

NDA Foundation Limited

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

22–24 January 2019

Overall effectiveness		Requires improvement	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement	Adult learning programmes	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good		
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement		
Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Not previously inspected	

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Senior leaders and managers do not ensure that a high enough proportion of learners achieve their full design qualifications.
- Managers have been slow in implementing comprehensive quality assurance arrangements that check and improve the standard of all online training.
- Tutors do not check learners' English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) development needs early enough and use the assessment results effectively to improve skills levels.
- A small minority of learners do not have their understanding of British values, the potential dangers of extremism, radicalisation and their safe use of electronic-based resources developed to an appropriately high standard.
- Learners receive relevant careers information, advice and guidance before and during their studies but have insufficient access to impartial support prior to completing their programme.

The provider has the following strengths

- Leaders and managers work well with employers and education providers to ensure that learners use high-quality distance learning resources and facilities that reflect current commercial practices.
- Tutors have high expectations for current learners that very effectively improve their skills and knowledge.
- Nearly all current learners are making the expected or better progress from their starting points.
- Learners' development of analytical and evaluative skills within their chosen design area are good.
- Tutors have good subject knowledge and recent industrial experience that they effectively use to motivate learners so that they engage and succeed in set tasks.
- Learners take pride in producing completed work of a good standard.

Full report

Information about the provider

- NDA Foundation Limited is a not-for-profit learning provider based in Nottingham. It provides programmes for adults that are funded through advanced learner loans. Learners undertake level 3 programmes leading to qualifications in either professional curtain and soft furnishing making, or garden or interior design. Learners use online learning resources to develop their theoretical knowledge and understanding. In addition, those on curtain and soft furnishing making or interior design programmes can attend two one-week tutor-taught practical sessions. Learners can start the programmes at any time of the year.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Introduce effective measures so that all learners understand the importance of British values, and how to protect themselves when using online and social media or encountering radicalisation and extremism.
- Use a rigorous assessment of learners' English, mathematics and ICT development needs to raise their skills levels to a higher level.
- Ensure that a high proportion of learners complete and achieve their full programme through earlier intervention.
- Introduce and use comprehensive quality assurance processes that lead to high and improving standards of programme quality and ensure that:
 - programme action plans are detailed, include ambitious targets and are swiftly achieved
 - managers' use of data contributes fully to performance management and improvement.
- Implement processes so that all learners receive relevant impartial careers information, advice and guidance prior to completing their programme.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Senior leaders and managers have yet to establish programmes where all learners attain their full potential. They have reviewed the causes of the performance shortfalls and implemented actions such as strengthening the monitoring of learners' progress. However, the pace of improvement has not been rapid enough.
- Quality assurance and improvement processes do not fully contribute to improving standards for all learners. Managers have recently reviewed and improved processes and procedures, so they align with the high standards identified in other providers. However, managers have been slow in implementing comprehensive arrangements that improve all aspects of the online training received by learners.
- Managers conduct useful and relevant reviews of programmes that inform action-planning processes leading to improvement. However, progress in achieving the identified goals has been slow. Too often actions have insufficient detail or interim timebound milestone targets to allow effective performance monitoring.
- Managers collect an appropriate variety of relevant data to inform daily monitoring and decision-making. They have strengthened its use as part of their self-assessment of the provision's quality that is leading to improvement. Managers recognise that their use of data for trend analysis purposes is weak. Their utilisation of data in action plans does not always allow for a comprehensive assessment of progress against suitably ambitious targets.
- Leaders and managers have not given enough priority to the development of learners' English and mathematics skills. They have failed to provide rigorous assessment arrangements that check learners' skills levels before they begin their programme. This limits tutors' effective planning and delivery of individualised support to aid learners' progress.
- Managers have not ensured that staff fully prepare all learners for life in modern Britain. Strategies to raise learners' awareness are too limited and not adequately tailored to the needs of learners taking part in online programmes. Consequently, a small minority of learners do not develop a good enough appreciation of how British values apply to their personal and professional lives.
- Senior leaders and managers are committed to an ambitious vision of widening participation through the delivery of high-quality distance learning programmes. They have developed and use well productive working links with employers and further and higher education that support their aims. Managers have established clear qualification progression routes that address learners' personal and career goals.
- Tutors effectively use the outcome of learners' feedback and analysis of their submitted work to improve assignment and online facilities. This has helped to minimise the errors learners can make when using online learning material. Managers and tutors work closely with industry representatives so that the design programmes learning materials and facilities reflect current sector practices. For example, learners consider how designers, manufacturers and suppliers are influencing the use and production of mood lighting.

