

The Adult College of Barking and Dagenham

Local authority

Inspection dates		22–26 April 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- Most learners achieve their qualifications on both accredited and non-accredited courses and apprenticeship success rates are now high.
- Learners develop good personal and social skills and many progress into permanent employment from, for example, the apprenticeship programme.
- Well-qualified and experienced tutors and assessors ably plan to meet individual learners' needs and support learners well in their classes and at work.
- Learners develop good independent learning skills and work well together on presentation tasks and activities in classes.
- The links between on- and off-the-job learning are good, enabling apprentices to apply theory to practice with support from their employers.
- Governance and accountability are good and governors act as effective advocates for learners.
- Operational management is effective and senior leaders have ensured good improvements in challenging circumstances.
- The service has set sound priorities in line with local goals including good engagement of new learners.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- On a minority of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses, achievements are lower than national rates for all providers.
- Initial assessment processes do not always lead to clear and measurable targets for learners.
- Opportunities to promote equality and diversity are not maximised in all lessons.
- The use of data to inform planning and judgements on performance is underdeveloped.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Develop tutors' skills to plan and deliver learning with particular attention to the individual needs of learners, peer support and interactive tasks to continue to improve success rates for ESOL learners on accredited courses.
- Improve target setting for the significant minority of learners on foundation English, mathematics, ESOL and visual arts courses to ensure they are always clear and measurable and linked to the results of initial assessment.
- Increase the focus on equality and diversity in lessons to maximise naturally occurring themes and develop learners' knowledge and understanding of the culturally diverse community the college serves.
- Improve the use of data, including its accuracy and clarity, to enable managers to deal with underperformance.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates on courses leading to qualifications have improved significantly over the last three years and in most subject areas are now at or above national rates. Apprenticeship success rates have improved significantly over the past two years from very low to high in the current year. However, on a minority of ESOL courses, too few learners successfully complete their studies and achieve a qualification. The great majority of learners on non-accredited courses achieve their main learning goals and personal targets.
- Learners make good progress on their courses. They take pride in producing work of a high quality and much of their work is attractively displayed in classrooms and public areas of the college. Many learners gain skills that enable them to progress successfully on to higher level courses within the college. For example, many learners on ESOL courses successfully progress from foundation to intermediate level. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress in developing their independent living skills, and achievement rates for this group of learners are consistently high.
- Learners improve their personal and social skills and their confidence. They speak enthusiastically about how much they enjoy their learning and the positive impact it has on their personal lives and in their jobs. For example, many learners become more able to support their children at school as a result of their learning. The overall rate of attendance is satisfactory. However, attendance on ESOL and foundation English and mathematics courses is noticeably lower than across other subject areas.
- On vocational courses, learners successfully develop and use employment-related skills. For example, a learner on the business and administration apprenticeship programme successfully applied his new skills in planning to organise an open event for the Citizen's Advice Bureau. Learners improve their English and mathematics skills whilst on their courses and become competent in applying these skills successfully in their learning and at work.
- Learners from different ethnic groups and male and female learners achieve equally well. However, the achievement rates for the small number of learners aged 16 to 18 years is significantly lower than for older learners. Learners who benefit from additional learning support achieve at a similar level to others.
- On the apprenticeship programme, learners progress successfully into permanent employment. The great majority of those completing their programme in the current year have secured employment locally or progressed on to other courses. Many learners on other vocational programmes also use the skills they acquire to secure relevant work. For example, learners on

