

Short inspection of V Learning Net

Inspection dates:

30–31 October 2019

Outcome

V Learning Net continues to be a good provider.

Information about this provider

V Learning Net (VLN) is a charity. It was established in 2001 and is based in Launceston, Cornwall. VLN was last inspected in November 2015 when its provision was judged to be good.

VLN is a consortium of six subcontractors based in the Devon and Cornwall regions. All are well-established, not-for-profit organisations which provide tailored, high-quality advice, guidance, learning and support to specific groups of learners. Learner groups include those who are homeless, have substance addictions, are unemployed or refugees. The subcontractors aim to build these learners' life skills and develop their confidence.

VLN is currently working with 153 adult learners and 25 learners between 16 and 18 years of age. Twenty-two learners have education, health and care plans. The vast majority of learners are following accredited entry and level 1 courses designed to provide them with the skills and knowledge to return to education or work, or to live independently within their communities.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Learners benefit from a well-planned curriculum which meets their individual needs. They feel safe and very well supported. Much is expected of them by highly experienced and skilled tutors. Subcontractor staff also contribute well to learners' development. They provide effective training and support. They have a good understanding of learners' needs and the challenges they face in their daily lives. They use this understanding to personalise programmes for individuals. As a result, learners are motivated to do their very best, and nearly all achieve their intended qualifications.

The curriculum also develops learners' behaviours, personal and social skills well. It prepares them for playing active roles within their communities effectively. All staff use the curriculum to ensure that learners become more self-confident and independent in their daily lives. Learners develop personal qualities quickly. They feel respected as individuals and able to be themselves. They are confident to explore their life options and learn from their mistakes. Staff encourage and enable learners to take part in voluntary

or part-time work. This helps learners feel valued within their communities.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Learners with few practical skills or very low levels of confidence develop new skills which help them when going about their daily lives. For example, they learn how to make themselves a hot drink, compose letters, arrange doctors' appointments and use the internet safely. Learners told the inspection team that they enjoy this useful learning and use the new knowledge gained to good effect.

The curriculum planned is effective in meeting learners' individual needs and takes account of their personal circumstances. Tutors formally assess learners' existing academic skills and personal competences at the start of the course. They use this information to plan programmes which suit each learner's needs. Tutors encourage learners to practise their new skills and knowledge, such as computing, repeatedly until they become adept.

Tutors think very carefully about how learners' English and mathematical knowledge can be enhanced. They plan activities that weave aspects of this learning through a practical and useful manner. Such approaches help learners with their daily living and routines well. They are also helpful in building learners' confidence with using the appropriate language and numbers in specific contexts.

Learners with high needs have good access to highly inclusive learning programmes based in stimulating environments. Together, these allow them to develop relevant and effective practical skills at the right time and in the right order, so they can be successful. For example, younger learners work alongside military veterans to build a field kitchen and, in the process, learn valuable budgeting and cooking skills.

Support workers use their considerable experience to help their learners complete their qualifications. Subcontractors working with learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities have developed highly effective risk assessment processes. These are used well to reduce learners' anxieties and increase their independence.

Learners are well behaved and highly respectful of their peers and tutors. Most work together calmly and are keen to support each other during classroom activities. Learners with anger and anxiety issues are taught to develop effective coping strategies in a variety of situations. Tutors continuously remind learners of the high expectations expected of them in training and when in public.

Tutors provide learners with clear guidance which prepares them for their next steps. Tutors identify learners' future goals at the start of their course and check on their progress to achieving these goals during impartial 'next steps' meetings. VLN leaders use their extensive networks and contacts to help learners secure volunteering work, employment, training with other providers or work experience.

VLN's leaders and managers have developed and implemented rigorous quality

assurance arrangements. They use these to identify improvements in the curriculum. These include providing learners with additional one-to-one support and further developing learners' speaking and listening skills. However, leaders and managers do not have the same high-quality systems and procedures in place for all of their subcontractors, for example to monitor learners' attendance or the extent of staff training. Subcontractor staff do not always have the opportunity to share the good and sometimes exceptional practice found in the consortium. Consequently, such practices are not being replicated by others.

VLN leaders and managers do not have reliable information on where learners go when they leave their courses. As a result, they cannot evaluate the overall impact of their provision well enough.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Learners feel safe and report that they are able to confide in staff. Learners understand how to stay safe online and in the world around them. They know the dangers of grooming, the risk of neglect and safe use of passwords online.

Pastoral staff ensure that personal or learning issues are picked up early and appropriate and effective support is provided.

VLN leaders check subcontractors' safeguarding arrangements routinely. However, they do not check that all subcontractor staff have had specific training about the potential risks for the unique characteristics of their learners.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- VLN leaders and managers should develop and implement effective systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of all their subcontractors in, for example, learners' attendance, their next steps and records of specialised staff training such as trafficking and female genital mutilation.
- VLN leaders should provide opportunities for subcontractors to share good or outstanding practice with each other to improve the consistency of practice throughout the consortium.

Provider details

Unique reference number	52983
Address	Unit 1 No 1 Business Centre Weston Road Launceston PL15 7FJ
Contact number	01566 770 729
Website	www.v-learningnet.org.uk
Principal/CEO	Stephen Howard
Provider type	Not-for-profit organisation
Date of previous inspection	3 November 2015
Main subcontractors	Questions and Answers; Open Doors International Language School; Transferable Skills Training; Kehelland; Sunflower Women's Centre; Shekinah.

Information about this inspection

The inspection was the second short inspection carried out since VLN's overall effectiveness was judged good at its full inspection in November 2009.

The inspection team was assisted by the teaching and learning quality manager, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the further education and skills inspection handbook and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including observing learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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