

Adult College of Barking and Dagenham

Local authority

Inspection dates

6–9 December 2016

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

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- A high proportion of learners achieve their qualifications and/or personal learning goals as a result of well-planned and implemented teaching, learning and assessment.
- Learners are supported well by staff at all stages of their recruitment and while they are on their courses.
- Staff motivate learners well and, as a consequence, learners have high aspirations and are ambitious for what they can achieve as a result of their learning.
- Teachers and assessors use their subject and vocational knowledge very well to motivate and enthuse learners in lessons and training sessions.
- Governors are effective in supporting senior leaders to maintain the quality and effectiveness of the provision.
- Learners feel safe at the college and in the workplace. They know how to keep themselves safe online and when at work.
- The curriculum meets local priorities well, helping learners to develop new skills, improve their health and well-being, combat social isolation and improve their prospects of sustained employment.
- Assessors involve employers well in the planning for and training of apprentices, ensuring that apprentices develop the specific skills that their employers require.
- Not enough learners on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses achieve their qualifications.
- Too few learners on GCSE English, mathematics and science courses achieve grades A* to C.

Full report

Information about the provider

- The Adult College of Barking and Dagenham is maintained by the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham. The college operates from two main sites in the borough and from several school and community venues. The college offers a range of qualification- and non-qualification-based courses from pre-entry level to level 3. The vast majority of the provision is in English, mathematics and ESOL. The college also offers apprenticeships in health and social care, supporting teaching and learning, and business administration.
- There are significant areas of deprivation within the borough, with a higher than the London average of the population having poor health and claiming health-related benefits. The proportion of the population who are not in education, employment or training is higher than the rate for London, as is the rate for unemployment overall. Life expectancy of females in the borough is about 10 years lower than the London average.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of students who achieve ESOL qualifications by improving the teaching and learning of reading and writing skills.
- Improve the proportion of students who achieve A* to C grades in GCSE qualifications by ensuring that tutors identify the specific skills that students have yet to master and help them to develop these skills to a high standard.
- Train observers to identify accurately the strengths and areas for improvement in lessons, to enable tutors and their managers to develop precise actions plans for improvement, setting challenging timescales for their achievement.
- Develop further systems for collecting and analysing the destinations of students and apprentices, to enable managers to evaluate the effectiveness of the provision in meeting local and regional skills needs and shortages.
- Develop the skills of teachers to ensure that students and apprentices, particularly the most able, maximise their rate of progress and fulfil their potential.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Governors and senior leaders have set a clear strategic vision and direction for the adult college and maintained successfully the quality of the provision during a particularly challenging period since the previous inspection in 2013; this has included several restructures of management and staffing, the closure of the main college site and relocation to two new sites in Barking and Dagenham.
- The different learning programmes have a clear rationale and provide very appropriate opportunities for students and apprentices, who have not recently participated in education and training or do not have the qualifications that they need to get jobs.
- Staff have established strong partnerships, particularly with the statutory and voluntary sectors. They use these well to ensure that the provision meets national and local priorities and local employment opportunities. Effective collaboration with a range of specialist organisations, such as a local women's centre, has led to the development of a good range of introductory courses for women based on employability, health and well-being, and English, mathematics and ESOL.
- Managers' use of accurate data to monitor and improve the quality of the provision has improved markedly. Governors and senior managers now receive frequent reports on the performance of different groups of learners. There are no notable differences in the performance of different groups of learners.
- Leaders' strategy to improve learners' English and mathematics, and ensure that they improve their skills and employment prospects, is effective. Current learners are making good progress in developing these skills, and gaining qualifications in these subjects, as a result of skilled teaching and relevant staff training.
- Learners benefit from good advice and guidance prior to enrolling on their chosen courses and very few learners leave their course early. They have good access to on-site impartial careers guidance, which supports them to make well-informed choices about their next steps in education, training or employment.
- Governors and staff have successfully established a harmonious and positive culture and learning environment. They work with learners to prevent any form of discriminatory behaviour. They promote fundamental British values actively and well, using examples from current media stories and activities from local communities to stimulate discussion and debate. For example, learners in an ESOL class discussed different Christmas traditions and, as a result, learned about how this festival is celebrated in different countries.
- Governors, college leaders and staff have worked effectively to ensure that the vast majority of learners are on courses that are taught well. However, the current observation of the teaching and learning process is not sufficiently rigorous or accurate enough to identify, secure and sustain further improvements. Observers do not identify clear enough judgements to justify the grades awarded, which at times are over-generous, and action planning is not sufficiently thorough. This results in over-optimistic judgements about the quality of teaching and learning in the most recent self-assessment report.
- Managers are not able to provide a clear enough analysis of the benefits learners gain

