

# Nacro

Community learning and skills provider

## Inspection dates

9–12 May 2017

Overall effectiveness		Requires improvement	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>	16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>	Adult learning programmes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>	Apprenticeships	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Outcomes for learners	<b>Requires improvement</b>		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings

### This is a provider that requires improvement

- Too few learners on 16 to 19 study programmes achieve their qualification.
- Managers have not designed 16 to 19 study programmes with sufficient consideration of the personal circumstances that often prevent learners from being able to maintain a commitment to year-long study programmes; as a result, too many learners do not complete their programme.
- Management of the quality of subcontractor partners is ineffective. The achievement of learners and apprentices who study with subcontractor partners is low.
- Managers have not ensured that learners on 16 to 19 study programmes have sufficient opportunity to benefit from external work experience. As a result, too few learners put the skills they acquire on their course into practice within the workplace.
- Teachers and assessors do not make good enough use of results from their assessment of apprentices and study programme learners' skills and abilities when joining a programme, to provide sufficiently challenging learning.

### The provider has the following strengths

- Learners benefit from a very wide range of specialist help from Nacro staff and those of their partner organisations. This enables many learners to re-engage with their learning.
- The proportion of adults and apprentices who achieve their qualification is high.
- Learners develop in confidence and self-esteem, and have high aspirations for what they can achieve in their learning and personal lives.
- Adult learners develop good communication skills and the practical vocational skills that make them employable.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- Nacro is a national social justice charity which provides education, housing, offender management and substance treatment services across England and Wales. A council of trustees has oversight of the charity's work, and the chief executive officer devolves the management of education and training to the director of education and skills. Learning centres and subcontractors across the country provide 16 to 19 study programmes, apprenticeships and adult learning programmes. Most learners are on 16 to 19 study programmes; very many come from backgrounds where their learning has been disrupted or was limited.
- In 2015, Nacro acquired the provision and took over the management of education and training at Totton College, and in 2016, the management of education within the secure estate at Medway Secure Training Centre. Neither provision is within the scope of this inspection.

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Managers must continue rapidly with their plans to:
  - provide a curriculum for learners on 16 to 19 study programmes that takes into account the wide range of learners' skills and abilities and is of a suitable length and level of learning to enable learners to attend and succeed
  - ensure that all learners on 16 to 19 study programmes who would benefit from external work experience do so.
- Managers need to work more closely with teachers and assessors to ensure that:
  - teaching, learning and assessment are of a consistently high standard
  - teachers and assessors use the assessment results of learners' and apprentices' skills and abilities effectively to plan individual learning that is stimulating and demanding.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have not sustained the good standard of teaching, learning and assessment; the proportion of learners on study programmes who complete their qualification remains too low. Managers have not ensured that enough learners on study programmes gain the experiences they need to put their vocational learning into practice or refine and improve their work-related skills.
- Under the leadership of the recently appointed director of education and skills, the management team has taken action to secure the improvements required, including those identified at the previous inspection. However, it is too soon to judge fully the impact on current learners' progress.
- Curriculum management on study programmes is weak. Managers have not provided a curriculum for learners that takes account of the wide range of learners' starting points and broader social or personal circumstances that often negatively affect their attendance and commitment to learning. Current programmes do not adequately meet learners' individual learning requirements because their complicated and challenging personal circumstances often prevent them from being able to sustain their commitment to a year-long programme.
- Management of subcontractor partners is ineffective. For example, apprentices studying with subcontractor partners do not achieve as well as their peers because managers do not hold partners to account when apprentices fall behind in their learning, or focus closely enough on the progress apprentices make towards completing their qualification. On study programmes, managers have not ensured that learners who study with their largest subcontractor are on the most appropriate level of English and mathematics qualifications. As a result, while learners are making good progress toward completing the vocational aspect of their programme, they make poor progress in developing the skills necessary to pass their external examinations.
- Leaders' and managers' evaluation of the quality of provision is insufficiently rigorous. Managers do not focus closely enough on the reasons behind learners' continued low achievement and low attendance on the study programme. Resulting action plans have not secured sufficiently rapid improvement.
- The commitment of trustees, managers and staff to ensuring that vulnerable learners from all backgrounds and beliefs access learning is very good. Groups of people often on the margins of society, for example those with a history of offending or substance misuse and those with refugee status, constitute a high proportion of learners. Staff at all levels ensure that they protect learners effectively from potential bullying, harassment and discrimination.
- Senior leaders and managers ensure that learners benefit from the strong partnership arrangements that exist at a national and local level, for example the well-planned routes into learning that exist between the housing, social justice and health divisions at Nacro. In addition, centre managers work closely and productively with employment referral centres, local charities and the youth offending services to provide the widest possible opportunity for learners to restart their learning.

