

# Inspection of Azure Charitable Enterprises

Inspection dates:

13 to 15 June 2023

## Overall effectiveness

## Requires improvement

The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Requires improvement**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Provision for learners with high needs

**Requires improvement**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

## Information about this provider

Azure Charitable Enterprises is located in Cramlington, Northumberland. It provides study programmes for learners who have moderate to severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities to prepare them for further education or employment. There are 38 learners currently enrolled, all of whom have education, health and care plans. Ten learners are working towards a level 1 horticulture qualification, 17 are studying level 1 hospitality and catering, and 11 are working towards level 1 employability qualifications.

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

Classrooms and practical learning environments are productive, calm and orderly, and learners display very good behaviour and positive attitudes to learning. There are high levels of respect between staff and learners. Learners are polite and courteous in lessons and during breaktimes when they engage and interact well with their peers.

Most learners demonstrate a basic understanding of British values, equality and diversity. They understand the importance of treating everyone with respect, regardless of their background, and they are aware of the need to abide by rules and regulations, both at college and in their daily lives. However, learners do not have a sufficiently well-developed understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, including awareness of local risks. They are not aware of how they could be targeted as vulnerable individuals.

Leaders and staff place a high priority on attendance and punctuality. They monitor attendance well and have implemented a range of effective and supportive strategies to maintain high levels of attendance and punctuality. As a result, learners attend well and arrive on time for their lessons.

Learners engage in a range of enrichment activities which help to develop their interests and enhance their daily lives. Learners and their families take part in quiz nights at the college and attend access evening clubs at the college. Learners also visit a local discotheque in the community. Staff provide learners with options of places to visit as part of their enrichment activity, and learners vote on which places of interest they would prefer to visit.

Too few learners have the option to engage in work experience. As a result, too many do not have opportunities to develop their employability skills in real working environments. Leaders have recognised the need to provide more opportunities for learners to engage in work experience and have recently secured placements with the local council, which they plan to commence at the start of the next academic year.

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

Leaders and managers provide a range of useful and relevant courses to enable learners to develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours. Learners are supported to improve their independence, confidence and self-esteem through the vocational subjects that they study so they are better prepared for adulthood and employment.

Leaders work effectively with a range of key stakeholders. They have established and maintained effective working partnerships with local schools and healthcare professionals to support learners' successful transition into college. For example, leaders provide taster days prior to learners commencing their studies at college. As

a result, learners are placed on the most suitable pathway that best meets their individual needs, and they settle quickly into the college.

Leaders employ staff who are caring and want to work with learners with high needs. Leaders are very considerate of the well-being of their staff.

Staff do not identify learners' starting points well enough. Assessment information is not used to set targets that would enable learners to work towards gaining the key knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to meet their long-term goals beyond the qualifications they are studying towards. As a result, staff cannot accurately measure the progress that learners make or assure themselves that learners are making the progress of which they are capable.

Tutors are vocational experts, and they use their expertise well to teach practical skills. Tutors helpfully demonstrate to learners the activities that they need to complete in practical sessions. Tutors frequently repeat instructions and remind learners what they need to do. For example, they demonstrate how to chop vegetables so that portions are of a similar size and how to use knives safely. Learners follow the instructions and work accurately and safely.

In a few instances, the activities that tutors use in lessons are not effective in developing learners' knowledge so that learners can apply it to their own experiences and aspirations. Staff do not adapt their teaching to meet learners' specific needs. As a result, learners with less well-developed knowledge and skills struggle to engage fully in learning activities and are not given sufficient time to understand and process key information.

Most learners benefit from effective learning support. Support staff use their knowledge and experience well to provide learners with the required levels of support, which enables learners to engage and interact in lessons. As a result, learners develop their confidence and increase their independence and autonomy in the way they work.

Leaders do not provide teaching staff with training to help them to develop and update their teaching skills and their knowledge of working with young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, they do provide a professional development programme for staff, which includes topics such as safeguarding, the 'Prevent' duty, and health and safety.

Learners do not receive clear information about the opportunities available to them when they leave the college. Staff do not ensure that the careers guidance that they provide to learners is related well enough to learners' own experiences and aspirations. As a result, most learners are not fully aware of the career and employment opportunities available to them.

Leaders and managers have put in place a board of trustees with expertise from various sectors, including finance, business and law. The board provides effective challenge to ensure financial security and effective safeguarding management.

However, it does not monitor the quality of teaching. As a result, trustees are not able to hold leaders to account for the quality of education and the progress that learners make. Leaders have recently appointed a trustee with experience in the education sector to offer increased support in this area, but the impact of this appointment is not yet evident.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers have in place effective processes and procedures which they use appropriately to ensure that learners and staff are safe. These relate to safeguarding, anti-bullying and safe recruitment. Leaders also have in place a 'Prevent' duty policy and risk assessment.

Leaders and managers recruit staff who are suitable to work with vulnerable learners. Staff have current disclosure and barring service checks. Managers take references and ensure that staff are eligible to work in the United Kingdom.

Leaders manage safeguarding concerns well. They have effective processes in place, and refer concerns to external agencies, such as social services and the local police, as necessary, to ensure learners are safe. As a result, learners feel safe and know who to contact should they feel unsafe. Learners have confidence that staff will respond appropriately to protect them and their peers.

## **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Ensure that tutors provide relevant training to enable learners to identify the dangers posed by the risks of radicalisation and extremism.
- Ensure that staff identify learners' starting points and use this information to set useful targets that enable learners to work towards achieving their long-term aspirations.
- Ensure that tutors make better use of assessment information to plan learning that meets the individual needs of all learners.
- Ensure that learners benefit from a wide range of opportunities to explore their future options, including engaging in work experience.
- Ensure that teaching staff receive good-quality professional development and training to enable them to provide teaching that meets learners needs.

## Provider details

|                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>      | 50582   |
| <b>Address</b>                      | McCallum House<br>Kielder Avenue<br>Cramlington<br>Northumberland<br>NE23 8JT |
| <b>Contact number</b>               | 01670 733966  |
| <b>Website</b>                      | <a href="http://www.azure-charitable.co.uk">www.azure-charitable.co.uk</a>    |
| <b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b> | Peter Wilson  |
| <b>Provider type</b>                | Independent specialist college  |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>  | 4 April 2018  |
| <b>Main subcontractors</b>          | Not applicable  |

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of education, 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.

## Inspection team

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Rachel Angus

Neil Clark

His Majesty's Inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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