from their courses, because they do not gather sufficient information on whether learners have moved on to other learning, training or employment on completion of their course.

The governance of the provider

- Governors continue to be well led by an able and highly experienced chair of governors and governance continues to be strong. The board of governors have a breadth of relevant knowledge and expertise and they ensure that college leaders are fully accountable for the performance of the college.
- Governors are well informed about most of the provision by senior leaders and provide good levels of challenge when performance does not improve rapidly enough. They also act as very effective advocates for adult learning and learners in the local community and in the local authority.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The designated safeguarding officer investigates and records appropriately any safeguarding incidents and makes good use of well-established links with the council's adult safeguarding team and local support services. Learners feel safe and are clear about how to report any concerns.
- Staff pay good attention to learners' health and safety, including e-safety. Governors and staff have received training in how to protect learners from radicalisation and extremism; current learners have a basic understanding of these issues.
- Managers make appropriate checks on new staff when recruiting them and all members of staff have had the necessary checks on their suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Tutors set high standards for learners. They ensure respectful behaviour, good-quality work and a commitment to learning. Learners respond well and work hard in lessons and in training sessions, developing their skills and building personal skills, social skills and skills for future employment.
- Learners work well together and teachers use discussions and group activities effectively to develop team-working, and speaking and listening skills. Tutors and students routinely use the college virtual learning environment (VLE) to download activities, receive feedback on completed work and access additional links to websites to encourage independent study and further research.
- Learners make good progress in their studies and most tutors and assessors monitor learners' skills development and understanding well. Most tutors and assessors provide effective oral feedback to learners on how to improve and develop their skills further. Tutors in English and vocational courses provide detailed written constructive feedback, which students use to help them improve. However, a minority of tutors do not correct spelling and grammar errors routinely on students' work and a few tutors are not sufficiently precise in their own use of English.
- Tutors assess accurately the abilities of every learner when they start their course and

use this well to ensure that they are placed on the right course and level. In the majority of lessons, tutors make effective use of this information to ensure that tasks and activities help learners make good progress. However, in a minority of lessons, tutors set work that is insufficiently demanding for the most able learners.

- Tutors and assessors use a wide range of approaches to make lessons and training interesting, to maintain learners' interest and enthusiasm on the topics taught, build their confidence and assess effectively their knowledge and understanding. Most tutors are skilled at keeping a good pace in lessons to motivate and stimulate learners and help them make good progress.
- Tutors, support staff and assessors have good knowledge, experience and expertise of their subject and industry, which they use well to help learners develop relevant practical skills, skills for employment and their use of English. Most tutors are skilful at using everyday situations to develop learners' spoken and written English skills, and ensure that learners understand and use technical language correctly in lessons and in the workplace. Tutors are less adept at developing learners' skills in mathematics in vocational lessons.
- Learners benefit from good and effective support in and out of lessons, and short, focused workshops. These enable those who need extra help to achieve as well as their peers. Staff work successfully with learners, particularly those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to review the support they need and agree reductions and withdrawal of support when learners have developed the necessary skills and confidence to work independently.
- Tutors help learners develop their understanding of British values well through discussions linked to current events and the use of relevant and vibrant displays across the college sites. Students are developing a good understanding of daily life, education, health and the world of work. Those who are on the volunteer programme, working in local cafés, on community projects and in the college reception, develop these skills very well.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Students' attendance at lessons is very good, with the vast majority of them attending frequently and on time. They understand well the importance of good attendance and how this relates to their skills for work.
- Students develop good levels of confidence, personal and social skills, such as communication, awareness of others' feelings, understanding of being safe and combating social isolation. They are respectful and polite to each other both in class and across all areas of the college sites.
- Students, particularly those who have low levels of prior achievement in English and mathematics, or those who do not have English as a first language, make good progress with these skills, which helps them in their daily lives with tasks such as helping their children with their homework or applying for jobs.
- Students are prepared well for employment, with opportunities to access work placements through training and volunteering in the community. For example, students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities volunteer in local cafés and football clubs, which helps develop their confidence and social skills well.
- Apprentices are well prepared for work, are highly motivated and value their learning.

