

Kiara Training College (UK) Ltd

Focused monitoring visit report

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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FOCUSED MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Context and focus of visit

Kiara Training College (UK) Ltd (Kiara) is a private company, established in June 2006. Kiara has premises in Mitcham and recruits learners throughout London. During 2007 Kiara was a member of a Train to Gain consortium. Since January 2008, Kiara has contracted directly to provide Train to Gain programmes, initially with the London South Learning and Skills Council and currently with the Skills Funding Agency. The contract covers the delivery of National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in health, public services and care, information and communication technology, retail and commercial enterprise, education and training, and customer services. The contract also includes provision for preparation for life and work. Most of Kiara's provision is government funded.

Kiara was last inspected in July 2009. Inspectors judged that the overall effectiveness of the provision was satisfactory, with outcomes for learners, quality of provision, capacity to improve, leadership and management and equality of opportunity also satisfactory. The two subject areas inspected, health and social care and preparation for life and work, were both judged to be satisfactory. This report focuses on the themes explored during the visit.

Themes

Self-assessment and improvement planning

What progress has Kiara made in developing the process of self-assessment, and its use as a tool for quality improvement? **Insufficient progress**

At the last inspection, self-assessment was judged to be inadequate. Kiara's next, and most recent, self-assessment reports on its provision in 2009/10. The report is insufficiently comprehensive and evaluative. It does not specifically report on subject areas or capacity to improve, and no aspects of the provision are graded. These were identified as areas for improvement at the last inspection. Feedback from learners and employers is not used sufficiently to inform self-assessment and most staff involvement is limited. Staff understanding of the purpose of self-assessment is underdeveloped. Kiara has not yet established a defined process to carry out self-assessment.

The self-assessment includes key strengths and areas for improvement, but it is not clear from the report how some of these were identified. Kiara has produced an action plan for improvement from the self-assessment, which has been reviewed for progress during the year. Many of the actions identified lack specific and measurable targets and, for most, the date to be actioned is 'immediately' at each subsequent review of progress. The current action plan is used more effectively to identify

progress and some aspects of ongoing actions have been clarified. However, self-assessment is not used sufficiently as a tool for quality improvement.

Outcomes for learners

What progress has been made in improving outcomes for learners since the last inspection?	Significant progress
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At the last inspection, no learners had a planned end date before 2008/09 and success rates were judged to be generally satisfactory. Subsequently, Kiara has effectively implemented a strong focus on learner progress and achievement. Overall success rates significantly increased in 2009/10, from 81% to 98% compared with the national average of 87%. Similarly, the overall proportion of learners who completed in the time planned has also increased from 72% to 97%, compared with the national average of 76%. Previous gaps in achievement for several groups of learners have been closed.

In 2009/10, all learners on Train to Gain programmes in child development and well-being, retail and commercial enterprise and direct learning support achieved and completed in the time planned. Success rates are high for health and social care learners and completion in the time planned increased by 31 percentage points to 98%. Both success rates and completion in the time planned increased significantly to 99% in preparation for life and work. Learner outcomes in the administration NVQ programme are high and have improved. On the information and communication technology NVQ programmes, outcomes for learners are good and above the national average, but have not improved since 2008/09.

Quality of provision

What progress has been made in improving arrangements for initial assessment and for the monitoring of learners' progress?	Reasonable progress
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At the last inspection, arrangements for the initial assessment and monitoring of learners' progress were incomplete. Kiara has made reasonable progress in improving initial assessment, and in identifying and supporting learners' additional literacy and numeracy needs. All learners are now appropriately assessed for literacy and numeracy and a member of staff has been appointed to provide the small number of identified learners with appropriate support. Learners identified as needing support in English for speakers of other languages are now signposted to other providers.

Good progress has been made in literacy and numeracy provision in setting specific and measurable targets, which are well matched to learners' needs. However, the progress in setting specific and measurable targets in Train to Gain provision is insufficient. Some assessors are setting progress targets for these learners well, but good practice is not shared sufficiently. However, progress reviews now routinely

include health and safety matters. Learners' performance records are generally detailed, providing clear evidence of their progress. However, the progress information recorded in individual learning plans often lacks the clarity and detail of learners' performance records. New documentation is being introduced to resolve this area for improvement, but it is too early to judge its effectiveness.

Leadership and management

What progress has been made in the collection and use of data to monitor and manage the provision, including the monitoring of the performance of different groups?

Reasonable progress

Kiara has made reasonable progress in the collection and use of data to monitor and manage its provision, an area which was judged to be insufficient at the last inspection. The company has experienced some difficulties in the operation and use of the management information system it has purchased and the system is not yet used to its full potential. However, Kiara has separately developed the use of detailed spreadsheets to monitor learners' progress and the frequency of their progress reviews on a monthly basis. Analysis of the spreadsheets is thorough, and is used to identify any issues affecting learners' progress. Kiara now uses data effectively to monitor learners' achievement, retention and success rates. It also now collects and analyses the feedback obtained from learners and their employers. Key information produced from the monitoring data is discussed at staff meetings, with relevant actions identified to manage the provision.

At the last inspection, it was identified that Kiara did not analyse the performance of different groups of learners. The company now carefully monitors these data, which show that outcomes for different groups of learners are similar. Data on learners' ethnicity are also being used to identify and target the recruitment of under-represented groups.

What progress has been made in improving the promotion of equality of opportunity?

Reasonable progress

At the last inspection the promotion of equality of opportunity was judged to be satisfactory overall, but with some areas for improvement. Promotional material now incorporates images which better reflect the wide ethnic diversity of the resident population and of Kiara's learners. Reasonable progress has been made in recruiting from under-represented groups, particularly men in health and social care, where numbers have increased by approximately 5%. Kiara, in conjunction with its partner organisations, has undertaken a useful project in supporting individuals who are not in employment or training to become engaged in gaining qualifications. A Somali speaker has been trained as an assessor to support this work. Kiara moved in 2010 and its new premises are fully accessible to learners with restricted mobility.

Learners are provided at induction with information sheets on Kiara's satisfactory equality policies, but this information is not consistently explained to learners. Insufficient progress has been made in routinely promoting aspects of equality and diversity at learners' progress reviews; learners' understanding of their rights and responsibilities at work is not sufficiently promoted or reinforced. A bank of equality and diversity related questions is used by some assessors, but learners' responses are not recorded.

What progress has been made in developing quality improvement processes to monitor key aspects of the provision?

Insufficient progress

At the last inspection, Kiara had appropriate arrangements to monitor and improve the quality of the NVQ provision and staff performance, but had not introduced the monitoring of other key processes. Some progress has been made in refining quality policies and the use of quality auditing. Internal verification and the observation of assessors have become more consistent. However, progress in developing systematic and effective quality improvement has been insufficient. Key sources of feedback, from learners and employers, are not yet being used effectively for quality improvement or to inform self-assessment. In 2009/10, questionnaires to learners at the start, middle and end of their programmes were introduced. The response rate to the first two questionnaires was very low. Whilst useful information was gathered from the final questionnaire, it was not effectively considered. The gathering of views from employers is sporadic, with a lack of clarity about what information Kiara wishes to collect. Where feedback of some employers' dissatisfaction has been recognised, there is insufficient evidence that this is being addressed effectively through quality improvement.

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