

# The Learning and Enterprise College Bexley

Local authority

**Inspection dates**

9–12 January 2018

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>		<b>Requires improvement</b>	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>	Adult learning programmes	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>	Provision for learners with high needs	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>		
Outcomes for learners	<b>Requires improvement</b>		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Requires improvement	

## Summary of key findings

### This is a provider that requires improvement

- On courses leading to qualifications, the proportion of students who successfully complete their studies is too low.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have not sufficiently improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Managers do not provide the college's senior leaders with up-to-date information on key areas of performance, such as the progress of current students. As a result, leaders and managers do not have a comprehensive overview of the college's success in order to make improvements.
- Tutors do not set specific enough targets to help students take the necessary steps to improve and make good progress.
- In vocational subjects such as business studies, information technology and health and social care, tutors do not sufficiently relate learning to workplace practices; as a result, students are not always clear how they might use these skills in employment.
- Leaders' and managers' actions to improve English and mathematics are not helping more students to achieve their qualifications.
- On community learning and vocational courses, tutors do not provide sufficient support to help students improve. As a result, students repeat errors, such as misspelling words.

### The provider has the following strengths

- The wide range of courses, including vocational learning, effectively meets the needs and interests of the local community. Students on courses in English for speakers of other languages achieve well and gain communication skills to help them integrate into society.
- Students with an identified learning difficulty and/or disability make good progress; they develop the personal and social skills they need to live more independently or gain supported employment.
- Leaders and managers have created a supportive culture within the college; students' behaviour is very good, they enjoy their learning and work well with individuals from a variety of backgrounds.
- Staff are passionate about supporting students to develop the skills, knowledge and confidence they need to be successful. As a result, students develop good practical skills in subjects such as pottery, creative glass, floristry and counselling.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- The Learning and Enterprise College Bexley is a community learning and skills provider and is part of the London Borough of Bexley. The provider runs courses from one large main site and two smaller high street sites in the London Borough of Bexley. The college offers a range of courses for adult students, of which about half lead to qualifications. Student on courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), English and mathematics account for a third of all adult students. The college also has a small number of students undertaking apprenticeships.
- The college has increased the number of students with a learning difficulty and/or disability on courses designed to support them in living independently or help them gain supported employment.

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

- Ensure that teaching is of a consistently high standard by requiring tutors to:
  - set targets for students that are meaningful, measurable and achievable and ensure that students know exactly what they need to do to achieve these targets
  - relate vocational learning in the classroom to students' future careers and to the workplace
  - provide more support for students to improve their skills in English and mathematics.
- Improve the proportion of students achieving qualifications in English and mathematics.
- Ensure that managers provide senior leaders with up-to-date information on key areas of performance, such as on the progress of current students and the proportion of students achieving their qualifications, including in English and mathematics; and ensure that senior leaders use this information to make improvements.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not sufficiently rectified all of the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Although senior leaders, managers and staff work diligently to make the changes needed, their actions have not had sufficient impact across all aspects needing improvement. However, they have successfully improved the quality of provision for students with high needs, which is now good.
- Senior leaders and managers understand most of the weaknesses of the provision but they overestimate the college's strengths. Managers do not provide senior leaders with up-to-date and helpful information, for example on the progress of current students and the proportion of students achieving their qualifications. As a result, senior leaders and managers cannot make accurate judgements on the quality of teaching and the outcomes for students, or identify the actions needed to secure improvements.
- Leaders and managers are implementing a plan to improve the teaching of English and mathematics, but this has not had sufficient impact on students' skills or their achievement. In classes, tutors do not consistently promote the development of English and mathematical skills well enough. Consequently, too few students studying for GCSE and functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics successfully achieve their qualifications.
- Leaders' and manager's actions to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are not fully effective. Managers' judgements on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the lessons they observe are broadly accurate. However, on occasions managers fail to identify significant weaknesses. Because of this, teachers do not always receive accurate feedback to help them improve.
- Following changes by managers, the majority of staff now recognise and record students' prior learning, and set learning targets for them, rather than leaving these tasks incomplete as previously. However, both students and staff find the new arrangements burdensome; the quality of target-setting is still not good enough and both staff and students are not always clear what progress students are making.
- Since the previous inspection, managers have made good improvements in a few areas. They now use a good range of information to identify underperforming curriculum areas in a timely way. As a result, they understand better the reasons why students have not progressed or achieved well, and put in place actions that support improvement. For example, ESOL courses have been reorganised so that they are taught at different times to meet the needs of the community better. More students are now achieving their qualifications in this area.
- Leaders and managers have successfully implemented strategies to improve the attendance of students, which is now good.
- Leaders and managers have ensured that students receive suitable careers guidance in order to help them make decisions about their future.
- Senior leaders and managers have developed the curriculum well to respond to local needs and priorities. A good range of courses meets the needs and interests of residents. For example, managers responded to the need for more care staff locally by developing a

