

Skills Max Academy Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number:	2748201
Name of lead inspector:	Mike Finn, His Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	Independent learning provider
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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Ofsted undertakes to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of adult learning provision where the provision offered is in scope for inspection. 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' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

Skills Max Academy Limited is based in Canning Town, East London. It teaches a range of courses to adult learners across London. In addition, it teaches Skills Bootcamps online to employed and self-employed learners in the West Midlands. Skills Max Academy Limited started to teach directly funded provision in 2023, having been a subcontractor for a range of providers.

Thirty-three learners are enrolled on adult education budget funded courses in smart energy transition skills (net zero) or electric vehicle charging. There are a further 159 learners on adult education budget funded courses in electrical installation at levels 2 and 3. Sixteen learners are enrolled on adult care programmes.

Themes

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

Leaders have developed an effective curriculum. They have designed their courses to make good use of the green construction expertise already established within the business. They make sure that the curriculum addresses skills gaps in construction and healthcare, ensuring that learners are being taught courses in sectors that match employment demand.

Leaders and staff prepare learners well for their longer-term careers. For example, leaders add inspection and testing content to electrical courses, as electricians become more employable if they develop the skills of checking the quality of their own work.

Leaders and managers have organised teaching so that it is more accessible. For example, they organise lessons so that learners can study at various times, including weekends and evenings. This enables learners to fit their studies around other commitments they have.

Leaders have ensured that high-quality resources are in place. They have developed well-equipped practical spaces. Workshops have industry-standard equipment. Learners can practise electrical installation, heat pump installation and inspection and testing. As a result, learners develop their skills in realistic workshops that mirror the industry.

Leaders and managers have suitable quality assurance arrangements in place. For example, they review learners' work across courses to check standards. As a result, leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and areas of the provision that need developing. Although leaders have put in place improvement plans to tackle areas requiring development, these are not specific in terms of identifying the actions they are going to take.

On the small adult care provision, leaders and managers have not planned the curriculum well enough. For example, leaders do not allow enough teaching time. As a result, learners do not benefit from time to process information. Too many learners fall behind on this course.

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? Reasonable progress

Tutors are suitably qualified and have good industry experience. They use their expertise to teach learners up-to-date knowledge of current issues in their industries. Tutors explain concepts clearly and ask learners appropriate questions to check their understanding. Learners develop new knowledge, skills and behaviours. For example, learners on net zero Skills Bootcamps develop their knowledge about carbon footprints and how to calculate their personal usage. They can then apply this knowledge when calculating usage for clients.

Tutors use a range of effective teaching strategies in lessons. For example, they use quizzes, multiple choice questions and case studies skilfully to help learners to recall what they have learned in previous lessons. Staff help learners to understand complex topics by breaking them down into smaller chunks.

Tutors provide clear and helpful feedback to learners on their work. For example, electrical installation tutors check that learners understand and apply cable selection procedures correctly. They provide precise guidance on the value of showing their workings and direct them to use them when they are missing. As a result, learners know how to improve their work. However, tutors do not routinely identify where learners make spelling, punctuation and grammar mistakes in their work so that they can learn how to avoid making these errors in future assessments.

Tutors prepare learners well for their final assessments. For example, on Skills Bootcamp courses, tutors show learners exemplar answers. They provide regular

mock examination practice to build learners' confidence gradually. Almost all learners on Skills Bootcamps achieve their learning goals. Most learners go on to gain more responsibility at work, or provide a wider range of services within their own business.

Tutors do not always make effective use of the information they collect about what learners know and can do at the start of the course in order to plan learning. They check if learners are on the right courses. However, for a few learners at the start of the course, they repeat information they already know through their prior learning.

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

Leaders and the designated safeguarding lead have created a positive safeguarding culture. They make sure that staff receive appropriate safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training. Leaders have also placed a strong focus on mental health and well-being. All staff receive mental health first-aid training. This enables them to understand how to support the well-being of learners. Leaders are aware of the isolation that some tradespeople experience when working alone. Therefore, they teach a mental health qualification to all learners taking Skills Bootcamps. This helps to raise learners' awareness of the steps they can take to maintain and improve their own mental health.

Leaders give learners information about keeping safe during the course induction. However, teachers do not repeat these topics throughout the course. As a result, learners struggle to recall what they have learned.

Learners feel safe. They know who they can speak with if they have any worries or concerns about themselves or others.

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