- Managers' oversight of teaching, learning and assessment is detailed, but their resulting judgements on these areas are overly positive. They fail to recognise that the quality of teaching varies too much between centres and across the different programme areas, and that the quality of much teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good.

### **The governance of the provider**

- Trustees are highly skilled and have the relevant experience and understanding of education and training; they provide appropriate challenge to senior leaders. However, they agree that their focus has been on securing the long-term financial viability of learning centres to the detriment of their focus on the quality of learners' experiences.
- Leaders' and managers' reports to trustees are detailed and comprehensive. However, trustees have not recognised sufficiently that managers' assessment of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is overgenerous when compared to the decline in the proportion of learners who achieve their qualification on study programmes. Trustees have not identified that apprentices and learners studying with subcontractor partners have low achievement.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders, managers and staff at all levels place learners' safety as a high priority and recognise that most learners are extremely vulnerable, requiring extra vigilance to ensure their safety and well-being. Suitably trained managers and staff respond rapidly and appropriately to any concerns learners raise. Learners are knowledgeable about all aspects of keeping themselves safe, including the risks associated with social media and working online.
- Senior leaders have met their obligations under the 'Prevent' duty effectively. Managers have developed good working relationships with relevant agencies and use these well to protect learners from those who promote extreme ideological views. Managers and staff have a very good overview of the wide-ranging personal and social challenges to their well-being that most learners experience. Managers coordinate the work of external agencies and other staff very effectively to provide rapid and sustained help to learners.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment on study programmes and apprenticeships requires improvement. Teachers' and assessors' practice varies too much and fails to ensure that learners receive a consistently high standard of learning across different programmes, at Nacro's various centres, and in apprenticeship training. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment on adult programmes is mostly good.
- Teachers often do not plan lessons well enough on study programmes to provide demanding tasks and activities for learners. Many teachers are not sufficiently skilled in eliciting a deep understanding of the theory behind the practical activities that learners undertake. Assessors do not set challenging practical work for those learners with prior practical skills and experience.

- On occasion, teachers do not ensure that learners participate equally well in group discussions and group work. In a minority of lessons, teachers allow the vocal minority to dominate at the expense of those learners who are quiet or shy.
- On apprenticeship programmes, the pace of learning is too slow. Assessors do not work closely enough with teachers to plan meaningful learning that relates well to the ongoing training provided by employers in the workplace. For example, tasks and activities set by teachers in lessons do not meet the exacting standards demanded by employers. Often, teachers do not set appropriate and relevant timescales for apprentices to complete practical activities. As a result, too few apprentices develop good practical skills.
- Managers recognise that the information and communication technology (ICT) in a minority of centres does not reflect the standards expected in the workplace, and that teachers' use of ICT to extend and enhance teaching, learning and assessment is often underdeveloped.
- On adult programmes, much teaching, learning and assessment has a clear focus on preparing learners effectively for the world of work. For example, learners prepare thoroughly for their upcoming job interviews through role-play activities, and they improve their writing skills through producing polished letters of introduction and gain employment as a result.
- Learners on adult programmes and study programmes develop good practical skills. For example, learners on hairdressing programmes are able to cut fashion styles with precision and flair, and learners on retail programmes use their improved communication skills to deal effectively with customer enquiries. Teachers use their good vocational knowledge and experience to enthuse and motivate learners, and relate learning well to the workplace.
- The additional help provided for those learners with more complex learning requirements is good. Staff provide help in and outside of lessons sensitively and effectively. They ensure that learners make good progress in their studies and achieve their personal learning and development goals.
- Learners value their learning and appreciate staff and teachers treating them as equals. Many who have previously dropped out of learning flourish in the personal and inclusive learning environment of Nacro centres.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