short course involving employers; this has led to students securing employment as care workers. A back-to-work course for unemployed adults with low-level mental health needs provided a holistic programme of well-being activities and employment-seeking skills, such as how to write curriculum vitae.

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

- Senior leaders provide good strategic leadership for the college. The well-conceived merger of the council's employment services with the college adds expertise and management capacity. Early signs of benefits from the merger include the development of new courses to meet local employment needs.
- Senior leaders have invested in external consultants and staff expertise from elsewhere in the council to support improvements. In bringing in new members to the strategic board, senior leaders have ensured that sufficient educational expertise exists on the board to support college managers in improving further the quality of the provision.

### **Safeguarding**

- Staff are suitably trained in safeguarding students. They act effectively when they identify students whose safety and welfare are at risk. Where students have been identified as more vulnerable, good risk assessments are in place that identify the practical actions necessary to promote their safety. A few staff have been trained to use a social care tool to assess and plan action to promote the welfare of the most vulnerable. Plans are in place to extend this training to the wider staff group.
- In a minority of instances, staff do not fully record the action taken to safeguard students. As a result, managers lack assurance and evidence that incidents are well managed. While senior leaders consider safeguarding at board level, they do not analyse records to identify trends in the types of incidents, in order to inform staff training or capture any learning from incidents.
- Leaders and managers ensure that all staff undergo regular training in safeguarding and their role in preventing extremism and radicalisation. As a result, staff have a good understanding of the risk posed by extremism and radicalisation.

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

### **Requires improvement**

- A minority of tutors do not set sufficiently detailed targets with students in their student learning records. As a result, students do not always know what steps they need to take to make the progress of which they are capable. In addition, where this occurs on courses that do not lead to qualifications, such as in creative glass and bookbinding, tutors have difficulty in making a valid judgement on students' progress and achievement.
- Too often, tutors' feedback does not help students to improve their written English skills. For example, tutors do not always provide accurate feedback on misspelled words, leading to students repeating errors in their written work.
- A minority of tutors do not use the results of assessments of students' abilities to understand the skills or knowledge that they already have. Because of this, teachers set targets for students to improve that are too easy for some and too challenging for others.

- In a minority of lessons, tutors make poor use of methods to check learning. They rely too heavily on questions that only the more confident students answer. As a result, tutors are not always clear who has understood and what has been learned in lessons. They are not able to plan further learning that is sufficiently personalised to meet the needs of individual students.
- Students on vocational courses benefit from tutors' experience; for example, beauty therapy students developed good knowledge of Indian head massage by closely watching their tutor's effective demonstration. However, too few tutors relate learning in the classroom to workplace practices, so students are not always clear how they will use new skills in employment.
- Students benefit from high-quality, well-maintained learning facilities and resources in each of the three learning venues. For example, students in pottery use industry-standard kilns, while those on vocational courses have access to well-equipped information technology rooms. Students identified as having a learning difficulty and/or disability enjoy a good range of flexible learning programmes, based in accessible rooms, which meet their individual needs.
- A large majority of tutors do not make use of opportunities in lessons to develop students' mathematical skills. As a result, students do not develop the skills and confidence needed to work with numbers in vocational settings such as in hairdressing.
- Most tutors support students to achieve learning goals in their lessons and provide guidance and support to promote individual learning. Recent improvements to the learning materials available through the virtual learning environment have improved students' access to resources between classes. As a result, most-able students can extend their learning and those students who have missed lessons are able to catch up with their studies.
- The majority of students make at least the expected progress during lessons and over time. Hairdressing students, for example, develop sound basic skills such as hair sectioning and tool handling. Counselling students develop good techniques such as active listening and minimal encouragers with confidence. However, tutors do not challenge a small minority of students sufficiently; these students do not attend lessons regularly enough to make the progress of which they are capable.
- The small number of apprentices receive good support from their trainers and assessors and benefit from extensive off-the-job training. Employers are involved in progress reviews and value highly the new skills apprentices rapidly gain, including their professional attitudes and behaviours when dealing with customers.
- Tutors of students with an identified learning difficulty and/or disability focus well on employment-related skills in lessons and work experience projects. More advanced students benefit hugely from work placements, such as supported internships at a local day care centre and in the office of a sales company.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

