

# Cheshire East Lifelong Learning

## Local authority

<b>Inspection dates</b>		20-23 May 2014
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good-2</b>
	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:

- Learners engage well in learning and enjoy learning new skills and improve their lifestyles. They achieve good outcomes such as improved confidence, higher levels of communication skills and vocational skills that enrich their lives with improved prospects for the future.
- Tutors use their skills and expertise well to plan teaching, learning and assessment. They provide sensitive support to learners to help them succeed as most of them start from a very low base and face complex barriers to learning.
- The partnerships with the voluntary sector partners are very strong. They help Cheshire East Lifelong Learning (CELL) to identify the needs of the local communities who do not currently participate in learning and work seamlessly with them to meet their needs.
- CELL provides strong support to the subcontractors and manages their performance well. This helps to develop the teaching and management skills of the voluntary sector partners enabling them to provide good service to communities in their local neighbourhoods.

### This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- The proportion of learners from targeted groups engaged in learning is not yet high enough. Leaders do not set a sufficient range of challenging strategic and operational targets such as engagement and employment of learners from targeted groups.
- The proportion of outstanding teaching, learning and assessment is low. The planning of teaching, including the use of initial assessment, written feedback to learners and the reinforcement of English and mathematics, requires further improvements.
- Learners on non-accredited courses make up 50% of the provision and do not have specific, measurable and challenging learning and personal targets in their learning plans. It is difficult to measure their exact progress and achievements in improving their skills and confidence.

## Full report

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Senior leaders should set clear and ambitious performance targets for the service, for example for recruiting a greater number of learners from the targeted communities, and hold managers to account by monitoring the performance of the service against these targets.
- Raise the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to outstanding levels by:
  - continuing staff training to raise their confidence in using initial assessment to improve the planning of teaching, learning and assessment
  - routinely providing written feedback that clearly states what learners have done well and how they can improve further
  - reinforcing English and mathematics in all subject areas through improved planning of lessons
  - making more effective use of support workers in planning and delivery of teaching, learning and support
  - ensuring that tutors plan learning consistently well to raise learners' awareness of diversity in society
  - sharing of good practice in using Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) within and beyond the service and
  - robust monitoring of the quality of RARPA.
- Identify sharp and measurable personal learning objectives for all learners on non-accredited provision and measure the progress against them to ensure that all learners make rapid progress.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Good
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- Learners develop exceptional levels of employability skills and good personal and social skills. Their confidence levels improve rapidly. They begin to believe in themselves, their self-esteem grows and they become ready to contribute to society in a meaningful way. They enjoy learning in safe learning venues in their neighbourhoods where tutors treat them as equals.
- The courses have a very positive impact on the learners. Many often start from a very low base with little recent experience of learning, face ill-health or isolation and have low self-esteem. They successfully overcome a range of personal barriers and engage in learning to improve their employment prospects by incrementally achieving several foundation-level qualifications.
- Learners enjoy the courses and are well-motivated to continue in learning. Almost all learners complete their programmes and attend classes regularly. Parents gain a good insight into the ways children learn in schools, develop their own skills and support their children confidently with their school work. They work as partners with schools to support their children's education and lay a sound foundation for their future. Many develop strong parenting skills that enable them to manage children's behaviour better and establish good learning habits and a routine.
- Learners gain a sound knowledge of a range of health matters such as physical and mental health, obesity and healthy eating. They adopt healthy lifestyles including regular exercise and cooking fresh food. Many improve their cooking skills. Having gained a sound knowledge of the properties of food, they buy fresh ingredients within a budget and cook with their children, establishing strong family bonds and adopting healthy eating habits.
- Outcomes for learners mandated from Jobcentre Plus are good. In the current year a high number of learners have achieved short foundation-level qualifications in a broad range of growth employment sectors such as hospitality, retail, construction, contact centre operations, customer services and administration. This has improved their chances of securing entry level

jobs. Learners gain good insight into what employers require and feel confident of securing employment through making well-crafted job applications and specific curriculum vitae.

- Learners recognise the true value of English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) for their daily lives and employment. Most learners develop appropriate skills and make good progress. The number of learners taking discrete English classes and passing examinations has continued to increase to good levels; whereas the number of learners taking mathematics and ICT classes remains low.
- Progression of learners into further learning and employment is satisfactory and improving rapidly. Inspectors saw many examples of excellent progression where learners have turned their lives around. For example, learners on 'strong women' and 'stronger women' programmes have become learning ambassadors and plan to offer other women similar experiences. They develop a positive mind-set, learn to be assertive and develop high levels of resilience to deal with the challenges in their lives confidently.
- Learners become valuable members of society by contributing as a volunteer in their children's schools and/ or children's centres. Some have progressed to become tutors, including some who themselves had additional learning needs.
- Target-setting for learners on non-accredited programmes is not sufficiently robust. Tutors do not clearly identify the true starting points and do not set measurable personal objectives for the learners at the outset. Although learners make good progress and achieve their objectives broadly, learners could make faster progress with more specific and measurable targets. The recording of learners' progress is variable.
- All learner groups achieve equally well. The number of learners in each category is too small for a meaningful analysis. However, the provider has rapidly narrowed the gap in achievement for those suffering from Aspergers syndrome. Outcomes for broad target groups such as the unemployed, troubled families and single parents are good and improving rapidly; although CELL does not set targets to reach these groups or monitor and evaluate their performance.

