

Manchester City Council

Local authority

Inspection dates		21–25 October 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:

- The number of learners who successfully complete accredited courses and achieve qualifications has been consistently very high for the last three years.
- Learners successfully gain personal and social skills that improve the quality of their lives and help them to find sustainable employment.
- Tutors successfully use a wide range of activities in their lessons to motivate and challenge learners.
- Leaders and managers have transformed the service very successfully to meet the needs of learners with low prior educational attainment and from the most deprived communities in the city.
- Strong performance management and effective staff development lead to specific improvements in the quality of tutors' practice in the classroom.
- Self-assessment and quality improvement processes are thorough and have been effective in maintaining the quality of provision at a high standard since the last inspection.
- Managers and staff actively promote equality and diversity, and a strong ethos of inclusion.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Not enough teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding.
- Tutors do not consistently use the outcomes of initial assessment to set and monitor progress against specific targets for individual learners.
- The monitoring of the consistency and quality of the assessment of learners' progress on non-accredited courses is not sufficiently robust.
- Opportunities for tutors to develop their skills further through the sharing of the best practice across the service are underdeveloped.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - setting clear targets for all learners and accurately measuring learners' progress against their targets
 - ensuring that all tutors plan and deliver activities that provide sufficient opportunity for learners to participate fully and actively in their learning
 - making better use of learning technology to enhance teaching and learning
 - ensuring that learners receive guidance, as they complete their course, on further higher-level learning opportunities offered by other providers.
- Promote the sharing of best practice across the service by identifying outstanding tutors through the observation process and enabling them to work with other tutors to improve further the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Increase the rigour in monitoring the quality and consistency of assessment of learners' progress on courses that do not lead to qualifications.
- Collect and analyse information more systematically on the destination of learners after they have completed their course, in order to assess the impact of learning on future study and employment.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- The proportion of learners who complete accredited courses successfully and achieve qualifications has been consistently very high for the last three years. The majority of the service's accredited courses are designed to develop learners' skills in English and mathematics, and increase their confidence and skills to seek employment. Learners make good progress in developing these skills and are very positive about the impact of their learning in enabling them to improve the quality of their lives and to gain employment.
- The proportion of learners who complete courses that do not lead to a qualification is high. Learners on short non-accredited courses successfully acquire skills and develop their confidence to pursue their learning and join longer courses. However, the monitoring of the consistency and quality of the assessment of learners' progress on non-accredited courses is not sufficiently robust to enable the service to measure accurately the overall level of achievement.
- Managers carefully analyse information about the success of their learners to establish if there are any significant gaps in achievement among different groups of learners. In 2011/12, managers identified that achievement among male learners was slightly lower than among female learners. This gap reduced in 2012/13, and male and female learners now succeed equally well.
- Learners gain personal and social skills that often transform the quality of their lives. They grow in self-esteem and confidence, and develop skills that benefit them in seeking work, in supporting their children at school, and in improving their own everyday lives.
- On courses that prepare adults for work, learners successfully enhance their skills and confidence in searching and applying for jobs, and learn how they can develop quickly the personal attributes that employers seek in job applicants. Learners on English courses successfully develop speaking and writing skills that enhance their ability to gain employment. On courses to improve language skills, learners rapidly develop their confidence to use language in a wide range of situations in the community and in the work place. In many lessons, learners

successfully acquire skills that enable them to learn independently outside the classroom and so extend their learning further.

