

London Borough of Waltham Forest (Community Learning and Skills Service)

Inspection report

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Type of provider: Local authority

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Information about the provider

1. The London Borough of Waltham Forest delivers its adult and community learning, family learning and work-based learning through its Community Learning and Skills Service (CLaSS), part of the environment and regeneration directorate. The service provides courses at three main centres in Walthamstow at newly built premises, Leyton and Leytonstone during the day, evening and at weekends. It also works with a wide range of community partners to deliver courses across the borough. CLaSS' mission is that 'CLaSS is committed to raising the level of skills for life and work in Waltham Forest'.

2. CLaSS provides a wide range of accredited and non-accredited programmes in twelve of the seventeen sector subject areas, delivering upwards of 1,600 courses a year. It is one of a large number of learning providers in the borough and surrounding boroughs. It delivers part-time adult learner responsive, learning for qualifications, provision and learning for social and personal development. It also offers a relatively small, but growing, amount of employer responsive provision, including apprenticeships and courses to help employers increase the skills of their workforce.

3. The borough is very diverse, with areas of relative prosperity and with other wards among the 10% most deprived in the country. Around 250,000 people live in Waltham Forest. The population is relatively young, with over a third of the population under the age of 25, which is a greater proportion than for London or the United Kingdom average. Some 44% of residents are from a minority ethnic background.

Type of provision	Number of learners in 2010/11
Provision for adult learners: Learning for qualifications Learning for social and personal development	3,260 part-time learners 2,792 part-time learners
Employer provision: Apprentices	85 apprentices

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Grade 2
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2
Learning for qualifications and for social and personal development	Grade
Arts, crafts, fashion and textiles	1
Learning for qualifications	Grade
Literacy and numeracy	2
English for speakers of other languages	2
Learning for social and personal development	Grade
Family learning	2

Overall effectiveness

- CLaSS is a good provider of adult and community learning and skills. In a period of economic austerity it achieves good value for money, through the effective and efficient use of its resources. Outstanding leadership and good management place CLaSS at the heart of the work of the borough and its local communities. Its good partnerships are used well to promote educational and social inclusion and social and economic regeneration. Quality improvement and CLaSS' self-assessment of its own strengths and areas for improvement are good.
- Outcomes for learners are good. Learners' success on their courses is good overall. Success rates are high on courses for social and personal development,

although on courses leading to qualifications, while many success rates are high, too many are no better than satisfactory. Learners' skills and standards of work are good and sometimes better. Learners often make good progress on their courses, achieve their own objectives and apply new skills in their home and working lives. They often continue their studies at CLaSS or elsewhere, although CLaSS does not systematically collect information about learners' further progress.

6. The quality of provision is good, with much good or better teaching. Learners are well supported in their studies and teachers often pay good attention to meeting learners' individual needs. Individual learning plans are often well developed, but in a small number of cases, planned targets are insufficiently precise and do not help to plan teaching and learning. Equality and diversity are well promoted and learners are able to study safely.

Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates have significantly improved since the previous inspection, both for learners on courses for qualifications and for those on courses for social and personal development. Success rates are high for non-accredited courses and satisfactory overall on courses for qualifications, but with many high success rates.
- The overall success rate for apprenticeships is high and has been consistently above national averages for the last four years. Learners' success within agreed timescales is also consistently above national averages, and was well above in 2010/11.
- Learners' skills and standards of work are good and some work is outstanding, especially in practical tasks. Learners enjoy their studies and often make good progress, attaining their own learning goals and improving their prospects for satisfying home and working lives. They often progress to further studies elsewhere, although CLaSS does not systematically gather and record information on the progress of its learners.
- Learners feel safe and demonstrate safe working practices in lessons. CLaSS' arrangements for safeguarding learners are good, with government requirements fully met.
- Teaching and learning are good, with no inadequate teaching observed. Learners enjoy their lessons and gain valuable knowledge, skills and confidence. In the best lessons, teachers plan carefully to meet individual needs, and activities are challenging and stimulating.
- Teachers are supportive of learners and enthusiastic about their subjects. Learners appreciate the blend of challenge and support in their lessons. Teachers very promptly mark project work, providing learners with very good, constructive comments on ways to improve work further.
- CLaSS provides a good range of courses at times and in locations that very successfully meet learners' needs. Courses have been run in around 100

locations during the past year, and times of classes are flexibly arranged to suit learners' domestic, employment, faith or other commitments.

