

24 February 2016

Mrs Christine Haines
Service Manager
Adult and Community Education and Skills
Wakefield Metropolitan District Council
Manygates Education Centre
24–26 Manygates Lane
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Dear Mrs Haines

Thank you for meeting with Gillian Reay, Senior HMI, and myself on 2 February 2016 at our visit to your training centre. We completed a scoping meeting to inform reinspection monitoring visits, following your inspection in November 2015. During discussions with you and your Service Director the following priorities were agreed:

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment including English, mathematics and ESOL courses.
- Improve the effectiveness of governance, leadership and improvement planning arrangements.
- Improve performance management and professional development arrangements.
- Raise the achievement of learners from African, Pakistani and other Asian backgrounds to at least that of their peers.
- Improve the design and management of the 16–19 study programme.
- Improve the adult learning curriculum to ensure that it aligns more closely with the local employment and skills priorities.
- Improve the data management systems to allow managers to identify and improve underperformance within the provision.

Actions taken to date and their impact:

Following your inspection in November 2015, and the resulting inadequate grade for overall effectiveness, you acknowledge that the service was experiencing a period of significant change due to previous leadership and governance being weak. You and your managers have since taken swift and decisive action to eliminate poor provision and to improve the performance and accountability of all staff. You have implemented a post-inspection action plan which you are diligently monitoring, and you are making improvements, including the appointment of a governing body and aligning the curriculum to local employment and skills priorities.

Managers are in the process of modifying a new process of the observation of teaching, learning and assessment which has an increased focus on the learning acquired by students as opposed to the quality of teaching. In addition, you have implemented a detailed individual action plan following observations to ensure that areas of development are swiftly acted upon, to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and ultimately learners' outcomes.

Managers are in the final stages of appointing an experienced governing body to ensure that there is sufficient strategic oversight of the provision and to provide the necessary challenge to senior managers to improve the provision rapidly. You and your director are confident of this governing body being in place by the end of February 2016 to provide an equal measure of support and challenge to improve the quality of provision.

Managers are acutely aware of the need to have access to accurate data on the performance of learners and their continuing progress while on their programme. You and your managers have implemented more rigorous systems to identify any gaps between the achievements of different groups of learners, and employed action plans to narrow these achievement gaps. You have recently improved your data reporting to include retention, achievement and success measures for a range of learners to identify the effectiveness of the provision in meeting learners' attainment goals. However, more emphasis needs to be placed on the progress that learners are making in relation to their starting points. Currently no senior management oversight of this key performance measurement exists, which prevents you and your managers from intervening when progress is slow.

Managers do not provide sufficient emphasis on monitoring the formative progress that learners make in their studies, and they do not use the results of the observations of teaching, learning and assessment to identify specific targets for the member of staff to improve. Managers do not use performance management documents to good enough effect to prioritise these two areas.

You and your managers have had extensive meetings with the Education Funding Agency in relation to the small number of learners following the 16–19 study programme, and have agreed not to enrol any more learners onto the programme. Transitional arrangements have been put in place to allow you to support the few remaining learners to achieve their qualifications.

Agreed next steps

During our discussion we agreed the following:

- ensure a monthly data report is produced and rigorously monitored throughout the organisation, including by governors; review the key data that you need to include to provide an accurate picture of performance including the progress that learners are making in relation to their starting points
- ensure that a governing body is established by the end of February 2016 to scrutinise performance of the service and execute proportionate challenge to improve the provision rapidly
- ensure that the key focus of observers' activity is on students' learning and progress development as opposed to tutor performance; and where areas for improvement are identified, these are swiftly acted upon and monitored meticulously
- ensure that the performance of tutors is monitored routinely and frequently and that interventions are rapidly put into place where necessary.

Thank you for your hospitality at our initial meeting and I look forward to working with you and your team at subsequent reinspection monitoring visits.

Yours sincerely

Paul Cocker
Her Majesty's Inspector