

# Inspection of First Intuition Chelmsford Limited

Inspection dates: 11–15 October 2021

## Overall effectiveness

**Outstanding**

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

## Information about this provider

First Intuition Chelmsford Limited is a small independent learning provider. It started by providing private training courses to the finance and accounting sector. In June 2017, First Intuition Chelmsford Limited gained approval to provide apprenticeship programmes.

First Intuition Chelmsford Limited has 228 apprentices on standards-based apprenticeships. Level 3 assistant accountant is the smallest training programme with 51 apprentices. The level 4 professional accounting taxation technician has 59 apprentices in training. The level 7 accountancy taxation professional is the largest programme with 118 apprentices in training.

First Intuition Chelmsford Limited has apprentices of 16 to 18 years of age on all three levels with the majority on level 3 and level 4. Most apprentices on the level 7 programme are over 19 years old. The provider has no subcontractors outside of the First Intuition network and no apprentices in receipt of high needs funding.

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

Apprentices benefit from highly qualified staff with diverse employment expertise across the finance sector. Apprentices rapidly develop their professional skills and

behaviours because of the highly personalised guidance and support provided by tutors, skills coaches, and employers.

Apprentices attribute their significant learning and development to the training they receive. They recognise how their tutors help them to understand the complex concepts and processes they carry out at work. Apprentices develop professional scepticism, reduce operational error rates and are less reliant on their managers for help.

Apprentices are highly valued and supported by their employers. Employers give apprentices significant and complex responsibility in the workplace which supports their rapid development. Apprentices complete tasks, such as leading large multi-agency audits within their organisations. For example, they lead on finance revenue recognition audits in the workplace. Apprentices confidently prepare and present reports of an exceptional standard to their senior leadership team.

Apprentices know how to keep themselves safe very well and do not tolerate any intimidation and bullying. They know who to report any such concerns to and are confident to do so. Apprentices take part in regular 'hot topic' discussions with their skills coaches. This includes exploring workplace and sexual harassment.

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

Leaders, tutors, coaches, and employers work tirelessly together to develop a highly effective programme that successfully introduces a young, diverse workforce to the finance and accounting sector. Leaders, staff and employer's close communication, highly individualised help, and expert knowledge enables apprentices to make rapid progress and perform exceptionally well in the workplace, regardless of their starting points.

Leaders have successfully promoted apprenticeships to the finance sector in the region. They understand the challenges that employers face in recruiting and retaining skills locally. Employers now see the apprenticeship programmes at First Intuition as fundamental to their workforce development needs.

Leaders provide a highly effective curriculum in partnership with apprentices and employers. Apprentices study professional qualifications which employers value as a license to practise within the financial sector. Leaders consult with employers effectively to ensure that the apprentice is studying for the most appropriate professional qualification for their job role. Leaders accurately identify gaps in apprentices' existing skills and knowledge. They tailor the curriculum expertly to include units of learning from different programme levels to overcome any knowledge or skills deficit.

Apprentices become highly reflective learners and valued employees. Apprentices develop their skills through a continuous cycle of self-evaluation and target setting.

Skills coaches expertly review the progress that apprentices make over time, to ensure that apprentices are on a planned pathway to achieve their extremely ambitious career goals. Apprentices describe how their communication skills have improved drastically. Younger apprentices can now present reports to the board of directors, having previously lacked confidence in answering the telephone.

Apprentices quickly become independent learners. They develop their own strategies to manage any barriers to learning. Consequently, apprentices who require extra help with their studies develop their skills at the same rate as their peers and thrive.

Apprentices make extremely good use of the clear, high-quality learning materials to ensure that they come to lessons fully prepared. They use recordings of classes to re-cap and revise the content of previous learning sessions in their own time. Apprentices understand the theoretical concepts of their studies extremely well. Tutors are available to apprentices for individual support outside of classes, if necessary. Leaders and tutors ensure that apprentices are prepared thoroughly for their final examinations from the start of their programme.

Apprentices develop excellent English skills that support their progression and promotion in their job role. For example, tutors skilfully develop apprentices' professional writing skills. They ensure that apprentices can translate data into useful written information that their clients can use and understand. Apprentices are fluent at using technical and complex language relevant to the finance sector.

