

E.Quality Training 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

E. Quality Training Limited (EQT) is a private training provider in North Staffordshire. EQT has a contract with the Education Funding Agency to deliver foundation learning in hairdressing and childcare. It also offers apprenticeships in hairdressing and childcare through a contract with PM Training. The business operates out of two training centres in Hanley and Newcastle-under-Lyme. The Newcastle-under-Lyme base is the main administration centre. Two directors, who are also the company owners, manage the company supported by ten staff. The majority of the provider's provision is government funded. At the time of this inspection, 86 learners are working towards a foundation level qualification in hairdressing or childcare. Forty-four learners are on apprenticeships in hairdressing or childcare.

At the previous inspection in July 2010, the overall effectiveness of provision, capacity to improve, outcomes for learners, the quality of provision and leadership and management were satisfactory. EQT's approach to safeguarding was good. This report focuses on the themes explored during the visit.

Themes

Self-assessment and improvement planning

What progress has the provider made in improving the self-assessment process, particularly at subject level, and in involving all staff in quality improvement activities? **Reasonable progress**

EQT has made reasonable progress in improving the self-assessment process. At the previous inspection, EQT's self-assessment process was satisfactory but managers did not sufficiently involve all staff and the report was insufficiently evaluative. Staff now understand their role in evaluating the quality of provision and the contribution they make to the self-assessment process. All staff regularly review the progress of their learners with managers and agree targets and actions for improvement. Teachers self-evaluate each learning session and use this appropriately to identify areas for improvement. Staff contribute to the self-assessment report through annual programme reviews at subject level. However, the self-assessment report is still overly descriptive and managers do not use all of the information available to them in producing the annual report. For example, EQT has implemented a system to observe teaching and learning but does not use the results of this in the self-assessment report. Managers use the self-assessment report to set appropriate improvement targets and to produce plans and actions to achieve these targets. However, some targets are imprecise and lack challenge.

Outcomes for learners

What progress has the provider made in improving qualification outcomes and progression for learners, in particular increasing the number of learners who achieve qualifications in literacy and numeracy?

Reasonable progress

Since the previous inspection, EQT has increased the number of learners who achieve qualifications and the number that progress into employment, further education or training. The number of learners who achieve a qualification in English and mathematics has increased significantly, although too few progress beyond an entry-level award. The number of learners who achieve a vocational qualification has also increased, particularly in hairdressing. However, the number of learners achieving qualifications in childcare has declined slightly. There is no significant difference in overall performance by gender or by ethnicity. EQT does not yet analyse the relative performance of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Quality of Provision

What progress has the provider made in improving the pace and challenge of learning so that all learners fully extend their skills and knowledge?

Reasonable progress

EQT has made reasonable progress in improving the pace of teaching and learning and in challenging learners to achieve their full potential. Since the previous inspection, EQT has recruited additional specialist staff to help focus on the management of teaching, learning and assessment. Staff development has appropriately focused on gaining professional qualifications. Teachers have standardised lesson plans and these appropriately identify opportunities to develop learners' literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers now use a wider range of teaching and learning methods. They appropriately plan learning to meet the differing needs of learners but this is not always evident in practice.

Managers have implemented a more formalised graded lesson observation process which clearly sets out their expectations of teaching staff and ensures that teachers receive targeted feedback to help them improve. Managers have yet to evaluate fully the impact this is having on the quality of teaching and learning and it is too soon to analyse trends in performance.

Leadership and management

What progress has the provider made in improving the use of data to understand the quality of provision, plan for improvements and set challenging targets for staff and programme performance? **Significant progress**

The previous inspection identified the need to improve the use of data to set challenging targets and to identify learners at risk of leaving and those making slow progress. Managers have developed their ability to analyse data well and now collect and evaluate a wide range of information about the quality of programmes and learners' progress and achievements. They make appropriate use of these data to set targets for improvement including targets for recruitment, the quality of teaching and learning, and satisfaction levels among learners and employers. Managers now have access to information on the work opportunities in hairdressing and childcare across the region and make effective use of this to identify potential work placements for learners. EQT has introduced detailed and comprehensive systems to monitor the progress of each learner and to identify learners making slow progress or at risk of leaving. Staff use this information well to help those who are falling behind to catch up and to support learners who may otherwise leave the programme.

What progress has the provider made in promoting and reinforcing learners' understanding of equality and diversity, particularly during their progress reviews? **Reasonable progress**

EQT has made reasonable progress in promoting and reinforcing learners' understanding of equality and diversity. Staff use a range of appropriate questions and scenarios to check and extend learners' knowledge and record this on the revised progress review records. All teaching staff now have a role in the initial teaching of equality and diversity. Teachers now routinely identify opportunities to reinforce equality and diversity in lesson plans although this is sometimes too narrowly focused. Managers' observation of teaching and learning includes the development of learners' knowledge of equality and diversity, and their feedback helps teachers to identify where they can improve. Learners demonstrate an appropriate level of understanding of equality and diversity. Teaching staff do not yet sufficiently share good practice in the teaching of equality and diversity. Managers make appropriate use of data to identify and evaluate any gaps in achievement between different groups of learners and this shows that there are no significant variations in performance. The profile of learners' ethnicity reflects that of the local community. EQT has recently developed appropriate links with employers to help attract more men onto programmes that traditionally appeal to women learners, but these measures have not yet proved effective.

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