

Tees Achieve

Focused monitoring visit report

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FOCUSED MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Context and focus of visit

Tees Achieve was formed in November 2008 from the merger of Stockton Adult Education Service, which provided adult and community learning, and Training and Employment Services, which provided work-based learning. Tees Achieve currently has 4,319 learners following programmes, of whom 4,017 are following adult learner courses, 133 are following apprenticeships, 124 are following Train to Gain programmes and 45 are following Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes. Tees Valley Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funds the provision. Currently, 835 courses are offered in over 80 subjects. The learning and skills manager has overall responsibility for the provision, supported by a deputy and a senior management team. A further 110 sessional tutors, five full-time and 25 fractional tutors and trainer/assessors deliver learning in a wide range of venues and help to develop the provision.

At the last inspection in 2008, provision in health, public services and care, business, administration and law, and family learning was good. Capacity to improve was inadequate. All other aspects of the provision were satisfactory. This report focuses on the themes explored during the visit.

Themes

Self-assessment and improvement planning

What progress has been made in improving the thoroughness and accuracy of the self-assessment and improvement planning processes?

Significant progress

The self-assessment and improvement planning processes, which were inadequate at the last inspection, have improved significantly. They now enable managers to plan and improve the provision more effectively and respond quickly to learners' needs. Involvement of all staff in preparing the self-assessment report has increased. Learners' views are collected more systematically through staff regularly visiting different centres and asking specific questions about the provision. The current self-assessment report is suitably evaluative and judgements are supported by evidence. Accurate and reliable data are now used. The first draft of the self-assessment report is now produced earlier in the year and is subject to rigorous moderation by members of the peer provider group. Any recommendations are incorporated into the final report. Partners, and the peer group, now challenge the quality improvement plan, produced from the current self-assessment report. This challenge process has been acknowledged to be good practice and is to be introduced by other providers in the area. The quality improvement plan is updated regularly and new actions added, to respond to new targets and initiatives appropriately.

Outcomes for learners

What progress has been made to improve the retention and achievement of learners, particularly those on adult learner provision? Reasonable progress

Reasonable progress has been made to improve the retention and achievement of learners since the last inspection. E2E progression rates have improved considerably and are high at 83% to date in 2009/10; Train to Gain success rates are also high at 85%. Work-based learning success rates to date in 2009/10 are satisfactory overall at 74%, having increased from 67% in 2008/09. Data for these programmes have been consistently accurate.

For the first term of 2009/10 success rates on accredited adult learner provision are very high at 95% and achievement rates on non-accredited adult learner provision are very high at 99%. Tees Achieve has introduced an effective system to standardise achievement requirements for learners on non-accredited provision. Although success and retention data for previous years appear to be very low for adult learner programmes, they are inaccurate. Inspectors are confident that the data for the first term of 2009/10 are accurate.

Quality of provision

What progress has been made to improve the effectiveness and accuracy of recognising and recording learners' progress and achievement procedures on non-accredited programmes? Reasonable progress

Reasonable progress has been made to improve the effectiveness of processes to recognise and record learners' progress and achievement in non-accredited programmes. Since the last inspection, initial assessment has improved, staff have received more training, and clear criteria for achievement in non-accredited provision have been introduced. Closer links between administration staff, tutors and education managers have led to an improved understanding and closer monitoring of attendance, retention and achievement. The application of the processes in some areas, such as silversmithing and drawing, is now good. Learners and tutors on these programmes can clearly measure and record learners' progress. However, as Tees Achieve recognises, the quality of implementation of the processes is inconsistent and some tutors do not understand its purpose. Training has not been sufficiently reinforced for all tutors. A very recently introduced audit is successfully identifying examples of good practice and where it needs to be improved. The two newly appointed area leads for education are planning to provide further training and moderation arrangements.

Leadership and management

What progress has been made in developing a more rigorous lesson observation scheme that can be used to improve the quality and consistency of teaching, learning and application of processes for recognising and recording learners' progress and achievement? Reasonable progress

Reasonable progress has been made to improve the observation of teaching and learning scheme. Since the last inspection, productive links have been developed with other providers to carry out peer and joint observations of teaching and learning. A working group has developed useful new paperwork, which guides observers to make judgements and award grades. Grades awarded through observations now match judgements more closely. Moderation meetings are now used well to test if proposed grades match recorded judgements. However, moderation focuses too much on paperwork and does not include observations of teaching practice. Two staff have recently been recruited to newly created posts to have an overview of the lesson observation process. Not all aspects of their job role have yet been clarified.

Action plans resulting from teaching and learning have recently been improved to record who is responsible for the action, what should happen and when it should happen by. However, responsibility for ensuring action plans are implemented and followed through is unclear. Action plans are not routinely used to measure improvement of individual progress and inform continuous professional development.

What progress has been made in the use of management information to bring about improvement? Significant progress

The management information system has significantly improved since the last inspection when data for adult learner provision were highly inaccurate and were not used well to improve provision. The management information system now provides accurate data on all aspects of provision. Data are validated thoroughly and error reports are produced weekly. The system is constantly being developed and is well supported by internal and external staff. Managers now confidently and effectively use the data to plan and monitor the provision. The data used for self-assessment are now accurate. Staff have direct access to current data for their courses. Reports are produced to meet staff's specific requirements. For example, managers can access reports showing courses that have low numbers of enrolments, enabling them to decide whether to continue with the course. Changes to the register now accurately allow learners' attendance to be recorded, and the system automatically removes learners who have stopped attending. Learners can now enrol and pay for courses on line or by ringing a central number. Staff taking these telephone calls can enrol learners immediately onto the management information system.

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