- Partnership working is well developed and highly effective. Community outreach work successfully identifies needs amongst often vulnerable, under-represented or hard-to-reach groups. Employer liaison has been a focus of work since the previous inspection and is very successful. Courses run for, and with, local employers do much to meet borough skills needs. For many learners first contacts with CLaSS lead to life-changing and highly beneficial progression.
- Support for learners is good across CLaSS and often very good in lessons. Learners feel very well informed about their learning and progression options, and are encouraged to consider progression as a result of their teachers' support for them.
- Tracking and monitoring of learners' progress are good in most areas. However, targets in individual learning plans are not always specific and measurable, and in a small number of cases teachers do not use these to plan lessons sufficiently effectively.
- Outstanding leadership and good management have continued to promote improvement since the previous inspection. Significant change, with reduced funding, has been well managed. The quality of provision is improved and learners benefit from improved accommodation and resources. The work of CLaSS is now central to the borough's strategies to further economic and social regeneration.
- Quality improvement, including self-assessment, is good. An established culture of high expectations and pursuit of continuous improvement drives forward further work to secure robust targets for improvement, progress towards which is carefully monitored.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. A good range of accessible learning opportunities promotes good social and educational inclusion and improves learners' life chances, with the most disadvantaged and vulnerable learners successfully attracted into learning. Teachers often promote equality and diversity well in lessons.

What does CLaSS need to do to improve further?

- Build on the good practice evident in many high performing courses to improve overall success rates on courses for qualifications.
- To contribute to the quality evaluation and future planning of provision, improve arrangements to gather and analyse the destinations and progress of learners when they leave CLaSS.
- Explore ways to share existing good practice in the setting of precise and meaningful targets in individual learning plans, so that learner progress is swift and more easily measured.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the local venues that allow attendance close to home or work
- the patient and encouraging teachers who have high levels of subject knowledge
- the ways that courses build confidence and quickly develop skills
- the opportunities to make mistakes and experiment in lessons without feeling like they are failing
- the possibilities for progression to courses with qualifications
- the ways that CLaSS helps build employment skills.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the cramped accommodation at a small number of venues
- the number of courses available at intermediate and advanced levels.

Summary of the views of partners and employers as confirmed by inspectors

What partners and employers like:

- the quick and imaginative response to need from CLaSS' outreach and employer engagement staff
- the ways that managers use funding constructively to support courses for specific groups and needs
- the flexibility of curriculum staff in designing and delivering courses for employees, employers and community groups
- the ways that courses can be located at employers' or community venues.

What partners and employers would like to see improved:

- the clarity of progression opportunities from CLaSS to other providers.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

7. CLaSS has further improved its capacity to make and sustain improvements since the previous inspection. Outstanding leadership and good management have secured a key role for CLaSS within the borough's arrangements to drive forward economic and social improvement for its various communities.
8. Significantly improved quality assurance has built the capacity for sustainable improvement and the momentum of change has gained pace. All key areas for improvement noted at the previous inspection have moved forward noticeably. Outcomes for learners are now good and learners benefit from higher standards in all aspects of their work with CLaSS. Leaders and managers know their provision very well and what requires further improvement.
9. Self-assessment is rigorous and comprehensive. CLaSS uses a broad range of evidence, including learners' and partners' views, to produce an accurate self-assessment report and rigorous quality improvement action plans

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

10. Outcomes for learners have significantly improved since the previous inspection, both on courses for qualifications and on non-accredited social and personal development courses. CLaSS' own 'in-year' data indicate that the trend of improvement has continued in 2011/12.
11. The overall success rate for learners on courses for qualifications has improved year on year over the last three years, from 62% in 2008/09 to 76% in 2010/11 and is at national averages. This trend is evident both for long and short courses. Long course success rates for 2010/11 are highest at foundation level, which constitutes well over half of all learners aged 19 and over. Learners' retention is often good, with poorer success largely attributable to lower pass rates.
12. Success rates for the many learners on non-accredited social and personal development courses are high. CLaSS' thorough and reliable systems for recording and recognising achievement show that overall success was 89% in 2010/11, with 92% in family learning and 94% in arts, crafts, fashion and textiles. Both achievement and retention rates are high. Overall retention was 93% in 2010/11.
13. Success rates for apprentices are high. CLaSS' overall success rate has been consistently above national averages for the last four years. In 2010/11 it was 81%, which is significantly above the national average for all providers. Learners' success within agreed timescales is also consistently above national averages, at 78% in 2010/11 compared with the national average of 65%.

