

Adult and Community Learning Service, Isle of Wight Council

Local authority

Inspection dates

4–6 October 2017

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

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Managers' self-assessment of the provision is over-optimistic as it does not take sufficient account of the weaknesses of the provision.
- Managers have not made sure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment on English and mathematics courses improves quickly enough, that more learners stay until the end of their courses and that a higher proportion achieve their functional skills qualifications.
- Too few learners are helped to improve their English and mathematical skills.
- Learners do not have a good enough understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.
- Managers do not know enough about whether courses are helping to improve learners' lives and job prospects.
- Managers do not provide sufficient feedback to curriculum leaders to enable them to identify good practice and areas for improvement.
- Too few learners attend their lessons regularly.

The provider has the following strengths

- Managers communicate well with users of the service, and reflect their views in the range of courses offered.
- Many learners improve their social skills and self-confidence during their courses.
- Most learners on courses that do not lead to qualifications achieve their personal learning goals.
- Family learning courses help parents support their children in all aspects of their learning and behaviours, and this has a significant positive impact on families and school communities.

Full report

Information about the provider

- The Isle of Wight adult education service provides a range of courses for adult learners throughout the isle. These courses focus particularly on providing opportunities for adults from disadvantaged urban and rural wards and on those wanting to improve their skills and qualifications to help them gain employment. Unemployment on the isle is higher than in the South East region and a significant number of jobs are seasonal.
- The courses on offer are divided into five categories: health and well-being courses and foundation programmes for disadvantaged and vulnerable adults each comprise around a one third of the programme; adult skills and digital skills courses each make up around one sixth of provision; and there is a small number of family learning courses. Managers use a range of subcontractors to provide most of the health and well-being courses, which do not lead to qualifications. Approximately one fifth of all courses lead to qualifications.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the accuracy and usefulness of self-assessment by focusing more closely on the impact that weaknesses in the provision have.
- Make sure that the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in all English and mathematics courses is consistently good and that tutors in all classes help their learners to improve their English and mathematical skills.
- Make sure that all learners have a good awareness of British values and understand the dangers of extremism and radicalisation.
- Extend quality assurance processes so that managers provide feedback that is more detailed to curriculum leaders to help them identify good practice and areas for improvement in courses.
- Make sure that all learners understand the requirements for good attendance, and ensure that tutors monitor both attendance and punctuality, taking appropriate action to help learners improve.
- Improve governance arrangements by making sure members of the newly established advisory board continue to receive frequent reports on the performance of the service that allow them to better support and challenge the adult and community learning team.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The small team of leaders and managers have faced significant challenges over the past year. A number of key managers have been on long-term sick leave or extended periods of compassionate leave. As a result, leaders were slow to make the improvements identified in the self-assessment report. This slow action has negatively affected learners' outcomes and leaders and managers have been too slow to improve teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, the effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement.
- Leaders have not taken effective action to improve the achievement rates on English and mathematics functional skills courses. Leaders and managers rightly acknowledge that the quality of provision in English and mathematics requires improvement. The actions they have put in place to improve the quality of teaching and learning on these courses have not yet had an impact. Too many learners leave these courses early. Nearly one quarter of those who began their courses in 2016/17 left before the courses ended.
- Leaders and managers have not made sure that tutors delivering courses in subjects other than English and mathematics help to improve learners' English and mathematics within their lessons or learning activities. Although training and support for tutors is planned, the slow pace of action means that around half of current learners are not improving their English and mathematical skills as part of their learning.
- Leaders continue to have a good focus on meeting the needs of communities across the island, despite significantly reduced budgets. This includes a strong focus on helping to improve opportunities for learners in the more disadvantaged communities.
- Leaders and managers work well with other providers and representative bodies across the island to identify any gaps or overlaps in local provision. For example, leaders identified The Isle of Wight College as a better option for English courses for learners who speak English as an additional language. The learning network, chaired by the service manager, also helps to make sure that an appropriate range of courses is available.
- Leaders and managers do not know enough about the destinations of their learners when they complete courses. As a result, they cannot be sure whether learners achieve their intended outcomes for each course. Tutors record learners' intentions on completion of their courses but do not follow this up to confirm with learners what actually happened.
- The self-assessment report, while largely accurate in identifying strengths and areas for improvement, is over-optimistic in grading the provision as good across all aspects. The report does not take into account the views of learners and subcontractors.
- Managers' quality monitoring activities are not effective and they are unaware that some course documentation is incomplete or lacks sufficient detail. For example, tutors do not always make sure that individual learning plans contain sufficient detail to be useful in meeting learners' needs. Managers did not identify these deficiencies during course audits, which are a key quality assurance activity. In addition, where they identified areas for improvement or areas of good practice, managers did not provide sufficiently detailed feedback for curriculum leads and tutors to take effective action and make improvements.

