

Rutland County Council

Unit 16A, Oakham Enterprise Park, Oakham, Rutland LE15 7TU

Unique reference number (URN): 54229

Monitoring inspection report:

11 and 12 February 2026

At the most recent full inspection, the following areas were identified as needing to improve:

- Make sure all courses have a clearly defined purpose that is well aligned to learners' needs.
- Develop clear progression routes or appropriate signposting to other relevant activity from all courses.
- Improve oversight of learners' progress towards their intended primary goals so that learners make swifter progress.
- Use stakeholder engagement to implement planned changes to the course offer that better meet community needs.

During the monitoring inspection, inspectors focused on the following themes:

- What progress have leaders made to ensure that courses have a clearly defined purpose and take account of stakeholder engagement so they can plan and implement a curriculum that better meets learner and community needs?
- What progress have leaders made to improve oversight of learners' progress towards their intended primary goals, so learners make swift progress?
- What progress have leaders made in developing clear progression routes and guidance about other relevant courses, so learners understand the options available to them?

What progress have leaders made to ensure that courses have a clearly defined purpose and take account of stakeholder engagement so they can plan and implement a curriculum that better meets learner and community needs?

Since the previous inspection, leaders have taken decisive action to make improvements. They conducted a comprehensive curriculum review and assessed local learning needs.

They then used these findings to redesign courses to match community priorities more closely. The revised curriculum, launched in September 2025, now offers clear pathways from beginner-level to advanced study, with longer and more ambitious programmes.

Leaders are also developing a digital strategy to address low digital literacy. They have planned purposeful courses to develop computer and mobile device skills. These courses develop learners' confidence in using online websites and applications to access services like healthcare. Although it is too early to assess the impact of these changes, courses are now more relevant to learners' current and future needs.

Leaders work closely with other parts of the local authority to ensure that learners access resources and services, including support for employment, life skills and wellbeing. They have strong partnerships with further education colleges, universities and employers to inform careers advice. However, leaders recognise the need to build more relationships with employers to understand local skills needs more fully. They have aligned curriculums with the local economic strategy, especially in digital skills. However, this is less well developed in areas such as sustainability and green industries.

What progress have leaders made to improve oversight of learners' progress towards their intended primary goals, so learners make swift progress?

Leaders have improved the quality of initial assessment and individual learning plans that tutors use with learners. They have revised the format so that tutors clearly identify learners' starting points using course-specific skills scans, online mathematics and English assessments and comprehensive interview discussions. Tutors now use this information more precisely to set course and personal targets. Leaders and tutors regularly review learner progress against targets and provide support if learners are not making the progress expected.

Leaders have increased course length and introduced structured mid-term reviews to capture meaningful information about learners' progress. There is a clear focus on targets rather than course completion. Tutors use assessment activities, including homework and mid-term tests, to inform these discussions. This helps learners see their progress over time, make improvements and build confidence.

Leaders and staff know their individual learners very well. Leaders use learning walks as a key mechanism for gathering feedback from learners on their views and their progress. Small group sizes and face-to-face lessons mean that staff communicate frequently about learners' progress and ensure that any support needs are put in place quickly.

What progress have leaders made to develop clear progression routes and guidance about other relevant courses, so learners understand the options available to them?

Leaders have redesigned the curriculum, so courses are now structured into clear pathways and levels. This allows tutors to map out learners' next steps with greater

precision. This approach enables learners to understand how they progress from one stage to the next.

Tutors now discuss progression with learners at the start of each course and record intended next steps in individual learning plans. This ensures that tutors know each learner's goals, such as higher-level study, volunteering, employment or greater independence, giving learners a clear purpose from the outset.

Leaders have built stronger partnerships with local colleges, universities and the local authority, enabling learners to benefit from relevant support for their next steps. Staff connect learners with job coaches, volunteer opportunities and wider services as needed. Some learners have progressed from confidence-building workshops into volunteering and are now seeking employment support.

It is still early in the implementation of these new progression pathways. In areas like digital skills, learners are just beginning introductory courses. Leaders recognise the need to ensure that these processes consistently lead to measurable progression toward further study, employment or community engagement.

Additional next steps

Leaders and those responsible for governance should, in addition to the next steps raised at the provider's last full inspection:

- Continue to build relationships with more employers to understand better local skills and employment needs and further align their curriculums with the local economic strategy.

About this inspection

This is the first monitoring inspection following publication of the inspection report on 7 May 2025 which found the provider to requires improvement overall.

The provider's previous full inspection was carried out under the Education Inspection Framework (EIF) at that time. The renewed EIF took effect from 10 November 2025. The areas for improvement identified at the provider's full inspection have been cross-referenced to relevant evaluation areas in the inspection toolkit for consideration on this monitoring inspection.

The purpose of this monitoring inspection was not to determine grades for any of the evaluation areas set out in the further education and skills inspection toolkit. The purpose was to identify and report on the provider's progress in addressing the areas identified as needing to improve since the provider's previous inspection.

Lead inspector

Mark Care

His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspector

Sarah Biddulph

His Majesty's Inspector

About this provider

Number of learners on education programmes for young people at time of inspection 0

Number of learners on adult learning programmes at time of inspection 162

Number of apprentices at time of inspection 0

Number of learners receiving high-needs funding at time of inspection 0

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