14. CLaSS increasingly analyses success data to determine any significant achievement gaps. It has not identified any gaps, but, as it notes in its own self-assessment, the more formal and regular reviewing of the performance of different cultural groups at curriculum level is required.
15. Learners often achieve good standards in their work, including their practical work. In the arts, the quality of work is sometimes outstanding. Learners enjoy their studies, make good progress on their courses and attain their learning goals. They value the benefits of studying alongside others and are proud of their achievements.
16. Courses often provide learners with a qualification for the first time in their lives. Learners develop their skills well and often apply them at work, with their families and in the community. Courses leading to qualifications provide learners with good skills to gain employment or to improve work practices. Overall attendance is satisfactory and improving, at 86% for 2011/12.
17. Learners are motivated by their studies and very often develop the confidence and enthusiasm to study further. They progress well to further courses, both at CLaSS and further afield. There are many examples of learners improving their economic and social well-being. CLaSS does not systematically track leavers' destinations or further progress, although it plans to do so.
18. Learners feel safe at their studies. Venues are well organised and offer a safe social and learning environment. Teachers pay close attention to implementing safe working practices and, where relevant, promote healthy living and well-being.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

19. Teaching and learning are good overall, and outstanding in arts, crafts, fashion and textiles. The majority of lessons have good or better teaching and learning and inspectors observed no inadequate lessons. Since the previous inspection a relentless and effective focus on the quality of teaching and learning has raised standards and given teachers a wider range of skills and confidence to meet the needs of learners.
20. Across all areas inspected, planning was careful and effective, with a good range of productive activities employed in most lessons. In the best lessons, the pace was brisk and learners were challenged and encouraged in equal measure. In some lessons teachers made excellent use of stimulating materials and demonstrations to promote learning. Many teachers have a very good range of vocational, industrial or specialist skills.
21. In most lessons assessment was good or better, an improvement over the previous inspection where this was satisfactory. Written work is carefully marked and learners receive a good range of comment and instruction on how to improve their work further. Teachers return assignments, projects and other work very promptly. In the small number of satisfactory lessons seen, teachers

did not make full and effective use of individual learning plans to establish clear and helpful targets to drive learners' work. In a few lessons there was insufficient or unimaginative use of learning technologies.

22. Teaching and learning observations are very comprehensive and have made a significant contribution to improving the quality of lessons. Teachers are given very comprehensive and constructive feedback on their lessons and regard observation as helpful and confidence building. Peer observation is well established in some subject areas, but overall is a developing activity. Teachers are supported well by curriculum coordinators and senior managers and a good range of relevant and well-received professional development activity takes place.
23. The needs and interests of users are met well. During the past year, courses ran in around 100 locations across the borough. For many learners, their contact with CLaSS leads to life-changing development or progression. Learners value very highly the availability of courses in community venues close to their homes. Vulnerable and hard-to-reach groups, such as the homeless or those with mental health difficulties, benefit from courses in locations that are familiar, safe and welcoming. The timings of classes are well suited to learners' domestic, work and other commitments.
24. CLaSS makes good bespoke arrangements to meet employers' and learners' needs, for example classes run during early morning hours so that borough hygiene and street cleaning staff can attend before work. As at the previous inspection, many learners progress from community-based courses into further study or employment.
25. Partnership working is good overall, with many outstanding features. As identified by self-assessment, CLaSS maintains very effective partnerships with community groups and employers, successfully engaging those in economic need or those under represented in learning. As identified by CLaSS, however, partnership working with local further education providers is underdeveloped.
26. Managers are adept at identifying and using a range of funding sources to enable specifically-designed employer and community-focused provision. For many employers, including the borough, CLaSS provides a much-valued service. Liaison with employers is highly effective in helping to meet borough skills needs. For example, very good work has taken place during the past two years with the London Olympic Organising Committee to recruit and train security, administrative, marshalling, and catering and other staff for the Games.
27. Excellent liaison between community outreach, employer liaison, and curriculum managers ensures that when a need is identified, appropriate courses are developed in suitable locations. Outreach work with faith groups, support and specialist care organisations is highly effective in identifying and meeting often very wide ranging needs. Since the previous inspection, CLaSS has run a wide range of successful courses for ex-offenders, those with mental health difficulties, homeless people and vulnerable groups.

