NDA Foundation Limited

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

Unique reference number:	1247998
Name of lead inspector:	Russ Henry Her Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
Address:	Rufford Hall Waterside Way Trent Park Nottingham NG2 4DP

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

NDA Foundation Limited (NDA) 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.

NDA provides level 3 diploma programmes in curtain making and soft furnishings, interior design and garden design. These programmes are funded through advanced learner loans. Students complete their programmes either wholly online or through a combination of online and face-to-face lessons. At the time of the monitoring visit, NDA had 179 active students.

Themes

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that a higher proportion of students achieve their qualifications?   **Reasonable progress**

Managers have taken a range of actions to increase the proportion of students who complete their qualifications. Students receive clear advice and guidance before they embark on programmes. Managers keep better records of students who are at risk of dropping out. They hold frequent review meetings with tutors to ensure that these students receive the help that they need.

Managers now ask students to provide a written account of why they wish to join programmes. This helps staff to make judgements about students' likely level of motivation and whether they need help with their writing skills. Staff ask students to declare any learning difficulties they may have, in order to provide them with appropriate support. Managers have established a set of indicators to help tutors to spot any emerging concerns about students' progress. Staff use these well to identify students who may be at risk of dropping out. Although tutors know which students require extra help, they do not receive enough guidance or training about how to support them.

Fewer students from 2019 have withdrawn from their programmes. Historically, almost all students who remain on course achieve their qualifications. This suggests that a greater proportion of current students will succeed in their studies. However, managers did not take action soon enough to have a large impact on students who enrolled in 2018. As a result, too many of these students did not complete their programmes.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that quality assurance arrangements lead to improvements in the quality of education and, in particular, online training?

Significant progress

Managers have developed appropriate processes to ensure that the quality of education is good, including the quality of online training. They have developed a calendar that identifies a number of quality assurance processes and gives a timeline for their completion.

They have established clear and effective processes for initiating the development of new online resources and for making changes to existing materials. These processes involve tutor discussions, reviews of student feedback about existing materials and informal discussions with individuals who work in relevant businesses. There are clear guidelines for the development and approval of study materials, which staff understand and follow carefully. Staff manage projects effectively and the resulting online resources are of high quality.

Managers have established new processes for checking the quality of taught lessons through observation. The observations and resulting action plans provide a good basis for developing tutors' practice.

The quality of education experienced by students is good. To this end, they have appointed a new director to oversee this work.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that tutors check the existing English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) skills of students and in using the information this provides to help students to develop their skills and knowledge?

Reasonable progress

Recently recruited students have benefited from improved processes to test their expertise in mathematics. Staff have developed an online mathematics assessment that tests the specific skills needed for design work. Tutors use the result of these assessments to provide individual help to those students who need it.

Tutors assess students' English through their written responses to questions on the application form. These questions ask students to explain why they want to study the subject they have chosen, what their aspirations are and whether there are any potential obstacles to their success. This is an effective way of identifying any support needs. Tutors provide personal support to students whose first language is not English. This helps these students to learn at a similar pace to others.

Tutors do not currently assess students' ICT skills when they join their courses. However, they provide appropriate training to ensure that all students can access the online learning materials and can use the computer-aided design tools that they need to complete their studies.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that students understand the importance of British values and how to protect themselves online or when encountering radicalisation and extremism?   **Reasonable progress**

Staff have developed a range of resources to help students to develop their understanding of British values and safeguarding themes. Students who recently joined the programme develop a good awareness of online safety and the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. They know what to do if they have any concerns. Students also develop an appropriate understanding of British values and respect those who have differing views and beliefs. Students nearing completion of their programme can often recall having read about these topics at the beginning of their course but cannot remember the material in any depth.

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