

Liberty Training

Progress monitoring report

Unique reference number:	144785
Name of lead inspector:	Montserrat Pérez-Parent, Her Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	Independent specialist college
Address:	Paragon House Albert Street Ramsgate Kent CT11 9HD

Monitoring visit:

Context and focus of visit

Liberty Training was last inspected in August 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

Main findings

Leaders and managers have taken action to deal with all the recommendations from the previous inspection. However, some of these actions have not yet had a beneficial impact on learners.

Leaders have made useful additions to the curriculum to meet the variation in needs and interests of their learners. Tutors and teaching assistants work effectively with learners to identify their personal and career goals, in addition to education and qualification goals. They use this information well to plan learning. As a result, learners benefit from a broader and more challenging curriculum.

Staff use face-to-face or remote tutorials well to review the progress that learners are making. Most learners are making good progress towards their academic and personal goals. For example, learners develop their handwriting and spelling skills and learn how to manage their money.

Tutors assess learners' starting points well and use this information to plan learning and to meet individual needs. For example, tutors use phonics to support learners with pre-entry reading skills, while working with others to improve their reading abilities. As a result, all learners in the group make progress.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have replaced the supported internship programme with a more suitable curriculum that provides learners with extra support and includes work experience. A dedicated member of staff works with employers to carefully identify work placements which relate to the needs and interests of learners. Learners interested in history and construction have placements at a local museum and a plastering company respectively.

Employers work with learners to develop skills they will need for work, such as punctuality, being polite and good personal hygiene. Employers work with tutors to support learners thoughtfully, taking into account their background and family life when planning activities for them. As a result, learners grow in confidence and develop the skills to take responsibility for their own independent work, such as showing visitors around a garden.

Leaders and managers do not benefit from external scrutiny and challenge, nor do they review sufficiently well the actions they take to continue to improve areas for development identified. Because of this, they do not know whether or not these actions have been successful. For example, leaders do not provide tutors with feedback on the remote lessons they have observed so that they know what they are doing well or what they might need to improve. As a result, teachers are not improving their remote-teaching skills.

Leaders and managers recognise that learners' participation in remote learning is a challenge and they have introduced interventions to improve learners' attendance. Low attendance is an ongoing problem that managers acknowledge.

Leaders plan learning during the current period of national restrictions to suit the individual circumstances of each learner. Learners who would need to use public transport to attend college and those shielding, or with relatives who are, work remotely. Learners needing one-to-one support or who struggle with remote work continue to have their lessons on site. At the time of the visit, nearly all learners were learning remotely.

Staff work effectively with learners, both face to face and remotely, to identify individual areas for improvement. Most tutors provide useful feedback to learners that helps them make progress in the areas they need to improve. However, level 2 learners do not benefit from this and are not challenged to improve.

Since the start of the pandemic, leaders have adapted their support so that sessions with external counsellors are available to learners studying remotely. Staff provide additional support to learners who are working remotely through one-to-one sessions and follow-up calls. Leaders have increased communication with parents and carers and make welfare calls to learners at least weekly. As a result, parents feel well informed and talk very positively about the support staff provide for their young people. Learners know who to contact if they need help or have any concerns and are confident that staff will support them well.

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

- ensure that they monitor and review more closely the areas they have identified that need improvements so that they can determine if the actions they have put in place are having a positive impact
- swiftly ensure that they introduce external scrutiny and challenge which holds leaders to account for improving the quality of education for all learners
- ensure that tutors provide all learners with useful feedback so that they can achieve their full potential.

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