

Elfrida Rathbone Camden - Leighton Education Project

Reinspection monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Jon Bowman, His Majesty's Inspector

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: 7 Dowdney Close
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This is the second reinspection monitoring visit to Elfrida Rathbone Camden - Leighton Education Project (ERC) following publication of the inspection report on 1 September 2022, which found the provider to be inadequate overall.

ERC is an independent learning provider based in Camden. The college provides education and training to young people aged 16 to 25 with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), including autism spectrum disorder, and medical needs, such as epilepsy. At the time of the visit, there were 19 learners with education and health care plans with high needs.

Themes

What progress have governors and senior leaders made to ensure they have the skills and expertise to provide effective scrutiny of the provision?

Insufficient progress

Trustees do not provide effective enough scrutiny of the provision. Since the previous inspection, trustees have increased the number of members of the board with experience of SEND. Trustees work with consultants to support them to achieve improvements in the provision. This has led to a clear curriculum strategy and plan through which they aim to meet the individual needs of young people. However, trustees have not ensured that staff implement the strategy effectively.

Trustees and senior leaders are not critical enough in their self-assessment of the education they provide. As such, they do not have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses. The chair of trustees has sought first-hand assurance that safeguarding arrangements are in place and effective. However, trustees and senior leaders do not ensure that there is sufficient capacity in place to make the improvements needed in delivering the curriculum. Not enough tutors are suitably skilled to teach young people with SEND.

Trustees and senior leaders do not adequately check or improve the quality of the provision. Tutors and staff do not receive effective support to improve their practice. Leaders and managers use consultants to evaluate the performance of tutors. These evaluations are sporadic, and tutors do not receive sufficient follow-up support or training, based on the feedback they receive, to improve their practice.

What progress have leaders and staff made in developing a curriculum that is ambitious for learners, meets their individual needs and enables learners to make good progress towards their goals?

Insufficient progress

Since the previous inspection, leaders have been conscientiously working to develop and implement an ambitious curriculum for learners. However, despite their efforts, too often learners follow a curriculum that does not meet their individual needs well enough. Leaders and managers do not ensure that assessments of what learners know and can do are thorough enough or effective. For example, learners who have similar levels of ability in mathematics study at different levels. This means that the tasks are too easy for some learners and too difficult for others.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that tutors are equipped sufficiently with the skills and knowledge they need to plan and teach an effective curriculum. Tutors and support staff are often too quick to offer support to young people. This prohibits learners from acting with autonomy, discovering things for themselves and developing their capabilities. For example, when learners learn how to travel independently in the community, staff do not give them sufficient time to interpret bus timetables independently. Consequently, too many learners do not develop the skills they require for the next stage of their education, employment or day-to-day lives.

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have taken effective action to ensure that learners have access to the therapeutic support they need. For example, all learners who need speech and language therapy now receive it. This is having a beneficial impact on learners.

Leaders and managers ensure that learners are taught about healthy relationships. They have devised a new curriculum to help safeguard learners against extremist views and from becoming radicalised. However, these aspects of the curriculum are new, and it is too early to judge the impact on learners.

What progress have leaders and staff made in ensuring that learners receive timely and independent careers advice to prepare them for their next steps?

Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have established effective partnerships with a range of organisations to support learners to choose what they do when they leave college. For example, Jobcentre Plus advisers, Connexions advisers and employers all visit the college. They give talks and guidance to learners. This ensures that young people receive suitable advice and guidance on their next steps once they leave college. The National Careers Service provides information to parents and carers. Staff also liaise

effectively with them. Consequently, most parents and carers are well informed about their young person's next steps.

Managers have extended work experience to all young people who attend the college. Learners in their first or second year now take part as a group, working with a charity at a local garden. Leaders and managers recognise the need to develop the work experience offer further so that it better meets the individual interests and aspirations of young people.

What progress have trustees and leaders made to improve safeguarding arrangements? Reasonable progress

Leaders, managers and staff are alert to the safeguarding and welfare needs of learners. Learners feel safe in the college, and staff supervise them well at all times. When learners take part in higher-risk activities, such as travelling on public transport, leaders increase the ratio of staff to learners to minimise the risk.

Designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) record safeguarding concerns in suitable detail. Where there are ongoing concerns, they frequently update their records. This ensures that they have up-to-date, relevant information to, for example, advocate on behalf of young people for additional support when needed.

DSLs are involved in the local 'Prevent' network. They attend useful training, which builds well on their knowledge and understanding. They ensure that tutors have up-to-date training.

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