

Future Finders Employability College

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

Unique reference number:	146551
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Type of provider:	Independent specialist college
Address:	77 Union Street Oldham Greater Manchester OL1 1JZ

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Future Finders Employability College was inspected in February 2023. 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.

Future Finders Employability College (Future Finders) is an independent specialist college in Oldham, Greater Manchester. It provides education and support for students who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Students have learning difficulties and disabilities such as physical disabilities, autism and social, emotional and mental health needs. The college is a member of the New Bridge Group.

At the time of the monitoring visit, 10 students aged between 19 and 25 years attended the college. Students study a supported internship programme from Monday to Friday. They attend a long-term work placement for around three days per week. Students study level 1 skills for further learning and employment, and functional skills in English and mathematics.

Themes

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that they plan a well-structured, challenging and purposeful work placement curriculum so that learners make the progress of which they are capable? Reasonable progress

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have developed personalised curriculums that now focus on learners' aspirations for employment and the development of learners' skills towards their education and health care (EHC) plan outcomes.

Leaders and managers have secured high-quality work placements for learners on the supported internship. Employers understand the purpose of a supported internship and what interns need to do to achieve the targets. Employers work closely with college staff, particularly job coaches, to ensure interns receive valuable and supportive feedback so that they work to their full potential. In most cases, the supported internship leads to paid employment.

Leaders and job coaches ensure that learners attend appropriate work placements, such as cafes, large supermarkets and restaurants. Learners enjoy their placements

and most develop significant new knowledge, skills and behaviours that they apply during their work placement.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that learners' initial and baseline assessments identify their starting points accurately across all aspects of the curriculum? Reasonable progress

As learner numbers are small, all staff and directors know their learners very well. Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have introduced a range of assessments across most aspects of the curriculum so that they can identify accurately what learners already know and can do. Although managers and curriculum leaders have recently begun to identify and record learners' wider personal development goals, they recognise that this requires further improvement.

The recording of the outcomes of assessments is burdensome and does not always provide a clear oversight of what learners need to do to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours based on their starting points. Leaders rightly recognise that they need to review and streamline these processes, particularly as learner numbers increase.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that tutors and job coaches plan learning so that learners develop their English skills across all aspects of the curriculum? Reasonable progress

Learners make positive progress from their starting points in English. Learning is personalised to meet learners' needs and abilities while also providing challenge. Targets set for learners are clear and based on the learners' baseline assessments.

Learners benefit from well-planned English lessons that link to their work placements and the wider curriculum. Learners who are on pre-entry level English courses develop and practise their skills in understanding letters, sounds and key words to help them in the work placement. For example, they use the alphabet to help them to identify alphabetically the aisles for cushions and lighting. Learners use their speaking and listening skills to talk about what they have learned during the week.

Learners develop their English and communication skills, for example when they collectively agree the topics they study each term. Currently, learners are working on an English project considering a post-apocalyptic society. They confidently and articulately discuss the impact of artificial intelligence and robotics on humans. Teachers provide relevant real-life texts for discussion, such as engineers working in vehicle factories being brutally attacked by robots during a serious malfunction. Learners, especially those with autism spectrum disorder, consider and respect each

other's views.

Teachers develop learners' English skills effectively during mathematics lessons. Teachers use rhymes to help learners to remember the definitions of mean, mode, median and range. Teachers encourage learners to write prompts in their workbooks to enable them to remember what they learn in lessons.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that they implement rigorous quality improvement processes for the work placement aspect of the supported internship programme, so that they identify weaknesses and put in place appropriate actions to bring about swift improvements? Reasonable progress

Since the start of this academic year, leaders have introduced work placement visits to check the quality of the support learners receive from staff during their placement. Leaders now have an accurate oversight of the strengths and weaknesses of the support that staff provide to learners. Staff benefit from training to improve the standard of the support they provide. Occasionally, leaders and managers do not act swiftly enough to identify individual staff training needs. Consequently, in a few instances, learners do not receive the level of support they need to help them to complete activities in their work placement.

Leaders and managers rightly acknowledge that inconsistencies remain in quality improvement processes. They are working with determination to rectify these shortcomings. However, it is too soon to see the full impact of these changes.

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have worked diligently to ensure that job coaches improve the quality and specificity of the targets set for learners on work placement. Job coaches now set learners targets based on the component parts of a larger task. They review and set new targets weekly, building on learners' knowledge, skills and behaviours so that learners can move to more challenging work placements. Learners needing a more supportive environment work in the college café to learn customer service skills, and they then move on to placements in commercial cafes in the local community. As a result, those learners furthest away from the workforce, develop confidence and communication skills that enable them to work with the public and ultimately find employment.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in the monitoring of the progress that learners make from their starting points and in providing directors with reports about the progress that learners make on their programmes? Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have significantly improved the monitoring, recording and reporting of learners' progress. Directors now receive comprehensive information about individual learner's progress and the actions taken if learners are not making expected progress.

Since the previous inspection, managers and curriculum leaders accurately identify and record learners' starting points in mathematics, English and employability. Staff effectively plan personalised and challenging curriculums for learners and carefully monitor their progress against targets and EHC plan outcomes. Most learners make good progress and, as a result, achieve accredited qualifications.

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