

Excellence-Solutions Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Rieks Drijver, Her Majesty's Inspector

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From March 2019, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of adult learning provision which began to be funded from August 2017 or after by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook', especially the sections entitled 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly funded to deliver adult learning provision' and 'Monitoring visits'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

Excellence-Solutions Limited is a training provider based in Leyton, which trades as Candor Professional Beauty Academy. The provider primarily offers training to adults in hairdressing, beauty therapy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). Excellence-Solutions Limited has taught courses since 2013, and has delivered programmes as a subcontractor to other providers since 2015. In 2017 it received funding from the Education and Skills Funding Agency through the adult education budget, and it is this provision that is in scope for the monitoring visit. In 2018/19 the provider had 185 learners funded through this route.

Themes

How much progress have leaders and managers made in designing and delivering relevant adult learning provision that has a clearly defined purpose? **Reasonable progress**

Leaders and managers have established a positive, open and self-reflective culture at the academy. They have a strong commitment to continuous improvement through honest self-reflection. They have an accurate picture of the academy's strengths and are candid in their evaluation of areas for improvement.

Staff are careful to recruit learners for whom achieving qualifications in the hairdressing and beauty therapy industries will give them new knowledge and skills, and access to further training and employment. They provide intensive programmes so that learners progress quickly. As a result, most learners stay to the end of their course and a high proportion achieve qualifications. Most ESOL learners progress to the next level of qualification. A high proportion of those on hairdressing and beauty therapy-related courses continue to study at level 3 in order to secure sustainable employment.

Performance management and quality assurance arrangements are effective. Leaders and managers evaluate well the quality of training and provide effective support to staff, so that they can improve their teaching and vocational skills. As a result, staff have the expertise needed for the subjects they teach. Programme

managers are self-critical in their evaluations of the qualifications they oversee, and senior leaders respond quickly and positively to suggestions for improvement. They make good use of the data they have to monitor the progress that learners make, and to understand what they do on completion of their programme. However, they do not pay enough attention to ensuring that unemployed learners, who make up a small minority, find jobs.

To date, managers have not established partnerships with employers to secure work placements, or to help learners understand more fully the demands of employment in their chosen subject. Similarly, learners do not have enough models or clients to work on to replicate the demands of salon work.

How much progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that learners benefit from high-quality adult education that prepares them well for their intended job role, career aim and/or personal goals? **Reasonable progress**

At the start of the programmes, staff provide good guidance to learners to ensure that they enrol on courses that will meet their aspirations. They assess accurately the prior skills and knowledge that learners have, both for the vocational subjects they wish to learn and in English and mathematics.

Staff who teach vocational subjects have good subject knowledge and commercial experience, which they use well to help learners to develop their skills quickly. Learners confidently and accurately recall the new knowledge and skills they have, for example in anatomy and physiology for facial massage, advising clients on different hairstyles, and different techniques in cutting and styling.

In ESOL, learners make good progress in the development of their reading skills and in their confidence to speak English. They enjoy their learning, they have good attendance and demonstrate good attitudes to their studies.

Learners are able to use mathematics accurately, for example by applying their learning about ratios and percentages when mixing colours in hairdressing. Teachers emphasise the need for learners to have good communication skills and, as a result, learners develop their confidence in building trust with clients. Teachers do not place the same high priority on developing learners' writing skills to ensure that they are able to spell subject-specific vocabulary.

Learners have well-organised portfolios of work in which they record the good standard of vocational skills they have gained. Teachers give helpful feedback on assessed work to ensure that learners know what they need to do to make improvements.

Learners are clear about their career goals, which range from wig making to salon and freelance work, and how their courses help them to achieve these. Staff provide

good guidance to learners on further training, but do not give effective enough advice in relation to gaining employment.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Reasonable progress

Leaders, managers and staff place a high priority on safeguarding learners. They have suitable policies and procedures in place, including in respect of the 'Prevent' duty. These outline in detail the risks learners may face and the action staff should take. All staff are trained in safeguarding and 'Prevent'. The designated safeguarding lead has completed appropriate training to be effective in their role. Managers deal effectively with the few concerns they receive, including referring to outside agencies where necessary.

Learners receive good safeguarding information. They know how to keep themselves safe, work safely in the training rooms and report concerns. They have a good understanding of health and safety in relation to themselves and their clients.

Leaders have been slow to create a 'Prevent' risk assessment and to ensure that training for learners is comprehensive enough. However, learners have a basic understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

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