

Evolve Your Future Limited

Report following a monitoring visit to a 'requires improvement' provider

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Name of lead inspector:	Vicki Locke, His Majesty's Inspector
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Evolve Your Future Limited (EYF) was inspected in July 2022. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in resolving the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

EYF is a small independent learning provider. EYF offers adult education courses in Northamptonshire and Cambridgeshire. At the time of the visit, there were 64 adult learners, 40 of whom study functional skills English or English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). The remainder study functional skills mathematics, digital skills or employability courses.

Themes

What progress have leaders made in focusing curriculum content on the specific knowledge and skills adult learners need so that they can develop their skills beyond a basic level?

Reasonable progress

There have been improvements in how tutors plan and sequence curriculum content since the previous inspection. Many tutors now consider learners' personal aims and learning goals more closely when they plan teaching. They use this information to tailor learning activities to the specific knowledge and skills learners want to gain.

At the start of functional skills English courses, tutors identify areas for knowledge development. This informs subsequent areas of curriculum focus such as comprehension, grammar or writing structure. As a result, many learners make positive progress and gain relevant new skills. For example, learners compose spelling lists related to the logistics industry, which helps them in their warehousing job roles.

Most ESOL learners join courses specifically to develop their conversational English so that they can integrate successfully within their community. In many lessons, learners practise spoken English and become more fluent. They improve their everyday language so that they can confidently make healthcare appointments, order coffee, or take part in discussions with their friends.

However, tutors do not always routinely plan classes that incorporate activities for learners to practise spoken language. As a result, learners do not always develop their skills as quickly as they could. Learners rightly state they would like to have more regular discussions about current topics and the sectors they work in.

At the time of the visit, leaders had introduced new curriculum content to meet the specific needs of employers and learners. For example, a bespoke training package for a cleaning company so that their ESOL employees learned how to read and speak key technical workplace terms. It was too early to judge the impact of these developments.

What progress have leaders made in ensuring that tutors use the results of assessments to inform teaching so that adult learners can progress more swiftly? **Reasonable progress**

There have been improvements in initial assessment since the previous inspection. Learners now undertake initial assessments in a controlled environment. Tutors support learners to complete follow-on in-depth assessments and ask them about their course aims. Subsequently, tutors now have accurate and meaningful information about their learners' starting points. As a result, tutors can plan more effectively to meet learners' individual needs.

Tutors make good use of initial assessment information available to them to plan learning for each learner. For example, they set specific tasks that relate to learners' knowledge gaps, such as improved use of punctuation or better comprehension of text. Subsequently, learners progress more quickly.

Most tutors use observation effectively in order to assess learner progress. Tutors monitor carefully how well learners cope with and complete written tasks. Tutors know their learners well and offer supportive individual guidance. Feedback is always helpful and encouraging. As a result, learners become more confident and able to identify areas for improvement in their own work.

Tutors also use questioning to check understanding. However, too often tutors accept readily very simplistic responses to their questions. They do not always use questioning effectively in order to assess learners' knowledge or to help learners apply what they know to more complex scenarios. As a result, learners do not always develop their knowledge to a higher level or progress as swiftly as they could.

Use of other assessment activities to assess understanding accurately and plan future teaching are limited.

What progress have leaders made in improving how attendance is monitored and managed, so that adult learners attend well, remain on, and complete, their courses? **Insufficient progress**

Leaders ensure that tutors promote the importance of attendance. Tutors brief learners about attendance expectations during induction. Tutors undertake check-in calls with learners who fail to attend. Subsequently, they know the reasons for non-attendance at individual classes. Leaders and tutors use various approaches to try to

help learners to attend more regularly and stay on their courses, for example joining lessons remotely and a laptop loan scheme.

Leaders now monitor attendance and retention more closely. They hold weekly meetings to review data and agree actions. However, most actions taken are breaks in learning or course withdrawal. Performance reviews recently introduced include scrutiny of attendance and retention by tutor and course.

However, these approaches have not helped to raise attendance or reduce the number of learners who leave their courses early.

Attendance is still too low on too many courses. It is especially low at online courses, which was an area of concern at the previous inspection. At face-to-face and hybrid classes, attendance is better, but still varies considerably. Around a third of learners leave their courses early, especially on functional English.

Leaders do not do enough to fully understand the underlying reasons why learners leave their courses early. For example, quality of initial advice and guidance, class times, or quality of support. Leaders plan to introduce exit calls, but at the time of the visit, these had not yet commenced. Leaders have not done enough to review the suitability of online learning. Leaders do not use attendance and retention data to target their quality improvement work.

However, on business start-up courses, leaders have introduced a short taster course successfully. Subsequently, learners are clear about what their course entails. As a result, most learners complete the course and go on to run self-employed ventures.

<p>What progress have leaders and managers made in improving how they review the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that this accurately informs improvement actions and staff training? How does external scrutiny support this work?</p>	<p>Insufficient progress</p>
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Leaders have not put in place a systematic and effective approach to review and improve teaching and assessment.

Leaders have re-introduced observations, and these encourage tutors to reflect on their general teaching practice. However, observations do not focus enough on key improvement areas, including curriculum content or use of assessment. Observation outcomes do not inform staff training. However, leaders have recently commenced performance reviews with this intent.

Since recent staffing changes, tutors have had informal support about teaching approaches. However, tutors often explore approaches under their own initiative. Tutors rightly indicate they would value more training about use of assessment strategies.

Leaders support staff to undertake training, such as attendance at webinars and pilots of new technology. In team meetings, there are occasionally useful discussions about planning and teaching. However, too often these meetings focus on processes and compliance.

At the time of the visit, quality audits had recently been introduced. However, this work was in its infancy and varied in effectiveness.

There is insufficient focus on teaching, learning and assessment within operational and leadership meetings. As a result, leaders do not have full and accurate oversight. Leaders have recently changed meeting agendas and developed key performance indicators. However, these are not yet in use.

Leaders have not ensured their actions are targeted enough to drive improvements in quality consistently and swiftly. There has been some progress in areas such as initial assessment and adaptations of teaching resources to meet learners' needs.

Leaders have now put in place arrangements for external scrutiny. An advisory board meets monthly and has oversight of contractual performance, staffing and safeguarding. They do not receive or review any quality performance data to help them understand and challenge the quality of education learners receive. Much of their focus has been to support necessary staffing changes.

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