

Springboard

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

Unique reference number: 50199

Name of lead inspector: Jonny Wright, HMI

Inspection date(s): 30–31 October 2019

Type of provider: Independent learning provider

Address: Unit 1-2
East Way
Rivergreen Industrial Estate
Sunderland
SR4 6AD

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Springboard was inspected in March 2019. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

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.

Themes

How accurately do leaders and managers identify weaknesses in the quality of provision so that they can take rapid and decisive actions to tackle them? **Reasonable progress**

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have identified accurately weaknesses in teaching and assessment. They have acted quickly to make improvements that are beginning to have an impact of the quality of the provision. They have worked closely with the staff team to redesign the study programme for learners. The changes to the study programme enable learners to build on their knowledge, skills and behaviours incrementally, at a pace suited to their needs. Consequently, fewer learners leave early and an increased proportion of learners complete their programmes successfully.

Leaders and managers have provided tutors with helpful training on topics such as giving effective feedback to learners and using questioning techniques to check learners' knowledge. Tutors have made positive changes to their practice, but leaders and managers recognise that further improvements are required.

Leaders and managers have not considered sufficiently the impact of actions taken to improve the provision. They do not systematically check that progress in implementing actions to drive improvements is rapid enough. For example, they have yet to evaluate fully the recently revised process of determining learners' starting points or how effectively tutors use the information about learners' prior knowledge to plan the delivery of their courses.

How successfully do leaders manage the performance of subcontractors to ensure that learners and apprentices benefit from high-quality training? **Reasonable progress**

Since the last inspection, leaders and managers have improved the process for managing subcontractors. They have introduced and further developed a subcontractor management framework that focuses accurately on the performance

of subcontractors and the quality of the teaching that learners on study programmes receive.

Recently, leaders and managers took the decision to reduce the number of subcontractors that they work with from ten to five. They decided to work with subcontractors that can offer high-quality specialised programmes that meet the needs of learners in the local area.

Leaders and managers set clear and challenging targets for subcontractors, including for the quality of programmes. Managers carry out frequent audits of subcontractors that accurately identify strengths and areas to improve. They set actions for improvement and closely monitor their implementation. When subcontractors do not make improvements quickly enough, managers provide helpful support.

Subcontractor managers have a clear picture of their performance to date and what they need to do to make improvements to quality and performance. As a result of the recent improvements in the management of subcontractors, a higher proportion of learners on subcontractors' study programmes have completed their courses and gained qualifications. Leaders and managers recognise that this needs to improve further.

What progress have leaders and managers made in providing impartial, timely and helpful careers advice that enables learners on study programmes to make informed decisions about their next steps? Reasonable progress

Leaders and managers have taken positive steps to ensure that learners are better informed about their possible career options on completion of their study programmes. For example, they have evaluated their careers advice and guidance against the Gatsby benchmarks and are making good progress in improving the provision of careers advice and guidance.

Senior leaders have recently employed a suitably qualified careers adviser to complement the careers advice and guidance that learners receive from tutors. Managers work well with local agencies and employers to provide meaningful work placements and careers advice for learners.

Tutors provide effective support and advice on future careers as part of the delivery of study programmes. For example, learners in warehousing consider how their skills, knowledge and behaviours align with job vacancies in the local area, and they develop CVs to support their job applications.

A small minority of learners do not recall or have a good enough understanding of the careers and jobs available to them on completion of their study programmes.

What progress have tutors made in improving their use of information about the starting points of learners on study programmes to plan and deliver teaching that consistently challenges learners to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours?

Reasonable progress

The large majority of tutors have made improvements since the previous inspection in how they collect and use information about learners' starting points. They plan learning well, using the information available to them about learners' starting points. As a result, most learners improve their knowledge and skills. The large majority of tutors use information from plenaries and learners' reviews of their learning to encourage learners to make more rapid progress.

Tutors use the information they have regarding learners' starting points effectively in order to help learners to improve their personal and social skills. Learners benefit from a 12-week introductory course on study programmes. The course includes community projects, work experience, team work, talks from external speakers and tasters in vocational study programmes. Through this course, learners increase their confidence, become better prepared for subsequent learning, and are able to make informed choices about the remainder of their study programmes.

A small minority of tutors do not routinely consider or use learners' starting points to plan their delivery or sequence their learning. For example, in digital marketing, tutors allow learners to work through generic qualification units rather than design learning that builds on learners' prior knowledge and understanding.

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