Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council Adult and Community Education

Local authority

Inspection dates	18–21 April 2016
Overall effectiveness	**Requires improvement**

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

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Too many learners do not attend lessons regularly and on time, and so do not develop time-management and self-discipline skills as well as they should for successful employment.
- The proportion of learners who achieve qualifications in English and mathematics is low.
- Learners on courses that do not result in qualifications do not have clear and ambitious learning targets, and so cannot judge accurately their progress and achievements.
- Tutors do not meet the learning needs of individuals well enough in their teaching.

- Managers do not have an accurate view of the quality of provision to inform their improvement planning. Consequently, they have not tackled weaknesses and the quality of the provision has declined.
- Council leaders and senior managers do not receive detailed and reliable analyses of learners' performance and the quality of the provision, and so are not able to hold managers to account for making improvements.
- Managers are unaware of many learners' destinations, and as a result they are unable to monitor the impact of the provision in Tameside.

The provider has the following strengths

- The very large majority of learners, often with significant barriers to participation in learning, enhance their confidence and self-esteem and take more responsibility for improving their daily lives.
- The vast majority of learners on first-steps computer courses achieve their qualifications.

- Tutors ensure that learners of different backgrounds and life experiences work well together; as a result they enjoy their lessons and overcome social isolation.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council Adult and Community Education (ACE or the service) is part of the Employment and Skills Directorate. The service delivers courses in a wide range of venues throughout the borough. Provision is targeted at those new to learning, those with low levels of qualifications and those seeking employment.
- Around three quarters of the Skills Funding Agency contract is allocated to courses which do not lead to formal qualifications. The remainder is allocated to accredited courses up to level 2. Most of the courses are in English, mathematics and first steps in using computers; the service offers a small number of courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL).
- Tameside borough is ranked 41st nationally in terms of the overall indicator of deprivation. Levels of unemployment in the borough are just below those nationally. The proportion of the population who do not have qualifications in Tameside is higher than the national figure.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure managers and all tutors set high expectations for learners' attendance and punctuality and communicate these expectations well to learners, so that attendance and punctuality rates increase.
- Increase the proportion of learners who achieve their qualifications in English and mathematics so that their prospects for progression into employment or to other courses improve.
- Ensure that the council's elected members and the service's senior managers receive detailed and reliable analyses of learners' performance, including their destinations, and of the quality of the provision so that they can support and challenge managers to make swift improvements.
- Ensure that tutors adapt their teaching methods to reflect learners' starting points well, so that they effectively meet the needs of all learners, including the needs of less- and most-able learners.
- Ensure that tutors, especially on courses that do not lead to qualifications, set learners clear and ambitious learning targets, and assess and record their progress against these targets, so that learners understand accurately the progress they are making and their achievements.
- Develop robust arrangements to collect information about learners' destinations in employment, education and training, and use this information well to evaluate the effectiveness of the provision for residents in Tameside.
- Ensure that managers evaluate the quality of teaching, learning and assessment rigorously and reliably, and that they use the findings from the evaluation well to improve tutors' teaching.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management　requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not secured improvements in outcomes for learners or in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment since the previous inspection. As a result, the quality of the provision has declined.

- The arrangements to evaluate and improve the quality of teaching and assessment are not sufficiently focused on learning. Managers evaluate the quality of teaching and learning through both full-length and short-lesson observations. However, they do not evaluate the impact of teaching on learners' progress. Managers' evaluations of teaching and assessment on courses that do not lead to formal qualifications require significant improvement.

- Managers have not developed and implemented a sufficiently robust system for evaluating staff performance. They do not discuss and agree with tutors a clear improvement plan to eradicate the weaknesses identified through quality monitoring activities. Tutors attend a wide range of courses to improve their teaching. However, managers fail to evaluate how well tutors use their gained knowledge to improve their teaching and assessment practice.

- The self-assessment report is detailed and identifies a number of weaknesses confirmed by inspectors. However, managers have underestimated the impact of these weaknesses on all aspects of the provision.

- Over time, managers have not had sufficient information about learners' destinations after the completion of their courses. As a result, they have not been able to evaluate fully and modify the provision sufficiently to increase the number of learners who progress to employment or further courses. More recently, managers have improved the accuracy and comprehensiveness of learners' destination data and have started to use it to plan and develop future courses.

