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Ms Lesley Spain
Principal Learning Manager
Skills and Learning Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole
Oakdale Centre
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Dear Ms Spain

Short inspection of Skills and Learning Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole

Following the short inspection on 27 and 28 April 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since Skills and Learning Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole was judged to be good in June 2015.

This provider continues to be good.

You and your staff have carried out the recommendations made at the previous inspection successfully, although you still have further work to do to ensure that more learners benefit from being able to use information learning technology (ILT) effectively.

You have well-established and effective arrangements to evaluate the quality of courses and provide senior managers with a good understanding of what the service does well and the areas for improvement. You and your staff follow these up promptly with appropriate actions.

Senior managers have ensured that learners continue to receive good teaching, learning and assessment following the restructure and merger of local services undertaken shortly before the previous inspection. You have also successfully developed your curriculum to ensure you provide suitable, high-quality courses for local people.

Learners on courses leading to national qualifications and those attending short workshops make good progress in developing social skills such as working with others and building self-confidence. They benefit through the attentiveness of tutors who help them with their specific areas of need. Learners in job club workshops improve their employability skills. For example, they learn how to construct records

of their working history and profiles of themselves to attract employers.

Learners and apprentices enjoy the courses you provide for the practical skills they gain and the lively teaching. Learners on fashion courses make progress quickly as a result of the insightful help they receive on patterns when working on their individual designs. Learners on counselling courses respond well to the clear advice and the quality and warmth of assessment when undertaking practice interviews.

Your ongoing programme of professional development and support for your tutors and assessor/trainers enables them to improve their expertise to a high standard. They take part in relevant training and updating of their skills that maintain their enthusiasm and commitment, which learners and apprentices greatly appreciate.

Learners value the additional help given by volunteers and learning support assistants and make clear progress as a result. However, the effectiveness of tutors' use of their learning support assistants is variable due to their lack of involvement in planning work.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is effective. Learners feel safe. Well-planned processes to protect learners are in place and understood by staff. The designated safeguarding managers take swift and appropriate action when needed. Managers follow up on any referrals about safeguarding or health and safety promptly. Senior managers ensure all staff who work with vulnerable learners are appropriately checked.

Staff understand safeguarding well. A good range of mechanisms to report issues and to use other helpful agencies is in place. Managers follow safer recruitment practices closely.

All staff have received appropriate training in safeguarding and on the 'Prevent' duty and the risks posed by extremist groups. However, during formal teaching and workshops, when appropriate, a few tutors do not ensure that activities link closely enough to the promotion of fundamental British values in order to help learners and apprentices gain a good understanding of the different aspects.

Inspection findings

We agreed on eight key lines of enquiry, including safeguarding of learners, and the following are the inspection findings from the other seven lines of enquiry.

- Several appropriate improvement measures have resulted in higher proportions of learners remaining on their courses and gaining their qualifications this year. Learners receive well-considered and suitable advice and guidance before they start their courses. This is supplemented by additional testing of their skills early in their courses which leads to learners receiving good support, particularly to improve their study skills.
- Changes to when learners can take tests or formal assessments and shorter

courses that build their confidence and skills before they embark on longer courses are contributing to learners being better equipped for their courses. Consequently, they are making better progress and gaining their qualifications.

- Senior managers receive good and timely support from the governing board who take an active interest in the achievements of learners. Members of the board receive informative and regular reports, visit centres and speak with learners to keep themselves informed of learners' views and how they are progressing.
- Managers regularly and carefully scrutinise the performance of learners and communicate to all staff their ambitions for learners to succeed. Curriculum managers involve staff well in introducing new policies and changes such as arrangements for improving learners' attendance. Managers support the process of self-assessment well, although the expansion of the apprenticeship programme has not been evaluated well enough.
- Learners and potential learners now have a greater number of opportunities to improve their skills and personal and social development as a result of a well-planned curriculum. The service is successful in meeting its aims to attract and recruit people from under-represented or disadvantaged groups.
- Subcontractors and partners provide good pathways and support to enter learning for ex-offenders, young people who are not in education, employment or training, and those seeking to gain employment. Other vulnerable people benefit from the supported learning they receive to help them recover from different forms of abuse and mental health problems.
- Appropriate interviews and thorough assessment of their English and mathematics skills at the start of their courses enable learners to embark on the courses most suitable for their abilities.
- The majority of learners improve their English and mathematics skills as a result of good teaching of these subjects. Tutors use imaginative methods that simplify calculations and show learners that they can become good at mathematics. They respond positively and their revised attitudes to mathematics help them to succeed.
- Strong emphasis by tutors on improving learners' speaking skills, supported by regular practice in writing, enables learners to improve their English skills. Tutors' well-chosen activities and appropriate use of humour bring a sense of fun and achievement to learners. However, apprentices do not significantly improve their English and mathematics skills during their courses, even when they have these qualifications.
- Apprentices receive regular, frequent and helpful reviews of their progress with their assessor/trainers. Good communication with employers enhances the experience which apprentices gain during their apprenticeship. Public service apprentices benefit from the helpful professional development they take part in alongside employers' staff.
- Currently, however, too many apprentices do not gain their qualifications within the agreed timescales, although they are successful eventually. This is because assessor/trainers do not monitor their progress closely enough other than at

reviews.

- Targets in reviews focus on the achievement of the next unit and evidence requirements rather than developing the skills, knowledge and understanding that apprentices need to improve.
- Although information learning technology (ILT) is widely available, learners do not benefit sufficiently from being able to use this as a tool to enhance their learning.

Next steps for the provider

Senior managers should ensure that:

- learners and apprentices further develop their English and mathematics skills during their courses even when they have these qualifications so that they further enhance their professional skills and personal development
- managers and assessor/trainers improve the monitoring of apprentices' progress and set clear improvement targets that develop their wider vocational skills and enable them to achieve their qualifications within the planned timeframe
- learners and apprentices are able to use ILT more effectively to improve their skills and make faster progress.

I am copying this letter to the Education and Skills Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Peter Green
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Ofsted Inspectors were assisted by the curriculum, quality and business development manager as nominee. We met with you, the joint governing board chair responsible for the service, managers, tutors and learners. We observed learning. We scrutinised key strategic and policy documents, including those relating to self-assessment, quality assurance, safeguarding, and the service's performance. We analysed information on learners' and apprentices' achievements. We also analysed feedback from telephone calls to employers and from learners, gathered during the inspection and from Ofsted's online questionnaires.