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Mr Mark Rhodes
Quality Manager
Brent Adult and Community Education Service
1 Morland Gardens
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Dear Mr Rhodes

Short inspection of Brent Adult and Community Education Service (known as Brent Start)

Following the short inspection on 21 and 22 March 2017, 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 March 2012.

This provider continues to be good.

You and your team have continued to work effectively to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, ensuring that a high and increasing proportion of learners achieve their qualifications and/or personal learning goals each year. A very high proportion of learners either move on to positive destinations, which include courses at a higher level and employment, or report significant gains in their confidence, self-esteem, literacy, numeracy or parenting skills.

In the few subjects such as business, where managers have been unable to improve the quality of the provision, they have taken the decision to remove these courses and, using their good range of partnerships, ensure that learners are able to enrol onto these courses with other providers.

Leaders and managers are aware of what needs to be improved within the provision and their plans for improvement are well developed and appropriate. In most cases, their actions are having a positive impact on learners' experience.

Safeguarding is effective.

Managers ensure that teachers are trained in safeguarding and know the signs and indicators that a learner may be in danger or in need of help. Teachers are good at spotting these signs and referring learners to designated safeguarding staff for help

and guidance. The designated safeguarding lead manager (DSL) for the service has a very thorough understanding of the potential issues and challenges to learners' safety and well-being that they may encounter locally. He uses this understanding effectively to ensure that staff are kept well informed.

Where safeguarding incidents do occur, the DSL investigates and records these thoroughly, using external agencies and support services well to ensure that learners get the help, guidance and support they need.

When recruiting new teachers and support staff to the service, managers follow appropriate procedures to ensure that applicants are suitable people to work with adult learners, and are skilled and qualified to teach their subject.

Recent training for staff on how to keep learners safe from the dangers of extremism and radicalisation has been effective. Consequently, learners are able to identify well how they can keep themselves and their families safe from these dangers.

Inspection findings

- Most learners on courses which lead to qualifications are making at least good progress towards achieving these. Learners are very confident about how achieving their qualifications will help improve their chances of getting a job, either on completion of their current course or after completing a further course at a higher level. For example, learners studying for functional skills mathematics at level 2 were able to describe the importance of gaining this qualification to help them get jobs as teaching assistants or as volunteers for a local charity which supports children with their English and mathematics development.
- Most teaching, learning and assessment help learners to develop skills and knowledge for their subject well. Teachers teach lessons that learners find interesting and motivating, and they have high rates of attendance at lessons as a result. Teachers use a wide range of methods to enable learners to develop further. Most teachers check how much learners have learned in lessons and plan future lessons using this information effectively. Learners, such as those on level 1 courses in early years, produce high standards of work. However, learners, particularly those on non-vocational courses, do not use the online and paper-based resources available to them well enough outside of lessons to improve their rate of progress.
- Managers have used the lesson observation process effectively to ensure that teachers continue to improve their skills and make lessons productive and motivating for learners. However, a minority of teachers are not clear how to make the improvements identified by observers, who do not give further guidance or set actions for teachers.
- Teachers give learners very good oral feedback on their work and skills development, making it clear how they can improve further. Teachers assess learners' written work accurately, but the most able learners do not always know

well enough how to make the improvements they need to, as teachers do not give them sufficiently precise feedback. Consequently, they do not always make the rapid progress of which they are capable.

- Most learners on courses that do not lead to qualifications achieve their course objectives and personal learning goals. They make substantial improvements to their skills in English, mathematics or for work, such as confidence and timekeeping, or they improve their parenting skills. However, a small minority of learners do not make more rapid progress as teachers do not review learners' progress frequently enough during their course. Female learners on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses use their improved skills in speaking English to improve the quality of their daily lives, such as being able to telephone their doctor's surgery to make an appointment.
- Learners understand British values very well. Teachers use their training in these values very effectively in the classroom to help learners develop their understanding. Learners, from a very diverse range of backgrounds and cultures, exhibit the British values of tolerance and respect in lessons; they work together in group tasks, show respect for each other's opinions and discuss differing views and opinions with confidence. For example, following a discussion about the role of parliament in law-making in Britain, ESOL learners were able to talk about how much better they understood recent news articles about the role of parliament in British life.
- Leaders have worked effectively to ensure that the courses offered by the service meet the needs of the local communities and the skills needs of local employers. Managers work well with council officers, local community groups, housing associations and local colleges and training providers to ensure that the courses offered are relevant to local needs, provide learners with opportunities to move on to more substantial learning and are offered in a range of venues to enable learners to attend easily. Managers collect and analyse data on learners' destinations when they leave and several months later to evaluate the impact and effectiveness of the provision.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers review learners' progress towards achieving their learning goals and personal development targets frequently during the course and at the end
- a small minority of teachers, particularly those who teach on courses that do not lead to qualifications, receive further training and coaching to enable them to plan and teach lessons, and provide feedback that enables learners to make the full and rapid progress of which they are capable
- managers, following their observations of lessons, make it clear how teachers can make further improvements to their practice.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Pemble
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

The inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Ofsted Inspectors. We were assisted by the quality manager as nominee. We visited three main sites and several community venues to observe teaching, learning and assessments and to look at learners' work. We met with learners, governors, senior leaders, managers and teachers. We reviewed key documents, including the service's most recent self-assessment report and development plans and documents related to safeguarding. We also analysed data on the performance of learners currently on programmes and considered the views of learners, staff and leaders.