

# Slough Pit Stop Project

Independent learning provider

## Inspection dates

10–13 May 2016

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

|                                              |                      |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Effectiveness of leadership and management   | Requires improvement |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Requires improvement |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare  | Requires improvement |
| Outcomes for learners                        | Requires improvement |
| 16 to 19 study programmes                    | Requires improvement |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good                 |

## Summary of key findings

### This is a provider that requires improvement

- Too many learners do not achieve their qualifications, and attendance is too low, which inhibits learners' progress.
- Targets for academic attainment are often unrealistic and insufficiently detailed for learners to know exactly what they need to do to reach their full potential.
- Quality improvement arrangements are not effective enough.
- Staff do not always ensure that they place all learners on the appropriate level of qualification.
- Managers have recently begun action to raise learners' awareness of the risks of radicalisation and extremism, but not all learners yet have sufficient understanding.

### The provider has the following strengths

- Teachers plan sessions well in order to meet learners' diverse and very complex personal, social and emotional support needs.
- Staff manage learners' challenging behaviour extremely well to minimise disruption to learning.
- Learners receive good information, advice and guidance that lead to the large majority of them progressing to further education, training or employment, even if they leave early.
- Learners are safe at learning centres and placements and know what to do should they have any concerns.
- Learners who regularly attend sessions engage in learning activities well, improve their behaviour and develop good personal, social and employability skills.
- Senior leaders, managers and staff share a common purpose to provide opportunities to disadvantaged young people who have multiple barriers to learning and very individual and complex support needs.
- Strong partnerships exist with local authorities, employers and external agencies that meet learners' support needs well.

# Full report

## Information about the provider

- The Slough Pit Stop Project (SPSP) is based in Slough, Berkshire, which has a population of approximately 130,000. About one third of the population is from minority ethnic groups. There are currently 49 learners on 16 to 19 study programmes. The SPSP delivers programmes with the aim of engaging and motivating disadvantaged young people to equip them with the confidence and skills to succeed in life.
- SPSP has engaged Haybrook College as the subcontractor. All managers and staff involved in the study programmes are employed by Haybrook College. SPSP retains a proportion of the funds to provide and maintain the physical resources for the vocational learning in motor vehicle and construction.

## What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve progress towards the achievement of qualifications by ensuring that teachers always set targets for learners that are realistic, specific and time-bound and that learners clearly understand what they need to do to improve.
- Continue to develop strategies to address shortfalls in learners' attendance to maximise their opportunities for learning and achievement.
- Ensure more effective quality improvement arrangements in order to:
  - make self-assessment more evaluative and accurate, with a greater focus on improving rates of learners' progress, retention and achievement
  - identify in the development plan all the aspects of the learners' experience that need to improve
  - maximise opportunities for teachers to develop their practice, with clear actions to help them continually improve.
- Ensure that staff use the results of initial assessment more effectively to place all learners on courses and at levels that are appropriate to their needs and prior attainment.
- Raise learners' awareness of the risks that they might be exposed to in relation to all forms of radicalisation and extremism and ensure that they know what to do if they have any concerns.

# Inspection judgements

## Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the outcomes that learners achieve have declined since the previous inspection and leaders and managers have not been able to sufficiently reverse the lower rates of achievement.
- Quality improvement arrangements are not effective enough. Self-assessment is insufficiently evaluative and over-grades the quality of provision. The development plan does not focus enough on improving all aspects of the learners' experience. Observations of teaching and learning are insufficiently critical of teachers' performance and the impact on learners' progress and do not effectively identify actions to help teachers improve. Managers have not been successful in making improvements to address all of the shortfalls identified at the previous inspection.
- Leaders and managers set high expectations of what learners can achieve, but these are not always realistic, based on the learners' prior achievements, and too many learners do not make the progress expected of them.
- Senior leaders and managers, including those with the subcontractor, share a very strong vision to promote equality of opportunity. They use their considerable experience well to support those young people from the locality who are from disadvantaged backgrounds and who have often achieved little in their previous education, including those who have previously been excluded from mainstream education.
- More recently, learners recruited onto study programmes have increasingly had more significant barriers to learning. They frequently have complex behavioural or emotional support needs relating to mental health problems or being ex-offenders. Managers are responding well to this challenge, and staff have been successful in improving learners' personal and social skills and behaviour, leading to a good proportion being able to progress to mainstream education, training or employment.
- The curriculum has a sufficient variety of subject areas available to meet most learners' needs. Vocational subjects are available in motor vehicle, catering and construction, as well as GCSE subjects such as business, health and social care, travel and tourism, art, and physical education. English and mathematics learning is available via GCSEs, functional skills and adult literacy and numeracy qualifications. However, staff place too many learners on qualification levels that are not appropriate, based on prior attainment, resulting in too many learners making slow progress. Managers are implementing changes to the curriculum for 2016/17 to set three clear pathways for learners that are more clearly linked to prior attainment.
- Managers have established good partnerships with local authority support agencies, ex-offender organisations, employers and others to support learning. Staff work well with these groups to share information about learners to ensure their individual support needs are understood and met to maximise the opportunity for positive outcomes.
- Resources are of good quality and meet the needs of staff and learners well. Classrooms and workshops are well equipped to a good standard. This creates a comfortable and welcoming learning environment and provides good opportunities for learning. Learners benefit from good-quality and plentiful tools and equipment in motor vehicle and construction workshops, as well as in the kitchen, including appropriate personal and protective equipment.
- **The governance of the provider**
  - The board of governors of both SPSP and the subcontracted college share a strong commitment to supporting disadvantaged young people. They work well together to monitor financial performance and to ensure that sufficient high-quality resources are made available to support teaching and learning.
  - The board of SPSP does not sufficiently, independently, evaluate the quality of its 16 to 19 study programme provision; nor does it challenge the subcontractor well enough by setting targets for improvement.
- **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**
  - The leadership and management of safeguarding are effective; staff and learners are aware of their responsibilities and feel safe. Managers implement a thorough range of policies well, to cover all key aspects to ensure learners are safe. This includes child protection, e-safety, anti-bullying, safer recruitment and behaviour management.
  - Systems to record incidents and monitor staff safeguarding training are robust.

