

Chadsgrove Educational Trust Learning Centre

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

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Type of provider: Independent specialist college

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Chadsgrove Educational Trust Learning Centre was inspected in February 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.

Chadsgrove Special School secured funding in 2016 from Worcestershire Local Authority to open Chadsgrove Educational Trust Learning Centre. The centre opened to provide provision for young people aged 19 to 25 with a physical disability and/or complex medical need. In 2017, the centre became a registered company and charity, having secured a contract from the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

The centre is based in Bromsgrove and provides programmes for students who live in Worcestershire. There are currently 10 students on programme. All the students are aged over 19. Students work at pre-entry level to level 1.

Themes

What progress have leaders made in developing a curriculum which is in line with learners' starting points, education and health care plans, and long-term goals?

Significant progress

Managers have developed two distinct and appropriate curriculum pathways. One is for learners at pre-entry level and the other is for learners at entry level 1. In both levels, managers and tutors ensure that learners make positive progress in terms of their readiness to participate in the community and their own healthcare, developing independence and moving into adulthood. Learners are making better progress than when they were all in a single group.

Managers use the information from detailed initial assessments and the recommendations from the recently updated education health and care plans well. They ensure that learners are on the correct course level and that the content reflects the interests and long-term aspirations of the learners. As a result, most learners are now motivated and engaged in learning.

Managers ensure that learners receive the specialist support that they need to make progress. Since the previous inspection, managers have increased the specialist support that learners receive to improve their speech and language skills and

physical mobility. During the monitoring visit, learners selected video clips which demonstrated the progress that they had made, including in these areas.

Managers have redesigned the curriculum so that they prepare learners well for their next steps. Managers work well with parents and external partners. They set ambitious and realistic targets towards adulthood. Managers ensure that learners visit realistic work, community and social care environments. On completion, tutors work with learners to identify what they have learned and what to do next.

During the visit, learners demonstrated effective use of different communication technologies and methods. For example, learners used speech, signing, pictorial signs, dashboards and eye-gaze technology to express their views and choices clearly. However, managers have not yet formalised the strategy for the development of literacy. Tutors do not focus sufficiently on the development of literacy for adulthood.

What progress have senior leaders made towards Reasonable progress effectively tracking and monitoring what learners know, understand and can do?

Managers have improved the accuracy and level of detail in their assessment of learners' starting points. Managers have identified broad and challenging learning targets for their learners. Managers reflect the outcomes of the initial assessments, and the current education, health and care plans, through the broad range of medium-term targets. Learners have clear and personalised targets to improve their participation in the community, involvement in their healthcare, independence and to prepare for their next steps.

Within teaching sessions, tutors select specific targets for improvement and record progress. Tutors use a range of methods to record progress. Tutors use both paper-based and electronic systems. Following the recent purchase of a new software system, tutors are beginning to record video evidence, which is supplemented by their own written comments. As a result, tutors provide a wider range of evidence of the progress that learners are making. Managers track the progress of learners more immediately.

It is too early for managers to demonstrate how they use the electronic process to identify learners who are not progressing well enough and need further support.

Managers and teachers do not identify the small steps that learners need to take to achieve their broad medium-term targets. As a result, managers and teachers do not formally recognise all the progress that learners are making.

Leaders acknowledge the importance of communication, but managers and tutors do not develop targets for the development of literacy for adulthood. Tutors do not

focus consistently on the development of specific literacy skills for learners. As a result, learners do not make the progress of which they are capable.

What progress have leaders made in improving the quality of learners' experience through the recruitment of well-qualified teachers and the management of staff performance?

Reasonable progress

Senior leaders have been swift to strengthen the capacity of the staff to improve the quality of education.

Senior leaders and directors appointed a new and effective centre manager with experience of managing high-needs courses within an adult context. They support staff well and share their knowledge and skills. This has led to an improvement in the curriculum design and early signs of improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

Leaders and managers have appointed a new well-qualified lead tutor. They have increased the hours for teaching and management. Tutors now have additional time to prepare for teaching and to review learners' progress. Leaders and managers have redesigned the job descriptions of learning support assistants. Staff are now clear about their roles and support learners more effectively.

Staff are developing their skills further. Two learning assistants are improving their teaching skills through enrolling on appropriate training courses. It is still too early to see the impact of this training on the progress of learners.

Leaders and managers have not yet reflected the changes in the job descriptions in the personal development targets for staff. Leaders have not yet devised key performance measures from the job descriptions to set precise targets against which they can measure staff performance. Managers do not use the formal performance management systems effectively to identify areas for improvement.

What progress have those responsible for governance made in improving their ability to hold senior leaders to account?

Reasonable progress

The governance function is carried out by the board of directors. Through changes in their composition, senior leaders have strengthened their ability to provide support and challenge.

Senior leaders have recently appointed two new directors who have extensive experience of working closely with learners who receive high-needs funding. A third director will join soon and complement the expertise of the existing team. Within the

board of directors there is now an appropriate level of knowledge of how to provide high-quality education for adult learners in receipt of high-needs funding.

Directors clearly understand the vision for the centre.

They understand and are supportive of the new curriculum. They rightly have confidence in the new centre manager.

Directors have invested appropriately in additional new staff and the professional development of all staff. Directors are clear about the need to improve the physical environment.

Managers provide directors with detailed reports relating to learners' progress and the quality of their experience. They have established a schedule of well-focused meetings at which they will monitor the progress of learners. Directors scrutinise the reports. Directors have commissioned and received a recent report on the quality of provision. They have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for improvement.

Due to the recent formation of the current board, they have not yet developed a formal strategy for the centre. They have not yet developed formal targets against which they can monitor the performance of senior leaders.

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