

Sutton College of Learning for Adults

Local authority

Inspection dates		25–27 June 2014
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:

- Outcomes for learners on non-accredited courses and short courses are good, especially in arts and crafts.
- Outcomes for learners on level 1 and level 3 vocational courses are good.
- A high proportion of teaching, learning and assessment is good or better.
- Well-planned recruitment, teaching and individual support arrangements help learners to improve their self-confidence, their employability skills and to pursue realistic ambitions.
- Good assessment of learners' progress through learning logs, reviews and progress monitoring helps learners to reflect and improve on their progress.
- Leadership, management and governance are highly effective and have a clear strategic vision for the college.
- Good communication leads to effective day-to-day management of the provision.
- Strong safeguarding arrangements and good promotion of equality and diversity are in place.
- Effective quality assurance and self-assessment lead to improvement.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Outcomes on most level 2 courses and on level 3 academic courses are still not good enough. Young learners do not make enough progress.
- On-line learning resources are not yet sufficiently developed to support independent learning.
- Tutors do not always pay sufficient attention to developing learners' mathematical skills.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that tutors are supported to become more confident teaching young learners and ensure that learners on long qualifications receive appropriate teaching and support to succeed.
- Further develop on-line resources for both tutors and learners in order to help learners become more autonomous.
- Improve the confidence of tutors across the curriculum to appreciate where learners' mathematical skills can be appropriately developed and ensure that these opportunities are fully exploited in lessons and practical activities.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Outcomes for learners are good at Sutton College of Learning for Adults (SCOLA). Over the past few years an increasing proportion of learners have successfully completed their qualifications and learning programmes. The vast majority of the learners, including apprentices, make good progress relative to their starting points and enjoy their learning.
- Learners on courses that do not lead to formal qualifications make good progress and a high proportion successfully meet the learning outcomes of their programmes. Many learners gain good personal and employability skills and make significant improvements in confidence by taking part in their courses. They develop valuable social contacts and appreciate the supportive and inclusive learning environment.
- Learners on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programmes successfully develop their written English whilst also developing conversational skills and pronunciation. In arts and crafts, learners achieve very high standards and produce, for example, fine paintings, stunningly beautiful quilts with complex geometrical patterns and interesting and attractive jewellery.
- Tutors successfully encourage and support those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress. These learners collaborate in class, show respect for each other and produce good standards of work, especially in visual and performing arts.
- Learners on entry and level one programmes achieve good outcomes. However, learners on programmes leading to nationally recognised qualifications make slightly less progress. Those on level 2 and AS- and A-level programmes do not always complete their courses and success rates are below recent national rates. Managers and tutors recognise this, and A-level work has been discontinued this academic year. However, learners on advanced vocational courses make good progress and show high success rates.
- 16- to 18-year-old learners, a very small proportion of the student body, do not all make good progress. Pass rates are low and managers have recently begun to address this by focusing staff development on meeting the learning needs of this group of learners.
- The service attracts learners from a wide variety of ethnic backgrounds, reflecting the diverse cultural and ethnic mix of the local communities. Outcomes for learners from minority ethnic backgrounds are good and there are no significant differences in the performance of male and female learners. However, learners who receive additional learning support and those who identify themselves as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities showed attainments above those of their peers.
- In courses across the curriculum, learners show improved standards of written and spoken English. They speak with confidence and use newly-acquired specialist vocabulary well. However, less attention is paid to mathematical skills and many learners complete courses

without any real improvement in this important life skill. Learners on employability programmes make good progress and achieve good standards.

- Staff and managers now collect and analyse progression information more rigorously. Learners' progression to further education or employment is good. Around half of the learners who completed courses in 2012/13 went on to other courses at SCOLA. In addition, a further third went on to employment or further education at other providers. However, managers acknowledge that more needs to be done to increase the rigour and accuracy of progression data.
- Inspectors observed safe working practices in classrooms, workshops and community venues throughout the inspection week. Learners' attendance and punctuality are good. Learners' achievements have been recognised by regional and national awards and eight current learners have been awarded Victoria and Albert Museum awards for art and crafts. In addition, learners regularly help raise funds for charities, this year focusing on money for a local hospital radio station.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and this results in good outcomes for learners. Tutors successfully motivate learners who have varied needs and interests. The majority of learners work very hard and make good progress in their lessons, growing in confidence, acquiring new knowledge and developing skills. For example, learners on visual arts courses create interesting and original artefacts and learners on ESOL courses make significant gains in confidence using English. Apprentices and those on family learning programmes benefit from well organised teaching and learning and make good progress.
- Tutors have high expectations of their learners and plan lessons well to ensure that these expectations are met. In visual arts lessons, tutors plan for and encourage learners to experiment in creative ways such as mixing colours directly on the canvas, in the style of Turner, in order to create subtle shades. Learners on jewellery courses experiment with enamels to good effect. Learners with difficulties and/or disabilities learn to express themselves well through learning challenging dance routines which they take pride in presenting to others.
- Tutors are skilful in using a good range of teaching and learning methods that enthuse and motivate learners. They are adept in providing effective one-to-one coaching support and make good use of questioning to check and extend learning. ESOL tutors give effective support to help learners develop their spoken English through individual support and well-designed learning activities.
- Many tutors make good use of learning technology within the classroom to enhance learning. They use social media well in a minority of curriculum areas and a few tutors also make use of their own websites for teaching. However, online resources are under developed and learners do not use them sufficiently to support independent learning.
- Tutors have a good understanding of learners' starting points and use these well to plan learning. Learners benefit from access to effective assessments to diagnose additional learning support needs, which are then provided in a timely manner. Those receiving additional support make good progress. Individual learning plans feature challenging learning goals and learners use these well to check their progress.
- Tutors monitor and check learners' progress carefully and provide good, supportive assessment of learners' work and progress. They mark learners' work regularly, and feedback on both verbal contributions and written work clearly indicates how learners can improve.
- Learners have good opportunities to develop their English skills across the curriculum. Tutors encourage learners to read out loud where appropriate and carefully correct pronunciation. Art and crafts tutors skilfully help learners to use ratio to develop perspective while painting landscapes and to use geometry confidently for patterns in quilt making. However, tutors in

other subject areas pay insufficient attention to developing learners' numerical skills to deepen their understanding and help them to gain more confidence in using number in their daily lives.