- Many learners progress successfully into employment and on to further learning provided both by the service and by other organisations. Learners on courses in mathematics and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) make good progress through the different levels that the service provides. In one centre, the service operates alongside the local further education college to provide a coherent programme with progression opportunities from the service's courses to the higher-level and vocational courses provided by the college. By improving their skills in English and mathematics and in preparing for work, many learners successfully find jobs or volunteering roles. However, managers do not collect information systematically on the destination of learners after they have completed their course, and so are unable to assess fully and accurately how well learners progress on to further study and into work.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, and this is reflected in the good outcomes for the great majority of learners. Tutors set high expectations for their learners, and this results in learners having high levels of motivation and enthusiasm to succeed. Learners know what their long-term goals are and are fully aware of the progress they are making in lessons and on their course.
- Tutors successfully use a wide range of activities in their lessons to stimulate and interest learners. They design tasks that encourage and enable learners to interact and support each other in their learning. They encourage learners with different abilities, motivations and needs, and from a wide variety of cultural backgrounds, to work together productively. As a result learners enjoy and participate fully in their lessons, and make good progress.
- In the majority of lessons, tutors provide appropriate challenge for all learners and ensure that the pace of learning is rapid. They use questions very well both to assess learners and to extend their knowledge and understanding. They introduce topics and examples into their lessons that are meaningful and relevant to the learners' own lives and aspirations. In a small minority of lessons, tutors spend too much time speaking to the whole class and do not provide sufficient opportunity for learners to participate actively in the lesson.
- Lessons take place in attractive and well-resourced classrooms in a wide range of community venues across the city. The majority of classrooms are equipped with appropriate learning technology. In the better lessons, learners make good use of interactive white boards, for example, to respond to tutors' questions or to summarise the findings of a piece of research. However, in a minority of lessons, tutors do not fully exploit the potential of the technology to enhance learning.
- The assessment of learners' skills before they start a course is effective in ensuring that learners join the most appropriate courses at the right level. Tutors have been trained and are skilled in undertaking initial assessment and in interpreting the results effectively. They accurately identify any additional support that learners need at the beginning of the course. However, tutors do not consistently use the outcomes of initial assessment to set specific targets for individual learners.
- Assessment of learners' work and the standards that they achieve is good on courses that lead to qualifications. The majority of tutors on courses that do not lead to qualifications also provide helpful, constructive feedback, both in writing and verbally during lessons, so that learners know how well they are progressing.
- Tutors and a small team of specialist staff provide comprehensive information, advice and guidance to learners about further courses offered by the service. As a result learners are well informed about internal progression opportunities, and many progress between courses and on to the next level of a programme. However, learners are not always made aware of the range of opportunities offered elsewhere, including progression on to higher-level courses offered by other providers.

- Learners successfully develop their English, mathematical and employability skills on the majority of courses. The standard of work in most English and mathematics lessons is good. Courses that are designed to prepare learners for work are particularly successful in enabling learners to gain highly relevant employability skills. Learners on family learning courses improve their confidence and their skills to support their children’s education, in particular the development of their children’s English and mathematical skills.
- Tutors promote equality and diversity well in their lessons. Learners show a high level of respect for the cultures and background of other learners in their class. Tutors often make very good use of learners’ different cultural backgrounds and experiences in their teaching, which successfully promotes tolerance and understanding of different lifestyles and backgrounds.

English for speakers of other languages	
19+ Learning programmes	Good
Community learning	

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, and this is reflected in the good progress that learners make and the high success rates in 2012/13. The great majority of learners benefit from much good and outstanding teaching, learning and assessment. In the outstanding lessons, tutors are dynamic and inspirational, and successfully support all learners to develop their language skills. The great majority of learners increase their confidence to use English in a wide range of situations. They successfully develop language skills that they need for work, as well as skills that are of value in their personal and social lives.
- Tutors skilfully use a wide range of well-designed activities to motivate learners to develop new skills and achieve high standards. In one lesson, for example, the tutor successfully designed role-play and peer-evaluation activities to enable learners to improve their pronunciation skills. However, learning technology, including the interactive white boards provided in most classrooms, is used insufficiently to enhance learning.
- Tutors plan effectively to meet the needs of individual learners. When designing learning activities, they carefully consider learners’ current levels of achievement and confidence. This ensures that the tasks that learners undertake are relevant and provide sufficient challenge, and that learners’ levels of motivation remain high.
- Tutors provide good individual support for their learners. They successfully encourage learners to practise their existing skills, and to develop new language skills. They quickly increase learners’ confidence and accuracy both in speaking and writing English, and their ability to understand the English that they hear and read.
- On ESOL courses that prepare learners for employment, learners’ individual targets are clear, specific and appropriately challenging. Targets enable learners to build effectively on their existing skills and extend their learning. Learners value their individual learning plans and use them to monitor their progress. However, on other ESOL courses, planning to meet individual needs is less successful, and targets are insufficiently clear and measurable.
- Tutors use initial assessment well to identify accurately learners’ skills at the beginning of their course. Assessment of learners’ progress is good. Tutors check learning frequently throughout lessons, often using careful questioning to probe learners’ knowledge and understanding. Tutors successfully encourage learners to use peer-assessment and self-reflection to develop their independent learning skills. The written feedback on homework and coursework is detailed and timely.
- Learners receive appropriate and timely information and guidance. They value the guidance that they receive and use it well to make decisions about joining other courses at the same level or moving on to a higher-level course within the service.

- Tutors promote equality and diversity well in the classroom. Learners with a wide range of cultural backgrounds enjoy working together. Tutors successfully develop a good awareness among their learners of inclusion and diversity through exploring different cultures, beliefs and gender issues both in class and through self-study.

