

Paddington Development Trust

Report following a monitoring visit to a 'requires improvement' provider

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Paddington Development Trust (PDT) was inspected in February 2019. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement. The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in addressing the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

PDT is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. It offers training to disadvantaged adults, including many who are unemployed. Learners take childcare courses at levels 2 and 3. Around a third also take functional skills English, mathematics information and communication technology (ICT) or English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). PDT has venues in six local community settings in west and north London. The large majority of learners are from minority ethnic communities and have arrived in the UK with few qualifications. For most learners, English is spoken as an additional language.

Themes

What progress have leaders and managers made to raise the quality of education in English, mathematics, information communication technology (ICT) and ESOL courses? Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have made pragmatic changes to the curriculum to increase the emphasis on the delivery and development of skills in English, mathematics and ICT. Teachers have improved how they embed the development of learners' skills in reading, writing, speaking, listening, numeracy and ICT in lessons. For example, students successfully imported images into word-processed documents, while another group were able to manipulate data on spreadsheets to produce pie charts. This approach helps learners become more proficient in using these skills.

Since the previous inspection, managers have extended the use of an online teaching package to support learners in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. Teachers use this well to carry out thorough initial diagnostic assessments, and pinpoint particular areas which learners need to develop. Teachers then direct learners towards appropriate modules so they can fill their knowledge gaps. Teachers track the progress of learners through each module to help ensure that they acquire the skills they need to succeed. Learners like using this online package and make good progress in developing their skills.

Teachers have introduced regular drop-in sessions to provide additional support for ESOL learners. Teachers carefully assess the impact of these sessions by monitoring learners' improvements, for example in the development of their verbal communication skills and by reviewing the quality of learners' written work. Learners speak confidently about how they have improved their skills as a result of the support they receive in the drop-in sessions. For example, a group of learners explained how their newfound skills have enabled them to improve their understanding of health and safety legislation in the workplace. They now understand the differences between hazards and risk assessments.

What progress have leaders and managers made to ensure teachers identify learners' starting points and sequence activities, so that learners acquire and retain appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviours? Reasonable progress

Teachers have strengthened the emphasis on assessing learners' starting points. They now carry out more thorough analysis of what learners know, and identify those areas where learners need to enhance their knowledge and skills. They then teach activities that support learners to fill the gaps in their knowledge. Teachers also use this information well to support learners with more advanced skills, so they can achieve a higher standard of work.

Managers have created new opportunities for learners to reflect on, and review, their own progress as they develop new skills and build their confidence. Teachers recognise and acknowledge the value of these new review opportunities, and how they can triangulate this self-reflective feedback from learners with more formal assessments that teachers carry out. They use information from these sessions effectively to help shape and inform future learning activities.

Managers have worked closely with teachers to review the curriculum. They have redesigned the programme to ensure a more logical sequencing of different activities. For example, a group of learners was exploring the basic principles of nutrition, prior to moving on to design an appropriate diet and menu for young people. As a result, learners are more able to consolidate their basic knowledge, before moving on to more advanced ideas.

Managers have increased the opportunities for teachers to share their ideas and best practice. They encourage teachers to pool their resources online, and to discuss how they plan and deliver their lessons. As a result, teachers take a more active interest in the craft of teaching. They maintain a professional dialogue about their work, which helps sustain the focus on the quality of education.

What progress have leaders and trustees made to ensure that they have oversight of the quality of provision and that they use data effectively to help raise standards?

Reasonable progress

Since the inspection, leaders have reviewed the governance arrangements and have established a new stakeholder group. The primary aim of this group is to provide support and challenge to managers, particularly in relation to quality improvement. At the time of the visit, this group was in the early stages of establishing their terms of reference to ensure clarity of focus.

Leaders and managers have responded positively to the feedback at the previous inspection on how they use data to help inform management decision-making. They have commissioned a new system for gathering and reporting on learners' attendance, results from tests and feedback from staff and learners. They have clear plans on how they will use this data to help them track and monitor the impact of their improvement strategies on the overall quality of provision.

Leaders and managers are realistic about the challenges they face to address weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. They are strongly committed to quality assurance and improvement. They continue to review regularly the work of teachers in lessons. They also gather relevant feedback from learners to help shape improvements.

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