28. Advice, guidance and support for learners are good. Course information leaflets are very widely available across the borough, including in supermarkets, nurseries and doctors' surgeries. Printed and internet information is available in a good range of formats and community languages, with appropriate accessibility options. Learners receive good advice and guidance from their earliest contact with CLaSS. Many teachers telephone or email learners directly following their first enquiry about courses. Induction activities are purposeful, and in some areas, for instance arts and crafts, learners make an artefact to take home from their first lesson.
29. Learners appreciate the supportive and welcoming manner of all staff at the main centres and at community locations. Learners in Skills for Life, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and family learning are given free childcare which, for many, enables attendance on courses.
30. Since the previous inspection, CLaSS has successfully promoted more widely its support services for learners and encouraged them to declare their support needs. Initial assessment effectively identifies needs, and most teachers make good use of its outcomes to plan lessons. Learners benefit from generally good, and sometimes excellent, in-class support and from effective referral to specialist support agencies. Valuable drop-in support workshops are well used by learners. CLaSS provides good support for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, with a good range of adaptive equipment available. As at the previous inspection, support for apprentices is good.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

31. Outstanding leadership and good management have continued to improve the quality of provision since the previous inspection. Outcomes for learners are now good and teaching and learning have improved. Significant change, to meet local and national priorities, has been well managed, the needs of more users are being addressed, and accommodation is much improved
32. CLaSS promotes its clear strategic vision and mission well. Outstanding leadership of CLaSS and the work of the responsible council cabinet member have raised the profile of CLaSS within the council and the borough. CLaSS is now very much at the heart of the borough's work to address its key priorities and commitments, including economic and social regeneration. CLaSS has a clear understanding of the needs of its local communities. Oversight of the service is sound, with clear and effective lines of management reporting.
33. Operational management is good. Management arrangements are clear and understood by managers, teachers and other staff. They are skilfully reviewed and adapted to achieve improved efficiency and effectiveness. Senior managers are experienced and able. Curriculum coordinators know their areas well and are highly visible to their staff and learners. Managers work very effectively, closely and in consultation, with their many teachers. Teachers speak highly of the many opportunities they have, both formally and informally, to influence

CLaSS' work. Opportunities for their professional development, and the take up of these, are good.

34. The safeguarding of learners is good, with government requirements fully met. CLaSS benefits from the comprehensive safeguarding framework of the council, which is extensively supplemented by specific arrangements and guidance relevant to CLaSS. The checking of all staff, using the Criminal Records Bureau, is comprehensive and well recorded. Staff and learners have a sound understanding of safeguarding. Safeguarding training for teachers is satisfactory. The management of health and safety is good and teachers pay close attention to ensuring the safety of their learners in lessons.
35. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. CLaSS' work is supported by the comprehensive infrastructure of up-to-date and rigorous council policies and procedures, together with its own policies and guidance. These are well understood by staff. Teachers often promote equality and diversity well in lessons, although opportunities to reinforce learners' understanding are sometimes missed.
36. Many successful initiatives promote inclusion well. Each academic year, around half of all learners are new to CLaSS. A good range of accessible learning opportunities promotes good social and educational inclusion and improves learners' life chances, with the most disadvantaged and vulnerable learners successfully attracted into learning. A good range of additional learning support encourages the participation of learners with disabilities. Childcare facilities are often available.
37. Quality improvement is good. A culture of high expectations and pursuit of continuous improvement are well embedded in CLaSS' work. The quality improvement cycle is increasingly effective in producing robust targets for improvement, which managers and other staff carefully monitor. Additional staff resources have improved the consistency and rigour of quality assurance. Managers and teachers use reliable learner performance data as a key part of their valuable reviews of courses. CLaSS' scheme to judge the quality of teaching and learning is rigorous and reliable.
38. Self-assessment productively involves all stakeholders. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements in the self-assessment report. Learners' views are used well to help improve provision, including the structure and content of courses. A strong network of partnerships contributes to improving the quality of provision.
39. CLaSS provides good value for money. It has significantly improved the quality of provision whilst extending the range and reach of services at a time of financial austerity.

