

# Telford and Wrekin Council

Local authority

**Inspection dates**

15–18 March 2016

**Overall effectiveness****Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for learners	Good
Adult learning programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good provider

- Leaders and managers have secured improved achievement for learners on most courses leading to a qualification at a time of significant reorganisation and recruitment of new tutors.
- Curriculum leaders plan the location, timings, levels and frequency of courses to meet council and local enterprise partnership (LEP) priorities particularly well.
- The large majority of learners progress to further learning and employment, which is helping them to meet their future aspirations.
- The large majority of learners undertaking accredited courses achieve their qualifications, enabling them to improve their job prospects.
- Many learners, often with complex barriers to learning, develop the skills, confidence and self-esteem to make better life choices.
- Adult and community learning staff collaborate very effectively with a wide range of partner organisations to meet the needs of the most hard-to-reach and most disadvantaged people.
- Staff provide excellent impartial careers and information advice and guidance through the highly visible and very well integrated 'Job Box' service across the borough in readily accessible community venues.
- Tutors plan lessons skilfully using a wide range of activities creatively to improve the personal skills and health and well-being of learners.
- Learners receive good oral feedback from tutors and this motivates learners to take part in sessions enthusiastically, enjoy their learning and make good progress.

### It is not yet an outstanding provider

- Too few learners on non-accredited courses have sufficient identification of their personal learning aims, have precise targets set or have their progress recorded sufficiently.
- Learners' success in English and mathematics requires further improvement to be good.
- A small minority of learners do not attend their courses frequently enough, and this has not improved since the previous inspection.
- Tutors' feedback on learners' written work is too brief, and does not always identify what learners have done well and what they need to do to extend their learning.

## **Full report**

### **Information about the provider**

- Telford and Wrekin Council Adult Learning is part of the Business Development and Employment Service Directorate. Learning programmes are delivered by council staff and two subcontractors across a wide variety of community venues located throughout the borough. The proportion of courses directly delivered by the council significantly increased in 2015. Provision is targeted at those new to learning, with low levels of qualifications and those seeking employment.
- Around two thirds of the Skills Funding Agency contract is allocated to non-accredited community learning courses in a range of subjects. The remainder is allocated to accredited programmes, with a focus on English, mathematics and courses leading to improved employability. Levels of unemployment in the borough are below those for the West Midlands region, but the proportion of the population who do not have qualifications is higher.

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

- Share best practice internally to ensure that individual targets for all learners are of a consistently high quality. Ensure that tutors use targets well to plan individual learning and to measure learners' progress on their course.
- Further improve learners' success in English and mathematics by the continued professional development of subject tutors and analysing the reasons why learners do not achieve better.
- Improve attendance by better understanding why learners with poor attendance struggle to attend, negotiating improvement targets and generally setting higher expectations for this aspect of learning.
- Develop tutors in order that the level and standard of written feedback that learners receive is improved so that learners are clear on how they can improve their performance and standard of work.