<b>The quality of teaching, learning and assessment</b>	Good
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- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and leads to good outcomes for learners who achieve their learning goals. Learners enjoy lessons where they improve their self-confidence and self-esteem significantly. They make good improvements to their lifestyles and are more positive about their future prospects for employment.
- Tutors have a very good understanding of learners' individual and often complex needs, and demonstrate a very caring and supportive approach that encourages learners well and raises their aspirations. Learners are highly appreciative of the individual support that they receive from tutors including in the drop-in sessions at the work club, which motivates them to engage and to succeed.
- Courses are well designed to meet the specific needs of hard-to-reach and vulnerable learners. Tutors have a good understanding of learners' needs and preferences. Most use their knowledge and expertise to good effect to plan and prepare most lessons very well. Initial assessment of learners is thorough. Tutors hold detailed individual discussions with learners and plan changes to the programmes or provide extra support that will help learners to succeed. Lessons are well-structured, and build on learners' prior knowledge, for example, in how to use a mind map to plan a piece of writing.
- Tutors use questioning well in the majority of lessons and engage learners in lively discussions, for example in the parenting course where learners discussed the difference their learning had made in improving the ways they brought up their children. Learners apply their skills confidently in lessons and often understand the concepts well enough to provide support for their peers. They engage very effectively in learning and take responsibility for their progress, for example, by applying styles to tables in word processing, formatting templates and using short cuts.

- For a minority of learners, learning is less effective. In such lessons, tutors do not make full use of the results of initial assessment to provide sufficient challenge to stretch the more able learners. Opportunities to reflect on their learning are too brief and infrequent for learners to consolidate their learning.
- Accommodation in local venues is satisfactory and easily accessible, providing a warm and welcome learning environment. Most tutors provide good written resources, such as informative handouts and tasks which are highly effective in promoting learning. Although learners often have good access to computers for their learning, most venues do not have interactive technology for teaching to add variety and interest to sessions. Learners who miss sessions cannot yet access assignments and learning resources remotely.
- Initial assessment is good. Tutors assess learners' progress in lessons well. They use individual learning plans appropriately to track learners' progress in achieving their overall learning aims and to record their individual targets. However, in many cases the targets are neither specific, nor measurable, which makes it difficult to confirm that the learners have met their targets.
- Tutors provide good clear and thorough verbal feedback so that learners know what they have done well and where they could improve, which motivates learners. However, written feedback is often insufficient and, as a result, learners do not always have enough recorded information that they can refer to and reflect on at a later date.
- CELL has a clear focus on improving learners' skills in English, mathematics and ICT. Tutors encourage learners to enrol on or signpost to courses to improve their skills, for example through online resources and websites. Tutors stress the importance of these skills by often promoting improvements in classes, for example, by correcting errors in spelling and grammar and incorporating these skills in family learning. However, tutors do not identify in advance and plan for the opportunities to reinforce these skills in all subject areas such as ICT and driving theory.
- Learners receive good information, advice and guidance on progression routes and the options available to them and, in the best instances, through the good work with the Jobcentre Plus and the national careers advisers. However, tutors do not always signpost learners to independent advice and guidance so that they increase their understanding of the wider options available to them.
- Learners have access to good additional support. Signposting of learners to appropriate support agencies is good. The good in-class support helps learners to progress well. Help for dyslexic learners with their writing skills is particularly good. Tutors do not always plan sufficiently to make best use of the support workers' time to provide outstanding support to learners.
- Tutors give good individual support for the different needs of learners. They provide strong encouragement and support learners to overcome their barriers and achieve high standards. Many learners exceed their own expectations. They feel valued and respected as adults. Learning environments are welcoming and safe. Tutors do not always sufficiently broaden learners' understanding of equality and diversity through challenging discussions, and the promotion of learners' understanding of a culturally diverse workforce and community is inconsistent.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

**Good**

- Council leaders and CELL managers are highly ambitious for the service and have a clear vision for the future. The service contributes significantly to the council's priorities of increasing employment opportunities and promoting economic well-being for residents from deprived neighbourhoods. It enables many learners to improve their skills and confidence to take responsibility for their own development and gain employment.
- Senior officers and elected members monitor the work of the service satisfactorily and provide effective informal support and challenge for the managers. However, they recognise the need to further improve CELL's accountability and performance by setting a range of challenging targets

for the engagement of learners from the targeted communities and the proportion of learners who should progress to higher-level courses or to employment.

