

City of London Adult Community Learning

Community learning and skills

**Inspection dates****23–26 May 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

Apprenticeships

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Senior leaders and managers have high ambitions for their learners and have successfully maintained the good quality of provision.
- Adults develop good life skills such as confidence in their relationships with colleagues; younger apprentices gain in independence, including managing their commute to work.
- Managers work effectively with employers to ensure that the apprenticeships meet their needs and reduce local skills shortages.
- Teachers ensure that lessons are lively, interesting and motivate adults to learn; they use resources well, including information learning technology to maintain learners' interest.
- A high proportion of learners successfully complete their qualifications or learning aims.
- Almost all apprentices who complete their programmes do so within the planned time, stay in permanent employment or gain promotion.
- Senior leaders and staff have a strong focus on improving the well-being of adults through learning; learners are positive about how participation on courses has supported them, for example to overcome social isolation.
- Staff know their learners well and act quickly to support those who need to overcome barriers to learning or who require additional help.

It is not yet an outstanding provider

- On non-accredited courses, teachers do not assess learners' starting points well enough, and do not set them sufficiently challenging learning goals.
- A small minority of employers are not informed sufficiently about how they can support their apprentice to extend their knowledge and skills.
- In a minority of lessons, teachers' instructions to learners are unclear, resulting in learners making insufficient progress.
- Managers do not use data or performance targets well enough to analyse the performance of the service and to increase the pace of improvement.
- Teachers do not provide good enough instruction to learners to develop their mathematical skills.