The governance of the provider

- Until very recently the service manager, learning and development, supported and challenged the adult and community learning manager and team through targets in performance appraisals. These arrangements did not help managers to recognise and successfully deal with weaknesses in provision. Leaders have recently put in place an advisory board, which includes an elected council member. They provide the board with detailed reports about service performance. It is too early to judge the impact of the board on improving the quality of provision.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Managers carry out appropriate checks on all tutors who might work with vulnerable adults, and family learning tutors who work with children. Subcontracted tutors are also appropriately checked. Managers keep thorough records of all checks.
- Managers carry out risk assessments of all learning venues and ensure that tutors accurately risk assess every learning activity. As a result, learners benefit from safe learning venues and activities.
- All tutors have had safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training. An appropriate 'Prevent' duty risk assessment and action plan is in place. However, many learners have only a very basic understanding of the dangers of extremism and radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Too few learners on all courses improve their English and mathematical skills. Too few learners on adult skills courses achieve English and mathematics functional skills qualifications.
- Too few tutors have the skills to raise learners' awareness of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, or promote learners' spiritual, moral or cultural development well. Learners do not develop more than a very basic awareness of the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. However, in all classes, learners work well together and respect each other's views.
- Most learners enjoy learning and develop new skills and knowledge. They are enthusiastic and attentive during classes. Most benefit from good support provided by experienced and knowledgeable tutors that enables them to learn new practical skills.
- The majority of tutors for community learning courses support learners to develop skills in English and mathematics alongside their main subject. For example, a sewing tutor planned to include basic mathematics, using features of the sewing machine, to teach learners to calculate the amount of material needed for a project. However, tutors for about half of these courses do not plan well to develop English and mathematics skills in their classes. As a result, too few learners improve these essential skills.
- Most tutors for community learning courses agree clear targets with learners, which help them to work independently. Most learners progress well during class and many go on to achieve their immediate learning goals. However, while tutors know individual learners

well, they do not always use information they gain about learners' knowledge at the start of the course to develop the particular skills that individual learners need. This makes it difficult to identify and agree appropriate targets. As a result, course activities can be too easy for learners who are more capable, and targets can be too challenging for less capable learners.

- The large majority of tutors use a good range of resources to support learning. For example, in a functional skills class one learner confidently worked on an online learning package designed to help him improve his spelling. Others in the class were working in pairs, or individually, practising basic English through tasks in well-designed workbooks.
- Most learners produce a good standard of work. Tutors often capture the quality of work through photographs and displays that they use well to celebrate learners' success.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

- Learners' attendance requires improvement. Managers are aware of the continued low attendance on some courses, particularly those that lead to English and mathematics qualifications. They encourage tutors to raise their expectations of their learners. Attendance improved slightly in 2016/17 but it is still too low and below the target that managers have set.
- Too few tutors help their learners to improve their English and mathematical skills. Managers have not yet carried out plans to train tutors, mainly in the subcontracted provision, to help them develop these skills within their teaching of other subjects. Because of this delay, about half of all learners do not benefit from improving these essential skills.
- Feedback from learners indicates that most have opportunities to consider and discuss next steps in learning with their tutors. Their experience of learning encourages them to take further courses. Learners do not have the opportunity to contribute their views to the self-assessment of the quality of provision.
- Learners feel safe and know how to keep safe. Tutors make them aware, during induction and through the learner handbook in classes, of the potential risks of using the internet. In an information and technology class learners discussed how to identify the potential hazards of using the internet and how to stay safe online. Older learners in the group helped younger learners to recognise the importance of keeping passwords safe when banking online.
- Learners develop increased confidence and self-esteem because of their learning. Learners on a family learning and parenting course benefit from improvements to their well-being, family relationships and their ability to communicate with their children's schools.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- The qualification achievement rates for learners on functional skills courses in English and mathematics are low. Although the provider's own data shows a small improvement from 2015/16 to 2016/17, significant further improvement is required. Results from the 2017 summer-school short courses for functional skills learners show that current learners are achieving at higher rates. However, it is too early in the academic year to judge accurately the progress of current learners who have just started longer courses.
- A high proportion of learners on community learning courses, which make up the large majority of the provision, achieve their learning aims. A good proportion of learners on information and communications technology courses achieve their qualifications.
- Managers and tutors do not know enough about what learners do after completing their courses. As a result, they cannot judge what impact courses have on employment for learners. Managers recently attempted to secure more information on the benefits that learners gained from courses, including whether they are in sustained employment, education or training. However, there was a very low response rate to the survey and managers now recognise that a more effective approach is required to gain the information they need.
- Most learners enjoy learning and many make good progress in developing their skills. In a contemporary dance class, the tutor rapidly assessed the starting points of two new learners and supported them well to learn and be included within a group practising dance techniques.
- There are no significant variations in the achievement of different groups of learners.

Provider details

Unique reference number	52544
Type of provider	Community learning
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	838
Principal/CEO	Mr Rob Brindley
Telephone number	01983 817280
Website	www.iwcommunitylearning.ac.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	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	0	104	0	0	0	0	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	0	0	0	0	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							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Bodster Equine Assisted Learning Centre Community Dance InspirED Richmond Fellowship Storeroom 2010 The Crossley Company The New Carnival Company CIC							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the manager of the adult and community learning service, 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 evaluated the quality of learning records and learners' work. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

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Her Majesty's Inspector

Pauline Dixey

Ofsted Inspector

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