Foundation mathematics

19+ Learning programmes Community learning

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, which reflects the proportion of learners who achieve their qualification. Learners are highly motivated and value the development of their mathematical skills to enhance their employment opportunities. Learners develop their confidence in using numbers in their everyday life and particularly value how it helps them to support their children and families.
- Tutors have high expectations of their learners. They challenge and encourage learners well. As a result learners persevere to overcome any aspects of their course that they find difficult. Tutors support their learners well. They work individually with learners, both in and outside lessons, to give them extra support they may need in order to succeed.
- Tutors plan their lessons well so that all learners work at their own pace whilst reaching their full potential. Tutors use a wide variety of activities and resources that learners enjoy. Learners feel comfortable to ask questions and learn from their own mistakes and from each other. Tutors successfully use a range of familiar objects to enable learners to understand difficult concepts. For example, in one lesson, the tutor discussed sharing a pizza among a family to help learners understand fractions. In another lesson, the tutor use different coloured beads on a necklace to illustrate ratio.
- Learners develop independent learning skills particularly well. At home, they practise the skills that they have learned in class and make good use of resources available on the internet. Learners also successfully develop their knowledge of mathematical language and terminology both in their lessons and through independent study.
- Learners have many opportunities to practise problem-solving and decision-making using numbers in real-life contexts. For example, learners in one lesson calculated the best value when faced with different shopping offers. In another lesson, learners produced an invoice for work completed, by taking into account the hourly rate and the number of hours worked.
- Tutors identify learners' initial starting points well. They assess progress towards learners' main learning aims at regular intervals. However, the targets set for learners are not always sufficiently clear or specific to enable tutors to plan their lessons to meet the needs of individual learners.
- Learners have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve their skills. Written work is marked promptly, and tutors' comments encourage learners and help them to reflect on any mistakes that they make. In classrooms, learners use mini white boards to provide their answers to questions electronically and immediately, and tutors quickly assess and provide feedback on learners' progress.
- Learners on non-accredited courses receive good information advice and guidance. Tutors provide clear guidance on progression routes within the service. However, on accredited courses, learners are not always given sufficient information about the content of courses or the different qualifications that are available. As a result they do not always know what they will achieve by the end of their current course and are unclear about the different types of qualification that they can take.
- Tutors promote equality and diversity well. They design activities and resources that reflect learners' different cultural backgrounds and experiences. For example, in one lesson, learners

with experience of an educational system in a different part of the world were encouraged to share their technique for long-division calculations to demonstrate an alternative method.

Foundation English

19+ Learning programmes Community learning

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. This is reflected in the good outcomes for learners. Learners are enthusiastic about learning and are highly motivated. The great majority of learners gain their intended qualifications. Learners make good progress during lessons and can identify the skills and knowledge that they have gained since starting their courses.
- Tutors are highly skilled and committed to ensuring that their learners make good progress. They support learners well during their lessons and are attentive to their individual needs. Additional tutors successfully provide extra support for learners when they need it.
- Tutors plan lessons well to ensure that learners are actively involved in their learning. They successfully use a blend of activities including demonstration, group work and independent learning to make their lessons lively and interesting. They also ask questions effectively to check learners' understanding, to reinforce learning and to challenge learners. In outstanding lessons, teaching is stimulating and encourages learners to think critically and imaginatively.
- Learners participate well during lessons. They produce work of a good standard. As they progress, they gain confidence to apply their writing, reading and speaking skills in a range of different contexts. For example, learners benefit from learning how to use skimming as a reading technique. Learners who speak English as an additional language significantly increase their vocabulary as a result of their learning. Learners take responsibility for their learning and routinely ask tutors questions during lessons to check their own understanding.
- Tutors use a wide range of high-quality resources. They make good use of interactive smartboards to promote learning and to encourage learners to develop their confidence and presentation skills.
- Initial assessment is thorough and used well to identify learners' starting points and needs. Learners undertake a written assessment task that enables tutors to make accurate judgements about the levels of learners' language skills. Tutors use this information well to ensure that learners enrol on a course that is most appropriate to their needs.
- Tutors monitor learners' progress well during lessons. They routinely check understanding. They also use self- and peer-assessment methods very effectively. This encourages learners to be less reliant on the tutors' assessment of their learning and to identify for themselves how they can improve further. Work produced by learners is marked and assessed rigorously. Both during lessons and on marked work, tutors highlight errors in learners' use of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- The planning by tutors to meet learners' individual needs requires improvement. Learners' individual learning plans do not always include specific and measurable targets and do not record in sufficient detail precisely what learners need to do to improve.
- Learners receive good information, advice and guidance, including specific lessons that focus on further learning opportunities. Progression interviews are effective in informing learners about other courses within the service and helping them to identify the most suitable progression route at the end of their course.
- The promotion of inclusion is good. Learners are treated with respect and their individuality is valued highly. When planning lessons, tutors take good account of the individual needs and abilities of learners. Opportunities to promote equality and diversity are planned well and are linked to specific coursework. However, in a minority of lessons, paper-based resources such as

