

New London Educational Trust

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

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

The New London Educational Trust was inspected in January 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.

At the time of the monitoring visit, there were 131 apprentices on programmes from levels 2 to 5 and 120 learners on adult learning programmes at level 3. Most apprentices were studying information and communication technology at levels 2 to 4. Around a third were on health and social care and child care programmes at levels 2 to 5. A few were on customer service programmes at level 2, and management and leadership programmes at level 5. All adult learners were on a business diploma course at level 3.

Themes

What progress have leaders and trustees made in using management information to improve the quality of the curriculum?

Reasonable progress

Senior leaders have put in place a well-planned curriculum. They have done much useful research into the knowledge and skills needed in their local community. For example, they spotted a need for technology skills in west London. The trustees bring a great deal of value to the curriculum in their knowledge and analysis of enterprise and business. Leaders link well with employers to make sure that their apprenticeships are relevant to them. The curriculum serves adult learners well; nearly all achieve the qualification they need to go on to university.

Leaders have improved their knowledge of what they know is working and what needs improving. They have a more self-critical culture in their assessment of the curriculum, and their latest self-assessment is a solid basis for making improvements. Leaders learn lessons from courses that do not work sufficiently well. They now make sure that apprenticeships suit their workforce's skills. Leaders' planning is decisive and underpins the improvements they are making against clearly defined targets. They know that there is still a way to go before they reach their high expectations.

Leaders at all levels have a clear idea of the progress that their learners and apprentices are making. They make frequent checks together on the progress both groups make towards their qualifications. They have improved their monitoring systems, so they know at an early stage when either group falls behind with their studies. They have a good enough overview of the quality of teaching and training.

Trustees do not have enough key information on the performance of courses to challenge senior leaders. Senior leaders do not share this information routinely with trustees, although it exists. Trustees do not check trends on the extent to which learners achieve or progress to higher education. Trustees do visit courses and check the quality of the learning experience.

How much progress have tutors made in making effective use of information, on what learners and apprentices know and can do at the start of their courses, to meet their needs?

Reasonable progress

Staff are effective at helping applicants find the right course. They understand applicants' needs and desired next steps and match their potential and abilities to relevant courses to give them the best chance of achieving. They signpost applicants to other education and training providers when they cannot offer what applicants need.

Tutors know adult learners' deficits in their English knowledge and skills that will be vital in their next steps and close these gaps well. For example, tutors hold a useful weekly 'English and academic writing' class for learners. This activity helps learners to improve their use of grammar and to structure written assignments. Tutors teach them so that they recall well the formal requirements in higher education of referencing literature. This change in practice is an improvement since the previous inspection.

Tutors make good use of information on deficits in what learners and apprentices know to improve their knowledge of the world of work. They integrate this well into what they teach by giving useful examples. Business tutors show learners the best ways of promoting their work on social media. Child care apprentices recall and employ strategies to help build a positive working environment from what they have learned.

Tutors, through fruitful discussions, take on board learners' and apprentices' subject interests and their feedback on what they have learned. They use this information well to widen learners' and apprentices' knowledge and improve their work. They show apprentices tips to use in the workplace that improve their effectiveness in their jobs. They put on extra teaching sessions to help adult learners to achieve a higher quality in their work.

In a minority of cases, tutors do not use the assessment of apprentices' English and mathematics skills well enough to plan their subsequent teaching. As a result, not all apprentices improve their use of English and mathematics quickly enough.

What progress have tutors made in improving how they build learners' and apprentices'

knowledge and skills?

Reasonable progress

Tutors have improved how they explain and get across concepts to learners and apprentices. They are careful to structure their teaching, so that they build on learners' and apprentices' knowledge. They do this by making sure that they reinforce technical knowledge that recurs in different parts of the course content. They teach apprentices through real-life scenarios about the right behaviours for dealing with customers. Learners also recall concepts from teaching sessions through extra training from industry professionals.

Tutors keep in touch with their apprentices and visit them frequently. They and employers review apprentices' workplace learning well. They help reinforce knowledge and skills that apprentices forget, or strengthen their practice. Apprentices told inspectors that at these visits, tutors help them to improve their spoken English skills. Apprentices also grow in confidence with the knowledge that they gain through working with assessors. Those on management courses put forward ideas in their workplaces to improve leadership practice.

Learners and apprentices rightly value the support they get to help them keep up with their studies. Tutors make themselves available to teach learners one-to-one. Learners contact tutors by phone if they are struggling with their assignments, and tutors spend extra time helping them. They speak to apprentices face-to-face in the workplace to ensure that they understand what they are doing. Managers are diligent in making sure that they check the quality of learners' work and that their assignments are complete.

Tutors do not help apprentices well enough to improve their spelling, grammar or presentation skills. As a result, apprentices repeatedly make the same mistakes, and a few do not feel ready for their functional skills examinations.

Apprentices do not have enough knowledge of how to keep themselves safe. They are aware that they need to report anything that they are really worried about, but do not know whom to contact if they have concerns.

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