The governance of the provider

- Leaders and managers are subject to relevant review and challenge from external education specialists. This has helped to improve the programmes' quality and standards. Senior leaders are aware that detailed scrutiny, for example of learners' achievement and retention, needs improvement to make the oversight more effective. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of initiatives to improve the effectiveness of current governance arrangements.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers have implemented suitable safeguarding procedures. They use these arrangements effectively to protect the welfare of learners and staff. All staff are subject to safe recruitment practices before they start to work with learners. These include appropriate Disclosure and Barring Service checks. Relevant processes and procedures are in place to respond to any concerns raised by learners or staff. Managers monitor welfare and safety issues closely. The few issues that have been reported are effectively recorded and addressed.
- Tutors and support staff take part in a relevant range and level of safeguarding training. As a result, they have an adequate or better understanding of how to carry out their safeguarding roles and responsibilities. Managers and staff are suitably aware of their responsibilities under the 'Prevent' duty'. However, a small minority of learners' understanding of how to stay safe when using web-based and social media and the dangers of radicalisation and extremism needs improvement.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Tutors set high standards for current learners that motivate them to develop and successfully extend their skills and knowledge. Learners receive very effective help from tutors that allows them to master the use of the online learning resources, so they progress quickly. This ensures that the majority of learners quickly settle into their studies, work independently and successfully achieve their learning goals. Tutors effectively monitor learners to check that they are moving through the process of teaching, learning and assessment at an appropriately challenging rate.
- Learners' development is enhanced through their use of high-quality online learning resources that they use at a time that suits them best. Resources include a comprehensive range of guides, research material and technical specifications that most learners utilise well to complete their assignments.
- Learners produce work of a good standard. It meets the qualification expectations and shows the competence and improvements they have gained since starting their programme. For example, learners on the curtain making and soft furnishings programme apply the correct practical techniques to produce a range of good-quality soft furnishings, including Roman blinds, padded pelmets and piped cushions.
- Tutors are highly qualified and experienced. Many have recently or currently work in the relevant design industry. They adeptly use their knowledge to motivate learners, so they

swiftly link their theoretical learning to resolving practical design problems. For example, garden design learners undertake a commercially based assignment, working with and completing projects to clients' specifications. Consequently, learners' development of analytical and evaluative skills within a vocational environment are good. This contributes to their confidence in applying for higher education programmes, employment or starting their own business.

- The large majority of learners receive timely and helpful feedback on the quality of their work and assignments from tutors. This helps learners to achieve their short-term learning targets by the agreed timescale. Where learners submit assignments, which do not meet the assessment criteria fully, tutors provide very detailed written feedback which effectively promotes improvement. Learners appreciate these evaluations and work hard to ensure that their subsequent assignments meet the required standard. In a few cases, more-able learners receive feedback that does not extend their development beyond that required by the qualification. This limits their potential development.
- Tutors do not evaluate sufficiently learners' English, mathematics and ICT skills at the start of their programme. Not all learners are supported well enough to develop these skills before or during their programme. Tutors do not routinely correct all English spelling and grammar mistakes in written work as part of a strategy to help learners avoid repeating errors. The few learners with a declared learning difficulty or disability receive good and pertinent support from tutors.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

- Managers do not ensure that all learners benefit from the available training on the potential risks posed by using the internet and social media. Tutors pay insufficient attention to developing all learners' deeper understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremisms. Consequently, a minority of learners do not have their awareness raised to a sufficiently high standard.
- A small minority of learners fail to develop the confidence and self-discipline to learn effectively. Learners appreciate the importance of meeting deadlines such as completing and submitting assignments on time. However, staff do not effectively help all learners develop the personal skills they need to overcome barriers to programme achievement. This demotivates learners and slows their progress.
- Learners receive appropriate careers information, advice and guidance before and during their studies. Tutors make particularly good use of referrals to external agencies that allow learners to undertake more in-depth exploration of the available options. However, learners have limited access to impartial careers advice prior to them completing their programme. This hinders them in making realistic and informed decisions about their futures.
- Learners who remain on the programme are enthusiastic and take a pride in their completed work. They support each other well during their courses through the provider's online community forum and a social media page. Learners exchange ideas and request and receive tips for successful assessment completion. This effectively enhances their team-working skills and enjoyment of the programme.
- Learners access an extensive range of enrichment activities that introduces them to the

wider career and development opportunities, for example through attendance at national and international design exhibitions. In addition, learners develop wider knowledge of current industry practice through viewing videos provided by professionals working in their specialised fields. This greatly motivates learners to achieve higher. For example, learners have been successful in national competitions and gaining prestigious commissions.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- The proportion of learners who achieve their full programme qualification is not yet high enough. In 2017/18, learners' achievement of qualifications was particularly low. Too many learners left early before completing their programme. In response, managers have ensured that current learners receive frequent contact from tutors and support staff to help them achieve. This is keeping or re-engaging a higher proportion of learners in learning. Tutors appropriately extend the programme length to give learners more time to complete agreed tasks. The majority of current learners are making expected or better progress from their starting points.
- The achievement of different groups of learners are similar. However, in 2017/18, male learners achieved at a higher rate than females. Managers have yet to close this achievement gap through the implementation of effective corrective actions.
- Learners embark on a range of new career opportunities, including working in their chosen vocational area and self-employment. Managers acknowledge that they do not have accurate information on what happens to all learners, particularly those not completing their programme. An appropriate proportion of learners start higher education course following completion of their programme.

Provider details

Unique reference number	1247998
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	97
Academy Director	Pauline Riley
Telephone number	0115 9123412
Website	www.nda.ac.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	–	–	–	–	–	89	–	–
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	–	–	–	–	–	–	–	–
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
		–		–		–		–
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	–							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	–							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	–							

Information about this inspection

The deputy academy director, as nominee, assisted the inspection team. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans. They used individual telephone interviews and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners; these views are reflected within the report. They interviewed training staff and scrutinised learners' work at the training centre. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Nigel Bragg, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Tricia Collis

Ofsted Inspector

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