Learning for qualifications and for social and personal development

Art, crafts, fashion and textiles

Grade 1

Context

40. CLaSS offers over 180 short courses including art, sewing, fashion, soft furnishings, jewellery, enamelling, calligraphy, interior design, photography, floristry and sugar crafts in a large number of venues across the borough. Over 400 learners take courses leading to qualifications at foundation or intermediate level, and over 500 learners study on non-accredited courses. Most learners are female, with the largest numbers of learners coming from White British backgrounds, with significant numbers of other White, Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Indian learners.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Learners enjoy their courses immensely and acquire excellent practical skills. Learners often join courses with little or no prior experience of the subject and make good, and often excellent, progress within a short space of time. Many progress to further courses with CLaSS or at local colleges.
- Learners' positive experiences at CLaSS help develop their confidence and independence. By learning how to evaluate and annotate their work, they are able to identify particular strengths and understand how they can improve. Many learners are highly motivated and work hard at home, practising and refining skills learnt in lessons. Analysis of learners' performance shows no significant difference between different groups of learners.
- All learners have opportunities to exhibit and sell work through the CLaSS craft fair, and learners are increasingly aware how their newly-acquired skills can support their career intentions or increase their earning potential. Several learners have won prestigious awards or competitions or successfully secured commissions. Others have progressed to related or self-employment.
- The quality of provision is outstanding. Teachers use their considerable specialist knowledge and technical expertise, along with their extensive industrial or commercial experience, to inspire and enthuse learners and ensure that they make rapid progress.
- Course and lesson planning is well structured, enabling learners to build up knowledge and skills sequentially, and to reinforce learning as they move through their courses. Occasionally, schemes of work and lesson plans focus more on listing tasks and activities than on considering what learners are intended to learn through completing the tasks.
- Teachers make regular use of information and learning technologies (ILT) in lessons, to display visual examples of work from other learners, artists, designers and makers for inspiration. Teachers and learners record work in

progress, creating useful technical logs for future reference. A few teachers use CLaSS' virtual learning environment (VLE) to provide course materials for learners to access from home, but this is at an early stage of development.

- Teachers and learners use individual learning plans well to assess prior knowledge and skills and to monitor progress towards learning goals. Teachers provide regular verbal feedback in lessons, with much praise and encouragement and with clear points for improvement to ensure learners reach the expected high quality standard of professional finish.
- CLaSS plans a wide range of provision very flexibly to meet the diverse needs of its local communities. Learners can study during the day, evenings or at weekends on programmes of varying lengths and levels to suit personal circumstances. Productive partnerships with other organisations in the borough help to target provision for specific groups of learners and to run courses in different geographical locations.
- Learners feel very well supported by teachers and other staff. They provide very good support for learners with additional learning needs or those with physical disabilities, making individual arrangements in lessons or providing specialist equipment where necessary. Teachers often encourage learners to progress to more ambitious and challenging courses and for many this has been the start of a life-changing experience.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. The curriculum coordinator is wholly committed to ensuring all learners enjoy the best possible experience and achieve well, and she has a very clear vision for the future development of the provision. Team working is coordinated well. New staff feel very well supported, through induction, training and support from the coordinator.
- Staff regularly review their own practice and the quality of provision. They evaluate lessons and identify strengths or areas for improvement, leading to an accurate curriculum area self-assessment. Managers rigorously monitor the quality of teaching and learning and moderation identifies areas for improvement. Learners' views, collected through lesson observations and end of course reports, are used well to review and improve provision.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good. All staff are appropriately trained and know how to deal with any issues that might arise. Learners feel safe at CLaSS. Equality and diversity are promoted well. Teachers draw learners' attention to the importance of equality and cultural diversity through reference to relevant topics in lessons, although these themes are not always identified in lesson plans, or records of lesson observations.
- Learners benefit from good accommodation and specialist resources, with excellent facilities at the Queens Road centre. Teachers in outreach centres ensure that learners can access the equipment and resources they need to help them achieve.

What does CLaSS need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teachers' planning clearly and consistently identifies opportunities to promote equality and celebrate diversity in lessons, in order to fully develop and reinforce learners' understanding.
- Encourage and support all teachers to use the VLE to support and enhance learning, both in lessons and for learners to use at home.