food hygiene courses gain employment in care homes and in catering and many learners on beauty therapy courses use their skills to become self-employed. Many learners on ESOL courses gain employment as a result of their improved language skills.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and lead to good outcomes for all learners. Very supportive workplace staff and college learning coordinators enable learners to maximise learning at work and in college. Learners are stretched and challenged in lessons, extending their knowledge and skills through tutors' careful questioning and their high expectations of learners. Tutors are energetic and motivational and, in the better lessons, introduce a sense of fun, enabling more reluctant learners to engage in the subject and participate in lessons.
- Learning coordinators carefully consider learners' needs and discussions with employers highlight personal barriers to learning. This results in swift action taken to remedy problems. Well-qualified and experienced tutors and assessors ably plan to meet individual learners' needs and adapt their lessons to ensure all learners take full advantage of the learning opportunities provided.
- Support for learners in their classes and at work is good. Tutors and assessors offer contact outside of planned sessions and encourage learners to use the range of resources and support mechanisms within the college. Good use is made of volunteers and learning support assistants, all of whom complete the appropriate qualification for their role.
- The majority of lesson plans are comprehensive and detailed and record the specific tasks, resources or approaches deployed to meet the differing needs of learners in class. Individual learning plans for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make use of pictorial prompts and clues to help learners understand their goals, record their progress and clarify the content of the subjects they are learning.
- The use of progress reviews for apprentices is good and includes the close monitoring of learners' progress and ensures the learners are aware of the next steps in their learning. Target setting is effective in workplace learning and successfully supports the good progress that learners make. However, a significant minority of learners on foundation English, mathematics and ESOL courses have insufficiently clear and measurable targets in individual learning plans.
- Enrolment and initial assessment activities are rigorous and appropriate and enable learners to be placed on the right level courses. Additional learning support for those learners who need extra help aligns well to their specific needs. Adaptive technologies enable learners to continue their studies and succeed.
- Learners develop good independent learning skills and take responsibility for their learning. The use of self-assessment encourages learners to develop their critical thinking skills and to consider what they have learnt in lessons and the knowledge or skills they need to improve. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are encouraged to think for themselves and plot their progress in individual learning plans.
- The coordination of on-and off-the-job training for workplace learners is very effective and supported well through bi-monthly progress reviews. Learners are clear about the progress they are making, receiving praise for good work both in the classroom and at work. The majority of learners report that they get prompt feedback on submitted assignments and make good use of the college's virtual learning environment to catch up on any missed work.
- Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive clear and accurate feedback from teachers about the work they produce and the development of knowledge and skills in their chosen subjects. Achievements are celebrated and learning routinely reinforced.
- The promotion of functional skills in mathematics and English occurs in the majority of lessons. Support for apprentices in developing their English and mathematical skills through additional support and through discrete lessons is good. The progressively reinforced use of subject

specific vocabulary to ensure learners understand the meaning and application of the terms in their vocational context is effective.

- The attention given to English and mathematics skills in lessons is good for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, for example in a cookery class where learners are encouraged to count and quantify ingredients, verbalise the texture of mixtures and the method to achieve the desired results, such as 'squeezing the pastry'.
- Information, advice and guidance are promoted effectively in workplace learners' progress reviews and helpfully signpost learners to use the employment agency at the college. The development of specific accredited courses for employability skills, such as one recently introduced for learning support assistants, is helpful in sharpening the focus on the prospect of paid work. Job vacancies advertised in the college are helpful and learners report good support to develop employability skills.
- Opportunities to promote equality and diversity are not maximised in lessons. References to equality and cultural themes in, for example, childcare courses are good and help extend learners' knowledge and understanding of their culturally diverse community. The use of equality and diversity topics as a subject for presentations in, for example, functional skills English classes is thought provoking. However, missed opportunities to promote equality and diversity in the arts and foundation English and mathematics classes limit learning.

Visual arts

Learning programmes for 16-18

Learning programmes for 19+

Community learning

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment for learners are good, reflected in the very good success rates for non-accredited programmes and high success rates on accredited courses. Learners benefit from a wide range of active learning approaches; however, learner attendance is just satisfactory.
- Tutors, who motivate learners with good demonstrations and attractive accessible resources, set realistic expectations. Learners benefit from good individual support on practical elements of their work, for example creating floristry products and with sewing techniques. Learners appreciate the expertise of tutors.
- Effective learner-centred tasks promote the steady development of learners' skills and independent learning. Learners acquire a good understanding of how the skills they develop are applied in related workplaces. Learners value the products they make and recognise that their skills are improving. They enjoy learning and have aspirations to work, or to develop their artistic expression.
- Learners demonstrate good practical skills including technical and design skills, for example in sewing, sugar craft and floristry. Learners progress well in pattern cutting, using sewing machines, knife skills and bouquet and basket arranging skills. However, learners' problem solving, evaluative and analytical skills are not fully effective in project work or for assessment of their own and others' work.
- Learners take positive steps in developing the ability to learn independently. Learners sustain independent work on individual projects without an over-reliance on tutors. Homework is completed well and in the best sessions learners complete additional work. Learners learn safely in well-maintained, appropriate, attractive, well-organised and mostly spacious environments and understand how to handle resources safely.
- Learners gain good levels of confidence in working with specialist materials. Tutors' knowledge promotes progress on learners' individual creative goals. Learners practise skills at a good pace, learn specific processes and apply solid techniques to project work.
- Learners practise, develop and apply good written English skills to support learning goals, for example making up order books in floristry and ingredients lists in sugar craft. However,

learners' interaction with learning technologies is limited. The development of mathematical skills is not planned for sufficiently in too many sessions. Learners' use of technical vocabulary is appropriate.