- Management of subcontractors, who deliver most of the programmes, is very effective. Managers conduct robust contract and performance-management meetings regularly with subcontractors. Advice, support and challenge for the subcontractors who underperform are particularly effective. CELL provides regular joint training sessions and specific support for the less-experienced subcontractors to enhance their capacity to deliver good provision. Managers use data well to monitor the performance of subcontractors and take swift action appropriately.
- Managers successfully improve the performance of staff to ensure that teaching is of at least good or better standard. Staff make use of an extensive range of on-going training opportunities to successfully develop their skills and knowledge in teaching, learning and assessment.
- CELL has further strengthened its quality improvement since the previous inspection. Observers quickly and accurately identify the strengths and areas for improvement through observation of teaching, learning and assessment. Tutors whose teaching is below the expected standard have clear improvement targets, which managers carefully review to ensure improvements in their teaching. In partnership with other providers, the service continues to benchmark the teaching observations to validate the findings of its quality assurance and monitoring processes.
- Since the previous inspection managers have improved the quality of RARPA in most subcontractors. Although inspectors saw some good practice, not all tutors are fully confident in working with learners to help them identify specific targets to measure their progress against. The quality of target-setting is not yet consistently good across all subcontractors and for all learners. It is too soon to see the full impact of recent training on improving RARPA.
- The self-assessment process is effective, well established and uses a broad range of evidence such as the success rates of learners, outcomes from observations, the views of learners and the self-assessment reports produced by subcontractors. The overall self-assessment report is detailed and accurate. The quality improvement plan is comprehensive and leads to improvements. Monitoring of improvements is thorough and systematic.
- Managers use an extensive range of research and information from its wide network of partner organisations to plan courses well to meet the needs of the local community and national priorities. CELL locates provision locally, closer to the most vulnerable groups, so that learners can access classes easily. Although the service commissions the delivery of courses to meet a range of priorities for targeted neighbourhoods, it does not set challenging numerical targets for engaging learners from deprived communities or for entering employment.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The service very effectively promotes learners' understanding of their rights and responsibilities and creates an ethos in which they respect and support each other well. Managers use a good range of data and information to monitor the impact of their provision effectively. Sustained action has ensured there are no significant gaps in achievement between different groups of learners. However, CELL does not prepare learners sufficiently for diversity in society, including people from various cultures and lifestyles.
- The service meets the statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Safeguarding training is mandatory and gives staff an appropriate level of awareness of the issues and actions they must take in such matters. The service takes swift action when safeguarding issues arise. All venues are risk-assessed and health and safety practices are monitored carefully.

**Record of Main Findings (RMF)****Cheshire East Lifelong Learning**

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:  1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2
Outcomes for learners	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Community development	2

Type of provider	Local authority								
Age range of learners	19+								
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	5,097								
Principal/CEO	Mr Mike Suarez								
Date of previous inspection	January 2011								
Website address	www.cheshireeastlearning.org.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+	
	N/A	406	N/A	30	N/A	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 traineeships	16-19		19+		Total				
	N/A		N/A		N/A				
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A								
Full-time	N/A								
Part-time	N/A								
Number of community learners	1,296								
Number of employability learners	N/A								
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)								
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ AuFait Training</li><li>■ CE CVS</li><li>■ Christian Concern</li><li>■ Congleton Learning Partnership</li><li>■ Crewe YMCA</li><li>■ Great Places</li><li>■ Macclesfield College</li><li>■ Macclesfield DIB</li><li>■ South Cheshire College</li><li>■ WEA</li><li>■ Wishing Well</li><li>■ Youth Federation</li><li>■ Advanced Employability</li><li>■ Middlewich High School</li></ul>								

## Contextual information

Cheshire East Lifelong Learning (CELL) is located within the Council's Economic Growth and Prosperity directorate. Cheshire East, the third largest unitary authority in the North West is a socially diverse community with isolated pockets of high deprivation. An increasing number of migrant workers from Eastern Europe live and work in Crewe and the surrounding towns. The other main towns in the council area are Wilmslow, Congleton, Knutsford, Macclesfield, Middlewich, Sandbach, Poynton and Nantwich. The rates of unemployment for all age groups are lower in the council area as compared with the regional and national rates. The proportion of adults without qualifications is slightly lower than the regional and national average. CELL works closely as a community learning trust with Cheshire West and Chester Council. Learners participate in accredited and non-accredited programmes in roughly equal numbers. CELL locates most of its provision in the lower super output areas including local children's centres.

## Information about this inspection

### Lead inspector

Harmesh Manghra HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the Curriculum Development Officer 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 relevant 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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