- Students' attendance and punctuality at lessons are good. Tutors make effective use of the college's electronic learning resources to provide students with greater flexibility and access to learning outside of the classroom.

- Students develop confidence during their time at college and enjoy their learning. Their achievements are celebrated well through prominent displays of their work, and a high-profile and well-attended event at the local civic centre. Students on craft courses display their creativity in annual shows that demonstrate the breadth and quality of their work. Some develop from nervous beginners to producing high-quality pieces sold at market stalls.
- Students develop good personal and social skills. Tutors work well with students to ensure that they develop productive working relationships with their peers, employers and staff. As a result, students understand their rights as citizens and they make a positive contribution to the college and the wider community. For example, each Christmas students sing carols at local events.
- Standards of students' work are good. Students across a wide range of areas, including hairdressing and beauty therapy, pottery, counselling and health and social care, develop specific vocational skills and knowledge well. Pottery students develop good knowledge of how to use glazes and slips by comparing different effects on pots produced by previous students. Students studying French develop confidence in their spoken language skills, and hairdressing students demonstrate their skills in sectioning hair.
- Staff promote effectively the importance of emotional health; specialist staff and tutors work closely to ensure that students support their own well-being, for example through understanding 'mindfulness'. As a result, students are developing the skills needed to keep themselves emotionally well.
- Students feel safe in the college and know who to talk to if they have any concerns. They have a good understanding of how to stay safe online and carry out their work within relevant health and safety guidelines. For example, students safely use ovens and pottery kilns.
- Students receive good support from specialist staff and their vocational tutors to help them make informed decisions about their course and their future. Subsequently, increasing numbers of students complete their courses and many progress into employment or further training. An extensive enrichment programme, with a firm focus on developing vocational expertise, enhances students' career prospects. For example, floristry students visited Chelsea Flower Show.
- Students' behaviour is very good and they work well with their peers, tutors and all staff. As a result, students from all backgrounds and of all ages share the harmonious and happy environment that the college provides.
- Students on supported learning programmes benefit from a practical approach to the development of work-related skills, for example by making and selling seasonal greetings cards. Through these tasks, students are developing the skills they need to gain supported employment.
- Staff are not fully successful in encouraging students to consider their fitness and health, increase their participation in exercise or adopt a healthier diet. No whole-college strategies exist to promote these aspects of health. Consequently, students are not developing their understanding of how to keep themselves healthy.
- Students have a good understanding of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism but are not always clear on how these risks directly affect them or their workplace.

## Outcomes for learners

## Requires improvement

- The proportion of students who successfully complete courses leading to qualifications has improved marginally, but remains too low. This overall improvement is as a result of more students achieving qualifications in information technology and in ESOL. However, in the vast majority of subject areas students' achievement rates have declined.
- Leaders and managers have recognised and taken action regarding the further decline in achievement rates for the very small number of students aged 16 to 18 on courses leading to qualifications. As a result, the college no longer offers courses directly for students aged 16 to 18.
- The proportion of students who achieve a grade 4 or higher in GCSE English and mathematics has improved and is good, enabling these students to progress to higher levels of study. However, the proportion of students overall who achieve a grade 1 or higher has declined in both subjects and is too low.
- The proportion of students achieving level 1 functional skills in mathematics has declined and is low. The proportion of students achieving level 1 functional skills in English has improved slightly but remains too low. However, the number of students achieving entry-level functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics has improved and is now good.
- Students from a Black, Asian and other minority ethnic backgrounds do not achieve as well as students from a White British background. Leaders and managers have identified this and put measures in place to reduce these differences in achievement, but it is too early to determine the impact of these. The achievement of both male and female students has improved; female students previously achieved less well than their male peers, both groups now achieve at the same rate. Students with a declared learning disability and/or difficulty achieve as well as other students.
- The amount of information collected by leaders and managers on students' destinations after their courses is increasing, but is still insufficient. As a result, it is not always clear what impact the qualifications and skills gained are having on students' lives. The majority of students about whom information has been collected progress onto further study at a higher level.
- The proportion of students completing community learning programmes is improving, and is good. Students successfully develop skills in subjects such as stained glass, bookbinding, languages, floristry, sewing and information technology.