- Consistent positive feedback and encouragement in classes inspire learners to explore materials and processes. The assessment of learners' progress against agreed learning targets is fair and in accredited learning detailed written tutor assessment promotes improvement.
- Tutors' feedback and guidance in non-accredited courses focus on improving learners' practical skills. However, when giving feedback in sessions, targets from learning plans are not always recorded by tutors or noted by learners. In too many sessions learning is not sufficiently individualised to learners' needs, in particular to extend learning for more proficient learners. Recorded comments on learner progress are not always sufficiently informative.
- Progression advice for in-house courses is good, but advice, support and links to external learning and external initiatives to promote community learning are still in development.
- Learners' views are welcomed and respected. However, equality and diversity are not sufficiently prominent in subject materials and too few tutors use a planned approach to its promotion.

ESOL

Learning programmes for 16-18

Learning programmes for 19+

Community learning

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement. Although the development of personal, social and employability skills is good, success rates are only in line with national rates and the development of language skills is just satisfactory.
- Tutors manage classroom-based learning well and nurture friendly and safe learning communities. Tutors skilfully engage all learners, allocate learning support effectively and make sure that all participate and enjoy classes.
- Learners are very motivated and keen to contribute and share knowledge and ideas. They are clear about what is expected from them and attend punctually, despite work commitments and childcare responsibilities. On the majority of courses learners have good opportunities to develop their literacy, numeracy or information technology skills, making them better equipped for more independent lives and improving their employment prospects. However, insufficient use is made of learners' life and work experiences to stimulate and enhance learning.
- The identification of learners' needs, learning styles and barriers to learning is good and the initial diagnostic assessment is robust. However, tutors do not make best use of this information to inform the planning and reviewing of learning. On a significant minority of courses, the individual learning targets are too broad and not measurable. Learners on too many courses do not have sufficiently challenging targets, resulting in a significant minority of more able learners not fully engaging or progressing to the next level of learning.
- The majority of tutors monitor learner progress in lessons and provide useful and timely feedback to learners to refocus them on what they need to do next. The written feedback on assignments is generally detailed and accurate.
- The care, support and advice that learners receive are good. Volunteers are particularly effective in providing support and advice for all learners in the classroom. Referrals to agencies, such as counselling for mental health concerns or domestic violence, are prompt. Those at lower levels of learning receive good information on health issues. Effective direction to spelling workshops, information technology courses, or language of mathematics courses to extend their skills, results in good progression onto other courses.
- The speaking and listening examination practice provided on a one-to-one basis, and followed by formative and summative assessments, helps lower level learners to prepare for more formal examinations, boosts their confidence and gives them a good sense of achievement. Although

learners make good progress with their literacy skills, planning for learners' language accuracy is not well developed. On intermediate level courses, learners rarely practise pronunciation, resulting in poor accuracy in the large majority of lessons.

- Tutors generally promote equality and diversity well in the classroom. Learners say they feel safe in their learning environments. They enjoy working alongside others from many different cultures and develop a good awareness of inclusion and diversity.

Foundation English and mathematics

Learning programmes for 16-18

Learning programmes for 19+

Community learning

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment in foundation English and mathematics is good, which reflects the high proportion of learners who achieve their learning aims. Learners readily and enthusiastically engage with their learning. They enjoy the college experience and acknowledge the impact that improved literacy and numeracy have on their daily life. One learner was able to reflect on how her improved communication skills enabled her to understand what her children were achieving in school.
- Tutors use a range of interesting and active learning strategies that are successful in securing the interest of learners. They prepare relevant and challenging activities and use a good range of resources. Learners benefit from the use of practical and physical resources to support spelling and the occasional use of first-hand materials provides effective opportunities to connect classroom learning to everyday life.
- The college provides good support for learners. All tutors and volunteers in mathematics, and many of those who teach English, have themselves been learners in the adult college. They have a good understanding of learners' concerns and use their prior experience well to reduce the anxiety experienced by some learners who are returning to education. One older learner was able to say how he was no longer ashamed to tell people about his dyslexia.
- Tutors manage learning support assistants effectively and provide well-defined roles within the classroom. Learning support assistants provide a high level of encouragement and use praise in a way that successfully affirms learners' view of themselves as achievers. When appropriate, tutors use humour very effectively to enable learners to attempt challenging tasks, particularly in mathematics.
- Tutors use an appropriate range of initial and diagnostic assessment tools that are effective in identifying each learner's starting point. In the best lessons tutors or their assistants undertake brief, but focused, informal assessments that provide opportunities for specific and swift feedback. In these classes, tutors build up a comprehensive picture of learners' abilities and intuitively adapt their teaching to match learner needs.
- Individual learning plans are an appropriate and effective feature for learners during their time in college. They contain very specific curriculum targets and tutors review learners' progress at regular intervals. However, they do not contain targets that reflect learners' own aspirations for employment and personal and social enhancement. The college does not effectively capture the progress made by learners as they develop confidence and self-esteem and apply their skills in their family and community.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is generally effective. For example, in one lesson designed to explore the nature of non-verbal communication, learners were encouraged to reflect on how some gestures provide conflicting messages in different cultures. However, it does not consistently feature in schemes of work or planning for learning so that, on occasion, tutors miss opportunities to explore these themes.