- Managers and staff use their good awareness of local issues, such as gangs, well to support learners and discourage their involvement in these groups.
- Senior managers have a good understanding of their responsibilities in preventing radicalisation and extremism and work well with local authorities and the police. Managers have recently begun to take action to promote awareness to learners of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism and what signals to look for if they or others might be at risk. However, this is still at an early stage and not all learners have yet gained a sufficient understanding.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement to ensure that all learners' needs are met sufficiently well. Too many fail to remain on course, attend regularly and make the expected progress towards achieving their qualifications.
- Staff accurately identify through initial assessment learners' level of ability, but often fail to place them on the right course at the right level, resulting in slow progress where they find the work too challenging. Where learners have low levels of ability in English and mathematics, they struggle to make progress on the GCSE courses in subjects such as business, travel and tourism, and health and social care, as well as on the GCSE English and mathematics courses.
- Targets for academic attainment are weak, unrealistic and insufficiently detailed for learners to know exactly what they need to do to improve specific areas of their coursework to reach their full potential. Targets for learning are too general and do not lead to learners making sufficient progress.
- A small minority of teachers fail to check and consolidate learning, asking closed questions and then moving on without giving learners time to think through their answer. In a few sessions, teachers do not sufficiently meet the needs of the most-able learners, to set them more complex learning activities that challenge them to reach their full potential, and the pace of teaching and learning for these learners is too slow.
- Teachers plan sessions well to meet individual learners' diverse and very complex support needs. In most sessions, teachers motivate and capture their interest and give them time to develop their thinking skills through problem solving or completing a task. Staff use risk assessments, and education, health and care plans and other information well to plan support and learning in order to minimise any disruption in sessions. For example, teachers put in place seating plans so that learners identified with over-sexualised behaviour are seated away from other learners.
- Mentors provide intensive support to learners, all of whom are coping with challenging issues including social, emotional and mental health difficulties, aggressive behaviour and living in a home that is in crisis or where there has been a lack of parental care and family support. This helps them overcome their barriers to learning. Despite the challenges, staff manage learners' behaviour extremely well. For example, when a learner became upset and disruptive, skilled staff provided immediate support to calm them, reintroduce them to the lesson, and stay with them while they completed the learning activity.
- Learners who regularly attend sessions participate in activities well, demonstrate good levels of concentration and stay on task. Teachers provide clear and effective instruction on the varied activities. Learners on vocational courses at level 1 are developing practical skills to a good standard. Learners receive good written and oral feedback that enables them to improve the standard of their work. Teachers pay good attention to learners' English skills and they identify and correct spelling and grammatical errors.
- Most teachers use questioning techniques effectively to draw on learners' previous knowledge and understanding to complete revision tasks. For example, in a health and social care revision session, learners confidently and competently completed an activity contextualising stages of life and growth patterns. Learners are articulate and they confidently ask questions and discuss topics.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

### **requires improvement**

- Attendance is too low. Overall, too many learners do not attend their learning sessions regularly enough and this inhibits their progress. A minority of learners do not fully complete the planned five days of work experience. The majority of learners on GCSE courses such as business, health and social care, physical education, music and art have left or gradually reduced their attendance to a point where fewer than half are still on these courses.

