

Blue Apple Training Ltd

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Malcolm Fraser, 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.

Blue Apple Training Ltd delivers courses leading to qualifications in employability at entry level and level 1. It also provides vocational courses in retail and customer service at level 1 and spectator safety at level 2. At the time of the monitoring visit, 18 learners, all Jobcentre Plus (JCP) customers from Wakefield, were on an employability course called 'stand out from the crowd'. Blue Apple Training Ltd provides short courses for JCP customers in Leeds, West Yorkshire and York. It does not use subcontractors.

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 successfully provide an adult learning curriculum that enables adults to develop very effectively the personal confidence, attitudes and skills that they need to gain employment.

Leaders and managers target programmes well to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged unemployed adults. They have established effective partnerships, particularly with JCP managers and job coaches. They work collaboratively with these partners to design and deliver employability and vocational training programmes that meet the needs of JCP customers. JCP managers greatly value the programmes, which are tailored effectively to their requirements and their customers' needs. They speak highly of the significant improvements that they witness to customers' confidence, personal effectiveness and ability to seek and obtain work as a result of participating in training programmes.

Leaders and managers have developed successful partnerships with a number of employers. They use these well, in collaboration with JCP managers, to design programmes that enable JCP customers to participate in courses designed specifically to meet employers' needs. Courses often involve employers participating in delivery of company-specific training activities. This helps learners to develop the skills,

attitudes and confidence that they need to work for the employer. Most courses provide guaranteed interviews and a high proportion of learners gain jobs.

Directors, leaders and managers use their self-assessment procedures well to gain a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. However, they have made slow progress in implementing a few of the key actions that they have identified to bring about improvements. Slow progress in developing an effective management information system has resulted in leaders and managers lacking access to up-to-date information about learners' progress and next steps after completing courses. This prevents them from having timely information to inform their judgements about the effectiveness and impact of their provision.

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**

Tutors take good account of the needs and circumstances of learners when planning training. A high proportion of learners lack the confidence and skills to apply for and gain work before joining their course. Many experience anxieties and an increasing number have poor mental health. Tutors work sensitively with learners, enabling the large majority to gain in confidence. Learners attend well and take pride in their work. Tutors help learners to recognise the skills and work-related attitudes and behaviours that they have developed, which learners use effectively to plan for their next steps when applying for jobs.

Leaders and managers ensure that tutors have relevant experience and qualifications to deliver courses that meet the needs of learners. They have a rigorous approach to reviewing the performance of staff, providing training and support, and addressing instances of poor performance. Regular staff training ensures that tutors have the knowledge and skills to develop successfully learners' understanding of a range of relevant topics related to their lives in modern Britain, including the risks of radicalisation.

Tutors support learners well to improve their literacy skills through speaking and writing exercises in lessons. They also encourage learners to read outside lessons. As a result, learners read more confidently and produce good-quality written work such as job applications.

In most cases, tutors use information about learners' starting points carefully to plan learning activities that enable learners to address effectively gaps in their knowledge and skills. However, in a few instances, tutors do not use this information well enough, slowing the progress that learners make.

Tutors accurately assess learners' progress in improving their knowledge, skills, confidence and behaviour. However, they do not consistently provide feedback which

is sufficiently helpful to enable learners to know how they could improve their work further.

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

Learners feel safe and know how to report any concerns. The recently appointed designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is suitably qualified. She uses her extensive experience of working with and supporting vulnerable adults well to promote a strong culture of safeguarding.

Directors maintain suitable safeguarding policies and procedures, which include arrangements to ensure the safe recruitment of staff. All staff have undertaken training on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. Tutors know how to report safeguarding concerns. The DSL carries out comprehensive risk assessments on JCP customers with unspent criminal convictions to confirm the suitability of courses and potential employment and to identify other safeguarding considerations for learners and staff.

The DSL maintains confidential records of any safeguarding concerns and actions taken. However, referrals to external agencies are not recorded in the safeguarding log. The 'Prevent' duty action plan is not updated routinely to respond to changing risks in the local area.

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