They demonstrate positive attitudes towards learning and have a strong sense of purpose at work. They are well informed about their options for their next step and can identify courses that are well matched to their aspirations. Prior to completing their training, they receive good information, advice and guidance from staff to help them succeed in moving on to the next level of apprenticeship or into sustained employment.

- Students and apprentices feel safe, both at college and in the workplace, and have a good understanding of how they can access help or guidance if they do not feel safe. They know how to keep themselves safe from the dangers of extremism and radicalisation.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- A high proportion of students on qualification-based courses achieved their qualifications in 2015/16. Although this declined from a very high level in the previous two years, managers are aware of the issues and have appropriate plans in place to improve the underperforming courses in the current year.
- Most students on courses that do not lead to qualifications achieve their course objectives and personal learning goals. A high proportion of these students move on to further learning, such as a qualification-based course, or to other positive destinations or end points, including improvements to their daily lives and greater independence.
- A very high proportion of apprentices achieve their qualifications in the planned timescale. They make very good contributions to their employers' businesses and organisations. As a result of achieving an intermediate-level apprenticeship, an increasing proportion of apprentices are moving on to advanced-level apprenticeships.
- Students studying for English and mathematics qualifications achieve these at a high rate. Students who return to learning to study for GCSE qualifications in English, mathematics and science make good progress with developing their knowledge and skills and the majority achieve their qualifications, although not enough students, most of whom are attempting these qualifications for the first time, achieve these at grades A* to C.
- Students in the current year are making good progress with their courses, achieving personal learning goals and enjoying their time at college. They use qualification-based courses to enhance their chances of gaining employment and improving their daily and family lives.
- The standards of students' and apprentices' work are high. They produce good-quality written work and, on vocational courses, they develop good practical skills.

Types of provision

Adult learning programmes

Good

- Adult learning programmes make up the majority of the provision, with around 1300 enrolments in the current year, of which the vast majority are in English, mathematics and ESOL. About a fifth of the students study vocational courses in subjects which include information and communication technology, science, and arts and crafts.
- Tutors in all subjects have high expectations of their students and set them clear goals,

which they understand and they know the intended impact on their learning and daily lives. For example, in family learning lessons, students identify the positive impact of their learning on the education of their children as well as their own skills development.

- Most students, especially those on English, mathematics and vocational courses, make very good progress and are achieving their personal and learning goals as a result of skilful teaching and teachers' frequent checks on their learning and progress. For example, on childcare and supporting teaching and learning courses, teachers are diligent in assessing the evidence students produce; they identify areas for development which students use to help them improve and make better progress.
- Students on courses which do not lead to a qualification agree personal learning goals for their course, in addition to the course objectives, with their teachers. They use the goals well to inform the progress they need to make over the duration of the course. The vast majority of students achieve these goals as a result of good teaching, but in a small minority of cases, teachers do not involve students in the review of their progress. Students on these courses, which include modern foreign languages, have their learning checked frequently by their teachers, using a wide range of methods, such as quizzes, which students enjoy. This encourages them to use the VLE between lessons to do further work and improve how much progress they make in lessons.
- Teachers assess students' learning needs accurately at the start of their course, using this information to ensure that students are on the right subject and level of course. Teachers use this information effectively to plan and teach lessons that enable most students to make good progress towards achieving their personal and learning goals. Teachers in most subjects review students' progress towards achieving their goals very well, but on ESOL courses, reviews are not always done in enough time to allow students to improve their writing skills quickly enough.
- Students' development of their speaking and listening skills on ESOL courses is good; teachers encourage students to share ideas in presentations and paired activities, which they do with confidence. They frequently compare different cultural practices in these activities, which helps students to develop a greater understanding of the diverse communities in which they live and work.

