

# Royal Mencap Society

Progress monitoring report

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<b>Name of lead inspector:</b>	Joanna Walters, Her Majesty's Inspector
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## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

Royal Mencap Society was last inspected in June 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 taken positive action to address the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. They have a determined focus to improve the quality of education and support that learners receive.

At the previous inspection, opportunities for tutors to develop their teaching skills and gain qualifications at a higher level were identified as areas for improvement. Leaders have recruited new qualified teachers and put in place a more extensive staff development programme. These actions have led to improvements to the quality of teaching and support that learners receive.

Most tutors now provide effective support that meets the individual needs and career aspirations of learners on supported internship and traineeship programmes. Most tutors use the outcomes in education, health and care (EHC) plans effectively to create a personalised curriculum for each learner. However, on supported internship programmes tutors do not make good enough use of EHC plan outcomes to plan a personalised curriculum for learners. As a result, they do not adequately plan learners' opportunities for development. For these learners, managers and tutors do not know the extent to which learners make progress towards achieving their EHC plan outcomes.

The majority of learners have not been able to undertake on-site work placements with employers due to COVID-19. Instead, they participate in thoughtfully planned community projects. This change to the curriculum enables tutors to teach learners skills that will support them to gain employment. For example, a small group of supported internship learners set up a business to make and sell candles to raise money for a hydro pool at a local school. Learners said that they enjoyed taking part in this project and learned new knowledge and skills, such as how to run a social media page to promote the items they were selling.

Most tutors use good resources that make remote lessons interactive and accessible to learners. Tutors skilfully use a range of strategies to make sure learners can participate in lessons and show what they have learned. For example, they design presentations that allow learners to type or upload photo answers to the presentations on online whiteboards.

A small number of learners on the supported internship programme have external work placements. Tutors appropriately plan online learning so that learners develop skills that they are able to use in their work placements. Case workers ensure that employers understand learners' targets, and this helps them plan appropriate tasks for learners on their work experience placement. For example, learners have learned how to measure in inches and in centimetres and convert between the two.

Teachers make good use of guest speakers. Learners participate in workshops from employers from a variety of industries such as banks, public transport providers, newspapers and social media experts. The workshops enable learners to develop their knowledge of roles in different job sectors.

Most learners have opportunities to attend virtual careers fairs. Careers advice and guidance are provided mainly by case workers. Leaders recognise that there is a need for learners to have access to further impartial advice and guidance and they have plans to put this in place.

Learners are safe and know who to go to if they need help. They are familiar with the signs of radicalisation and extremism. Learners participate in lessons on how to keep safe when in the workplace, online and in their communities. Tutors reinforce how to keep safe throughout the programme.

Learners benefit from high levels of support from staff that enable them to make progress. Through frequent meetings with their case works and tutors learners know how well they are doing, and have the opportunity to raise any concerns they may have. Learners spoken to say that they appreciate the support they receive from staff, and that it is one of the best parts about their programme.

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

- ensure that on supported internships, the curriculum for all learners includes the individual outcomes in EHC plans and that staff use these to monitor learners' progress more closely.

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