

Inspection of Standguide Limited

Inspection dates: 13 to 16 June 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Adult learning programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Standguide Limited was established in 1990 and is based in Ashton-under-Lyne. The company specialise in pre-employment and skills training courses for adults. They also provide employment advice, funded qualifications, business mentoring and recruitment. Standguide Limited received its first publicly funded contract to deliver adult learning programmes in November 2017.

At the time of the inspection, 46 adult learners were on short pre-employment courses in digital skills, business start-up, kick-off in business, and warehousing and storage with fork-lift truck training. There were an additional 18 learners following pre-entry and entry level English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programmes, and 21 adults on a supporting teaching and learning programme at level 2. Learners were studying with the provider and their three main subcontracting partners.

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

Learners enjoy their learning. They are motivated and excited to learn. Learners clearly articulate how the skills they develop will help them in the future. For example, they talk enthusiastically about using digital skills in the workplace and applying for jobs and paying bills online.

Learners benefit from well-planned lesson activities that build on their lived experiences and allow them to gain confidence. As a result, learners develop employment skills and contribute actively to society. For example, learners on the supporting teaching and learning programme discuss experiences of their own children with special educational needs that enrich their practice on their work placements.

Learners develop a good understanding of key concepts and technical terminology, which they use with increasing accuracy. For example, in the 'kick off to business' course, learners learn about the meaning of acronyms, such as NIC, for national insurance contributions. ESOL learners use terms, such as hardware, when describing technology and online safety, and defecate, when writing a letter of complaint about mouse infestations. Supporting teaching and learning learners talk confidently about professional boundaries and safeguarding thresholds.

Learners feel safe and know how to report concerns should they arise. Learners benefit from training on internet safety, safeguarding concerns and mental health. They know how to keep themselves safe.

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

Leaders have a clear rationale and strategy for the programmes they offer. They have created an ambitious curriculum designed with partner employers to address skill shortages locally, regionally and nationally. Where leaders do not have the in-house expertise to teach specialist skills, they work effectively with selected subcontractors to provide the training that adults need to improve their job opportunities. For example, leaders provide pathways into in-demand sectors such as warehousing and logistics, and digital skills. They also provide ESOL and basic literacy programmes to help learners develop the language skills they need to remove barriers to the job market. As a result, the vast majority of learners stay on their course, pass their qualifications and progress to further study or work.

Leaders and teachers use assessments of learners' existing knowledge and skills thoroughly and accurately. They place learners on the right course to meet their needs. Teachers identify accurate starting points, and any support needs that learners may have. They use the results of these assessments to inform teaching.

Teachers teach the curriculum in a logical order. For example, in warehousing and storage, learners first learn about health and safety, followed by its application in the workplace and then policies and procedures, and responsibilities of learners and employers. Learners on the 'kick off in business' programme start with the considerations

and risks of self-employment. They then learn about business structures and tax implications before finally learning how to market a business on social media. As a result, learners develop their knowledge incrementally.

Leaders and teachers have an accurate oversight of the progress that most learners make. Teachers and learners use learner journey documents effectively to reflect on learners' progress. Teachers use formative assessment well. Most learners complete their programmes and, for those on accredited courses, achieve their qualifications.

Teachers ensure that lessons are calm and orderly. They set high standards and expectations for learners' behaviour from the beginning of the course. For example, learners on warehousing and storage programmes adhere to the strict health and safety practices that keep them safe in a warehousing environment. They clearly explain the potential dangers of non-adherence when working with large machinery and equipment. As a result, learners behave well, and are respectful of their peers, teachers and the learning environment.

Teachers ensure British values, safeguarding training and the 'Prevent' duty are embedded within the curriculum to help learners develop a good understanding of living in modern Britain. For example, they teach about cyber security, password protection and suspicious emails. Learners learn about pupil vulnerabilities and the promotion of inclusive practice on the supporting teaching and learning programme. As a result, learners have a good understanding of barriers to participation within British society.

Peer-to-peer support and collaboration is highly effective and means that learners develop their communication skills when interacting with peers. Learners provide technical support for each other. For example, on ESOL programmes they correct the pronunciation of words such as pepper and paper. Learners with more knowledge and skills help other learners to understand and complete tasks and activities. They build their confidence over time and demonstrate their learning.

Teachers provide learners with careers guidance and CV writing support before they attend job markets with local employers. Learners gain a clear understanding of employment opportunities and progression in the workplace. They benefit from external speakers such as the National Careers Service. As a result, learners are aware of what their next steps could be.

Governors and leaders are ambitious and committed to providing high-quality education and training for learners. They have an accurate understanding of the quality and effectiveness of the provision. Governors use their knowledge, experience and skills in their wider roles, such as as chief financial officer and chief operating officer, to hold senior leaders to account for the quality of training and for the development of new and emerging programmes offered.

Leaders use both formal and informal meetings to monitor and support staffs' work-life balance. They ensure staff benefit from a supportive workplace environment. Leaders make reasonable adjustments, including greater flexibility in working patterns to support staff welfare, well-being and positive mental health. They have

trained mental health first aiders and produce a weekly bulletin with hints and tips on keeping mentally fit and healthy.

On a small number of courses, tracking and assessment are weak. As a result, a few learners do not know what they need to do to improve the quality of their work. Managers recognise this and have taken steps to improve the assessment of learner work and the quality of feedback that learners receive.

Teachers on ESOL programmes do not always explain activities clearly enough and learners become confused about what is expected of them. Teachers do not always challenge the more-able learners sufficiently. For example, while a few learners finish their work swiftly, others struggle to keep up. As a result, a few learners do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

External governors with responsibility for safeguarding use their knowledge and expertise to enhance safeguarding practices. They provide training to raise mental health awareness of staff and learners, creating a culture of safeguarding and welfare across the provider.

Leaders place the safeguarding and well-being of learners and staff at the heart of what they do. The safeguarding team has the appropriate training and experience to carry out its role effectively. The team has well-developed links to external agencies that help them keep learners safe.

Staff, subcontracting partners, and learners benefit from regular training on safeguarding and the Prevent duty and learn how this relates to them and their lives.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Improve tutors' tracking and assessment of learning to ensure all learners know what they need to do to improve the quality of their work.
- Ensure ESOL tutors explain activities clearly and challenge their more-advanced learners to extend their learning.

Provider details

Unique reference number	58520
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Contact number	0161 881 4826
Website	www.standguide.co.uk
Principal/CEO	Mark Owen
Provider type	Independent Learning Provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	Discover Consultancy and Training CIC McKenzie Horn Limited Transport Training Academy Limited

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the CEO, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection 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.

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