

Best Practice Training & Development Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Name of lead inspector: Kathryn Townsley, Ofsted Inspector

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Address: First Floor
Centre Block
132a St Albans Rd
Watford
WD24 4AE



Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From March 2019, 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.

Best Practice Training & Development Limited (Best Practice) started offering funded adult learning provision in October 2017. It provides courses in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) from entry level to level 2. Learners also enrol on short work skills courses and on units in retail or warehousing. In 2018/19, 1,361 learners attended courses. Courses are offered in Hertfordshire, London, the North West, North East and East Midlands. Best Practice also runs similar courses as a sub-contractor for a local authority, but these learners were not in scope for the monitoring visit.

Themes

How much progress have leaders and managers made in designing and delivering relevant adult learning provision that has a clearly defined purpose? **Significant progress**

Leaders and managers design and deliver short learning courses that meet local needs very effectively. Courses are planned in conjunction with statutory services and partner organisations, including Job Centre Plus (JCP) and NHS trusts. Courses help learners to overcome personal and social barriers to employment by improving their self-confidence and by helping them to gain qualifications and skills.

Leaders and managers ensure that the programmes offered are of a high standard. Managers monitor accurately the quality of teaching, learning and assessment through a rigorous observation process and frequent drop-in monitoring sessions. Regular and frequent reviews of tutors' performance ensure that tutors are focused on improving the quality of the learners' experience and ensuring that learners make rapid progress. Managers ensure that tutors receive the appropriate development to achieve this.

The team of central and area managers work closely and effectively together to deliver high-quality provision to learners. They clearly understand the main strengths and weaknesses of their provision, particularly the need to develop more opportunities for work experience. Robust quality assurance arrangements, including

detailed data reports, quickly identify any issues and support accurate evaluation of the programmes across the regions.

Leaders have ensured that members of the recently formed advisory board have the relevant skills and experience to provide good support to the business. Members of the board scrutinise managers' judgements of performance and meet with learners to help further improve the provision.

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? **Significant progress**

Tutors and managers plan and deliver courses with a specific focus on developing the skills learners need to acquire to be successful in finding employment. They link course content very well to the everyday knowledge that learners need, for example digital skills and accessing and understanding Universal Credit. All courses focus closely on developing learners' skills in English and mathematics. This helps learners to make significant improvements in their personal well-being and confidence.

Tutors make good use of information gathered about learners' starting points. As a result, learners are placed upon the most appropriate level of course. Tutors are skilled in delivering courses to groups of learners with mixed abilities. Additional help is provided to enable all learners to access the provision, for example additional teaching sessions and/or extended days. Tutors are aware of learners' specific learning or mental health needs. They use this information effectively to individualise learners' programmes and to meet their needs very effectively.

Tutors know their learners very well. They help learners to reflect on what they have achieved after each session. As a result, learners steadily develop confidence and make good progress. Tutors provide effective advice and guidance to help learners plan their next steps and to ensure that they can make decisions that support their personal goals.

Learners enjoy their learning and feel valued by the supportive staff. Most learners quickly gain confidence in their own abilities, improve their basic skills in English, mathematics and digital skills and gain a greater understanding of the world of work. A high proportion of learners who complete their courses achieve their qualifications. Many gain employment or move on to further learning.

Managers do not yet have a clear programme of work experience to provide next steps from short employability programmes.

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

Leaders and managers have put in place appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures, including for lone working, online safety and the conduct of staff. Managers have effective links with local authority safeguarding boards, with whom they share information when appropriate.

All staff, including the two designated safeguarding leads, have received extensive training and updates on safeguarding. Staff consider learners' safety appropriately. Potential or actual safeguarding issues are swiftly identified and appropriate actions implemented.

Tutors undertake risk assessment of learners for safeguarding issues at the recruitment stage. Staff provide good support to learners with personal and welfare issues, including information on, and access to, a wide range of services, including counselling services, mental health support and benefits advice.

Learners receive detailed information on all elements of safeguarding at induction. Most are very aware of the potential risks from extremism and radicalisation.

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Piccadilly Gate
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