The effectiveness of leadership and management**Good**

- Leadership and management are good. Provision reflects and meets local needs well. The college priorities reflect well the strategic goals of the local authority and the area. There is a clear and widely understood focus on employability and engaging those who are taking their first steps into learning and on those with few or no qualifications.
- Governance arrangements are good. The board of governors, led ably by the Chair, ensures that college leaders are accountable for the performance of the college. The governors are well informed of the strengths and areas for improvement of the provision. They act as effective advocates for adult learning and learners. Their good knowledge of the communities that the college serves helps them to influence and shape strategic developments effectively.
- The college has a good track record of securing improvements in provision despite funding pressures, service re-organisation and proposals to significantly change premises. The college has addressed effectively the key weaknesses identified at the last inspection in 2010. The maintenance of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment at a good standard is testament to the college's senior leaders' efforts. The quality of visual arts is now good. Strengthening the systems to validate learning on non-accredited courses is reliable in most subject areas. Outcomes for learners overall are improving and rapid improvements in the outcomes that apprentices achieve have been made.
- Performance management arrangements are generally effective. There is a good focus on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the observation scheme is robust and accurate. Although, in a small minority of instances, observers are generous in their grading and do not focus sufficiently on the progress and attainment of learners. Judgements about the quality of teaching inform appraisal and the professional development needs of tutors well. Managers act swiftly where teaching is not good enough through effective coaching and training. Where necessary, managers use formal processes to address the poor performance of staff. This reflects the high ambitions that they hold for learners.
- Overall, the self-assessment report captures the key strengths and areas for improvement well. Leaders and managers know well where improvements are needed and act effectively to secure them. Service performance is routinely scrutinised through the performance review board that involves governors, learners and external agencies well. The service is pro-active in seeking out and using best practice from elsewhere. The collection and analysis of data to inform scrutiny and help plan service development are appropriate; however, its use is underdeveloped. Routinely monitored targets for the service are sufficiently ambitious.
- The regularly sought views of users through course reviews, evaluations, learner satisfaction surveys and learner forums inform developments well. Leaders and managers are receptive to learner feedback and make adjustments to the curriculum so that it better meets learners' needs. Managers, including senior officers in the council, have maintained a dialogue with learners who are opposed to the move to new premises in Barking; they have responded to their views where they can.
- The focus on equality and diversity has ensured that the college engages those new to learning well and enables them to progress successfully onto other learning opportunities. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds is high. The wide range of venues used helps increase access for learners. Good support provided for learners with additional needs ensures they achieve good outcomes. Although learners from different backgrounds learn and work cooperatively in classes, tutors miss opportunities to develop learners' understanding of equality and diversity.
- The promotion of health, safety and safeguarding is effective and appropriate. Senior managers have regular oversight of safeguarding matters. The college meets statutory safeguarding requirements and learning takes place in safe environments. Appropriate pre-employment checks are undertaken when recruiting staff and the routine monitoring of provision ensures the effective management of health and safety. The college's procedures for safeguarding learners are robust.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

The Adult College of Barking and Dagenham

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Community learning
	Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	3	2	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2	2	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2	2	2	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Visual Arts	2
ESOL	3
Foundation English and mathematics	2

Provider details

The Adult College of Barking and Dagenham	
Type of provider	Local authority
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 23
	Part-time: 2844
Principal/CEO	Ms Patricia Pearson
Date of previous inspection	December 2010
Website address	lbbd.gov.uk/adultcollege

Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)								
Full-time	0	2	0	22	0	1	0	0
Part-time	25	850	17	338	4	93	0	0
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	31	89	3	18	0	0		
Number of learners aged 14-16	6							
Number of community learners	2000							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ None 							

Additional socio-economic information

The Adult College of Barking and Dagenham is maintained by the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham and is part of the Education Division of the Children's Services Department. The college provides courses at a variety of venues across the borough in addition to its main site at Fanshawe Crescent. The college plans to move to a new main site in Barking Town Centre in the summer of 2013. The borough has seen rapid changes over the last ten years, with a 13% increase in its population and rise in its minority ethnic groups to 36%. There has been a large decrease in those aged over 65 years and a 30% decrease in the White British population. Residents of the borough experience poor health and have low qualification levels. Of all college learners, 79% claim a fee remission, 55% are from minority ethnic groups and 15% declare themselves as disabled.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Rosy Belton HMI

Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the Deputy Principal as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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