- Many learners and apprentices who study at Nacro have significant social and personal difficulties, which have impeded their educational progress in the past. Managers and staff at all levels are very talented in establishing a secure and nurturing environment that inspires learners to raise their aspirations and aim high.
- Learners and apprentices grow in personal confidence and self-esteem because of their time at Nacro. They are enthusiastic to do well and succeed. Learners value highly the positive help and encouragement they receive from teachers and staff.
- Learners and apprentices, with the exception of the few who study with Nacro's main subcontractor partner, improve their skills in English and mathematics. Learners apply their skills well in class and in the workplace. Learners develop the confidence to speak at external events and in front of their peers; they are able to proofread their own work

accurately and write letters to relatives and friends because of their studies.

- Learners and apprentices understand well the risks associated with drug and alcohol misuse. In lessons, teachers frequently discuss and explore health and personal well-being and the dangers of potential substance misuse. For example, in a mathematics lesson, learners analysed the statistics pertaining to the impact of poor mental health upon employment and discussed appropriate strategies to help those with fragile mental health.
- Managers and staff have ensured that apprentices and learners have an effective understanding of British values and the potential risks associated with those who may hold extreme views. In lessons, they explore topics such as democracy, voting and the rule of law in a democratic society. Teachers and assessors ensure that learners and apprentices have sufficient opportunity to discuss and extend their knowledge.
- Learners and apprentices are generally understanding and respectful of one another's differences. They show tolerance towards those with cultural and religious differences, for example accommodating the fasting requirements of their peers observing Ramadan.
- Learners and apprentices feel safe and know what actions to take to keep themselves safe. They are very clear about to whom they should take any concerns they may have should they feel vulnerable or threatened.
- Managers work closely and well with employers to encourage them to take learners as employees and on work experience. They challenge employers' stereotypical views effectively regarding learners with an offending background or history of drug and substance misuse. Managers and staff ensure that the help they provide to employers enables learners to settle quickly into work. However, on study programmes, managers do not ensure that enough learners who would benefit from external work experience do so.
- Adult learners and those learners on study programmes benefit from effective careers advice and guidance. This enables most to make informed career choices. Learners understand clearly the requirements and expectations of employers and the various job opportunities available to them on completion of their studies. However, apprentices seldom benefit from ongoing careers advice and many are unclear of the career pathways available to them on completing their qualification.
- For many learners, who often have complex personal circumstances and a poor prior experience of education, their attendance is much improved and indicates an important step in their re-engagement with learning. However, too many learners on study programmes find a commitment to full-time learning over a full year of study a considerable challenge, and the attendance of these learners is often low and/or erratic.

### Outcomes for learners

### Requires improvement

- Too few learners on 16 to 19 study programmes achieved their qualifications in 2015/16. This was a decline on the previous year's slightly better achievement. However, for too many years, the proportion of learners who complete their qualification has remained low. Managers have appropriate plans in place to improve this long-term underperformance, and early indications suggest that, in this current academic year, more learners will complete their programme.

