

Derbyshire Adult Community Education Service

Progress monitoring report

Unique reference number:	50217
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Inspection dates:	23–24 February 2021
Type of provider:	Local authority
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Derbyshire Adult Community Education Service (DACES) was last inspected in March 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 and training 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

Adult learners, apprentices and the vast majority of young learners study remotely. Teaching continues through a combination of online lessons, workshops, tutorials and progress reviews. A small number of vulnerable learners attend on-site, some to access information technology (IT), others to participate in face-to-face learning.

Learners without access to IT or with limited digital skills found the transition to online learning difficult. Leaders and managers invested significantly in technology and training to support learners to study online. Learners continue to make good progress. They are aware of how to keep safe online.

Tutors sequence course content logically. Apprentices start by learning the essentials they require for work. Teaching assistant apprentices consider the importance of safeguarding before moving on to more complex topics such as child development and school leadership. Apprentices, who are new to their sectors, rightly find this approach helps them progress into their roles with confidence.

Lessons are most effective when tutors ensure high levels of learner participation through effective task design and questioning. The use of interactive platforms is particularly helpful in allowing tutors to quickly check learners' understanding. In customer services, learners practise answering questions for job interviews and receive instant feedback about the quality of their performance and how it can be improved. In a few less effective lessons, tutors introduce too many ideas before they can be fully assimilated by learners. The role of learning support assistants in relation to the tutor is unclear in a small minority of lessons. This can confuse learners.

Staff at all levels of the organisation place a strong emphasis on learners' welfare. Positive mental health workshops and resources are readily available. Mentors maintain close contact with young learners to keep them on track and ensure they make progress. Tutors provide effective individual support for adult learners who have caring and home-schooling responsibilities.

Leaders have addressed most of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Tutors have benefited from subject-specialist training and vocational updating provided through a professional development programme. More specific focus is needed on the teaching practices most likely to help learners integrate new knowledge and skills into their long-term memory.

The quality of tutors' feedback on learners' written work is too variable. Most tutors clearly identify what learners have done well and what they can do to improve. In a small minority of cases, feedback does not include any tutor comments or learners are simply asked to amend tutors' corrections. Either approach limits learners' abilities to understand and learn from their errors.

Leaders and managers have overhauled safeguarding processes, so that information is up-to-date and accessible to relevant staff. New, more rigorous protocols are in place to manage safeguarding incidents. Safe recruitment checks take place for staff, with enhanced checks for those who teach younger learners. A governor with safeguarding expertise has been appointed and works closely with the designated safeguarding lead to review procedures and audit quality and compliance. Governors have received safeguarding training and use the reports they receive to hold senior leaders to account.

Tutors have participated in extensive training in order to understand the dangers of extremism and radicalisation and the importance of British values. Guest speakers have worked with learners as part of parliament week, holocaust Memorial Day and

to share experiences of modern slavery. Despite this, learners and apprentices are not able to discuss radicalisation or extremism with any degree of confidence.

Learners' understanding of British values is well developed in lessons. In English as a second language (ESOL) lessons, tutors use news articles about COVID-19 to discuss vaccination and the concept of individual liberty. Apprentices develop their understanding of British values through monthly topical projects, for example the American Presidential election and the dangers of inciting hate. Younger learners are less secure in their understanding of British values.

Impartial careers advice and guidance are well integrated into courses. Careers coaches work effectively with tutors to develop employability resources and visit lessons to offer advice to learners about potential career paths. As a result, learners are clear about their next steps.

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

- ensure that tutors' professional development includes a sharper focus on the teaching practices most likely to help learners make more rapid progress
- support tutors to make better use of assessment and feedback so that learners gain a better understanding of how they can improve their work
- continue to integrate information on radicalisation and extremism into the curriculum and through enrichment so that learners and apprentices gain a firm understanding of the dangers in their local contexts.

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