

Icon Vocational Training Limited

Progress monitoring report

Unique reference number:	52434
Name of lead inspector:	Emma Barrett-Peel, Her Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
Address:	61 Newport Road Caldicot NP26 4BR

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Icon Vocational Training Limited was last inspected in December 2019. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

This monitoring visit focused on the extent to which leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances. It was undertaken as outlined in the [operational note on visits carried out from January 2021](#) and with reference to the further education and skills handbook.

These visits are to help learners, parents, employers and government understand how providers are meeting the needs of learners in this period, including those with high needs and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Following changes to government guidance and the imposition of COVID-19 (coronavirus) lockdown restrictions, inspectors carried out this monitoring activity remotely. As a result, the range of evidence available to inspectors was narrower than would be the case during an on-site inspection. Therefore, this report provides a more limited level of assurance.

The impact of COVID-19 has been taken into account in the findings and progress judgement below. Inspectors did not evaluate leaders' response to COVID-19 during the spring and summer of 2020, when the provider was not open to all learners and there were no national expectations regarding remote education.

Theme

What progress are leaders and those responsible for governance making to ensure that staff teach a curriculum and provide support to meet learners' needs, including the provision of remote/online learning?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have made progress against all the recommendations from the previous inspection. However, due to the pandemic and the sectors that the provider works in, the progress against a few of the recommendations has been slow. A large proportion of sport apprentices, who account for around two thirds of the learners, are either on furlough from their workplace or have been at some point over the last 12 months.

Leaders and managers have made substantial changes to make sure that they focus on improving the quality of education for apprentices. Leaders have made changes to improve the learners' experience, including to induction, programme monitoring

and the staffing structure. As a result, apprentices are now making expected progress towards completing their apprenticeship. However, leaders and managers do not fully monitor the impact of the changes and therefore miss opportunities to make more rapid improvements.

Leaders and managers have improved quality assurance processes to make sure that apprentices benefit from a well-planned and challenging curriculum. Managers carry out frequent meetings with tutors to review apprentices' progress. They observe their teaching sessions and provide them with developmental feedback to help them improve their teaching skills. Most tutors give apprentices useful feedback that helps them to improve their work. For example, sport apprentices show an improved understanding of technical language that helps them in their jobs and to pass their assessments. For a few apprentices, tutors' feedback is too brief and focuses on unit completion rather than the new knowledge and skills apprentices develop and are able to apply at work.

Leaders provide tutors with training to develop the skills they need to teach their learners remotely. Tutors have completed courses to help them teach and assess online, raise awareness of online safety and use learners' starting points for planning, tracking and monitoring progress. However, leaders recognise that they still need to support tutors to improve their teaching skills further, as recommended in the previous inspection. In particular, this applies to tutors who have not yet taught apprentices on standards.

Tutors provide apprentices with effective online, one-to-one learning sessions. Apprentices benefit from well-planned and sequenced sessions that help them develop significant new knowledge. For example, tutors support sport apprentices to focus on anatomy and physiology theory. This improves their understanding and gives them the skills they need in the workplace when working with clients. Apprentices who work in leisure facilities have found skills development more challenging due to the current restrictions. However, they make good use of photographs and videos to provide evidence of their new knowledge and skills and tutors then follow up with professional discussions.

Apprentices now have a good understanding of what counts as on- and off-the-job training, and most are benefiting from better planned training with their employers' involvement. Leaders and managers have redesigned the induction process to make sure that they involve employers in coordinating and planning high-quality training for new learners. Employers and apprentices have a good understanding of the requirements of the apprenticeship, including end-point assessments. Employers are well informed and able to support their learners to achieve their apprenticeship.

Tutors use progress reviews and tutorials effectively to support most apprentices to stay on track with their learning. Tutors use the 'topic of the month' well to develop apprentices' current knowledge of safeguarding.

Most apprentices understand the career opportunities available to them at the end of their current programme. However, their knowledge beyond the next level of course or job is still limited. Apprentices are not always aware of the wider opportunities in the sectors they work in, or how the new knowledge and skills they develop could transfer to other sectors or jobs. Staff provide good support to

apprentices who face, or are at risk of, redundancy. For example, tutors work with apprentices to complete qualifications, such as for fitness instructor, to help them with their job search.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have started working with a subcontractor to provide a sport-related traineeship programme for a small group of trainees. Learners benefit from the opportunity of a progression route into an apprenticeship. Leaders have made sure that they have processes in place to manage subcontracted provision effectively, check the quality of teaching and swiftly identify and resolve any issues.

Leaders and those responsible for governance should take further action to:

- make sure that they fully monitor and review the impact of any changes they make to maximise the opportunities to improve the quality of education
- make sure that they develop further the teaching skills of all tutors so that all learners benefit from high-quality teaching.

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