

# The Romsey School

Monitoring visit report

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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' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

The Romsey School started to offer adult education almost 20 years ago for Hampshire County Council. It began its direct ESFA-funded adult learning provision in November 2017 and is registered as The Romsey Community School. It provides courses in English, information technology and mathematics from entry level to level 2, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and childcare at level 2 and a range of other short accredited and non-accredited programmes. Most learners enrol on short courses that provide them with qualifications to access employment or to move onto higher-level study. The Romsey Community School had 85 learners studying at the time of the monitoring visit. The majority are from within the local area of Hampshire.

### 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 exceptionally strong partnerships in place which ensure that adult learners and their needs are at the heart of their provision. For example, through chairing the Local Families Forum Operational and Strategic Partnership group, leaders have an excellent understanding of the needs of the local community and more vulnerable adults.

Leaders and managers work within their local area to design a bespoke curriculum offer so that there is a very close alignment with individual needs as well as local and national skills shortages. They use these partnerships to ensure that their English and mathematics programmes closely meet the needs of their learners. They have successfully built on an earlier introduction to childcare course to now offer a level 2 childcare programme to meet local employment needs.

Leaders review their provision carefully and use their funding to support the most vulnerable in the local area. They design all programmes so that pathways into higher-level programmes or employment are in place following successful

completion. Learners benefit from very good careers advice and guidance. As a result, learners have a strong awareness of what they will do next to continue to build their knowledge and skills.

Tutors provide very effective support for learners and they intervene swiftly to support any learners who are at risk of failing. Managers monitor learners' progress closely through monthly meetings with each tutor reviewing each cohort of learners.

Leaders have invested in their management team to ensure that sustainable improvements are in place. Managers demonstrate their new skills and confidence in the way they manage their staff teams. Staff benefit from good support and relevant training to carry out their roles. All staff have improved their teaching of literacy skills following training on the use of phonics. Newer staff receive mentoring so that they quickly become skilled practitioners.

**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?**      **Significant progress**

Tutors carefully consider the needs of their learners when they plan and deliver adult learning courses. A group of learners receiving support from the National Probation Service enthusiastically work on a project to design and implement a family-learning event for vulnerable families. This allows them to develop their citizenship awareness as well as valuable teamworking skills and confidence.

Teachers assess learners' starting points to ensure that learners are on the most appropriate course to meet their individual needs. They develop concise and clear individual learning plans so that learners understand their initial priorities. Teachers closely monitor learners' progress and record it accurately within learners' individual plans. Learners use these records so that they are aware of their development and their next steps.

Learners enjoy their studies and recognise the benefits of improving their life chances by gaining qualifications. They are highly motivated to learn and develop new skills rapidly, including confidence and resilience. Teachers provide learners with detailed feedback which helps learners improve their work and make progress. For example, childcare learners are set weekly homework tasks and receive timely and helpful feedback.

Lessons are extremely well planned with a range of engaging activities and teaching methods used which meet learners' needs. Learners on ESOL courses are able to communicate more effectively at work. They are also more confident in everyday situations such as shopping and banking. Learners on childcare courses benefit from studying a range of additional qualifications, including Makaton sign language, to improve their employment and progression opportunities.

Learners benefit from highly effective learning support within lessons. Learning support assistants are knowledgeable on learners' support needs and confidently go about their role in the classroom. As a result, all learners participate in lessons and contribute with enthusiasm.

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

Learners benefit from a very strong focus on their safety and well-being. They have a good understanding of radicalisation and extremism and how to stay safe.

Leaders work with a broad and relevant range of local agencies to understand the challenges and the risks for learners and their lives. Staff are well trained, including the designated lead and her deputies, with frequent updates and refresher training to ensure they are up to date.

Leaders carefully monitor learners who may be at risk and make referrals to statutory agencies or other support groups as appropriate. However, they do not analyse these referrals to identify any trends and the reporting to governors is not detailed enough to enable them to scrutinise trends effectively.

Leaders ensure that safer recruitment is in place, with a wide group of managers benefiting from recent training to inform their practice.

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