worksheets only include references to British culture and do not fully reflect the experiences of learners from other cultural backgrounds.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and managers have transformed the service very successfully in recent years so that it now focuses firmly on meeting the educational needs of adults from the most deprived neighbourhoods in the city, and on preparing adults for work. They have achieved this whilst increasing the proportion of learners who stay to the end of their course and achieve. Outcomes for learners and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have remained consistently good during this period of change and since the last inspection.
- The service's strategy is closely aligned to the council's priorities to improve skills for employment and promote economic growth in the city. Senior managers and elected members in the council provide effective support for the service and contribute significantly to its strategic direction.
- Performance management and staff development are effective in driving forward improvements in the quality of provision. All tutors benefit significantly from regular training and mentoring opportunities that improve their skills in teaching, learning and assessment. The service takes decisive action to challenge and improve underperformance. For example, it quickly terminates the contract of any subcontractor that does not meet the service's clearly stated expectations and standards.
- Managers evaluate the quality of the provision comprehensively and take appropriate action to improve it. Self-assessment accurately identifies the service's main strengths and weaknesses, and managers are rigorous in implementing actions to improve the provision. Records of the observations of lessons are accurate and lead to clear actions for improvement that are monitored carefully. However, records of observations do not specifically identify lessons and practice that are outstanding, and this limits the service's ability to improve the quality of provision through the sharing of the very best practice of its tutors.
- Managers at all levels in the service rigorously analyse data on the performance and success of learners on accredited courses in order to monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of provision. On courses that do not lead to a qualification, the monitoring of the achievement of learners is insufficiently robust.
- Managers gather anecdotal evidence of what learners do when they have completed their courses in order to evaluate the impact of learning in enabling learners to gain sustainable employment. However, the arrangements to gather and evaluate systematically the progression of learners to further study and into employment require further development.
- The service provides a wide range of opportunities for learners and stakeholders to give their views about the quality of provision. These include course reviews, learner forums and satisfaction surveys. In most instances, managers respond well to the feedback and make changes, where appropriate, to the provision.
- Managers plan the provision well. They have a thorough understanding of the needs and priorities of people living in the city. They have developed and enhanced the curriculum successfully by, for example, integrating the development of employability skills into all subject areas.
- Very effective partnerships enable the service to respond to the complex needs of the high number of learners from deprived and disadvantaged communities. The service subcontracts approximately a fifth of its provision to a wide range of partner organisations from the community and voluntary sector. Subcontracting successfully enhances the service's ability to recruit learners who are the hardest to reach in the city. The management of subcontracts is thorough and robust, and includes clear and detailed performance targets, mandatory training, and regular monitoring visits by the service's managers. As a result subcontracted provision is of high quality and effective in improving learners' skills. For example, one subcontractor, a

residential centre for homeless people, has transformed successfully the prospects of many individuals with complex emotional or mental health difficulties.

- Managers and staff successfully promote equality and diversity and create an ethos of inclusion and mutual respect across the service. Learners from diverse backgrounds and culture, and with varied social and personal experiences, work well together. The service actively recruits learners from the most disadvantaged groups and communities in the city including, for example, people who are homeless, who have suffered from drug and alcohol abuse, and who have mental health problems.
- The service meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Arrangements to ensure that learners on subcontractors' courses learn and work in safe environments are effective.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Provider name

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

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

Provider details

Type of provider	Local authority							
Age range of learners	16+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 0							
	Part-time: 10,289							
Head of Service	Julie Rushton							
Date of previous inspection	April 2008							
Website address	www.manchester.gov.uk							
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	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Part-time	N/A	2,083	N/A	266	N/A	27	N/A	N/A
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Full-time	N/A							
Part-time	N/A							
Number of community learners	1,806							
Number of employability learners	80							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							

At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:

- Proper Job Theatre Company
- Ladybarn Community Association
- Water's Edge Arts Limited
- Impact for All Ltd
- ALL FM Limited
- Chapter 1 – The Limes
- The East Manchester Community Association
- Back on Track Manchester Limited
- Street League
- Construction Industry Trust for Youth
- Emerge 3Rs
- The Mustard Tree
- Manchester Communication Academy
- Klarrati CIC

Contextual information

Manchester City Council's adult education service (MAES) is part of the Education and Skills Service, in the Children's and Commissioning Directorate. MAES supports the council's priorities of employment, learning and skills through community learning and skills-based programmes, operating across 10 adult learning centres and over 100 community venues across the city. The population of Manchester was 510,800 in 2012. Manchester ranks as the fourth most deprived area in England. The unemployment rate is 11.9% compared with 8.2% across the North West. The proportion of people with a qualification higher than a National Vocational Qualification at level 3 is slightly higher than the national average, but 14.3% of residents have no qualifications, compared with 9.7% nationally.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Steve Hailstone HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the Area Adult Education Manager 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 lessons, 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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