

Norman Mackie & Associates Limited

Re-inspection monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Shahram Safavi, HMI

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This is the first re-inspection monitoring visit to Norman Mackie & Associates Limited following publication of the inspection report on 1 November 2016 that found the provider to be inadequate overall. At the inspection, outcomes for learners, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, personal development, behaviour and welfare, and the effectiveness of leadership and management were judged inadequate. Inspectors judged the provision for learners with high needs to be inadequate.

This first monitoring visit focused on the post-inspection action plan; strategies to improve outcomes for learners; the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; quality improvement arrangements; governance and safeguarding.

Themes

What progress have leaders and managers made in producing and implementing a robust action plan in response to the weaknesses found at the previous inspection?

Leaders and managers have produced a post-inspection action plan that describes how they intend to improve the quality of provision and address the areas for improvement identified at their last inspection. The action plan includes all but one of the recommendations made in the inspection report. It does not include specific detail on how managers will engage with relevant external partners to develop a secure multi-agency approach to manage and access the wide range of support and specialist help that their learners require. This was identified in the inspection report as being key to free up tutors to focus on teaching and learning.

The post-inspection action plan is not sufficiently detailed or clear about the intended impact of managers' actions. The plan focuses on describing what has happened since the inspection, for example the introduction of a daily learning log for each learner and a weekly staff meeting to review learners' progress and achievements.

The post-inspection plan does not have any targets against which progress in making improvements can be measured. In addition, there is no indication of timescales for completion or when key milestones are likely to be achieved. There is no accountability for the success of the actions because there is no named person identified as responsible for their completion.

Managers have not developed and implemented effective quality assurance arrangements to monitor the trajectory of improvement and the intended impact on outcomes for learners. Leaders recognise that there are limitations in their capacity to bring about the level of change needed on their own and have met with the local authority to seek support.

Priorities for improvement

- Review and rewrite the improvement action plan to include specific details, including a clear indication of:
 - how managers will work with relevant external agencies to provide the required levels of support to address the barriers to learning faced by individual learners
 - the timescales and completion dates for each action
 - interim dates for the review of the implementation of each action and how progress will be monitored
 - the manager responsible for the effective implementation and review of each action
 - how managers will measure the impact of each action.
- Review fully, develop and implement quality monitoring and improvement arrangements, including the approach to evaluating the quality of teaching and learning, so that leaders and managers can assess accurately the impact of changes.

What changes have been made to ensure the organisation has effective governance arrangements?

At the inspection, the provider had not established any effective arrangements for governance. Leaders have since decided to implement an advisory board to fulfil the governance role. As yet, leaders have not identified terms of reference for the advisory board and no suitable candidates have been identified to join the board.

Priorities for improvement

- Swiftly establish effective governance by:
 - defining clearly the roles and responsibilities of the advisory board in providing strategic oversight and independent challenge to leaders and senior managers
 - ensuring that appointments are made to the advisory board as soon as possible and that candidates have the necessary skills, commitment and experience to assist the organisation to make swift improvements
 - providing effective training and induction for the newly established advisory board members so that they can discharge their responsibilities effectively
 - ensuring that managers provide the advisory board with clear and robust information about the pace of progress in the implementation of the post-inspection action plan, learners' achievements and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

What progress have leaders and managers made to engage external partners responsible for multi-agency support services to provide learners with effective specialist support?

Since the inspection, senior managers have held meetings with relevant stakeholders to review individual learners' education, health and care plans and how these

translate into effective learning plans. Managers have had some degree of success in bringing about a greater level of engagement from both parents and those external stakeholders responsible for supporting learners, including those learners who are looked after. However, the outcomes agreed and recorded at the review meetings lack the specificity required to allow tutors and managers to track the extent of progress made by learners from their individual starting points.

Managers have developed arrangements with Positive Steps, an organisation that holds the contract to provide information, advice, guidance and employability support for young people in Tameside, so that learners can benefit from specialist career guidance.

Priorities for improvement

- Ensure that the contributions of each stakeholder to the well-being of individual learners, are clearly agreed and their effectiveness monitored, so that tutors can focus on planning and providing effective teaching, learning and assessment.
- Ensure that the professionals with expertise in supporting learners with mental health needs attend these learners' progress review meetings regularly so that they can contribute to improving the well-being and readiness to learn of this group of learners.

What progress have managers made to ensure that all components of individual learners' study programmes reflect their ability level and potential, so that they make good progress and achieve?

Staff have started to review the structure and suitability of different aspects of individual learners' study programmes, including the level of qualifications that learners should achieve, and make reasonable adjustments. The records of learning are not yet sufficiently coherent or detailed to record all aspects of each learner's journey. They do not always include how activities develop learners' personal development and welfare, for example behaviour management, attendance and punctuality.

The planning of learning takes into account the views of parents and carers on such issues as non-attendance when learners are experiencing mental health issues. Staff support learners well to boost their confidence and improve their readiness for work, for example by working in the onsite cafe. Learners enjoy attending sessions at the provider's farm, but the purpose of the activities and the impact they have on improving learners' attitudes to learning are not always clear.

Priorities for improvement

- Ensure that tutors plan activities that clearly develop specific personal and vocational skills for each learner.
- Ensure that tutors communicate to learners the purpose of learning activities and how these activities serve to develop their skills so that learners know what it is they need to do next to make good progress.

- Ensure that tutors set specific targets and assess learners' skills accurately so that progress is monitored rigorously.

What has been done to ensure that tutors use the starting points of learners to plan and deliver teaching, learning and assessment to meet effectively the needs of learners, including the need to improve their use of English and mathematics and protect them against harm?

Managers have started to take steps to improve the quality of teaching; for example, they have identified the need for tutors to draw more effectively on learners' starting points to make sure that the targets they set for them are specific and challenging. A daily learning log has been introduced since the inspection. Tutors set targets for each learner on behaviour and attendance, vocational skills development, and English and mathematics. However, the targets for each learner are far too broad and so it is not possible to demonstrate precisely the progress made by each learner. When learners improve or develop new personal or vocational skills, tutors do not record these accurately. Consequently, they cannot plan effectively to enhance learners' skills further. Staff training to improve tutors' ability to set more precise learning targets is imminent.

Tutors do not encourage and challenge their learners enough. Tutors are not adept at using questioning and assessment effectively to establish learners' levels of prior knowledge or their existing skills at the start of the session. Consequently, the activities are often too easy. In too many instances, tutors too readily provide direct support and intervention which hinder learners' progress.

Staff use a wide range of documents to record information about learners' barriers to learning, the support that they require and their progress and achievements. Due to the complexity and the repetitive recording of the same information about each learner, the records do not provide a clear picture of what each learner has achieved. Consequently, learners do not have a good understanding of their own progress and what they need to do to develop further.

A new tutor has been appointed to deliver discrete mathematics and English sessions and a review of learners' starting points in these subjects is currently being undertaken. Vocational tutors do not plan effectively to develop learners' mathematics and English skills.

Arrangements for safeguarding and protecting learners are sound.

Priorities for improvement

- Revise how learners' progress and achievements in developing their personal and vocational skills are recorded so that staff and learners know exactly what has been achieved and there is a clear record of learners' progress and next steps.
- Ensure that tutors have the skills and expertise to draw more effectively on learners' starting points and the results of ongoing assessment to set targets for learners that are meaningful and time-constrained.

- Ensure that tutors are skilful in matching their teaching and assessment activities to learners' needs, so that learners can achieve their targets.

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