

Gecko Programmes Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 1270872

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Inspection date(s): 16–17 July 2019

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 ESFA. 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.

Gecko Programmes is a private training company that started trading in 2009. Its main aim is to provide training for adults seeking to gain full-time employment. Most learners study at either level 1 or 2. One third of learners study subjects such as employability skills that lead to forklift-truck driving and security courses. One third study English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses, with the remainder studying sports coaching. Courses range from five days to 12 weeks in duration.

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 have a clear strategy to ensure that adult learners receive the training and support needed to move into further learning or employment. They work closely with the local enterprise partnership (LEP), mayoral combined authority and Jobcentre Plus (JCP) to identify exactly the skills and knowledge required by employers and learners. For example, they help learners to develop their employability skills, such as time management, working with others, personal presentation and body language.

Leaders have designed distinct programmes in areas such as ESOL, security, employability and sports coaching to provide learners with the specific knowledge and skills for them to move into further learning or employment. For example, a significant proportion of the budget is used to help learners who speak English as an additional language to improve their speaking and listening skills to help them access further training.

Leaders have recently recruited suitable staff with relevant teaching qualifications to support their planned growth with the LEP combined authority. They have also ensured that their teaching venues are well equipped, with access to information technology and other essential learning tools and resources.

Managers review and use effectively the information about the destinations of learners to plan the future curriculum. Where provision falls below expectations, leaders act swiftly to improve or remove provision. For example, leaders have withdrawn one programme as a result of too few of its learners moving into employment.

Leaders have developed a comprehensive lesson observation strategy to ensure that all teaching staff and staff providing information, advice and guidance deliver effective teaching sessions. However, they have not developed sufficiently well their quality assurance arrangements to ensure that learners make at least the progress of which they are capable.

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

Most learners receive effective training to help them develop the skills and knowledge necessary for them to move into further learning or employment.

Learners on sports coaching courses develop their confidence, knowledge and skills well. Teachers plan their theory and practical sessions to ensure the gradual development of learners' ability to deliver coaching sessions confidently. Teachers identify high-quality work placements, so that learners practise these essential skills and can work independently in a range of settings, including schools and sports clubs.

Teachers on ESOL courses support learners to become more confident and independent within their communities. For example, they help them to develop their speaking and listening skills, so that they can visit their doctor independently. As a result, learners are more able to support themselves in activities where they live and work.

All learners complete an initial assessment in English and mathematics to identify their starting points. Managers use this information effectively to place most students on an appropriate course. However, in a few cases, managers do not place all learners accurately. These learners found courses too easy because of their prior knowledge and experience.

Teachers do not develop learners' English and mathematical skills well enough. Where written feedback is given, teachers do not provide sufficient comments to help learners know how to improve their spelling, grammar and punctuation skills. For example, they fail to identify errors with capital letters, full stops and commas. As a result, learners continue to make the same mistakes.

Teachers on sports coaching courses monitor learners' progress consistently and help them to catch up if they fall behind. These learners receive effective feedback to help them improve their knowledge and skills. However, in ESOL and employability skills courses, too few teachers record accurately learners' progress or provide them with sufficiently helpful feedback for them to improve well enough.

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

All staff and learners have received training on how to keep themselves safe. Consequently, although they work and learn in locations deemed to be high risk, they feel safe and work safely. They know whom to contact or refer to should they have any concerns.

Managers ensure that they follow safe recruitment practices on all staff to assure their suitability when working with learners. Managers ensure that all staff have the appropriate qualifications for the subjects that they teach.

The designated safeguarding officer (DSO) has had the appropriate training to carry out the role effectively. The DSO ensures that all policies and procedures are up to date, reviews routinely safeguarding practice and strengthens arrangements where necessary. For example, leaders have changed teaching locations to ensure that learners are safe.

Most learners have a basic understanding of how to keep themselves safe from the threat of radicalisation or extremism.

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