

# Norman Mackie & Associates Limited

Monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 58507

**Name of lead inspector:** Elaine Price HMI

**Inspection date(s):** 28–29 November 2018

**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

**Address:** The Peacock  
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## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

Norman Mackie & Associates Limited is a small independent learning provider that offers courses to young people aged 16 to 24 years of age who have significant barriers to learning. Many of the learners have challenging behaviour, very low prior attainment, have been disengaged from education or have mental health concerns. At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 41 learners enrolled on a range of vocational programmes, including in construction, catering, art, hair and beauty, and animal care. Most learners are working towards qualifications in personal and social skills and vocational skills from entry level to level 2.

Norman Mackie & Associates Limited was inspected in November 2017 and was judged requires improvement for overall effectiveness. All key judgement areas were judged requires improvement, apart from personal development, behaviour and welfare, which was judged good. The themes for this monitoring visit were identified from the areas for improvement in the last inspection report.

### Themes

**How much progress have leaders made in revising the self-assessment process and the quality improvement plan to ensure that weaknesses are clearly identified? Are measurable targets set against each improvement action to bring about rapid progress in improving quality?**

**Reasonable progress**

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have worked closely with staff to identify weaknesses in the quality of education and training for learners. While the self-assessment report is detailed and comprehensive, it is not always sufficiently evaluative. Despite the shortcomings in the written report, leaders and managers have successfully put in place actions that have led to improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and learners' behaviour. Leaders and managers frequently monitor the impact of their actions on learners' experiences and adjust their plans accordingly. For example, learners now participate in meaningful and relevant external work placement. Staff have made good links with employers, such as a large fast-food company and the local football club, to provide learners with work experience. As a result, learners gain useful skills in customer service and catering and improve their confidence when communicating with people in a public environment.

As a result of the self-assessment process, leaders and managers have revised the curriculum, so that each learner has a more individualised programme that meets their needs. Staff use project-based learning that engages learners and helps them

develop vocational skills and improve their personal and social skills. For example, learners in construction carry out projects that require them to use their practical and problem-solving skills to refurbish old furniture for auction. They plan and cost the project and calculate how much they will need to sell the furniture for, to make a profit. Learners purchase materials and tools required from local building suppliers. As a result, learners gain useful skills to work in the construction industry, as well as budgeting skills they can use in their daily lives and personal strategies to manage their behaviour.

Leaders and managers have acted upon the need to improve the quality and accuracy of their data, to assist them in identifying issues and implementing interventions in a more timely way. The new management information system enables staff to record, track and monitor more accurately learners' progress in the development of new skills and improvements in their behaviour. Leaders and managers use this information effectively to identify staff development needs, for example, in implementing training for staff on managing difficult behaviour. Staff are now more confident in implementing strategies to deal with challenging behaviour. As a result, there has been a reduction in the number of incidents of poor behaviour.

Leaders and managers recognise that they are not yet using the new management information system to its full potential, for example to set precise targets to monitor the improvements in learners' attendance.

**What progress have leaders made in ensuring that observers accurately assess the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to inform staff development? How much progress has been made on improving tutors' teaching practices?**

**Reasonable progress**

Leaders have revised the observation of teaching, learning and assessment process. Managers who carry out observations now focus on learners' progress. During the monitoring visit, inspectors carried out joint observations and agreed with managers on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Managers observe staff frequently and use the outcomes to inform staff's individual targets and training plans. Where performance does not meet the required standards, managers provide support and development to help staff improve their practice. However, where standards are met, managers do not provide staff with precise enough feedback on what they need to do to further improve their teaching techniques.

Leaders and managers have in place a staff development plan to ensure that staff engage in frequent training to improve the quality of their teaching practices. As a result of their training, tutors and support staff have improved how they use learners' education, health and care plans and the outcomes from initial assessments, to plan and deliver bespoke and meaningful programmes more effectively. Learners complete well-thought-out activities that prepare them for independent living and employment. For example, in the community hair and beauty salon, learners gain vocational skills on how to plait hair and make hand-scrub

products. They improve their understanding of the importance of good hygiene routines to help prepare them for working in salons with external clients.

Tutors use project-based learning effectively to engage and motivate learners and help them improve their personal and social skills and gain useful qualifications. Tutors focus on ensuring that learners develop valuable vocational skills while increasing their confidence and self-esteem. For example, learners in catering prepare and serve food in the community café and at the local football club at weekends. In addition to improving their social and personal development skills, learners gain useful qualifications in food hygiene.

**How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that tutors set learners clear and suitably demanding targets and provide them with clear feedback on what they need to do to improve?**

**Reasonable progress**

Staff use education, health and care plans and initial assessment to accurately identify learners' starting points. Staff know their learners very well. Most staff set learners targets that help them develop their knowledge and practical skills and make the progress of which they are capable. For example, in functional skills sessions, learners improve their skills in converting fractions to decimals and percentages using a calculator. Tutors skilfully encourage the most able learners to coach their peers and complete more demanding tasks, which helps build their confidence.

Staff provide learners with useful oral feedback in sessions that enables them to make immediate improvements to their work. For example, construction staff help learners improve their practical skills in planing through detailed instruction and demonstration. As a result, learners make immediate improvement in their techniques when practising planing.

A minority of learners do not have specific enough personal skills targets. In these instances, their daily targets are too vague and repetitive. On occasions, staff feedback is overly positive. Staff use praise effectively to boost their learners' confidence and self-esteem, but they do not always set clear goals on what their learners need to do next.

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