# Inspection judgements

## Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Leaders and managers across the council departments work exceptionally closely to ensure that adult and community learning programmes and activities contribute strongly to Telford and Wrekin's economic development strategy. Council senior officers and elected members have allocated resources to demonstrate their commitment to sustain and develop the provision. Curriculum leaders plan the location, timings, levels and frequency of courses to meet council and LEP priorities to develop an available skilled workforce that meets the needs of existing and new businesses.
- Adult and community learning staff collaborate very effectively with a wide range of partners such as schools, children's centres, health services and voluntary sector organisations to meet the needs of the most hard-to-reach and most disadvantaged people. Course leaders take great care to match individual tutors to the curriculum offer to ensure that they are able to sensitively support learners with significant barriers to learning while at the same time setting high expectations.
- Managers work very well with the two subcontractors to monitor the quality and effectiveness of the specific, targeted courses they provide. Quality assurance and improvement measures are robust and combine elements of Telford and Wrekin's own processes, such as observations of teaching, learning and assessment and data analysis with complementary measures of the subcontractors such as learners' feedback and tutor evaluations.
- Leaders and managers worked very effectively to maintain the breadth and quality of provision following the decision to cease working with one subcontractor at the end of last year. During this period of reorganisation which has included the recruitment of new tutors, they have secured improved achievement for learners on many of the accredited programmes.
- Leaders have contracted with an outside organisation to track the next steps and destinations of those people who have used any of the service's courses or functions such as advice and guidance. The tracking of destinations is rigorous and leaders have a very good understanding of where learners go after a course.
- Staff provide excellent, impartial advice and guidance through the highly visible and very well integrated 'Job Box' service. Advice centres are based in a very wide variety of community venues. Learners receive advice about career paths, immediate and projected employment opportunities, training offers, health support, financial advice, help with housing and, where relevant, school places.
- Self-assessment is a particularly effective improvement activity. Managers make good use of information and data to identify strengths and areas for improvement in lessons as well as opportunities to develop and extend provision. Tutors and learners complete evaluations at the end of each course, which are collated and thoroughly analysed by team leaders. They discuss these summaries at regular team meetings to plan actions for improvement, such as thematic training events, individual staff development using online resources, regular subject support for individual tutors and peer observations to promote good practice. All parts of this robust process extend to the subcontracted provision, including the observations of learning.
- The most recent self-assessment report is mostly accurate and appropriately cross-referenced to supporting evidence. The quality improvement plan derived from the report focuses too much on business growth and development rather than on improving the quality of aspects of the provision that most directly affect learners.
- Leaders have not yet fully resolved two of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. While most learners on non-accredited programmes achieve their learning aims and evidently develop new skills and confidence, tutors do not consistently help their learners to set or recognise the achievement of individual targets. Attendance across the provision is still not high enough despite concerted action to improve it.
- Tutors have received training on the new duty to protect learners from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. A more specific online training package is offered to tutors but this is relatively new and not all tutors have completed it. The integration of discussions around 'Prevent' and fundamental British values is at an early stage, and learners' understanding of these important topics is limited.
- **The governance of the provider**
  - A senior council officer and an elected member with cabinet responsibility for employment and skills provide appropriate challenge and scrutiny to ensure that the adult and community service meets its target and performance targets.
  - Senior leaders are well informed about how efficiently and effectively the programmes offered provide good value for money and meet the needs of the communities they serve.

## ■ The arrangements for safeguarding are effective

- Team leaders risk assess venues and tutors risk assess individual sessions to identify health and safety control measures appropriately.
- Appropriate policies are in place and safe recruitment arrangements are adhered to.
- Learners have an appropriate awareness of e-safety, particularly where they are on courses that make use of the internet as a resource.
- Parents attending family learning courses know how to keep their children safe.
- Regular staff training in safeguarding ensures that they know how to recognise vulnerable learners at risk of harm such as through drug or alcohol misuse.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** is good

- Staff have high expectations of learners, which motivates them to achieve their learning goals. The adult learning provision meets local and national priorities well and provides flexible opportunities for learners, many with complex needs, in a wide range of community venues. Most learners take part in sessions enthusiastically and enjoy their learning.
- Tutors are appropriately qualified and experienced and use a good range of activities and resources well, to actively involve their learners. As a result, learners are well motivated, increase their levels of ability, confidence and technical skills and make good progress. In creative craft sessions, learners quickly develop the skills to craft small products, such as picture frames and cushion covers, which they sell to raise money at a local craft fair.
- Tutors get to know their learners quickly, have a good understanding of the different backgrounds and needs of individuals and ensure that these are met. As a result, learners develop their personal and social skills very well. In effective self-awareness sessions, learners learn to manage their feelings and behaviour well. This helps them to better manage their children's behaviour, which impacts positively on their children's learning at school.
- Tutors provide learners with a good level of support in group coaching sessions and often provide them with additional activities to research and explore in their own time, and this encourages their independence. Tutors and support staff provide individual support that meets learners' specific personal needs well. Learners develop very good working relationships with each other and with their tutors.
- The development of learners' speaking and listening skills is good. Speakers of English as an additional language quickly develop the confidence to take part in meaningful group discussions with their peers and to communicate confidently with their children's teachers and staff at school.
- In mathematics lessons tutors help to rapidly develop learners' basic mathematics skills, such as using fractions and decimals. They also integrate mathematics well in vocational sessions. In a cake-decorating session learners accurately calculate the size of cake they need to bake, based on the number of portions required, to meet a customer order. In a craft lesson learners are able to apply these new skills well to calculate the cost of their time when making products for sale at a craft fair. As a result, learners are better equipped to be successful in their personal lives and future careers.
- Tutors use an appropriate range of techniques to assess learning, such as observation and role play. During vocational sessions, tutors provide learners with frequent, constructive oral feedback and this motivates them to make good progress.
- Staff provide excellent information and guidance services that learners value very highly. This enables most learners to develop clear and realistic plans for progression. As a result, the large majority of learners progress to further training or into employment.
- Tutors encourage learners to listen to each other and respect each other's opinions and contributions to discussions. Tutors have established a culture in which learners show mutual respect and understand the importance of valuing diversity.
- Tutors do not always record well the outcomes of the initial assessment of learners' skills at the start of their courses. As a consequence of this, the ongoing progress of a small minority of learners is not recorded with consistent accuracy. While these learners have a clear understanding of what they intend to achieve during their courses, not all make the rapid progress required to achieve higher standards.
- Vocational tutors do not focus sufficiently on the development of learners' written English skills, and learners are not always clear about how they can improve their spelling and punctuation. Tutors' feedback on learners' written work is too brief and does not consistently identify what learners have done well and what they need to do to extend their learning.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good**