Apprentices have extensive knowledge of the roles available to them across the finance sector. The skills coaches recognise and support apprentices' highly ambitious career goals. Skills coaches map apprentices' progress through every aspect of their apprenticeship to ensure that they achieve their career goals. Tutors discuss these roles with apprentices as they teach specialist units, such as auditing and taxation. Apprentices have a sound understanding of how to advance their careers. Most go on to the next level qualification and/or promotion in the workplace.

Apprentices know how to identify and take appropriate action if someone is at risk; this includes their clients. For example, they understand that if a client's finances suddenly improve exponentially without proper explanation, it could mean they are undertaking illegal or questionable practices. They know who and how to report these situations if they arise.

Apprentices are resilient and highly motivated to achieve their apprenticeship. Tutors support them extremely well to overcome any challenges that they face in their personal and professional lives. Leaders' actions to help apprentices deal with their own concerns and anxieties are highly effective. They have produced podcasts on topics such as resilience and staying motivated. Apprentices who have had COVID-19 and have not been able to sit one of their examinations, have been supported successfully by their tutors to complete two examinations in the same term.

Apprentices' development of their wider personal and professional skills is exceptional. Leaders have designed a meaningful 'skills impact' curriculum related to well-being, careers, and professional behaviours. Apprentices can articulate very well the behaviours and professional attributes that they need to develop to become successful accountants. They know how to communicate professionally with clients and how to recognise and deal with unethical practices, such as, money laundering, and tax avoidance.

Ongoing careers advice and guidance for apprentices is exceptionally good. Leaders have developed a wide range of informative and relevant careers resources. They have broadcast a series of podcasts by successful practitioners in the finance world, who describe how their careers have developed over time. Tutors advise apprentices very well on which professional qualifications they need, to help them realise their career goals. For example, apprentices know how to become a senior auditor and an audit manager in the digital sector.

Leaders' quality monitoring practices are incisive and extremely successful in identifying and driving improvement. They use data and feedback from employers, governors, and apprentices extremely well to identify clear actions for improvement.

Leaders and staff benefit significantly from the close working relationships that exist within the wider First Intuition group. They share resources, best practice ideas, join professional development workshops and networking meetings. For instance, the designated safeguarding lead was instrumental in establishing a safeguarding network across the First Intuition group. Tutors and coaches join 'lunch and learn' remote workshops across the group to improve their teaching and coaching practice.

Governance arrangements are highly effective. Governors are experienced in the financial sector, apprenticeship training and safeguarding. Executive governors strongly challenge leaders, share best practice, inform staff development, and drive improvement. Non-executive governors provide an impartial and valuable viewpoint. They gather independent opinions from tutors and coaches. They check staff's understanding of quality targets and safeguarding issues. Governors have a detailed and sound understanding of the provider's key strengths and areas for improvement.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established and maintain a culture of safeguarding through the curriculum they provide to apprentices at First Intuition Chelmsford. They use safeguarding logs very effectively to identify trends in concerns expressed by apprentices and take rapid action to implement training for staff and apprentices. Leaders produce a frequent 'hot topic' newsletter that reports concerns that apprentices need to be sighted on. Such topics include dealing with loneliness and information about involuntary celibates following a recent shooting. Safeguarding

arrangements are extremely well promoted and understood by staff, apprentices and employers. Leaders have established appropriate external contacts and support networks should they need to make any referrals.

Apprentices understand the impact of radicalisation and extremism in their personal and professional lives. They are aware of local safeguarding issues, such as county lines, human trafficking, and the threat posed by right-wing extremism.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	1278627
<b>Address</b>	Halford House 2 Coval Lane Chelmsford CM1 1TD
<b>Contact number</b>	01245 209900
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://www.firstintuition.co.uk/classroom-courses/chelmsford/">https://www.firstintuition.co.uk/classroom-courses/chelmsford/</a>
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Kelley O'Donovan David Malthouse
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the co-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

Penny Fawcus, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Rachael Johnstone	Ofsted Inspector
Sambit Sen	Her Majesty's Inspector
Linnia Khemdoudi	Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

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