- Staff work closely with prospective learners to assess their individual needs and to match them to appropriate courses. Learners benefit from well-planned and instructive induction. Tutors and support staff provide good impartial advice and guidance to inform learners of possible progression routes.
- Staff provide good individual support for learners, who are positive about the help they receive to complete their programmes. Support ensures that all learners, no matter what their backgrounds, have opportunities to participate fully. Staff and learners treat each other with fairness and respect. Learners are encouraged to collaborate and, when they do this well, it results in a very productive learning atmosphere.
- Tutors encourage learners to celebrate diversity and cultural differences through, for example, art exhibitions, discussions of other cultures and and learning dance routines from around the world. Learners on ESOL courses are encouraged to bring and share food from their home countries to broaden an awareness of different cultures.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders, governors and managers have ensured that teaching, learning and assessment remain a core priority for the college. The wide range of learners benefits greatly from high expectations and the desire of leaders, tutors and managers to provide good and better teaching. Their commitment to improving learners' experiences and outcomes continuously is raising standards, meeting local needs and contributing to social cohesion.
- Governors are well informed and very supportive of leaders and managers. They know how to challenge them and to ask the right questions to ensure they are accountable and effective. They are realistic in their expectations and equally aspirational in their dealings with senior and curriculum managers. Their commitment to learners is apparent in how they listen to, and act upon, learners' feedback.
- Leaders and managers plan and review the curriculum in detail and use management information well. Teaching and learning have improved and teams now set realistic targets to bring about more improvement. Quality improvement goals on the majority of courses are challenging and lead to learners successfully developing their skills and improving their learning.
- Curriculum managers use performance management effectively to tackle poor performance and improve teaching. The staff development programme helps tutors improve their teaching and assessment. Professional development opportunities arise from a comprehensive and supportive process of lesson observations and the strategic plan. For example, judgements from observations have identified that more access to, and use of, the virtual learning environment are important to improve outcomes for learners.
- Leaders accurately identify areas of underperformance and take appropriate actions to remedy them. Curriculum teams now regularly use the data dashboard to review performance and this has enabled managers to put in place actions to improve retention and punctuality on a number of courses.
- Leaders and managers ensure local and government priorities are met through providing a wide range of courses in different centres across the borough. The curriculum offer is broad and meets the needs of local communities well, including those not in education, employment or training, vulnerable groups and learners aged 16 to 18 years.
- College managers have developed effective partnerships with government agencies, local providers, schools and voluntary organisations. For example, in family learning, parents successfully improve their own literacy and numeracy skills which then help them assist their children with homework. Through these partnerships, SCOLA has extended its ability to provide apprenticeships and courses that are accessible to learners and which help them gain good

employability skills. A good number of volunteers successfully support tutors and learners in the classroom.

- Quality assurance and communications across the provision are good and ensure good day-to-day management. The college self-assessment report accurately assesses key strengths and areas for improvement. It is comprehensive, uses data well and has clear targets to measure improvement. However, it does not sufficiently evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and how it might be improved.
- Managers and tutors benefit from effective professional development and contribute appropriately to the self-assessment process through clear and well-established procedures. They actively seek and use the views of learners well to secure improvements to the provision. For example, they have recently included more information on progression routes in the prospectus as a result of feedback from learners.
- Tutors and managers actively promote equality and diversity and learners from a wide range of backgrounds attend the college. Staff receive regular updates and training that help them integrate topical issues in their schemes of work and lessons. However, not all tutors are confident and adept in putting this into practice.
- Safeguarding meets statutory requirements. Training and updates for staff are regular and informative. Procedures for ensuring health and safety and risk assessment are thorough and robust. Learners feel safe and the college is friendly and welcoming to all.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Sutton College of Learning for Adults

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	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
Outcomes for learners	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2

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

Provider details

Type of provider	Local authority							
Age range of learners	19+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	6,822							
Principal/CEO	Mrs Jennifer Sims							
Date of previous inspection	November 2009							
Website address	Scola.ac.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+
	71	2159	56	742	21	95	-	-
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	2	44	3	70	-	21		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Full-time	N/A							
Part-time	2							
Number of community learners	2,782							
Number of employability learners	161							
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"> ■ Sutton and District Training ■ Kruger Associates Ltd 							

Contextual information

SCOLA is a hybrid organisation; essentially a community education provider, it also has some of the characteristics of a further education college. Two main campuses, one in Sutton centre and the other in Wallington, provide the focus for learners. However, a variety of programmes are also in place in local schools, children's centres and community venues. Nearly 7,000 learners enrol each year for a wide range of courses, both recreational and those leading to formal qualifications. The vast majority of learners are adults and most take courses in arts and crafts, ESOL and preparation for life and work. A small, but growing, number of students aged 16 to 18 are recruited, along with a very small number of apprentices. Sutton is an area of some affluence but, like many other areas of England, has wards in which people live in deprived circumstances. Unemployment is relatively low. Around a third of the current learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds, a proportion broadly similar to that of the area. The proportion of Year 11 pupils in Sutton and Croydon obtaining five A* to C GCSE grades, including English and mathematics, is broadly at national rates.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Alex Falconer HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the interim 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 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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