- Learners receive outstanding careers and information advice and guidance to help inform them about the courses that the service offers and how well the courses meet their needs. Guidance is provided throughout the borough in community venues, through outreach workers and mentors. As a result, the large majority of learners progress to their desired next steps. All courses of longer duration are visited by an independent careers advisor, who provides information, guidance and advice on local opportunities.
- Learners make good gains in confidence and self-esteem. Many learners have not traditionally engaged in learning, are unemployed or have other barriers to learning. The verbal feedback that learners receive enables them to feel valued and identify how their skills are developing.
- Learners benefit from purposeful courses which are aimed at acquiring skills which help them gain employment and improve their children's learning and health. This is enabling, for instance, improved parenting and self-awareness skills.
- Learners show respect for their other course participants and tutors. They work co-operatively together, which promotes productive relationships and enhances their learning experience. Learners arrive punctually for the start of their courses and therefore disruption is minimised.
- The service provides a good range of courses for older members of the community. This is enabling these learners to improve their mental well-being, feel less isolated and improve their fitness levels.
- A small minority of learners do not attend their courses frequently enough and typically courses of longer duration times do not have full attendance. This affects the progress these learners make and the ability to accurately measure their progress during the course.
- Learners know how to protect themselves when using electronic devices relative to the course they are undertaking and they feel safe. The service recently introduced an initiative to promote and improve learners' understanding of how to protect themselves from bullying and risk of harm. As a result new learners have a stronger understanding of these aspects to keep themselves safe compared to learners who joined before the initiative.

## **Outcomes for learners are good**

- Most learners progress from their first course to further learning, employment or voluntary working. This is enabling learners to improve their economic well-being and make greater contributions to their families and the wider community.
- The large majority of learners in accredited provision achieve their qualifications, and in non-accredited provision most achieve their learning aims. Success rates improved in 2014/15 and are now good. Many learners have low levels of academic qualifications on entry; the acquisition of qualifications is enabling learners to better progress into their chosen employment.
- The standard of learners' practical work is consistently good. Learning resources are of high quality, which is enabling learners to take pride in their work and to produce high-quality products.
- Learners enjoy their learning as reflected in the high levels of their satisfaction in the courses that the service is providing. This is encouraging learners to continue in learning.
- While improving, learners' success in English and mathematics qualifications requires further improvement to be good. Not enough learners who undertake these subjects are improving their levels of qualifications.
- Learners on non-accredited courses do not have their personal targets identified precisely enough, and the recognising and recording of prior achievement are not done consistently well. This means that learners do not fully understand what they have achieved or their current progress well enough in relation to their individual needs or aspirations.

## Provider details

Type of provider	Local authority
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1,320
Principal/CEO	Katherine Kynaston
Website address	<a href="http://www.telford.gov.uk">www.telford.gov.uk</a>

## 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)		407		83				
	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
Number of learners aged 14–16								
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	■ Workers' Educational Association							
	■ Relate							

## Information about this inspection

### Inspection team

Maxine Mayer, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Nicholas Gadfield	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jacqueline Deane	Ofsted Inspector
Margaret Fobister	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the adult and community learning manager – skills delivery, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

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