

Standguide Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Kim Bleasdale, 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

From March 2019, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of adult learning provision which began to be funded from August 2017 or after by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. 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 to providers that are newly directly funded to deliver adult learning provision' and 'Monitoring visits'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

Standguide Limited received its first publicly funded contract to deliver adult learning programmes in November 2017. It offers courses in work skills at entry level and level 1, English and mathematics functional skills courses from entry level to level 2, and a small number of vocational courses at level 1. Currently, there are 23 adult learners.

Themes

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

Leaders and managers have developed effective working relationships with partner organisations such as Jobcentre Plus. They provide courses for adults, many of whom are long-term unemployed or have considerable barriers to learning. Managers work with employers very successfully to design and deliver a two-week training course called the 'work academy' that leads to a guaranteed interview by an employer. The large majority of learners progress into sustained work as a result of attending the 'work academy'.

Leaders and managers know their provision well and identify accurately most of the areas that they need to improve. They recognised that they needed to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Consequently, they now implement more rigorous processes to assess learners' starting points, to observe lessons, and to set challenging targets for staff. However, it is too early to evaluate the impact of these new processes.

Leaders and managers monitor regularly the progress that learners make. They ensure that tutors intervene when necessary to help learners to catch up. For example, extra sessions help learners to increase their progress and achieve their qualification by the expected date. However, while most learners achieve their qualifications, in a small number of cases, learners do not make the progress of which they are capable.

Leaders and managers monitor learners' destinations routinely after learners achieve their qualifications. This allows them to evaluate the usefulness of their courses in helping learners to progress into employment or higher-level training.

Managers ensure that tutors have the relevant experience and qualifications to teach vocational subjects. They monitor routinely the performance of tutors by analysing their learners' achievements. Managers ensure that all tutors are held to account when learners' achievement falls short of their expectations.

Leaders do not receive any external scrutiny and challenge and rightly recognise that they need to strengthen their governance arrangements. They are currently in the process of recruiting a non-executive board member.

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? **Reasonable progress**

Tutors have a good understanding of the personal and emotional barriers that learners face. They provide effective support and establish a beneficial environment that helps learners to take tentative steps back to learning. Tutors build successful relationships with learners swiftly. As a result, learners settle into their courses quickly, attend regularly, are punctual and become resilient. Tutors regularly provide practical help to learners who have difficulty using the Universal Credit online system.

Tutors identify and make good use of information about learners' starting points on English and mathematics courses to plan learning. They set learners tasks that specifically address their individual developmental needs, such as working out fractions and multiplications. However, this is not the case for learners on work skills courses, which accounts for a small minority of the provision. On these courses, tutors do not routinely use information about learners' existing skills. All learners are set the same tasks and, as a result, the most able learners do not make rapid enough progress.

Tutors successfully link their discussions with learners to employment and job opportunities. As a result, learners develop a deeper understanding of behaviours and expectations.

Tutors provide helpful feedback to learners on English, mathematics and information and communication technology courses. Consequently, learners improve their work. English and mathematics tutors prepare learners effectively for their examinations. As a result, most learners pass their examination on their first attempt, with a minority progressing to the next level.

Most learners on English and mathematics courses produce a good standard of work. However, a small minority of learners on work skills courses produce work that is not neatly presented.

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

Leaders and managers make safeguarding a high priority. They have comprehensive and rigorous safeguarding policies and procedures in place, including for whistle blowing. They take effective action to ensure that learners are safe in learning environments. Senior leaders ensure that staff recruitment processes are rigorous. They check the appropriateness of all applicants very thoroughly and ensure that applicants are suitable for working in education and training.

Learners develop their awareness of safeguarding and recognise how to improve their general well-being early in their course. Learners benefit from using support materials such as videos and case studies. As a result, they understand how safeguarding applies to them in their everyday lives. For example, learners know how to recognise the signs of radicalisation and extremism and how to keep themselves safe.

A designated safeguarding officer (DSO) conducts a comprehensive review of the safeguarding policy annually and takes into account the latest safeguarding guidance. The DSO reports accurately to the board on any concerns raised. The DSO is supported by two deputy safeguarding officers, all of whom have had appropriate training at level 3.

Staff receive regular and effective training in safeguarding and in the 'Prevent' duty. The DSO and the deputy safeguarding officers liaise effectively with staff to ensure that learners' concerns and issues are dealt with as quickly as possible. They record any safeguarding-related cases on a central tracking system. They monitor any agreed actions appropriately and ensure that learners receive support when they need it.

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