

Expanse Group Limited

Report following a monitoring visit to a 'requires improvement' provider

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Name of lead inspector: Alison Cameron Brandwood, HMI

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Type of provider: Independent specialist college

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Expanse Group Limited (Expanse) was inspected in September 2018. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement. Apprenticeship provision was judged inadequate. In February 2019, Expanse stopped offering apprenticeship programmes.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in addressing the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

Expanse is an independent specialist provider. Students have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). At the time of the visit, 68 students aged 16 to 25 years are on classroom- and work-based programmes and supported internships. They attend sites in Leigh, Wigan and Warrington.

Themes

What progress have leaders and managers made to ensure tutors implement high-quality education? Reasonable progress

Leaders have put in place ambitious programmes of study that give students opportunities to experience the world of work. Staff and students work together to set challenging personal success targets. Students grow in confidence and self-reliance. For example, they learn how to stay safe by crossing the road properly. Students gain confidence as team leaders when they sort job roles for their classmates. Tutors plan their delivery in a way that ensures students have enough opportunity to practice and develop their work skills. For example, when planning an enterprise project for Halloween, students were assigned roles and responsibilities that allowed them to learn about business processes which were closely linked to their individual targets.

Leaders prioritise developing staff's professional, vocational and teaching skills and knowledge. They set staff targets to share good practice and to improve how well they deliver the curriculum. Staff work with colleagues to improve how they design and plan the curriculum. For example, they produce better resources and lesson plans so that students achieve their goals. Staff benefit from external training to develop specialist skills. For example, they learn respiratory care and resuscitation techniques to meet students' needs. Staff put the skills and knowledge they gain into practice in the classroom.

Students know more and can remember more because most tutors, instructors and teaching assistants plan learning well. They use specialist resources, such as visual aids, verbal prompts, 'now and next' timelines and laptops, to check students' understanding and recall frequently. Students are motivated to try their best and succeed. Tutors provide clear feedback which students respond to well. They plan

learning logically, so students build their knowledge and skills incrementally. Students apply the knowledge they gain to different activities. For example, when students learn about British values they reinforce their understanding of respect and tolerance during discussions about stereotypes. A few tutors do not have high enough expectations of what students can achieve. They do not plan the use of resources and activities that are challenging enough so that all students develop new skills and knowledge.

What progress have tutors made in providing a challenging functional skills curriculum in which learners benefit from high-quality education which helps them to achieve their goals? Reasonable progress

Students enjoy a well-planned functional skills English and mathematics curriculum. Managers and tutors personalise students' English and mathematics targets by assessing their knowledge and skills gaps and using students' education, health and care (EHC) plans. Students use the knowledge and skills they gain in a range of settings and activities. For example, students work in the college's tuck shop and milkshake bar. They develop money management and communication skills successfully. Students told us about how they can now manage money in their personal lives.

Students who fall behind or who need more help to prepare for examinations attend extra English and mathematics classes. Tutors work with students to improve their knowledge, understanding and recall of specific topics that they are unclear about. This has addressed the poor performance identified at the previous inspection for most level 1 students. A few students at the Warrington site have yet to complete levels 1 and 2 English and mathematics qualifications. Leaders and managers had not identified this as a weakness and, consequently, had not put in place actions to bring about improvements.

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