

Nottinghamshire Training Group Limited

Progress monitoring report

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Name of lead inspector:	Russ Henry, Her Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
Address:	Cheapside Worksop Nottinghamshire S80 2HX

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Nottingham Training Group Limited (NTG) was last inspected in February 2020. 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

Since the previous inspection, managers have challenged staff to improve their curriculum planning and have provided them with training and guidance to help them do so. As well as in-house training that has focused on curriculum planning, developing learning resources and teaching lessons online, teachers have completed a level 3 award in education and training. This training has contributed to substantial improvements.

Teachers now plan programmes much more thoroughly. They produce detailed documents that describe precisely the knowledge and skills that learners should develop. In most cases, they ensure that topics are taught in an appropriate sequence. They produce clear and detailed learning materials that they use to supplement their teaching.

However, within their planning, most teachers do not pay enough attention to the development of learners' fluency in applying their newly acquired skills and knowledge. Plans provide too little opportunity for practice and recap, and links to on-the-job training for apprentices are not explicit.

In most cases, managers have organised class groups so that teachers only have to plan and prepare for learners studying the same topics at the same level. This makes it much easier for teachers to provide effective lessons. However, such grouping is not always possible and in a small number of cases teachers still have to wrestle with planning for groups that contain students studying multiple qualifications at different levels.

Managers have developed plans to use current affairs to explore themes related to British values with learners. However, they have had to focus considerable effort on adjusting to pandemic restrictions and this has meant that these plans have not yet been fully implemented.

Managers have allowed staff a degree of flexibility in how they teach learners who are studying remotely. Some make use of live lessons on video conferencing platforms. These lessons are effective. Teachers use a range of tools to explore topics, such as videos and slide-show presentations, and they supplement these with appropriate learning activities. They present information clearly and logically. They also check learning well and do not move onto new topics until learners have grasped the current material.

Other staff use email and telephone contact to teach their students and apprentices. For example, one teacher emails apprentices a slideshow and a set of activities on a weekly basis and then telephones them and explains the topic. Apprentices find this approach helpful.

Staff check learners' understanding when they are in lessons or during one-to-one discussions, but they do not provide them with enough guidance on mistakes and omissions in their written work. Feedback on this work is often too positive and does not provide specific and precise details of how learners can make improvements. Teachers do not pay enough attention to the quality of apprentices' writing and do not do enough to help them to develop their English skills in the vocational context.

Managers have put in place a range of measures to help them to identify those learners who need support and they provide learners with help so that they can continue with their studies. For example, they identified the few learners who were struggling to access IT, and provided them with laptops.

Teachers discuss learners' welfare with them during online lessons and through frequent individual telephone calls. They offer individual support sessions and learners are frequently reminded of the help on offer. Learners are appreciative of this and feel well cared for.

Staff have continued to provide learners with careers advice during pandemic restrictions. They discuss next steps with both students and apprentices. Staff have started level 3 qualifications in information, advice and guidance to help them provide better quality support for career planning.

Students have some recollection of having explored online safety when they started their programmes, but they cannot recall having received any guidance since they commenced remote study. However, learners are able to describe the steps they should take to protect themselves.

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

- ensure that staff include appropriate opportunities for learners to revisit topics and practise their skills at frequent intervals during their studies
- ensure that staff provide better feedback to apprentices on written work that enables them to understand precisely how they can make improvements, particularly in relation to the quality of their writing.

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