Full report

Information about the provider

- The City of London Adult Community Learning service is based in the Community and Children's Services department. It provides education and training for residents and employees within the City of London and its neighbouring local authorities and uses sites both within and outside the borough. Around 950 learners per year enrol on courses. Approximately 200 learners complete accredited courses that lead to qualifications, mostly in English and mathematics. Around 750 learners enrol on non-accredited courses that do not lead to qualifications, but provide them with skills for employment or support them to increase their confidence, prepare them for further study or help them to participate more fully in their local communities and with their families. The most popular subjects are in arts and humanities. The number of apprentices enrolled with the service has increased recently to around 60, the majority in business-related subjects.
- The City of London has a population of just over 8,000 and unemployment rates are low compared with the rest of the city and nationally.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Further increase the pace of improvement by:
 - using a broader range of data to better analyse the performance of the service
 - ensuring that the improvement plan for the service includes measurable targets so that senior leaders and managers can further evaluate the progress that is being made and the impact of their actions.
- Further improve teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
 - teachers assess learners' starting points on all non-accredited courses and make use of this information to set challenging learning goals for learners
 - on all programmes, teachers provide clear instructions to learners of what is expected of them during lessons
 - teachers are able to provide consistently good support to learners to improve their mathematical skills.
- Improve the guidance given to employers so that all apprentices are on suitably challenging programmes relative to their prior attainment, and to ensure that employers participate fully in apprentices' reviews to know how to support their employees to extend their knowledge and skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Senior leaders and managers have high ambitions for learners and apprentices in the City of London and more widely throughout London. Since the previous inspection in 2010, they have continued to develop the service successfully and maintained a good standard of teaching, learning and assessment, resulting in good outcomes for adult learners and apprentices.
- Senior leaders and managers ensure that the priorities for the service are clear and understood well by staff and external stakeholders, including employers, subcontractors and other local authorities with whom they collaborate. They work closely with their partners to ensure that the courses and qualifications they teach are matched well to local employment needs and are successfully increasing the number of learners who are new to learning. The Corporation of the City of London also leads the way as an employer, with its commitment to training its own apprentices.
- Managers are successfully reshaping the curriculum so that it has a better focus on developing the skills that learners need to improve their employment prospects. A greater number of learners now take and successfully complete accredited courses such as English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and GCSEs in English and mathematics. Managers are also successful at securing funding and leading projects that help the service meet the needs of adults in the city and across London, such as the recent 'speaking English with confidence' project to support adults improve their conversational English.
- Managers monitor the performance of subcontracted providers effectively through regular reviews of their performance. They have recently reduced the number of subcontractors who deliver apprenticeships as a result of underperformance. Managers' close scrutiny of their own apprenticeships and those taught by subcontractors has resulted in apprentices in the current year making better progress than previously.
- Through their observations of teaching, learning and assessment, managers have a good understanding of learners' experiences in lessons. Managers' evaluations of learning are thorough and accurate. This helps them identify and improve weaker aspects of teachers' practice and implement effective staff development, such as in the increased and better use of information learning technology (ILT) by teachers to improve learning.
- Managers have successfully implemented actions to overcome most of the key areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. These include increasing the range of courses that lead to qualifications and improving learners' access to resources to help them extend their knowledge and skills outside lessons. Where managers have not yet successfully improved on weaknesses identified, for example in recording the progress of learners on non-accredited courses, they have sound plans in place to do so.
- Leaders and managers accurately evaluate the strengths and areas for improvement in the service in their annual self-assessment report and make effective use of the views of learners to draw their conclusions. During the academic year they do not make sufficient use of the data available to them to analyse the performance of the service. Managers do not use their key performance targets well enough in their quality improvement plan to monitor the progress they make and to quicken the pace of improvement.
- **The governance of the provider is good**
 - Elected members and senior officers routinely hold managers to account for the performance of the service. They provide effective oversight of key decisions and strategies and ensure that the curriculum is developed in line with the strategic goals of the corporation and its stakeholders.
 - A recently established advisory group provides additional and effective scrutiny and guidance to senior leaders and managers, who provide them with suitable reports to ensure that they are sufficiently informed about the quality of the provision.
- **The arrangements for safeguarding are effective**
 - Managers ensure that safeguarding learners is given a high priority. Staff act swiftly when they have concerns about the welfare of learners and liaise effectively with other agencies when necessary.
 - When recruiting new staff, managers ensure that they adhere to safe recruitment and selection practices. They keep accurate records on their single central record and complete appropriate suitability checks on new employees.
 - Managers have implemented effectively their actions to ensure that staff and learners know what measures to take to prevent radicalisation and extremism. They have also ensured that staff know how to integrate topics into the curriculum to promote British values, and teachers are confident to discuss these issues with learners.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Teachers have high expectations of their learners and in most adult and community lessons and apprenticeship training sessions set work that is demanding, maintains the interest of learners and ensures that they make good progress in gaining new skills or developing their knowledge.
- Teachers use a wide range of strategies to ensure that lessons are lively and interesting. They make effective use of technology, including interactive whiteboards and mobile devices, to explain topics or to enable learners to share what they have learned.
- The majority of teachers assess learners' prior knowledge and skills accurately at the start of their course and use this information well to ensure that learners make progress according to their abilities. In a minority of courses, in particular in family learning and leisure courses, teachers do not evaluate carefully enough learners' progress in relation to their starting points and do not set them learning goals that are challenging enough.
- Staff identify well those learners who need extra help to achieve, including those who have personal circumstances to overcome to be successful in attending lessons and achieving their learning goals. Staff take time to understand individual learners' circumstances and provide effective support to help them find suitable courses and successfully complete them.
- Most teachers assess learners' progress accurately during lessons and through written or practical assessments. They provide good feedback to learners so that learners know what progress they are making and how to improve further. Teachers in the majority of subjects make effective use of reviews of learners' progress halfway through, and at the end of courses, so that learners know what progress they have made in relation to their learning goals.
- In the majority of lessons on adult and community learning and apprenticeship programmes, teachers provide clear instructions so that learners know what to do. In a minority of lessons, teachers' explanations are not sufficiently clear, or teachers move on to new topics before learners have fully understood what has been taught, resulting in learners becoming confused and making insufficient progress in the lesson.
- The majority of teachers use high-quality resources, including video clips, well-prepared presentations and detailed handouts, to help learners to learn. In a small minority of courses, in particular in arts and crafts subjects, teachers do not have suitable resources and this has a detrimental impact on learning.
- Teachers are skilled at integrating themes related to equality and diversity into their lessons. For example, in a functional skills lesson, all learners participated enthusiastically in a discussion about taking account of different people's cultures and social values when using public transport. Learners listen carefully to each other, value the different opinions of their classmates and demonstrate respect for the views of others.
- On most courses teachers ensure that learners improve their skills in the use of English and, where appropriate, the application of mathematics, although this is not yet consistently good across all programmes. Teaching on English courses, including functional skills, GCSE and ESOL programmes is good. Teachers are less skilled at supporting learners to develop their mathematical skills and the proportion of learners making good progress in mathematics is lower than in English.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare are good