Apprenticeships

Good

- The college has 43 apprentices, the majority of whom are on intermediate level qualifications. They offer apprenticeships in business administration, health and social care, and supporting teaching and learning.
- Employers work productively with assessors to ensure that apprentices benefit from well-planned, individualised training that matches their future career goals. This ensures that apprentices are equipped with the knowledge and skills they need to achieve their qualifications and move on to higher levels of learning or into employment. For example, one employer uses a 'red, amber and green' audit skills analysis to identify skills gaps of business administration apprentices. The results of the analysis are then used to plan training in the workplace.
- Employers work well with college staff to support apprentices in selecting units of the apprenticeship programme that are most relevant to their job role and to their future goals. Assessors plan on- and off-the-job training well and apprentices are able to

explain, with practical examples, how their classroom training complements their workplace training.

- Apprenticeship staff have established productive and successful relationships with employers. Employers speak highly of the quality of the apprentices they are able to recruit through the college and are very positive of the apprenticeship programme. One employer said, 'if we didn't have the scheme, we'd be a poorer place'. The apprenticeship training offered meets local skills needs and helps to raise employment prospects for the local community, and raise the aspirations of apprentices.
- Most apprentices complete their qualification within the planned timescale and move on to higher levels of apprenticeships or into permanent employment. Employers and assessors promote potential progression routes to apprentices very well. This helps to raise apprentices' aspirations, their ambitions and helps them to stay motivated, both at work and at college. A small minority of apprentices have moved on to higher education as a result of the skills, knowledge, confidence and aspiration that completing their apprenticeship has given them.
- In addition to developing vocational knowledge and skills, apprentices develop important personal and work-related skills, such as team-working skills and being able to work confidently with other staff, or in a few cases, with the public. Apprentices training in specialised areas, such as specialist schools or who are based in the legal department of the local authority, benefit well from additional training offered by their employer to all employees. For example, this includes training in tube feeding for apprentices working with severely disabled children, and court visits for apprentices working in the legal department who learn, through observation, how the court system works.
- Employers play an active part in reviewing the progress of their apprentices with assessors. Additionally, they organise one-to-one supervision sessions with apprentices. During these sessions, they provide apprentices with constructive feedback about the quality of their work and, where relevant, provide feedback about apprentices' attitudes, disposition and personal skills at work. Apprentices value this feedback and are able to give specific examples of how their skills have improved as a result of the feedback they have received. One apprentice talks of how feedback has helped her to become more confident in speaking to senior staff within her department.
- Apprentices know what they need to do to improve. They receive constructive oral feedback about their progress from tutors, assessors and from employers frequently. Most reviews focus on completion of tasks and units rather than learning targets. Consequently, the most able apprentices do not always make the rapid progress of which they are capable.
- Assessors give apprentices constructive feedback about the subject content of written assignments. However, they do not pay enough attention to helping apprentices improve the quality of their writing, including their spelling, punctuation and use of grammar.
- Assessors introduce apprentices to the topics of equality and diversity well during their induction programmes at college and with their respective employers. However, they do not do enough to ensure that apprentices understand their rights and responsibilities that relate to equality of opportunity and understanding diversity in the workplace.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53100
Type of provider	Local authority
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1,548
Principal/CEO	Patricia Pearson
Telephone number	020 8270 4722
Website	www.adultcollege.lbbd.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 or above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	0	1006	0	296	0	23	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	10	22	3	8	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	0							
Funding received from:	Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	None							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the quality 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 learners 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.

Inspection team

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Priscilla McGuire	Ofsted Inspector

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