- Managers use data well to monitor the progress and achievements of learners on accredited courses. They identify effectively learners who are at risk of slow progress and agree a clear plan with tutors to support these learners to achieve.

- Managers have a good understanding of the reasons why a significant minority of learners do not attend regularly or punctually for their lessons. They have developed a number of strategies to improve the attendance and punctuality of these learners. Despite early indications of improvement, too many learners are absent from lessons or arrive late.

- Staff promote fair treatment and respect for individuals well. Learners benefit from inclusive teaching and from welcoming venues, so that they feel safe to meet and work with people of different backgrounds. Managers monitor well the performance of different groups of learners, for example, learners with disabilities and those with learning difficulties, and make reasonable adjustments to meet their needs. All staff have received training in promoting democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. However, most tutors do not promote these concepts well enough.

- Following a period of numerous changes and reductions in funding and staffing, the service is now more stable. Senior managers focus on making improvements; they have fully reviewed the provision and provide courses which reflect the aims of the council, such as those designed to reduce the number of long-term unemployed people in Tameside.

- Managers use data well to monitor the progress and achievements of learners on accredited courses. They identify effectively learners who are at risk of slow progress and agree a clear plan with tutors to support these learners to achieve.

- The service is very successful in recruiting learners from disadvantaged backgrounds and those who have been disengaged from learning. Staff at all levels place a high priority on recruiting learners with significant personal difficulties, such as physical or mental health issues. The courses are effective in helping learners to reduce their sense of social isolation. The service works well with a large number of partners to ensure that learners, who in many cases are reluctant to return to learning or have been long- term unemployed, make their first steps back to learning. As a result, the large majority of learners are new to the service, and most have low previous educational attainment.

- **The governance of the provider**
  - The council has conducted a detailed review of the service's provision for residents in Tameside. It has developed a sound strategy for the future of the service and the courses that it offers. The service is progressing well in implementing the strategy. For example, since the previous inspection, it has increased the proportion of courses in English, mathematics and employability.
  - Managers do not provide the elected members and the council's senior managers with reliable and sufficiently detailed analyses of the quality of the provision and learners' performance. As a result,

elected members do not have a sound oversight of the provision and do not challenge senior managers well to ensure robust and swift improvements.

- **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**
  - Managers ensure that all staff are appropriately checked for criminal records and safeguarding concerns. Staff receive regular training on their safeguarding responsibilities and how to report any concerns identified. Managers keep a detailed record of any matters reported to them by staff or learners related to safeguarding, and of the responses made.
  - All staff have received appropriate training to develop their awareness of their responsibility in preventing extremism and radicalisation. Most tutors appropriately raise learners' awareness of how to stay safe. However, managers have not ensured that tutors are sufficiently confident in discussing with learners all aspects of the risks which they might encounter, for example, when working online.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment　requires improvement

- Learners value highly the opportunity to learn and develop friendships in a safe and supportive learning environment. Tutors are very sensitive to some learners' difficult circumstances and work hard to keep them motivated. However, tutors are not sufficiently skilful to ensure that this high level of care and support leads to consistently good learning.

- Tutors do not set work at the right level of difficulty to ensure that all learners reach their potential. They do not check often enough to ensure learners' understanding of the topics discussed. They do not use the information about learners' starting points well to deliver lessons that meet the ability levels of individual learners. As a consequence, a few learners become disengaged; less-able learners do not develop their skills sufficiently and most-able learners do not make the progress of which they are capable.

- On the courses which do not lead to qualifications, tutors do not work with learners to help them identify and set personal learning targets that are specific, measurable, challenging and realistically achievable in a given timescale. They do not assess and record accurately learners' progress during their lessons and courses. As a result, learners do not know how well they are progressing towards achieving their personal or developmental goals, or when they have completed their courses successfully. Tutors record inaccurately that all learners who stay on courses achieve and managers have failed to investigate this assertion.

- Tutors do not explain well to learners how the skills they develop in lessons can help them to find jobs. In employability lessons, tutors do not ensure that learners can identify the range of skills they have which they can use in their job search. As a result, learners cannot readily link what they learn in lessons to job opportunities and do not progress into employment as quickly as they should.