- At the previous inspection, learners from different backgrounds did not achieve equally well, and this remains the case. For example, children in care and those eligible for free school meals do well; however, apprentices who study with subcontractor partners, learners who have previously offended and male learners, who form the majority, do not achieve as well as their peers.
- The very small proportion of learners and apprentices who study with subcontractor partners have low achievement. Most learners on study programmes complete the vocational element of their studies; however, too few pass their external tests in English and mathematics or complete the study programme successfully.
- A relatively small proportion of learners continue into further training and/or employment on completing their studies. Until recently, managers did not monitor or evaluate whether learners secured work or further training within the subject areas they studied at Nacro. The proportion of apprentices who continue on to higher-level apprenticeship programmes is low.
- The proportion of apprentices who complete their qualification within the planned time is high. Current apprentices are developing effective practical skills and making expected progress in their learning. Many employers value significantly the contribution apprentices make to their business.
- The majority of current learners who study at Nacro are making the progress expected of them; adult learners make good progress. Learners enjoy their studies and, for very many, this is the first time they have remained in learning and achieved a qualification.
- Most learners on study programmes achieve their functional skills qualification in English and mathematics. Teachers focus appropriately and well on learners developing their skills, particularly their use of technical language and ability to do mental calculations.
- The achievement of adult learners is good. The majority complete their learning successfully and improve their chances of finding sustainable employment. Those learners on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programmes develop much-improved speaking and listening skills, enabling them to take a more active part within their local communities and apply for work with greater confidence.
- The majority of learners on adult programmes and 16 to 19 study programmes develop good practical skills, and the standard of their work is high. For example, on motor vehicle programmes, learners are able to replace the gearbox of an engine from an early stage in their learning, and in early years, learners are able to prepare simple, nutritious snacks for the children in their care.

## Types of provision

### 16 to 19 study programmes

### Requires improvement

- Study programmes constitute the majority of provision at Nacro. At the time of inspection, 725 learners aged 16 to 19 had enrolled on a wide range of courses at levels 1 to 3, with the majority on level 1 programmes. Most learners study vocational pathways in retail, motor vehicle, early years, hairdressing and construction.
- Too few learners benefit from the opportunities to practise their vocational learning within the workplace and improve their work-related skills. Managers have not planned



programmes of study to meet the broad range of learners' starting points or the personal circumstances that prevent many from remaining committed to their learning.

- Teachers do not ensure that learners make good progress because they do not plan and implement learning that is sufficiently demanding. In most lessons, learners work on the same tasks and activities and, consequently, the most able learners quickly complete their learning and do not develop their skills and knowledge further. Teachers do not set work beyond the requirements of the qualification or extend learning further.
- Learners do not extend the depth of their knowledge and understanding well enough because teachers do not take sufficient account of learners' starting points. Teachers do not use the information from assessment activities when learners start their programme to plan and implement effective learning.
- Learners develop good practical skills. For example, learners working towards early years qualifications understand how to communicate effectively with parents and carers in childcare settings.
- Most learners improve their skills in English and mathematics and make the progress expected of them. Teachers set tasks and activities that make learning relevant and fun, and expect learners to apply their skills accurately to their vocational learning, for example when working out the area of a wall to estimate the amount of paint required and then costing this out for the customer's invoice.
- Learners understand the progress they are making in their learning and what they need to do to improve further. Teachers provide clear and constructive feedback and are highly motivational in their praise and the extra help they give. Teachers monitor learners' progress carefully, maintaining detailed records of the small steps learners make towards completing their qualification.

## Adult learning programmes

**Good**

- Adult learning programmes make up a significant proportion of the provision at Nacro, with approximately 804 enrolments in the current year. The vast majority of adult learners enrol on programmes to develop skills for employment, with the remainder working towards mathematics, English, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), access to higher education and warehousing qualifications.
- Learners make good progress in their studies and for many learning is life-changing. Teachers plan learning carefully to ensure that learners meet their personal learning goals well, often setting additional work for learners to complete at home. For example, in an ESOL lesson, learners planned their journey from work and into the centre after learning about the various modes of transport available to them locally.
- Learners develop very good speaking and listening skills. On ESOL programmes, teachers model good spoken English and are careful to correct learners sensitively when they mispronounce words or phrases. Teachers ensure that learners enjoy their learning and develop good teamworking skills through working together in pairs and small groups to practise their reading and improve their use of English. Learners relish extending their vocabulary through completing crossword puzzles and word games. On access to higher education courses, learners learn how to correct their own work and that of their peers.
- Learners develop and enhance their existing mathematical skills. They develop effective



strategies to improve their mental calculations and know how to use a calculator to check that their answers are correct. Learners are able to use mathematics well to manage and improve their personal finances and their household budget efficiently.