- Through participating in community learning courses and apprenticeship programmes, learners gain valuable skills and most develop their self-confidence, both in regard to their personal lives and in furthering their careers. Staff have successfully created an environment in which learners on all programmes associate well with each other. Learners have a high level of respect for their peers and tutors. They are enthusiastic, motivated to learn and keen to develop new skills. Learners enjoy their lessons and apply themselves well to their studies, including through practising skills learned and completing tasks between lessons. Their attendance is good on most courses, but this is not consistent across all subjects.
- The standard of learners' behaviour on all programmes is excellent; they take pride in their work and most produce work of a good standard. Through their participation in learning, adults develop good life skills. For example, apprentices gain confidence in their relationships with colleagues. Younger apprentices quickly gain in independence, such as in managing complex commuting journeys to work and taking responsibility for their own time management.
- Senior leaders, managers and staff have a strong focus on helping residents in the City of London and its neighbouring boroughs to improve their health and well-being. They set the tone for this in their

successful leadership of a 'learning well' project in which adults are supported to overcome mild to moderate mental health problems through participation in courses focused on improving their well-being. Learners on a range of courses feel very well supported with regard to their health and well-being, for example their participation in adult learning programmes has supported them to remain integrated into the community and overcome social isolation.

- Learners feel safe at the service's various sites and are well informed at the start of their programmes about how to maintain their personal safety and, where necessary, to work safely with equipment. Staff provide good information about safeguarding and well-being and match the provision of information very well to the issues that they know prevail within their local communities. Learners know who to contact if they need to raise concerns.
- Apprentices, and learners on programmes such as ESOL, develop relevant and useful skills which they use in their workplace. Learners also improve their skills in areas such as assertiveness, research, and customer service. They become more confident as a result of their learning and improve their future career options.
- Learners on all programmes have a good knowledge and understanding of current issues related to radicalisation and extremist ideology. They are provided with clear information about these topics during their induction and staff reinforce this well with apprentices during their reviews.
- Learners receive good guidance to place them on suitable programmes to meet their needs and learning goals, although a small minority of apprentices are training at a level that is too low given their prior attainment. Staff provide effective support to learners on all programmes to help them make decisions about their next steps and those on community learning programmes have good access to impartial careers guidance.
- Learners develop good written and spoken English skills; they confidently and competently participate in class discussions and the standard of their written work is good. Learners develop mathematical skills at a level that is sufficient to complete their courses and where relevant, teachers integrate mathematics well into lessons. For example, in a functional skills English lesson, learners calculated bus fares in order to be able to discuss value for money on public transport.

Outcomes for learners

are good

- A high proportion of learners on accredited adult learning programmes successfully complete their qualifications, including those who study English, mathematics and ESOL. Most learners on non-accredited courses successfully achieved their learning goals.
- In 2014/15, the majority of apprentices were on programmes in business administration and customer services taught by the service. These apprentices achieved well. The minority of apprentices were enrolled on programmes delivered by subcontractors and achieved less well. Managers have reduced markedly the number of subcontractors they work with and apprentices' progress in the current year is good.
- Although the proportion of apprentices who stay to the end of their programme is not high enough, those who leave mostly do so in order to further their careers in alternative employment or higher levels of study. Of the apprentices who have already completed their programmes in the current year, a very high proportion successfully did so in the planned time.
- On completing their qualifications, almost all apprentices stay in permanent jobs with the employers who trained them and a minority are successful at gaining promotion. Apprentices quickly become trusted employees and make a good contribution to their workplace.
- In 2014/15 the proportion of learners who achieved a grade C or above in GCSE mathematics was high, while for English it was low. In the current year, based on teachers' assessment of learners' progress to date, a high proportion of learners on GCSE qualifications in English and mathematics are making good progress and are on track to achieve a grade C or above. Similarly, most learners on functional skills qualifications are on track to achieve their qualifications. However, the proportion of learners on GCSE mathematics qualifications who stay to the end of the course is too low.
- Managers monitor the performance of different groups of learners well and in most cases learners from different backgrounds achieve equally well. In 2014/15 all learners with learning difficulties or disability achieved their learning aims. On adult learning programmes, males achieve slightly better than females, but on apprenticeships the reverse is the case. Managers implement effective actions to rectify issues related to different groups of learners, such as their efforts to increase the participation rates of males on adult learning courses, and to recruit more apprentices from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- Managers do not have sufficient knowledge of the next steps taken by learners when they leave adult learning courses.

