

EDLounge Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From October 2018, 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.

EDLounge Limited is an independent training provider that offers online learning through a virtual learning environment, with face-to-face teacher support. Currently, there are 262 adult learners, 92 of whom are with subcontractors. The large majority of learners are taking functional skills courses in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) from entry level to level 2. There are 66 learners taking level 2 courses in road passenger vehicle driving, and the remainder are working towards employability or vocational qualifications.

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 successfully achieve their strategic goal of providing flexible training programmes through an approach that blends online learning with face-to-face support. They work effectively with employers to design bespoke courses that meet industry requirements and help adult learners to sustain employment and improve their lives. For example, managers worked with local authorities and passenger transport specialists to design a course for the road passenger vehicle driver qualification.

Leaders recruit high-calibre employees who apply their extensive experience and knowledge to design and deliver successful learning programmes. Leaders have taken effective action to formalise the governance of the organisation. They work successfully with professionals in their field and have formed an advisory group that aims to provide challenge and hold senior leaders to account.

Leaders and managers have high expectations for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. They have a professional approach to developing teaching practice that is linked to clearly defined standards. Managers take decisive action when staff or qualifications do not meet the required standard. As a result, they have improved the quality and consistency of teaching, learning and assessment.

Managers risk assess the suitability of subcontractors to deliver provision and conduct effective monitoring visits to assure the quality of their delivery. However, visits are not regular enough to ensure sustained improvement over time.

Senior managers do not analyse effectively information about the progress and destinations of learners. They rely on managers and teaching staff to monitor progress and do not collect information about actual or sustained destinations of learners. As a result, they are unable to demonstrate the full impact of their courses.

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

Leaders and managers work very effectively to meet the needs of vulnerable adults. They have high aspirations for learners, many of whom have been in long-term care, suffered from drug or alcohol misuse, or encountered domestic violence. They provide individualised training programmes that meet learners' needs. As a result, most learners have gained their first qualification and have moved on to further learning or sustained employment.

Teachers use information about learners' starting points effectively to identify learning and support needs. They provide personalised coaching and one-to-one support that enable learners to make at least the progress of which they are capable. Teachers use high-quality online resources innovatively to help learners engage in learning.

Learners develop good work-related skills. They develop communication and interpersonal skills, which improve their confidence. For example, learners completing functional skills courses in ICT are able to apply complex formulas to carry out tax calculations on spreadsheets. As a result, they make positive contributions to the workplace by taking on the role of digital ambassador to support colleagues in developing their digital skills.

Teachers monitor learners' progress thoroughly. They take prompt action to help learners who fall behind to catch up. A few teachers do not assess accurately the development of learners' skills, knowledge and behaviours. Teachers' feedback informs learners about what they have achieved but it does not focus on what learners need to do to improve further.

Teachers successfully support learners to develop their mathematical skills. They link learning to work and essential life skills, such as managing money. However, teachers do not focus sufficiently on the development of learners' English skills, as they do not routinely correct learners' mistakes.

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

Leaders and managers have designed and implemented comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures. They check that staff, including those newly recruited, are safe to work with learners.

Learners are safe and feel safe. They know how safeguarding is relevant to them in their everyday lives and careers. For example, taxi drivers who have recently completed their course develop a better understanding of how to support vulnerable customers and how to contact key personnel if issues emerge.

Leaders and managers provide a good range of safeguarding training opportunities for staff. Staff benefit from high-quality specialist training, covering issues such as county lines, forced marriage, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation. Leaders and managers use this training effectively to ensure that staff have a good knowledge of specific risks that could affect their learners. However, staff working for subcontractors do not benefit from the same rigour in training and development.

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