- Opportunities for learners to take additional work-related qualifications are good and enhance their chances of securing employment on completion of their studies. For example, learners on warehousing programmes learn how to operate forklift trucks and achieve their licence as a result.
- Learners make a valuable contribution to their local communities by sharing their newly developed skills with others. Through taking part in competitions, charity events and targeted community work, they enhance the lives of others. For example, learners on art courses work with children in local schools to promote tolerance for people of different faiths and cultures; learners on hairdressing and beauty therapy programmes ensure that learners at local Job Centres are well groomed and professionally presented for job interviews.
- Careers information and ongoing careers advice and guidance are highly effective. Many learners who use the service benefit by taking their first steps into employment or by progressing their existing work into a more sustainable career. A small proportion of learners use the advice well to help them move into new areas of employment.
- The standard of learners' behaviour is good; learners show respect and tolerance for their teachers and peers. Learners are proud of the progress they are making towards improving their learning and their lifestyle.

## Apprenticeships

## Requires improvement

- Approximately 190 apprentices are working towards qualifications in motor vehicle, ICT, health and social care, hairdressing, beauty therapy and business administration at intermediate and advanced level. A small minority are working towards higher-level qualifications.
- Teachers and assessors do not have high enough expectations for what apprentices can achieve. Assessors do not use their knowledge of apprentices' existing technical skills, the range of duties they undertake when at work or their prior attainment to plan and provide learning that is stimulating and suitably demanding. As a result, apprentices all follow the same length of programme regardless of their starting points, make expected progress and develop effective skills.
- Too few apprentices receive good ongoing careers advice and guidance. Few apprentices understand the broad range of future jobs and career paths available to them on completing their qualifications. Too few progress into higher-level programmes.
- A significant minority of apprentices are unclear about how well they are progressing or do not know what skills they still need to develop to complete their training. Assessors do not encourage apprentices to monitor and track their own progress or do not involve apprentices and their employers sufficiently in managing their training. Too often, assessors provide insufficient opportunity for apprentices to develop their problem-solving skills.
- Managers' use of data to monitor apprentices' progress towards completing their

qualification is insufficient. They are not able to identify those apprentices who are making rapid progress or those who are falling behind in their studies. Managers rely too much on verbal feedback from assessors to assure themselves that apprentices are making good progress.

- Managers, teachers and assessors do not ensure that apprentices improve their existing skills in English and mathematics. Too few teachers and assessors plan learning and develop assessments effectively to develop apprentices' skills and knowledge further through lessons and in work based work-based assessments. Assessors do not routinely inform teachers of the job roles and activities apprentices are currently undertaking that would enable them to plan more appropriate job-related tasks in lessons.
- Apprentices develop a good understanding of health and safety while at work, and most develop good interpersonal skills that enhance the service they provide to their employers' clients. For example, a hairdressing apprentice dealt sensitively and discreetly with a client who requested a treatment that would negatively influence her medical condition. Beauty therapy apprentices demonstrate good practical skills while providing pedicures and manicures and understand how to give appropriate after-care advice to clients.
- Apprentices make expected progress in their studies and develop the skills and work behaviours anticipated by their employers. Assessors visit apprentices frequently to check on the progress they are making and provide appropriate personal help, particularly to those apprentices who lack confidence or have low self-esteem. Apprentices enjoy their learning and value the help they receive from their assessors.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	50170
Type of provider	Community learning and skills provider
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	2,742
CEO	Jacob Tas
Telephone number	0207 902 5426
Website	<a href="http://www.Nacro.org.uk">www.Nacro.org.uk</a>

## 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	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	564	94	152	17	3	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	48	39	35	52	-	16		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	6		6		12			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	7							
Funding received from:	Education and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Essential Learning Company Five E JT Development Training Northern Construction Training NXG Group Skills Training UK Workpays DA Training and Consultancy Limited							

## Information about this inspection

The director of education and skills, as nominee, assisted the inspection team. 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

Jules Steele, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Fadia Clarke, assistant lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kanwaljit Dhillon	Ofsted Inspector
Darrell Bate	Ofsted Inspector
Jaswant Mann	Ofsted Inspector
Mary Herbert	Ofsted Inspector
Lynda Pickering	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Dearnley	Ofsted Inspector

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