Adult learning programmes

are good

- Managers have successfully increased the range of courses offered in English and mathematics, with a focus on teaching GCSEs in these subjects to meet adults' career aspirations. Around 10% of learners enrol on English, mathematics and ESOL courses. The remainder study on non-accredited courses; the majority in art and humanities subjects, but also subjects such as ballroom dancing, tai chi as well as programmes in family learning.
- Managers and teachers have high expectations of their learners and have maintained a good standard of provision since the previous inspection, resulting in learners making good progress and most achieving their learning goals.
- Most teachers are skilled at ensuring that they use activities in lessons that are matched well to learners' skills and knowledge. Teachers provide good coaching and support to those who are less confident or experienced, and set more challenging tasks or goals for more-able learners. For example, in French lessons learners are able to take part in a conversation at a level suited to their ability.
- Teachers use good strategies to check learners' progress during lessons, such as through their close observation of learners' practical skills and their use of questions to check learners' knowledge and understanding. The majority of learners receive clear and constructive feedback on their written and practical work that helps them understand how to improve. For example, in tai chi the teacher provides precise guidance and correction to individual learners so that they are able to complete movement sequences accurately.
- Teachers provide good support to learners to develop their English skills, for example by providing explanations of new vocabulary and technical terms, and by ensuring that they participate in class discussions. Most learners develop their English and mathematical skills to a suitable level to enable them to achieve their main learning aims.
- In the majority of lessons, tutors make effective use of good resources, including ILT, to support learning. For example, in an ESOL lesson learners used mobile devices to look up the meaning of words, such as 'relationship', that formed the topic for the lesson. In a small minority of lessons, the quality of learning resources is insufficient to support learning, for example in jewellery making and art. Managers are aware of these shortcomings and have suitable plans to improve them for the start of the next academic year.
- On courses that do not lead to qualifications, teachers do not assess accurately enough learners' prior knowledge and experience. They subsequently do not record in sufficient detail the progress that learners make and, in a minority of cases, do not set challenging enough learning goals. Managers have identified this as an area for improvement in their own evaluation of the provision, and their actions to bring about improvements, while not yet evident on all courses, are beginning to have a positive impact.
- Learners comment very positively on the extent to which their participation in courses has improved their health and well-being. Teachers also place a strong emphasis on raising learners' understanding of safeguarding. For example, in family learning parents learn about the actions they can take to keep their children safe in public buildings and outdoor spaces.

Apprenticeships

are good

- Managers have well-established and strong partnerships with a range of high quality employers; they respond well to the needs of employers and ensure that the apprenticeship frameworks help reduce local skills shortages. For example, managers have recently started working with the Smithfield Market Tenants' Association to recruit apprentices to train as butchers, and they work closely with employers in the financial sector to train advanced level apprenticeships in accountancy and procurement.
- Managers have a rigorous process for vetting employers prior to apprentices beginning their training. This ensures that most apprentices are supported well in their jobs and that the working environment is suitable for them to achieve their qualifications.
- Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic and teach interesting and well-planned activities which help apprentices to become better employees. Most apprentices make good progress and practise useful vocational skills, including making presentations to colleagues, researching and evaluating written texts and giving verbal feedback to their peers. Apprentices work well with each other and with their teachers and a culture of respect helps them to feel safe and to contribute freely to discussions.
- Teachers provide useful feedback to apprentices on their work and check apprentices' written work closely for spelling and grammatical errors. For example, when apprentices make presentations using presentation software they receive praise for their achievements and effective guidance on how they could improve.

- During reviews of apprentices' progress, teachers focus well on pacing apprentices to complete the various components of their apprenticeship frameworks and as a result, most apprentices are on track to achieve their qualification in the planned time. A few apprentices are on programmes that are at a level that is too low given their prior attainment and this does not provide them with sufficient challenge. Teachers and employers do not do enough to ensure these learners make good progress given their starting points.
- In a small minority of cases, employers are insufficiently involved with apprentices' on-the-job training. As a result, in these cases apprentices' supervisors are not sufficiently informed about how they should contribute to and support their employee to achieve their qualifications or extend their knowledge.
- Staff provide apprentices with effective training to help develop their knowledge and understanding of contemporary issues and to prepare them to integrate into modern society. They work closely with the City of London police to highlight in an innovative way the threats posed by radicalisation and extremist ideology and teachers follow this up well with apprentices during reviews.

Provider details

Type of provider	Local authority
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	941
Principal/CEO	Mrs Barbara Hamilton
Website address	www.cityoflondon.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+
	0	508	0	65	0	0	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	16	16	15	14	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14–16	0							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	■ College of Animal Welfare							
	■ Hackney Community College							
	■ Havering College of Further and Higher Education							
	■ Just It							
	■ Westminster Kingsway College							

Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Rieks Drijver, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jon Bowman	Her Majesty's Inspector
Haifa Abdul Amir	Ofsted Inspector
Robert Mottram	Ofsted Inspector

The above team was assisted by the head of adult skills and education, 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.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



Learner View is a website where learners can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other learners think about them too.

To find out more go to www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk



Employer View is a new website where employers can tell Ofsted what they think about their employees' college or provider. They can also see what other employers think about them too.

To find out more go to www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2016