Learning for qualifications

Literacy and numeracy

Grade 2

Context

41. In the current year, 785 learners are enrolled on courses in literacy or numeracy. Courses run during the day, in the evening and at weekends, at CLaSS' main sites and in community locations. Courses range from pre-entry to intermediate levels. All courses are part time and lead to external qualifications. The majority of learners are adults, most of whom are female, with 80% of all learners from a diverse range of minority ethnic backgrounds.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Achievement is satisfactory overall, but has shown marked improvement in the current year, with many high pass rates. Success rates are high at foundation level in literacy and numeracy, but low at intermediate level for numeracy short courses. In the current year, some poor outcomes at entry level have been rectified and learners' achievement, in this case, is satisfactory after re-testing. 'In-year' success rates are well above national averages for the majority of qualifications.
- Learners gain significant confidence in expressing themselves, both verbally and in writing. They improve their numerical skills well and demonstrate improved confidence in using the language of mathematics and understanding its concepts. Learners' speaking, listening and writing skills are developed well on entry level literacy courses and those studying at foundation and intermediate levels often progress to General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) courses.
- All learners make very good progress in improving their literacy and numeracy and progress well both towards, and through, qualifications. Many learners gain the confidence, through employment-related courses, to seek work. Others have improved their awareness of a healthy lifestyle and attained related qualifications. The standard of learners' work is good. Learners feel safe and enjoy learning.
- The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are conducted at a good speed with a wide variety of learning activities. In a numeracy lesson, for example, learners enjoyed working together collecting and comparing data on the cost of clothing. In literacy, a lively discussion on persuasive texts was stimulated by good visual resources.
- In all lessons, teachers plan learning very well with a good focus on the individual requirements of each learner. Individual learning plans are comprehensive records of learners' attainment. Learning targets are clear and measurable, fully understood by learners, and regularly reviewed by teachers. Occasionally there is no indication of how a learner's targets are planned to be met in lessons.

- Teachers focus well on the needs and ambitions of learners. They give very clear guidance on the requirements of the qualifications learners wish to achieve and what they need to do to achieve their goals. Learners' work is marked well and teachers write evaluative comments, helping learners to improve.
- Teachers use learning technologies well in many lessons. For example, in one lesson, a version of 'Mastermind' tested learners' knowledge of spelling and grammar well and enjoyably. In another, good use was made of on-line dictionaries which 'sounded out' words. In weaker lessons, unimaginative use did not contribute to learners' clearer understanding of the topic.
- The provision meets the needs of learners very well. CLaSS' partnership working is good and valuable joint initiatives lead to new courses. CLaSS' initiative to help learners benefit from the Olympics, 'Going for Gold', has successfully led to employment for many learners at London Olympic venues. New 'fast track centres' offer access to advice on qualifications and on-line skills testing successfully improves the employability and qualifications of residents of local communities.
- Support for learners is good. Teachers give good individual support in lessons. Good initial assessment of learners' needs informs learning plans. Teachers refer learners to external agencies where appropriate and additional support workshops are open to all learners, providing opportunities to consolidate learning. Some good learning materials are available to, and used by, learners on the CLaSS intranet.
- Teachers communicate well with learners when they are not at CLaSS, through telephone calls or by email, and learners feel supported and valued. Teachers keep in close contact with those who may have difficulty attending regularly because of personal circumstances or shift patterns at work.
- Leadership is strong and curriculum management is good. Managers and staff work together effectively as a team. Staff are experienced and have good access to further training and professional development. Safeguarding of learners is good, with thorough arrangements for e-safety. The promotion of equality and diversity is good.
- Quality assurance is good and the area pays very good attention to all aspects of the learners' experience, from initial assessment to success in qualifications. Success rates are improving. CLaSS' lesson observations are rigorous and lead to improvements in teaching and learning. The self-assessment report is evaluative and quality improvement plans are rigorous.

What does CLaSS need to do to improve further?

- By building on the good practice in many courses, maintain improvement in success rates for numeracy at entry and short intermediate levels.
- Improve learners' understanding in lessons by consistently exploiting the benefits of good use of learning technologies. Develop all teachers' understanding of how best to use them.