## Types of provision

### Adult learning programmes

### Requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have developed the curriculum well. Just over half of the courses offered are in community learning, and many lead onto accredited courses, which make up the remainder of the provision. As a result, adult students benefit from a range of courses that meet the needs of the community, for example in health and social care, and for teaching assistants.

- Tutors do not always set sufficiently detailed learning targets for adult students on community learning courses not leading to qualifications. As a result, students and tutors cannot confirm that targets have been fully met, or ensure that the student has made the maximum possible progress during their course.
- A minority of tutors do not use the results of assessments of students' skills well enough before starting the course to understand the skills and knowledge that students already have. As a result, targets set by tutors for students are too easy for some and too challenging for others.
- Community learning programmes help students participate more widely in their communities, as they improve their confidence, social and employment-related skills. For many students, the courses are an important part of their lives and overall well-being.
- Most tutors support students well to achieve learning goals in their lessons and provide guidance and support to help them continue learning in their own time. Students' learning is supplemented by online learning material available through the college virtual learning environment. Students say they find this useful and appreciate being able to get guidance from tutors when they need it between lessons.

### Provision for learners with high needs

**Good**

- Students have access to a good range of classes; the programme caters for students' levels and interests well. It meets students' individual needs well and prepares them for greater independence in their lives and for supported employment. For example, they learn to make a hot drink safely and learn to travel independently to work placements.
- Tutors place a consistently strong focus on developing the skills that will be useful in future employment, both in lessons and through work experience activity, such as roles in the canteen and in caretaking. As a result, students are successfully enhancing skills they need for employment, such as working with people, food hygiene and working safely.
- Students have benefited from the recent merger of the college with Bexley Twofold, part of Resources Plus, which has provided work placements with local companies. Students now have access to internships in the office of a sales company and at a local day-care centre, and are developing their customer service and office administration skills.
- Students' access to the internship programme has made them and their parents and carers much more aware of the potential of supported employment. As a result, planning between tutors, students and parents has improved for the next stage after students leave high needs provision.
- Tutors know their students very well. They use their understanding to plan and teach effective lessons which lead to students making good progress. Some staff plan and evaluate their students' progress expertly and, as a result, students make progress well above their expected targets. For example, one student is on target to achieve level 2 mathematics and level 2 English and is on an external placement.
- Teaching assistants and learning support assistants help students effectively in lessons, collaborating well with tutors. Staff provide well-focused support, which enables students to achieve independently where they can, and additional help when students are stuck. In a minority of lessons support staff do the work for students, rather than letting students try for themselves. Occasionally, in a small minority of lessons, the tutor does not allow

sufficient time for less confident students to respond.

- Leaders and managers are aware that classroom materials used to deal with the risks posed by extremism and radicalisation and British values are too complex for many high needs students. Leaders and managers are taking steps to rectify this but it is too early to assess the impact of these actions.
- Managers and staff are aware that the quality of feedback given to students needs to improve, and that the language used is often too complex for the students to understand. It is too soon to see impact of planned actions to improve this.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	53104
Type of provider	Local authority
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	4,340
Principal/CEO	Andrea Gewessler
Telephone number	020 3045 5176
Website	<a href="http://www.thelearningcentreboxley.ac.uk">www.thelearningcentreboxley.ac.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)	13	393	18	261	-	49	-	101
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	2	1	3	2	-	-		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	42							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	-							

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the programme 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

Steve Lambert, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jon Bowman	Her Majesty's Inspector
Philida Schellekens	Ofsted Inspector
Philip Elliott	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Shackleton	Her Majesty's Inspector

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