

House Builder XL Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 2748174

Name of lead inspector: Sarah Alexander, His Majesty's Inspector

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 March 2024

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: HERE, Bath Road, Bristol BS3 3AP

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Ofsted undertakes to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of adult learning provision where the provision offered is in scope for inspection. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook', especially the sections entitled 'Monitoring visits' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

During the monitoring visit, House Builder XL Limited (HBXL) was teaching three Skills Bootcamps for adults. Twenty adults were studying computer-aided-design (CAD) for construction, two were studying business management for construction businesses and two were studying estimating skills for construction businesses. The Skills Bootcamps are delivered over 16 successive weeks, with one four-hour taught session per week. Programmes are taught entirely online. Around one tenth of the curriculum content is taught by a subcontractor, CPJ Education Ltd.

Themes

How much progress have leaders and managers made in designing and delivering relevant adult learning provision that has a clearly defined purpose? Significant progress

Leaders have a very clear vision for the Skills Bootcamps they provide for adult learners. Leaders have identified that one of the reasons for the high level of insolvency among construction businesses is a significant gap in skills. They have sought to fill this gap by carefully developing the Skills Bootcamp course content and structure, drawing on their extensive knowledge of the construction industry. Leaders and tutors have worked comprehensively with the self-employed, the unemployed, sole traders and small- to medium-sized enterprises to offer Skills Bootcamps in the Lancashire, Liverpool and New Anglia areas of England. Leaders use the Skills Bootcamp online training to work with learners who live in rural locations, often far away from education providers. The vast majority of learners have not had any formal training since finishing school or completing their trade apprenticeship.

Leaders and tutors focus well on developing learners' digital skills to help to improve their business profitability. For example, tutors teach learners studying the estimating Skills Bootcamp how to produce accurate cost estimates of building work and secure contracts of greater value. Tutors teach learners studying the business management Skills Bootcamp how to improve their productivity by accurately considering their overheads and the impact that economic factors, such as inflation,

will have on their profits. Self-employed learners gain valuable technical skills that have a transformative effect on their businesses, enabling them to bid for larger, more complex projects and increase their profitability.

Leaders have made skilful strategic decisions about how best to deliver their programmes. For example, leaders employ a suitably experienced subcontractor to teach learners content on presentation skills, the circular economy and mental health themes. The subcontractor also acts as a job coach for learners, helping them to refine their business plans and résumés. As a result, learners gain work on projects with large construction companies, such as BAM and Balfour Beatty, using their newly developed skills in CAD, estimating and business management.

Leaders assure themselves well of the quality of the subcontracted provision in line with their own quality assurance activities. Leaders draw on the substantial network of very large construction firms built through their subcontractor to check that the content of the bootcamp remains current and useful to the sector they are preparing learners for. They also routinely seek the views of learners and smaller employers to ensure that the skills learners develop are useful and help them to take the next step in their careers. For example, leaders added teaching on how to read building plans to the estimating course to help learners to improve their ability to estimate prices accurately from plans.

How much progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that learners benefit from high-quality adult education that prepares them well for their intended job role, career aim and/or personal goals? Significant progress

Leaders and tutors have carefully designed an effective curriculum that is logically sequenced and builds on learners' prior learning. For example, learners studying the CAD Skills Bootcamp start by learning how to draw plans for a new build before they progress to devising plans for an extension to an existing building. Learners quickly use these skills to design plans for more complex projects, such as loft installations and renovations.

At the beginning of the course, tutors carry out a thorough assessment of what learners can already do and identify those skills that they need to learn or master. Tutors also carry out a similar assessment with employers to identify the skills the learner needs to develop when studying the bootcamp. This is supported by conducting assessments in English and mathematics to ensure that learners have the required level of skills to be able to take part fully in learning without being overwhelmed. As a result, learners start the course knowing what they can do well and what they are expected to learn. They attend very well. All lessons are recorded for those who cannot attend a live session. Tutors use homework tasks well to check that learners have understood thoroughly the content taught and identify any gaps

in their knowledge. They use this information well to plan further activities that revisit learners' areas for improvement and to fill gaps.

Learners describe tutors as highly approachable and helpful. They appreciate the way tutors teach the course. For example, many of the learners have been out of education for a long time and appreciate the help and support they receive from tutors, which helps them to grow in confidence. Learners benefit from tutor mentoring both when studying the skills bootcamp and for up to six months after.

Tutors ensure that lessons are well structured and include effective teaching of complex mathematics in the CAD and estimating Skills Bootcamps. For example, learners develop further their use of mathematics by calculating the distance between stairs and a doorway to ensure that it meets building regulations. As a result, learners are better able to produce accurate plans, such as for roof elevations.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Reasonable progress

HBXL has a well-established culture of safeguarding and promoting learners' well-being. Leaders have appropriate safeguarding arrangements in place. Staff are trained in adult safeguarding, which is updated annually. They also undertake advanced training mid-year to refresh their knowledge between bootcamp learner cohorts and to enhance their understanding of safeguarding topics.

Leaders have developed a useful learner handbook that includes information for learners on how to recognise radicalisation and extremism as well as important tips on how to stay safe online. Learners use the handbook content to help them to feel safe and identify who to contact with any concerns.

Leaders undertake a sensible and thorough risk assessment as part of their 'Prevent' duty responsibilities. They have rightly identified the need to provide staff with additional training in the safeguarding risks that exist in each of the locations they operate in. They have also correctly identified the need to continue to develop partnerships with agencies and regional coordinators so that they are fully informed about any developments and training needs as they arise.

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