

Dv8 Training (Brighton) Limited

Re-inspection monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Mark Shackleton, Her Majesty's Inspector

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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 reinspection monitoring visit to Dv8 Training (Brighton) Ltd (Dv8) following publication of the inspection report on 15 January 2019 that found the provider to be inadequate overall.

Themes

Review the provision for learners with high needs to ensure that staff review learners' education, health and care plans with partners frequently and provide appropriate support.

Managers have ensured that education, health and care (EHC) plans for students with high needs are logged centrally on a secure site. They have reviewed virtually all the plans and agreed dates to review the remainder. Most students have transition plans agreed for September 2019. Staff keep comprehensive records for students with EHC plans. These show that the reviews have been undertaken with an appropriate range of partners. In the records, the views and aspirations of the student and their parents or carers are clear.

Leaders have placed a high priority on this area for improvement. This is also reflected in the support and challenge provided by the advisory board, which has helped to ensure that all key deadlines are met

Managers have supported tutors to develop their skills and knowledge in supporting students with EHC plans. However, more training is needed to ensure that staff are skilled and confident in supporting these students in the classroom.

An innovative life skills programme helps students with EHC plans to develop rapidly their confidence and wider practical skills. The programme is individually tailored to meet students' needs and is being extended in scope and duration.

Priorities for improvement

- Ensure that reviews of students' EHC plans are frequent, continue to involve relevant partners, and identify transition plans for students in good time to inform their next steps.
- Ensure that all tutors and support staff receive appropriate training to improve the support they provide to students with EHC plans. Such training should enable them to implement the sensible strategies that have been developed even more effectively.
- Ensure that good practice in teaching and supporting students with EHC plans is shared even more effectively.

- Leaders should ensure that staff who manage and provide support to students with EHC plans and those with special educational needs have appropriate qualifications.

Ensure that staff set effective improvement targets with clear ownership, accurate monitoring of progress and measurement of impact on learners' experiences.

Leaders have rapidly improved the use of targets to hasten improvement. They have sensibly used a post-inspection action plan to allocate responsibilities and monitor progress in improving the provision. Most of the actions have clear ownership and appropriately challenging milestones and completion dates.

Leaders have established an advisory board whose members have the right skills and knowledge to challenge and support improvement actions. The board meets every two months and monitors closely the progress leaders and managers make in improving the provision. This has enhanced the ownership of improvement actions and is starting to improve the focus on the positive impact on students' experience.

Priorities for improvement

- Ensure that all improvement targets have clear ownership and challenging but achievable milestones and achievement dates.
- Ensure that progress is measured against the impact it has on improving students' experiences.

Improve the weak aspects of the study programmes. Make sure that work-based programmes meet study programmes requirements, that learners benefit from impartial careers guidance and have suitable work placements and that the teaching of GCSE English and mathematics enables learners to succeed.

Managers have stopped recruiting students to work-based courses. They have introduced traineeships as a short-term method of fulfilling their commitment to the small number of new students who were expecting to be on a study programme. These traineeships are well-designed, 13-week programmes. They involve work placements that are closely matched to students' apprenticeship or employment aspirations. Managers do not plan to continue traineeships following completion of the current small group of students.

Managers contracted with an external provider to give impartial careers information advice and guidance (CIAG) to students. The large majority of students have received impartial CIAG and plans are in place to complete the remainder before students finish their current programmes.

Most students benefit from work placements, a significant improvement since the previous inspection. However, there are not yet enough work placements for all that need them.

Managers' strong focus on improving the teaching of English and mathematics has led to improvement. Inspectors observed an English teacher working particularly well with students, using appropriate teaching strategies needed for individuals in the class. Well-qualified English and mathematics tutors are working more closely with vocational tutors and students now have a better understanding of the importance of developing skills in these subjects. Students are offered additional support and coaching leading up to examinations and tests. Attendance at a recent GCSE examination was much improved from the mock examination earlier in the year.

Priorities for improvement

- Ensure that all learners benefit from impartial CIAG as soon as possible and by the target date.
- Ensure that appropriate staff are trained to at least level 3 in information, advice and guidance to provide impartial CIAG
- Ensure that all students benefit from appropriate work-related experience during their study programmes.
- Continue to develop schemes of work and approaches that make students think more positively about the value of improving their English and mathematics skills.
- Develop students' independent learning skills so they increase their confidence in applying English and mathematics to their vocational courses.