- Staff do not provide learners with sufficient advice, guidance and information about progression routes after completing their courses. They do not gather detailed information about the learners' previous education experiences, particularly learners who are from different countries. A small minority of these learners have qualifications at high levels, but staff do not refer them to agencies that can explain the equivalent worth of their qualifications, so they can find employment or progress to higher-level courses.

- Tutors coach learners sensitively to develop new skills. They provide learners with detailed verbal feedback on their work during lessons, for example on their approach to writing a job application. Not all learners remember the specific verbal feedback that they have received, and therefore when completing similar tasks, they encounter the same issues, and so they repeat the same mistakes and their progress slows.

- On English and mathematics courses, tutors set short-term and precise targets for learners linked to their learning needs. They review learners' progress towards these targets well. As a result, current learners improve their spoken and written English skills and their use of mathematics; learners apply these skills well, for example to start self-employment. Managers have not ensured that the good practice in setting and reviewing targets in discrete English and mathematics courses is shared across the provision.

- Tutors are very successful in ensuring that learners from different backgrounds, including learners with physical or mental health issues, learn well together. Learners often help each other to learn new topics. Tutors ensure learners develop a good understanding of fair treatment and respect for and appreciation of differences in ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, disability, sexual orientation, education and religion. Tutors do not promote sufficiently all the values which help learners to live in modern Britain, for example democracy, the rule of law and individual liberty.

- Tutors are suitably experienced and use learning resources well. They use workbooks competently, for example in first-steps lessons in using computers, enabling learners to work at their own pace.

- Tutors support learners well to confront the barriers which they face. Learners, when required, discuss with tutors their personal difficulties, such as emotional, health issues or homelessness. Learners receive good encouragement during and after lessons to complete their courses, resulting in the vast majority staying on to the end of their course.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare require improvement

- Many learners do not attend lessons regularly. Managers' and tutors' expectation of high attendance to lessons is not communicated consistently to learners and so there are too many erratic absences. Too many learners do not arrive in time for the start of their lessons. As a result, these learners do not develop good attendance and punctuality skills for employment.
- Learners do not have a good understanding of important safeguarding issues such as how to keep themselves safe from radicalisation or extremism. They feel safe and know whom to contact if they have any concerns for their own or others' safety.
- Learners do not develop sufficient understanding of the career pathways that are open to them and which they can realistically aim for in the short, medium and long term. Tutors do not develop sufficiently learners' awareness of the world of work.
- Learners enjoy learning and improve their confidence and self-esteem. They enhance their social and personal skills. Many learners, who have been out of employment for a variety of reasons, gain confidence in applying for jobs.
- Learners conduct themselves well. They show mutual respect to tutors and peers. They develop the skills of learning independently, for instance through learning at home, or working at their own pace in computer workshops.

Outcomes for learners require improvement

- On courses which do not lead to qualifications, the service's arrangements for the recognition and recording of progress and achievement of learners are not reliable, and do not allow for accurate evaluation of achievements across all courses.
- In 2014/15, the proportion of learners who achieved their qualifications on short courses in information and communication technology (ICT) for users was high. Too many learners did not succeed in achieving qualifications on English and mathematics courses.
- Most learners make the expected progress from their very low starting points, and the standard of their work is appropriate. However, the most-able learners do not achieve as highly as they should.
- A significant number of learners develop new skills in using computers; for example, they produce effective advertisements for community events. Learners on family learning courses develop a better understanding of what their children learn at school and how they can help them with homework.
- The service's new arrangements for collecting learners' destinations after completing their courses are not yet fully established. The initial results indicate that too many learners do not progress to other courses or employment.
- On accredited courses, few differences exist between the achievements of learners from different groups, for example those from different ethnic groups or those with disabilities, when compared to their peers. No discernible differences exist in the number of learners from different groups who complete their courses.

Provider details

Type of provider	Local authority
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1500
Head of service	Mrs Jean Quinn
Website address	www.tameside.gov.uk/adultlearning

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	206	N/A	41	N/A	1	N/A	0

	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher	
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

	16-19	19+	Total
Number of traineeships	N/A	N/A	N/A

Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	■ N/A

Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Shahram Safavi	Her Majesty's Inspector
Harmesh Manghra	Her Majesty's Inspector
Heather Hartmann	Ofsted Inspector
David Longworth	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the learning manager, 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, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of students and employers; 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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