English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)

Grade 2

Context

42. Currently, 773 learners study English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) at eight venues throughout the borough. ESOL courses are offered from foundation to intermediate levels. Most of the provision is externally accredited and learners are offered the opportunity to achieve speaking and listening, as well as reading and writing, components of the ESOL qualifications. All learners are part time and most study for six hours a week. Just over two thirds study at foundation level and 80% are female. The area is managed by an ESOL coordinator and 25 teachers deliver the provision.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Retention rates are high and above national averages on most courses. Success rates have improved steadily and are high on the accredited speaking and listening courses at intermediate level. Overall pass rates at entry and intermediate levels have been low, but for current learners they show a significant increase at most levels, to satisfactory or good.
- Learners benefit from learning at times and at locations that help maximise attendance and retention. Very effective attendance and retention monitoring impact favourably on raising and maintaining high rates. Learners respond very positively to the thorough monitoring by teachers, who telephone, email, text and, if required, provide them with details of missed work.
- Learners develop and improve their language skills well. They make good progress and their standards of work are good. Learners enjoy learning and are keen to participate in lessons. They become more confident, improve their communication skills and use their newly-acquired skills to function more independently in the community and workplace. Many improve their employment prospects by actively seeking volunteering and training placements.
- Safeguarding of learners is satisfactory. Learners feel safe and like the secure learning environment created by teachers, the presence of security cameras and reception staff at community venues. A few public venues, used by CLaSS for lessons, do not have stringent entry procedures.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan lessons in great detail, with a strong focus on addressing learners' differing needs. Learners' interest is well captured and teachers provide ample opportunities for learners to practise and demonstrate their use of language. Teachers create and successfully use stimulating learning resources. They make good use of learning technologies to display pictorial images and develop pre-entry learners' vocabulary skills.
- Initial and diagnostic assessment processes are good and outcomes are used well to help plan teaching and learning. Teachers ensure that they share and record the language skills learners need to develop. They regularly monitor and record learners' achievements. However, the setting of specific and measurable

individual learning targets to develop independent learning and study skills is insufficiently developed.

- A very responsive, flexible and accessible curriculum is well suited to meeting learners' diverse needs and interests. Offering elements of the qualification at different times in the year ensures good learner participation. Learners are very positive about the location and availability of crèches at some local community venues.
- Partnerships are good. They are well established with children's centres, religious and women's groups, Jobcentre Plus, local hospitals and trusts. Productive joint working with partners has helped CLaSS to contact new learner groups across the borough and encourage them to return and participate in adult education.
- Information, guidance and support for learners are good. Course information and the prospectus are well produced, include clear text, and are made accessible to learners in more than 12 community languages. Study support workshops provide additional assistance for learners. Teachers provide good and enhanced personal and learning support and refer learners to external agencies for specialist support.
- Leadership and management are good. Communication with teachers is good. Many improvements have been made to accommodation since the previous inspection. Most venues are well equipped and provide a good learning environment. Teachers improve their work through participation in an extensive range of training and development.
- A keen concentration on quality improvement has raised standards and outcomes for learners. Changes to the structure and delivery of programmes have helped improve learners' success. The quality improvement plan accurately identifies key priorities and progress made, although the self-assessment report is too brief and does not fully capture the positive features of the provision. CLaSS' lesson observations are very rigorous and most are graded accurately.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Teachers make good use of learners' life experiences to enhance learning and maximise use of naturally occurring opportunities to discuss cultural differences.

What does CLaSS need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teachers set individual learning targets that are specific and measurable and support learners to develop independent learning and study skills.
- Provide a full evaluation of the strengths of the provision and complement the rigorous quality improvement plan with a more detailed and comprehensive self-assessment report.

Learning for social and personal development

Family learning

Grade 2

Context

43. CLaSS offers part-time family literacy, language and numeracy (FLLN) and wider family learning (WFL), including parenting courses, in partnership with schools and children's centres. Of the 731 learners enrolled during the current academic year, just over half have followed FLLN courses. Overall, 125 family learning courses are delivered in 27 locations, of which just under half involve children and adults learning together. Some accreditation is offered at entry level. Almost all learners are female.

