

# Inspection of DV8 Training (Brighton) Limited

Inspection dates:

3–6 March 2020

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Education programmes for young people	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Provision for learners with high needs	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

## Information about this provider

DV8 Training (Brighton) Limited (DV8) is an independent learning provider specialising in creative industry courses for students aged between 16- and 24-years-old. It has campuses in Brighton and Bexhill.

DV8's main subject areas are fashion and design, games development, media production, music production and performance, event management, and life skills. It currently has 178 students on education programmes for young people. Twenty-two students study at level 1; 92 study at level 2; and 64 are on level 3 programmes. There are 32 learners with high needs funding.

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

Too many students do not attend lessons. When they do, they often arrive late. As a result, they do not develop skills, knowledge and behaviours as securely as those students who attend regularly.

A significant number of students do not feel that their courses prepare them well for what they want to do next in their careers.

Students appreciate and benefit from the inclusive environment at DV8. They like the small class sizes, the caring attitudes of tutors and support staff, and the welcoming behaviour of fellow students. As a result, the great majority of students, many of whom come from challenging backgrounds, complete their studies.

Students who attend regularly develop self-confidence and personal resilience. Many students overcome considerable barriers, such as extreme anxiety and mental health issues, to engage purposefully with their peers in classes and on group projects.

Students respond well to the expectations set by teachers at the beginning of their study programmes. As a result, they embrace difference and treat each other with respect. Students behave well in lessons. They are highly considerate of each other.

Students with high needs do better than their peers. A higher proportion attend classes regularly and achieve their qualifications. Many move on to higher-level qualifications and employment.

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

Leaders and managers at DV8 have a clear strategic intent for the curriculum. They use creative subjects to engage hard-to-reach young people in learning that aims to develop their wider social, personal and employability skills.

The structure of the curriculum enables students with low levels of prior attainment to progress from level 1 to level 3 in a broad range of creative disciplines. Leaders and managers have worked effectively with local authorities to ensure that students with high needs can access this curriculum in growing numbers.

The implementation of this ambitious curriculum intent is undermined by the high proportion of students who do not attend classes and miss significant amounts of teaching time by arriving persistently late. These students do not participate in the practical group work that is central to the teaching and assessment of creative subjects. They miss demonstrations by external experts in their vocational fields. As a result, they do not achieve the qualifications or skills and knowledge that they need to thrive.

In most subjects, curriculum managers and teachers plan and deliver a curriculum in a logical fashion. They enable those students who attend to build cumulatively the

skills and knowledge they need to increase their competence in practising creative disciplines. For example, students in games development start by learning how to pitch a media product. This provides them with the communication skills they need to work as part of a team for the group project where they learn most of their technical skills.

The great majority of teachers use information on the initial starting points and career aspirations of students well to plan and deliver study programmes that meet the needs of individual students. Teachers work effectively alongside learning support assistants to identify strategies to enable students with high needs to participate purposefully in practical activities. For example, support staff use their knowledge of students' mood inhibitors and behavioural triggers to keep them focused on their studies. As a result, they stay in lessons for longer periods and build their resilience to deal with sensory overloads.

Most teachers use feedback effectively to help students improve their practical work and written assignments. As a result, teachers challenge an increasing proportion of students who attend classes to achieve a merit or distinction grade. In a minority of instances, particularly at level 2, teachers are not sufficiently ambitious for their students to aim for high grades.

Most teachers have relevant vocational experience in the subjects they teach. Many of them are current practitioners in creative disciplines as performing musicians, producers of performances and studio managers. As a result, they give students a good grounding in the commercial realities of the careers many of them want to pursue.

Leaders and managers ensure that staff receive training that enables them to deal with the changing needs of their students. For example, they have provided specific mental health and first aid training for learning support staff, so they can cope with the increase in self-harming among students. Teachers are all being trained in how to work with students with autism spectrum disorder. As a result, students are kept safe and staff feel more able to cope with the challenges they face at work.

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have increased the volume and improved the quality of the work experience that students participate in as part of their programmes. The great majority of work placements are with employers working in fields that are relevant to students' vocational studies. Teachers ensure that students are prepared well for work placements and that they use the experience purposefully to develop their wider employability skills.

The resources and environment at the campus in Brighton are poor. Teaching spaces are cramped. Information technology equipment is not up to date or reliable. These physical surroundings do not project a culture of aspiration for students. By contrast, the recently renovated campus at Bexhill is spacious and well resourced, particularly for students on the games development programmes.

Leaders and managers have not ensured that all students receive impartial and timely careers advice. Too many students report that they do not feel well informed about career choices. Although leaders and managers have appointed a new senior manager to oversee the implementation of the organisation's careers strategy, it is still too early to see the full impact of this appointment.

Since the previous inspection, there has been an increase in the proportion of students who achieve their vocational qualifications, including those who take functional skills exams as part of their study programmes. The proportion who achieve high grades in English and mathematics GCSE, while increasing, remains too low.

Leaders and managers do not have sufficient information on the destinations of their students to enable them to evaluate the impact of the current curriculum. As a result, they cannot use this information to make changes to the curriculum to increase opportunities for students to secure relevant employment or move into further and higher education.

Leaders and managers have not tackled successfully all the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Despite making progress in improving the quality of education, particularly for students with high needs, they have not been able to reduce significantly the high proportion of students who do not attend lessons or arrive late.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, managers and staff are clear about their respective responsibilities for keeping students safe. Managers follow safe recruitment procedures to ensure that all teachers and support staff are cleared to work with very vulnerable groups of students. Staff ensure that all absent students are followed up and their whereabouts are checked. All staff, including the designated safeguarding leads, are trained to an appropriate level. As a result, students feel safe. They trust staff and know that if they report any concerns, these will be followed up promptly and measures taken to protect them from harm.

## **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Leaders, managers and staff need to challenge and support students to improve their attendance and punctuality at lessons, so an increasing proportion of students can develop secure skills, knowledge and behaviours.
- Leaders and managers need to ensure that all students receive timely and impartial careers advice, so they can identify the best available options for their next step into further/higher education and employment.

- Leaders and managers need to collect more detailed information on the destinations of their students once they leave the provider, so they can evaluate the impact of the curriculum and make it more successful in achieving positive destinations for students.
- Managers should ensure that teachers are equally ambitious for all their students, so that they can challenge students, particularly those on level 2 qualifications, to achieve higher grades in their subjects.
- Managers and teachers should improve the quality of the teaching and assessment they provide to students on GCSE English and mathematics, so that an increasing proportion of students achieve a high grade.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	59191
<b>Address</b>	12 Queen Square, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 3FD
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<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Dan Wallman
<b>Provider type</b>	Independent learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	20–23 November 2018
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## 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.

### Inspection team

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