

Inspection of Elfrida Rathbone Camden - Leighton Education Project

Inspection dates: 14 to 16 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education	Inadequate
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Inadequate
Provision for learners with high needs	Inadequate
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Information about this provider

Elfrida Rathbone Camden - Leighton Education Project is an independent learning provider based in Camden. The college provides education and training for young people aged 16 to 25 who have 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 inspection, there were 16 learners with education and health care (EHC) plans who have high needs.

Most learners follow a three-year programme to prepare them for their next stage in adulthood. Learners study life skills such as independent travel training, English, mathematics, employment studies and extra-curricular activities. Learners attend college four days per week. Speech and language, and creative art therapy are offered to learners based on their individual needs.

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

Learners like coming to the college. They feel safe and know who they can speak to if they have any worries or concerns. Staff are attentive and sensitive to learners' needs in lessons, around the building and on external visits. In lessons, support staff use appropriate methods to re-engage learners when they become overwhelmed and calmly enable them to continue in learning.

Learners study a curriculum which does not meet their individual needs well enough. Leaders and managers do not make sure the curriculum, including for English and mathematics, is clearly defined, fully planned and has long-term goals for what learners will achieve. This contributes to learners making slow progress and too few achieving their planned learning goals.

Too often, learners are taught as one group without teachers considering what each learner needs to learn. Tutors do not adapt activities and learners complete the same work regardless of their prior knowledge, skills and behaviours. This means that for some learners the work is too hard and for others it is too easy.

Learners participate in purposeful tutorials, where tutors facilitate discussions on important topics, such as grooming and keeping safe. Although improved since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have not fully created a curriculum to teach learners about the dangers of radicalisation, extremism and what it means to maintain healthy relationships with others.

Most learners attend well. However, too many learners do not arrive at college on time in the morning. Those who arrive late miss parts of their lesson, and tutors do not help them adequately to catch up with what has been taught. Staff do not follow up consistently of learners' lateness.

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

Since the previous inspection and monitoring visits, governors, leaders and managers have worked hard to make improvements. They have been proactive in securing useful external expertise to help with their work. Trustees take a keen interest in, and scrutinise the provision. They frequently visit the college to inform themselves directly about learners' experiences. They provide suitably critical feedback to leaders and managers based on these visits. Leaders have made sure that learners are safe. They have put in place effective measures to improve learners' behaviour and attitudes and have made sound progress in improving the personal development curriculum.

Leaders and managers have rightly focused on redesigning the curriculum. They have successfully introduced themes for learners within their personal development curriculum. However, they have not had the same success with the core curriculum. They do not consider well enough how the core curriculum is planned or taught, so

that learners develop the specific skills, knowledge and behaviours they need in the longer term, including in relation to their EHC plan outcomes.

At the start of the courses, tutors do not assess accurately enough each learners' prior knowledge. They assess all learners on the same topics regardless of their prior learning and how many years they have been at the college. Consequently, tutors do not have a good enough overview of what learners know and can do at the start of programmes. They are therefore unable to plan an ambitious curriculum for learners to achieve their EHC plan outcomes.

Leaders have taken positive steps to improve staffing at the college, but have not been successful in ensuring that learners are taught by sufficiently qualified tutors. They do not provide good enough opportunities for tutors to develop their skills in teaching learners with SEND. This contributes to learners not receiving high-quality teaching and learning. For example, tutors do not check thoroughly enough that learners understand what they are taught in lessons. Tutors do not always clearly explain new topics in a way that learners understand. As a result, learners do not sufficiently understand new content they are taught.

Leaders and managers do not plan sufficient time for learners to develop skills needed for employment and life. For example, staff do not provide sufficient opportunities for learners to develop their digital skills. Too often, tutors focus on facilitating extra-curricular activities with learners rather than teaching the core programme. This limits the time available for learners to develop and consolidate the skills they need for their next steps.

Since the previous inspection, leaders have improved the speech and language therapy on offer. Therapists work effectively with learners through group and one-to-one sessions to help develop learners' language skills. Leaders have made sure that the creative art therapy provision continues to meet the needs of learners. However, leaders have not fully integrated the work of therapists with that of the teaching staff. For example, tutors and therapists do not collaborate to plan opportunities in lessons, through which learners can further develop their speech and language skills.

Leaders and managers have introduced helpful learner profiles. Staff use information from learners' EHC plans well to develop the profiles. Teachers, consequently, have good information on strategies to support each learner, relevant medical information, and what a good or bad day looks like for learners. Staff use the profiles effectively to understand learners' health, medical, care and behaviour needs, and how best to support each learner.

The majority of learners move to positive destinations at the end of their programme. This includes moving to further learning opportunities at a further education college or a supported internship.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Teach a curriculum that is ambitious, meets learners' individual needs, prepares them for their next steps and through which they achieve their planned learning goals.
- Make sure that teachers use assessments of what learners know and can do at the start of the course to plan and teach a curriculum to meet their individual needs.
- Teach students a curriculum, so that they learn about fundamental British values, radicalisation and extremism, and healthy relationships.
- Support tutors to improve their teaching skills, so that learners receive good quality teaching and learning throughout the curriculum.
- Integrate speech and language therapy into the core curriculum, so that learners' needs are fully met, and they can make progress.

Provider details

Unique reference number	51701
Address	7 Dowdney Close London NW5 2BP
Contact number	02074241601
Website	www.elfridacamden.org.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Nicole Francis
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	28 to 30 June 2022
Main subcontractors	No subcontractors

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of college, 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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