

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



10 October 2016

Mr Thomas Molloy
Principal
Community Learning Milton Keynes
Rivers Centre
Trent Road
Bletchley
Milton Keynes
MK3 7BB

Dear Mr Molloy

Short inspection of Community Learning Milton Keynes

Following the short inspection on 27–28 September 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in November 2012.

This provider continues to be good.

Senior leaders have retained a good focus on sustaining and improving the quality of Community Learning Milton Keynes (CLMK) during a recent period of organisational change. They set high expectations and have ensured that CLMK leaders and managers have the capability and capacity to sustain and enhance the quality of the provision. They also ensure that CLMK managers play key roles in local employment, skills and community partnerships to ensure that the provision continues to reflect the needs of local communities and employers well.

Managers have made good progress in addressing the areas identified as requiring improvement at the last inspection. Learners' achievement rates are high in most subject areas. In just two subject areas, achievement rates are slightly below those achieved by providers nationally. The large majority of teaching, learning and assessment are now good and a small minority is either outstanding or requiring improvement. Managers have ensured that there are effective processes in place to share good practice systematically. Curriculum development organisers (CDOs) hold regular meetings with their tutors which include the sharing of good practice which they have identified during effective annual lesson observations. The vice-principal chairs monthly meetings of the CDOs which are increasingly focusing on sharing good practice across curriculum areas.

Safeguarding is effective.

- Arrangements to ensure the safety of learners remain effective. Safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty policies fit well with the broader local authority policies and have been adapted well to meet the needs of learners. Managers carry out appropriate checks on all teaching staff and ensure that they receive relevant training. Designated safeguarding officers manage any concerns expressed by learners well and keep detailed records of the actions taken.
- Learners receive effective training and information about the 'Prevent' duty and about British values, but not all tutors do this well during the early stages of courses. Learners' basic understanding of British values also needs to be further reinforced by tutors during courses. Learners have an awareness of how to stay safe while online but a small minority of adult learners cannot remember tutors raising their awareness during the early stages of their current courses.

Inspection findings

- Senior leaders have a strong focus on working with partners to meet the needs of Milton Keynes' communities and employers. Adult learning accounts for the vast majority of the provision but a small number of young people have also benefited from well-managed traineeship and apprenticeship programmes. A very recently introduced level 2 study programme, aimed at preparing young people for employment, has a focus on customer service and a well-planned curriculum. These programmes provide good opportunities for young people, including children looked after and care leavers, which are difficult to find with other local providers.
- Leaders and managers understand the quality of CLMK learning programmes very well. Their self-assessment identifies the strengths of the provision and virtually all the areas identified by inspectors as requiring improvement. Quality assurance processes work well and extend to the partners who provide key elements of the traineeship programmes.
- Learners enjoy their courses and are proud of their progress and success. Managers gather, analyse and respond to learners' views and have a good understanding of satisfaction levels. The vast majority of comments from learners are positive and managers react quickly to any expressions of concern or dissatisfaction.
- Learners make good progress on courses that lead to qualifications and those that do not. This progress is measured against carefully identified starting points. Tutors agree targets for learners to achieve and regularly review the progress learners are making towards these targets. However, many of the targets they set are insufficiently detailed, for example, 'learn how to sew'. Tutors also focus on the requirements of the course and do not yet routinely identify targets to help learners improve their English and mathematics, or to support their broader personal development.

- The training that managers arranged to help tutors embed the development of learners' English and mathematical skills more effectively has had significant positive impact. Tutors take every opportunity to help learners improve their English skills across the full range of courses. This includes helpful feedback on any spelling, punctuation or grammatical errors in written work and ensuring that learners know how to use and spell any subject-related terms that may be new to them. A minority of vocational tutors, however, are not yet sufficiently skilled in helping learners improve their mathematical skills.
- Apprentices benefit from frequent visits by an experienced and well-qualified assessor and a good range of off-the-job training. The visits include helpful reviews of progress, tuition to improve skills and knowledge and in providing the right evidence, and observations of performance. The traineeship programmes are delivered through well-managed partnerships with subcontractors and have a strong focus on employability, work experience and developing English and mathematical skills at the appropriate level for each learner.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and managers should ensure that:

- tutors enable learners to gain a more consistently good understanding of British values so that they are more confident in their understanding of the importance of these values in a democratic society
- tutors highlight the potential risks associated with online learning at the earliest opportunity during courses
- all tutors set sufficiently detailed targets with their learners to enable them to make even better progress and to recognise the full range of new skills and knowledge that they are gaining during community learning courses
- the small minority of vocational tutors who do not yet help learners develop their mathematical skills sufficiently, are supported to adopt the good practice observed in the majority of lessons.

I am copying this letter to the Skills Funding Agency and the Education Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Mark Shackleton
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Ofsted Inspectors were assisted by you and the deputy principal. We met with you, members of your senior management team, managers, tutors and learners. We scrutinised key strategic and policy documents, including those relating to quality assurance, safeguarding and the performance of CLMK learning programmes. We analysed data on learners' achievements and progress relative to their starting points. We also analysed feedback from learners.