

Inspection of My Life Learning

Inspection dates:

4 to 6 May 2022

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Inadequate

Personal development

Inadequate

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Provision for learners with high needs

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

My Life Learning is part of the wider My Life charity. It provides education and support for learners aged 16 to 25 who have a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These include moderate to severe learning difficulties, autism spectrum condition, speech, language and communication needs, and emotional difficulties.

At the time of the inspection, 26 learners attended the college in Wigan, Greater Manchester. Learners study horticulture, animal care and equine in one of three groups. Half of the learners are in the employability group, one third are in the learning for independence group and the remainder are in the learning for life group. The college is located on an 84-acre site.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Learners enjoy coming to college. They feel supported and cared for by their tutors and learning support assistants (LSAs). Learners are respectful of one another and are aware of the need to respect individual differences.

Learners do not develop the substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours of which they are capable. Tutors do not plan the curriculum to help learners know more and remember more over time. Learners cannot recall their previous learning and activities easily or without significant prompts.

Learners do not benefit from a curriculum that prepares them for their next steps. Although attendance is high, staff fail to instil in learners the importance of punctuality. Learners are not provided with opportunities for work-experience placements that relate to their future ambitions. They do not routinely develop their confidence and independence skills.

Learners feel safe. They know whom to go to if they feel sad or need help. However, leaders have not created a culture in which learners develop appropriate behaviours and skills that will keep them safe. Tutors and LSAs do not consistently model appropriate physical contact. Learners making sandwiches to sell to college staff do not follow appropriate food hygiene standards.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders, managers and governors do not have high enough expectations of staff and learners at the college. The curriculum is not aspirational or challenging. Learners follow a similar curriculum content regardless of their level and ability. Leaders' and managers' curriculum rationale is not clear or understood by staff. They have yet to involve stakeholders such as employers in the design of the curriculum.

Leaders have been too slow to make changes to staffing and appoint new staff. The significant changes to academic staff since July 2021 have seriously hampered leaders' ability to bring about improvements. The curriculum is unambitious, and the quality of education is uninspiring. Newly appointed managers and staff have only recently started to make changes to the curriculum and quality processes. The impact of these cannot yet be seen.

Learners do not routinely receive the support that they need to be successful in their learning. Leaders, managers and tutors do not identify, or embed into the curriculum, the support for which learners are funded. Leaders do not check the impact that specialist therapies, such as speech and language therapy, have on learners' progress.

Leaders and managers do not provide training for staff or learners about local safeguarding issues, such as the exploitation of young people. They are unclear about the local issues relating to radicalisation and extremism.

Leaders provide specialist support training for staff, such as sighted guide training. However, leaders do not have robust plans in place to develop tutors' teaching skills to improve learners' educational experiences.

Leaders, managers and tutors do not plan or sequence the curriculum logically. Tutors fail to consolidate and broaden learners' knowledge and understanding. When learning about voting as part of the personal development curriculum, learners do not revisit the topic regularly or in different contexts.

Tutors and LSAs use class rules and gentle prompts to establish clear expectations in the classroom. Learners behave well, are compliant and stay on task. However, in lessons, tutors and LSAs do not plan activities to help learners improve specific behaviours, such as building confidence. Learners do not develop the behaviours they need to prepare them for work or life in the community.

Learners do not currently benefit from careers education, information, advice and guidance. Current arrangements do not support learners in planning for their future. Independent advice and guidance are not yet in place for learners.

Leaders and managers have in place a range of enrichment activities, such as creative crafts, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme and football. Learners who are not in college on a Friday do not have the opportunity to take part.

Governors are suitably experienced in the further education and SEND sectors. Although they have recently begun to challenge leaders and managers, governors have failed to ensure that leaders have acted swiftly to identify, implement and bring about improvements to the quality of education and the curriculum. Governors were unaware of the current weaknesses in safeguarding at the college.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are not effective.

Leaders do not ensure that all safeguarding concerns that staff report are followed up appropriately. The safeguarding team failed to identify potential issues such as neglect or to refer concerns to external agencies. The two recently appointed designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) are inexperienced in this role. Current and previous DSLs have not met regularly or formally with learners identified as a cause for concern to ensure that these learners are staying safe.

Leaders have failed to put in place robust risk assessments for work placements. They do not assess properly the activities that learners undertake, the environments in which they learn or the people that they will meet, or the transport in which they travel to their placement.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- As a matter of urgency, put in place effective safeguarding arrangements, including prompt identification, referral and monitoring of safeguarding concerns, and the implementation of robust risk assessments. Leaders and managers must ensure that correct food hygiene standards are followed, that staff model appropriate behaviours, and that training is provided for staff and learners about local safeguarding issues, including radicalisation and extremism.
- Work with stakeholders to develop an ambitious curriculum intent, including a clear rationale, coherent planning, and logical sequencing that is tailored to meet individual needs.
- Ensure that leaders, managers and tutors provide an aspirational and challenging curriculum in which learning is planned effectively, so that all learners develop the substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours of which they are capable in preparation for their next steps.
- Use funding effectively so that learners receive the support that they need in order to be successful in their learning.
- Establish high-quality careers education, information, advice and guidance that supports learners to plan for their future.
- Ensure that all learners have equal access to enrichment activities.
- Ensure that governors challenge leaders and managers to swiftly bring about improvements to the quality of education and the curriculum.

Provider details

Unique reference number	146045
Address	Thompson House Pepper Lane Standish Wigan Greater Manchester WN6 0PP
Contact number	01257 472900
Website	www.my-life.org.uk/my-life-learning
CEO	Caroline Tomlinson
Provider type	Independent specialist college
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the interim head of college, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous monitoring visit report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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