Ensure that the tutor development programme and lesson observation process raise the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

Managers have improved the lesson observation process. Advanced practitioners have been appropriately trained to conduct observations and moderate each other's reports. Observers provide constructive oral feedback to tutors after lesson observations, which tutors find useful and developmental. Many tutors have benefited from additional support from coaches and peers. This has helped them improve specific aspects of their teaching, such as managing behaviour in the classroom and improving the range of learning activities and resources.

Managers and advanced practitioners carry out frequent and useful themed learning walks. They ensure that all tutors receive useful feedback during their routine meetings on how to improve aspects of teaching, learning and assessment. Themes have included more structured lesson planning, clearer objectives and questioning techniques. Tutors find this useful in improving their practice.

Inspectors judged that the observations were having a positive impact but did not always support improvement as well as they might.

Priorities for improvement

- Make sure that managers' observations of teachers and that records of these observations are fully completed and accurately recorded. Ensure that documents help observers to focus on identified priorities for improvement such as the importance of punctuality and providing challenge for all students.
- Actions planned for teachers following observations need to be monitored more closely to ensure that coaching is effective and teaching continues to improve. Currently there is not enough evidence to show how actions identified in observation reports are followed up.

Ensure tutors use information about students' starting points effectively to challenge all learners appropriately.

During induction, staff accurately identify students' starting points for English and mathematics using standard assessment tools. Staff also capture students' vocational starting points effectively in music production and performance through videos of their first performance during induction. The vocational starting points for students in other subject areas are less clear.

Progress reviews carried out by teachers cover all aspects of the students' study programme. However, the targets which teachers set in these reviews are not sufficiently challenging for students.

Priorities for improvement

- Many teachers are starting to design activities that meet the students' different needs. However, there is not yet enough evidence to show how well these plans are implemented and how successful teachers are at challenging the most able students.
- Staff must assess the starting points for learners' information technology skills so that teachers can make sure that learners know how to organise and manage their own data and files.
- Managers need to complete work to capture the vocational starting points of students during induction at the start of the next academic year.

Ensure tutors set high expectations for learners' attendance, punctuality, work-related and independent learning skills, progress and standards of work.

Managers have ensured that staff understand the importance of improving students' attendance. They monitor overall attendance and by groups of students. Managers, staff and students are clear on the priority placed on attendance, which has led to an improving trend. However, this requires further improvement. Students have noticed that staff focus more on ensuring that they improve their attendance since the previous inspection. Managers have not focused well enough on improving students' punctuality. There is no consistent approach to what constitutes lateness. This lack

of clarity results in lateness becoming accepted practice for some students. This slows their learning and limits their chances of gaining employment.

Students benefit from an industry-focused curriculum. Tutors are very experienced vocational specialists who link classroom learning to the requirements of the workplace very effectively. Students, as a result, understand and value the vocational skills, knowledge and behaviours they are developing and enjoy their learning.

Leaders and managers should carefully consider the balance between support and challenge for students and ensure that it is appropriate. The very good support that staff provide for students is important, but managers also need to ensure that students are challenged to reach their full potential.

Students feel and are safe and they are very well supported by staff. Many students highlight examples of how their life, prospects and self-esteem have improved significantly since starting their Dv8 study programmes. Students speak passionately about their next steps and plans for their future studies

Managers and tutors have focused too much on ensuring that the standards of students' work meet, rather than exceed, awarding body minimum requirements.

Priorities for improvement

- Ensure that the improving trend in student attendance continues and leads to a significant improvement in overall attendance rates.
- Ensure that all students with very low attendance, many who have significant barriers to learning, have appropriately challenging improvement targets.
- Improve the profile of punctuality as a key employment-related behaviour and ensure that students arrive on time for their lessons and that they are ready to learn.
- Leaders need to ensure that staff achieve the right balance between support and challenge.
- Managers should ensure that tutors raise their expectations for the standards of students' work. Students should be clear about assessment target dates, the quality of work required and how it will be assessed.

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