective scrutiny, challenge and support to leaders. They know the provision well and understand how leaders can improve the few weaknesses.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) are both suitably qualified and experienced and foster a culture of safeguarding throughout the organisation. They, along with the governors, make sure that staff's knowledge and understanding of safeguarding, safety and the 'Prevent' duty are kept up to date so that they can put the apprentices first and keep them safe.

The DSLs take all reports seriously and keep secure and detailed records. Apprentices know who they can contact if they have any concerns and trust all staff at the provider to listen to them.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should regularly monitor the progress of improvement actions so that they can assess the impact on the apprentices.
- Leaders should quickly improve with the participation of employers in apprentices' progress reviews so that they are able to support apprentices better at their on-the-job training.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1278625
Address	Avenue One Witney Oxfordshire OX28 4XZ
Contact number	01993 771155
Website	www.oxford-energy-academy.co.uk
Principal/CEO	Christopher Foley
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	N/A

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the director, 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

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