

Altamira Art and Design Limited.

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Peter Nelson, Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI)

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: 132 Eric Street
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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 (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.

Altamira Art and Design Limited (Altamira) is an independent learning provider, based in Mile End, in the London borough of Tower Hamlets. Altamira has delivered apprenticeship and adult education provision since 2016 under subcontracting arrangements. In 2017, Altamira received funding directly from the ESFA through the adult education budget, and it is this provision that is in scope for the monitoring visit.

Over the past academic year, a total of 196 learners enrolled on adult courses, from entry level to level 2. Subjects include English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), business administration, information technology (IT), beauty therapy, early years, and health and social care.

Themes

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

Significant progress

Leaders and managers have developed a suitable curriculum. It provides the opportunity for learners to improve their English and IT skills and develop relevant vocational skills. The curriculum helps improve the life chances of unemployed adults in the local community and responds well to the economic development priorities in the borough.

Leaders and managers build strong partnerships with the local job centre, through which they recruit most of their learners. They work closely with colleagues from the job centre to ensure that they recruit learners on to the most appropriate courses to meet their needs.

Managers have established good partnerships with several local employers. For example, learners on the beauty therapy course develop good practical and customer service skills through weekly placements at a local beauty salon. This helps enhance the quality of the training for the learners.

The learning centre is conveniently located to meet the needs of borough residents and is readily accessible by public transport. Leaders and managers maintain high-quality accommodation and resources that help underpin the quality of education. Staff enhance the learning environment, and celebrate the success of learners, through stimulating and informative displays in classrooms.

Leaders and managers have established effective quality assurance procedures, including self-assessment, lesson observation, and a range of internal audits. Staff use this information well to help maintain and improve the quality of provision.

Managers have established valuable links with local colleges and training providers. As a result, a high proportion of learners successfully move on into further study or into apprenticeship locally once they have completed their course with Altamira.

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**

Teachers assess learners' skills well at the beginning of their programmes. They guide learners skilfully towards programmes that meet their developmental needs and personal aspirations. Where learners do not have the suitable skills, staff refer them appropriately to other courses.

Teachers are well qualified in their vocational specialisms. Most have appropriate teaching and assessing qualifications or are working towards them. They use their experience and insight well to develop learners' skills and knowledge.

Learners produce work to a suitable standard for their level of study. Tutors ensure that learners maintain well-presented work. Staff provide good individual support to help learners to apply for jobs or to move on to the next level of learning. They provide high-quality guidance on job search and preparing job applications. As a result, learners have the confidence and skills they need to apply for further courses or employment.

Teachers on beauty therapy and childcare courses develop learners' English skills particularly well. They support them to communicate effectively with clients and to use technical terminology well in vocational contexts. Tutors on a small minority of vocational courses at entry level do not correct learners' spelling and grammar consistently. As a result, learners on these courses are less clear about what they need to do to improve their written English. Tutors do not routinely develop learners' mathematics skills on vocational courses.

Tutors support learners very well. They provide additional time for learners to gain individual support for portfolio building and to complete assignments. Tutors monitor learners' progress effectively.

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

Staff ensure that learning takes place in a safe environment. They have established a suitable portfolio of policies and procedures to help assure the welfare of learners. All learners receive appropriate information on safeguarding as part of their induction. Most learn about health and safety, the 'Prevent' duty and British values. They know what to do, and to whom they should speak, if they have any concerns. As a result, learners feel safe at the centre.

Most teachers reinforce these topics through their teaching. However, a minority of learners, particularly on ESOL courses, are not clear about the risks associated with extremism and radicalisation. They are unsure of the actions they should take to stay safe online.

Managers have put in place a designated safeguarding lead for the organisation. They ensure that all staff receive appropriate training on safeguarding. Managers follow safe recruitment practices to assure the suitability of all staff.

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