

North Lincolnshire Council

Progress monitoring report

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Name of lead inspector:	Jacquie Brown, Her Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	Local authority
Address:	Adult Education Centre The Link Scunthorpe DN16 2UT

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

North Lincolnshire Council was last inspected in June 2019. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to be inadequate.

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, leaders have carefully reviewed the curriculum offer to ensure that it meets the needs of the local community and to respond to the effects of the pandemic. For example, leaders are working with the Department for Work and Pensions to develop and provide useful programmes for adults who are furloughed or made redundant as a result of COVID-19. However, following recent changes to the English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) curriculum, too many learners on ESOL courses who need a qualification to progress on to a further course or into employment no longer have the opportunity to follow an accredited course.

Leaders provide helpful careers education, information and guidance that helps learners to work towards their future goals. They appointed a careers coordinator in October 2020 who provides course guidance and a useful careers programme for learners, including access to workshops provided by the National Careers Service.

Leaders have implemented an effective attendance monitoring system. This enables tutors to monitor learners' attendance at online sessions and their participation in other types of online learning. Tutors identify learners who are at risk of falling behind with their studies and intervene quickly to provide support.

Leaders have put in place a quality assurance process that provides managers with greater oversight of the quality of teaching, training and assessment. 'Quality champions' use observations of online learning to identify aspects of practice that tutors need to improve and to provide support to improve practice.

Leaders effectively manage staff who are underperforming. Tutors attend useful training sessions that improve their teaching skills. Tutors who are unable to improve the quality of their teaching leave the organisation.

Leaders have implemented an appropriate programme to improve tutors' teaching skills. Tutors benefit from training on assessment, planning learners' programmes using their starting points, how to deliver a successful lesson using the online learning platform, and the importance of sequencing learning. For example, tutors plan topics within their programmes so that learners develop the required knowledge and behaviours in a logical order. In ESOL, tutors prioritise the development of speaking and listening skills at the start of the course.

Learners on courses leading to qualifications benefit from appropriate teaching, training and assessment that enables most to make at least reasonable progress in improving their knowledge, skills and behaviours. For example, learners on the understanding children and young people's mental health programme are able to support children in their workplace with strategies for coping with anxiety.

Learners on ESOL courses develop their confidence in speaking English in a range of situations. However, they do not make rapid enough progress in the development of their knowledge to gain a broader understanding of the language.

Governors have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the organisation. They also have appropriate expertise to scrutinise, challenge and support leaders. They have experience and expertise in teaching and learning, safeguarding, finance and recruitment. As a result, they effectively hold leaders to account for the quality of education.

On the understanding children and young people's mental health course, tutors teach useful topics that are not covered by the qualification. As a result, learners benefit from coverage of additional topics which they can then apply to their job roles and

family lives. For example, learners can support children in their workplace with strategies for coping with anxiety.

Leaders are providing effective support to learners during the COVID-19 restrictions. They use online teaching and other remote learning activities and resources to respond appropriately to meet the needs of learners. Learners can access both live teaching and other online activities to make progress in their learning. Tutors ensure that vulnerable learners who do not feel confident accessing online materials receive paper-based work packs through the post.

The safeguarding team effectively identify the most vulnerable learners and ensure that they receive frequent phone calls to check on their well-being. When learners need additional support to overcome challenges in their lives, the safeguarding team provide training and support. Learners benefit from training in relation to domestic abuse, online safety and mental health and well-being. The designated safeguarding officer works well with external agencies when learners require more specialist support, such as the probation service, housing support, the police, and adult services.

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

- ensure that tutors provide effective support and tuition to learners enrolled on programmes that do not lead to a qualification so that these learners quickly develop knowledge, skills and behaviours
- ensure that learners on ESOL courses who need a qualification to progress to their next steps are able to take one.

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