Key findings

- Learners' outcomes are good. Success rates have remained consistently high for learners on FLNN and WFL courses and almost all achieve their personal and learning goals. An increasing number progress to literacy, language and numeracy courses and achieve qualifications at foundation or intermediate level. Learners' attendance is good and any absences are promptly followed up by staff.
- Learners increase their confidence and understanding of how their children learn. They enjoy learning and develop good knowledge and skills. Learners feel safe in learning venues. Outcomes for families improve because of learners' increased interpersonal and communication skills, which support better interaction with teachers and help children's learning. In the majority of the settings working with CLaSS, children's school attendance and attainment are improving.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan and monitor learning very well. They understand the individual needs of learners and ensure learning is enjoyable and worthwhile. Using a good and varied range of teaching and learning methods, they keep learners motivated and help them achieve positive outcomes. Teachers very effectively encourage learners to apply their learning to family situations and experiences, helping to bring learning to life.
- Teachers provide clear and effective feedback which promotes learners' understanding. Learners know what to do to improve. The initial assessment of literacy, numeracy, and language needs is good and outcomes are used effectively to help plan lessons and determine individual learning plans. Teachers produce good resources and provide challenging and interesting follow-up activities for families to do at home.
- Resources to support learning are good. Teachers are well qualified and experienced. Venues are suitable and classroom resources are generally good. In a few locations access to suitable teaching areas is limited and information technologies are not used sufficiently effectively.

- The needs and interests of users are met well, including those from disadvantaged groups and communities. Courses are well promoted. They promote community cohesion and increase the aspirations, educational and employment opportunities of learners. Parenting courses are highly effective and valued by learners and partners. The number of males participating in courses is very low.
- Courses involving adults and children learning together are well planned and coordinated to promote active learning and social and cultural awareness. They motivate learners, strengthen their family relationships and reinforce their understanding of the wider benefits of learning and development. Teachers are creative and often try out new initiatives to engage and support families, such as breakfast clubs.
- Partnerships are outstanding. CLaSS has established a very positive reputation with key organisations, such as schools and children's centres. They work closely together to improve outcomes for families and to seek new opportunities to improve family learning in a wide range of settings.
- The involvement of children's centres and schools in the design, review and evaluation of provision is highly effective. Many courses provide a good introduction to learning and parents develop a deeper understanding of how their children learn and ways of promoting this outside of school.
- Leadership and management are good. Managers focus on providing high quality, responsive and family-oriented provision. Staff are trained and supported well. Safeguarding is good with safe learning environments and procedures. The sound outcomes from the observation of teaching and learning are used well to improve the quality of provision. Self-assessment is good and used to improve performance and outcomes for families.
- The promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity is good. Well-targeted and negotiated provision increases the participation of some minority ethnic groups, but there is no written strategy to increase the involvement of men. Staff and learners celebrate diversity and challenge discrimination. The promotion of equality and diversity in lessons is very effective.

What does CLaSS need to do to improve further?

- By building on the better practice within CLaSS and by ensuring that all venues are suitable to support the enhanced use of technologies, improve and increase their use in lessons.
- Widen participation by increasing the number of men on courses by more effectively targeting provision to their needs and interests and offering appropriate courses and activities.

Information about the inspection

44. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the service's Head of Service, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the service's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, Framework for Excellence indicators, the previous inspection report, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
45. Inspectors used group, individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gather the views of learners. They looked at questionnaires learners and partners had completed in relation to the service. They also visited learning sessions, assessments or progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subjects the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

London Borough of Waltham Forest (Community Learning and Skills Service)

Learning types: 14-16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships. **Social and personal development:** all adult safeguarded provision

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive	Social and personal development
Approximate number of enrolled learners				
Part-time learners	4,866	2,794	65	2,007
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2
Capacity to improve	2			
A. Outcomes for learners	2	2	2	2
A1. How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2			
A1.a) How well do learners attain their learning goals? A1.b) How well do learners progress?	2			
A2. How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2			
A3. Do learners feel safe?	2			
A4. <i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	n/a			
A5. <i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	n/a			
B. Quality of provision	2	2	2	2
B1. How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2			
B2. How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2			
B3. How well do partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2			
B4. How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2			
C. Leadership and management	2	2	2	2
C1. How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	1			
C2. <i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	2			
C3. How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2			
C4. How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2			
C5. How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2			
C6. How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2			
C7. How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2			

*where applicable to the type of provision

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