

Inspection of Tower College Of Further And Higher Education London Limited

Inspection dates: 4–6 February 2020

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| Overall effectiveness | Good |
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| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Good |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Adult learning programmes | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Information about this provider

Tower College of Further and Higher Education London Limited (TCFHEL) is an independent learning provider. The college has three sites. Two sites are in the London borough of Lewisham and one in the neighbouring borough of Greenwich. Lewisham, where the head office is situated, is the 48th most deprived local authority in England.

Learners, who are all employed adults, attend lessons at TCFHEL twice a week. They fund their learning with advanced learner loans. Learners can start their courses at different times of the year. Almost all the current 500 learners follow courses in health and social care at level 3. A very small number follow courses in the early years and business administration at level 3.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Staff have created a welcoming and inclusive environment where learners, especially those who would not normally have attended further education, receive the extra help they need to achieve their qualification.

Learners respect and like their teachers. They enjoy the way the teachers bring lessons to life by drawing on their experience in the care sector. This encourages and motivates learners to achieve their qualification.

Staff challenge learners to be ambitious and set aspirations for them to go to university. Learners receive good guidance and support from staff in choosing their next course and in applying for university. They learn how to write effective personal statements and how to be successful in interviews.

Learners work hard, and the large majority achieve their qualification and go on to higher levels of study. They are rightly proud of the confidence they gain and in becoming an active part of society.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders and managers have taken swift action to make the improvements highlighted at the previous inspection and monitoring visit. They have supported teachers to improve their practice and have invested wisely in good-quality online resources. They have provided teachers with training on teaching skills, such as using questioning to help them check that learners are remembering the knowledge that they gain.

Teachers use their subject expertise and teaching experience well to sequence and teach the content of the curriculum. Teachers make good use of online resources to plan and teach lessons that build learners' knowledge and skills. For example, learners have a good knowledge of diversity through understanding the meaning of their own names. They then use this knowledge to start to understand that everyone they meet is unique. They recognise that some of their service users have faced discrimination in their lives and have very specific challenges for which they will need support. This is particularly true for those clients with whom they work who have mental health difficulties. As a result, learners show empathy and compassion in their caring roles.

Senior leaders have a coherent strategy for courses that are suited to their learners. They offer courses that meet the diverse needs of their learners to become qualified in health and social care. Leaders and managers work well with local care homes so that learners who are not employed in a care setting can gain suitable work placements.

Learners' work is of an appropriate standard for level 3. However, teachers do not help learners adequately to master the technique of academic writing. For example,

learners do not always know how to incorporate quotes or reference other people's work in their essays.

Learners gain confidence in their work as health and care practitioners. For example, they are more able to deal with clients with severe learning difficulties and disabilities. In addition, learners gather more pertinent information relevant to an individual's care plan and subsequently write accurate reports on their clients.

Teachers help learners to challenge their own behaviours and attitudes as a result of newly gained knowledge. For example, learners understand the importance of making eye contact with the older people they care for. For some, this is contrary to their cultural upbringing. Learners also recognise how they must adapt their communication to be more professional.

Staff provide learners with helpful advice and guidance about their next career step. For example, learners are helped to explore university courses online and explore a wide range of job roles they can apply for when they complete their qualifications. As a result, learners are confident about their next steps and have a clear view of how to achieve them. The vast majority of learners progress into higher-level learning or promotion at work.

Staff set high expectations of learners and these are demonstrated in lessons. Learners are courteous and respectful of each other and the staff. They work well together and learn from each other and from the experiences they gain in their workplaces. They do not interrupt each other; they listen to each other's contribution in lessons. However, too many learners are not punctual for their lessons or do not hand in their assignments in a timely manner to meet the expected deadlines.

Leaders and managers have a secure oversight of the quality of provision. They have introduced a suitable scheme for evaluating teachers' performance. They have started to use data to monitor how well students achieve. However, they have not fully integrated their use of these processes into their management of the college to secure further continued improvement. Leaders recognise that they have made administrative errors that resulted in records of students' achievements on courses not being accurately recorded in 2019.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, managers and staff have created an environment where learners feel supported. They have appropriate policies and procedures in place which outline in detail the risks apprentices may face and the actions staff should take. Staff are trained in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty and know what to do should a concern be raised. The designated safeguarding lead has completed the necessary training to the appropriate level.

Learners feel safe and have a good understanding of how to keep the people they care for safe. Learners know to whom they should report any concerns. They are able to distinguish between the need to respect confidentiality and to report potential safeguarding concerns. Learners could talk with maturity about a recent terrorist event locally. They understand that people can express radical views and know the dangers posed when individuals act on extremist views, potentially harming others.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Teachers should support learners to develop their academic writing skills so that they know how to reference texts in their written work.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that they fully implement their evaluation of teachers' performance so that they provide staff with the development they need to further improve their practice.
- Leaders and managers should make better use of the data they have on the performance of learners in order to identify any emerging weaknesses and put in place remedial actions.
- Teachers should ensure that they demand higher expectation of learners with regard to their punctuality and their timely submission of assignments.

Provider details

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|------------------------------------|---|
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| Contact number | 020 8692 7500 |
| Website | www.towercollegelondon.co.uk |
| Principal/CEO | Theresa Mgbeobuna |
| Provider type | Independent Learning Provider |
| Date of previous inspection | 19–22 February 2018 |
| Main subcontractors | N/a |

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the managing director, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including observing learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

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