- Too many learners are making slow progress in developing mathematical and English skills well enough to support their employability. The work produced for GCSE courses by many learners is not of a high enough standard and insufficient in quantity to achieve their goals. Learners' practical work on the vocational courses at level 1 in motor vehicle, construction and catering is mostly good, and their written coursework meets awarding organisation requirements.
- Learners who fully attend their work experience make good progress in developing employability skills such as confidence, teamwork and communication. Learners have a clear plan of what vocational and employability skills they should develop on placement. However, they do not receive a sufficient evaluation of their work experience to identify their progress in these skills and their overall contribution to the workplace.
- The majority of learners make good progress in improving their personal, social and employability skills. They become more confident and self-assured, and improve their behaviour and communication skills well. For example, a learner previously excluded from mainstream education, who lacked confidence and found it difficult to communicate with others, flourished at the work placement with an accountancy firm. The learner is now participating more fully in extra-curricular activities and has applied for an apprenticeship in accounting.
- Learners receive a comprehensive range of careers advice that raises their awareness of opportunities that are available, and the large majority achieve a positive progression. Employability skills activities are varied and managed well by the teachers providing ample support and guidance so that learners develop appropriate behaviours and attitudes for work. Those learners who attend regularly take pride in their work, keeping notes and work books in good order. Learners develop knowledge of employees' rights and responsibilities well; for example, zero-hour contracts and national minimum wage.
- Learners feel safe at the learning centres and in work placements and know whom to contact if they need to raise concerns. They receive and understand guidance on keeping safe including e-safety and the risks that exist when using social media and the use of personal images. Health and safety are observed well in the practical workshops and on work placements.

## Outcomes for learners

## require improvement

- Too many learners do not achieve their qualifications. Only a minority of learners successfully achieved their vocational, English and mathematics qualifications during 2014/15. The progress of learners in the current year indicates a small increase on the rate of achievement, although it is still too low overall.
- Too many learners leave their programme early. In 2014/15, over one third of learners left before completing their planned learning on their study programme, and although there is a slight improvement this year, too many have already left without completing their planned learning. However, a significant number of these learners did make a positive progression to mainstream further education or employment.
- Learners make good progress in overcoming their barriers to progression, such as in standards of behaviour. They respond well to the support that staff provide and most re-engage in learning well, gaining a better understanding of the opportunities that exist for a more positive future.
- The large majority of learners make effective progression to further learning or employment, even where they have left their programme early. The majority of learners who progress do so to a local college. Others remain at the provider for a second year, to work on developing their skills in English and mathematics. A small minority progress to employment or apprenticeships.
- Males achieved less well than females in 2014/15. Managers recognised this achievement gap and implemented a good variety of actions to close the gap, although it is too early to judge the success of these actions.

## Provider details

|                                                                         |                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Type of provider                                                        | Independent learning provider                                                        |
| Age range of learners                                                   | 16–18                                                                                |
| Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year | 52                                                                                   |
| Principal/CEO                                                           | Jim McLaughlin (chair of the board of governors)                                     |
| Website address                                                         | <a href="http://www.sloughpitstopproject.org.uk">www.sloughpitstopproject.org.uk</a> |

## Provider information at the time of the inspection

|                                                                                                 |                                      |                    |                                |     |                |       |                          |     |  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|-----|----------------|-------|--------------------------|-----|--|
| <b>Main course or learning programme level</b>                                                  | <b>Level 1 or below</b>              |                    | <b>Level 2</b>                 |     | <b>Level 3</b> |       | <b>Level 4 and above</b> |     |  |
|                                                                                                 | 16-18                                | 19+                | 16-18                          | 19+ | 16-18          | 19+   | 16-18                    | 19+ |  |
|                                                                                                 | 49                                   |                    |                                |     |                |       |                          |     |  |
|                                                                                                 | <b>Intermediate</b>                  |                    | <b>Advanced</b>                |     | <b>Higher</b>  |       |                          |     |  |
|                                                                                                 | 16-18                                | 19+                | 16-18                          | 19+ | 16-18          | 19+   |                          |     |  |
|                                                                                                 |                                      |                    |                                |     |                |       |                          |     |  |
|                                                                                                 | 16-19                                |                    | 19+                            |     |                | Total |                          |     |  |
|                                                                                                 |                                      |                    |                                |     |                | 49    |                          |     |  |
|                                                                                                 | <b>Number of learners aged 14–16</b> |                    |                                |     |                |       |                          |     |  |
|                                                                                                 | <b>Funding received from</b>         |                    | Education Funding Agency (EFA) |     |                |       |                          |     |  |
| <b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b> |                                      | ■ Haybrook College |                                |     |                |       |                          |     |  |

## Information about this inspection

### Inspection team

|                             |                  |
|-----------------------------|------------------|
| Gary Adkins, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Catherine Prest             | Ofsted Inspector |
| Haifa Abdul Amir            | Ofsted Inspector |

The above team was assisted by the executive headteacher of Haybrook College, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

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