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19 March 2018

Ms Kerry Gray  
Head of Service  
Leicester Adult Skills and Learning Service  
2 Wellington Street  
Leicester  
LE1 6HL

Dear Ms Gray

### **Short inspection of Leicester Adult Skills & Learning**

Following the short inspection on 20–21 February 2018, 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 November 2013.

#### **This provider continues to be good.**

- You and the management team at Leicester Adult Skills and Learning Service ('LASALS') receive good support from an experienced and motivated team of adult education tutors. Together, you have maintained a clear focus on providing high-quality adult education and community learning for Leicester residents from some of the most economically disadvantaged areas of the city.
- Your outreach work in a wide range of community venues helps to secure participation in adult education for learners, many of whom are on the margins of the labour market and have multiple barriers to learning. LASALS contributes well to the city council's plans for economic regeneration, as demonstrated in the excellent joint work with a wide range of stakeholders such as Jobcentre Plus, local employer networks, schools and community centres.
- You and your management team have made particularly good progress in successfully identifying and tackling the most significant weaknesses and in maintaining the high standards identified by inspectors at your last inspection in 2013.
- Your self-assessment report and position statement provide an honest and accurate account of LASALS' key strengths and areas for improvement. The quality improvement plan clearly identifies the actions you are taking to resolve the few remaining weaknesses. Feedback from learners and community stakeholders demonstrates that they value LASALS' flexibility and responsiveness to local needs and priorities.
- Teaching, learning and assessment continue to remain highly effective in

ensuring that outcomes for all groups of learners, especially at entry level and level 1, are high. You have correctly identified the poorer performance of learners on functional skills courses in English and mathematics at level 2 and in GCSE English language as a key area for improvement. You are taking appropriate actions to tackle this issue, as well as to narrow the few disparities that exist in the performance of different groups of learners.

- Learners rightly comment very favourably on the high quality of teaching and learning they receive and on the commitment and enthusiasm of their tutors. Your learning support assistants provide good in-class help for the relatively high proportion of learners for whom English is an additional language. As a consequence, these learners progress and achieve well.
- Current learners make good progress. Individual learning plans are of high quality and tutors make good use of them to set challenging targets and to record learners' progress and achievement. As a result, learners have a good understanding of what they have achieved and what they need to do to complete their course successfully.
- Your curriculum offer aligns well with the city council's strategic four-year plan for improving skills and training and achieving a better match between the skills needs of local businesses and the provision of adult learning programmes. The curriculum includes a wide range of employability programmes run collaboratively with the Jobcentre, focused on supporting learners to re-enter the labour market. You work well to help people who have been made redundant to retrain for alternative work.
- You continue to provide a programme for learners with mental health difficulties that helps many residents to manage their condition effectively. This in turn enables them to remain in work, cope better with family life or return to work. Your joint work with learning and skills staff at HMP Leicester has supported men nearing their release date to sign up for vocational and learning pathways to help them resettle in the community.
- Though you have tackled most of the weaknesses identified during the previous inspection, a few still remain, as you rightly acknowledge in your self-assessment report and position statements. For example, though managers collect some data on learners' destinations, they acknowledge that this data remains patchy and incomplete. Managers have begun to strengthen the arrangements for collecting accurate destination data but this work is still in its early stages.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

- As the designated senior safeguarding officer for LASALS, you have overall responsibility for safeguarding learners on adult programmes, especially those made vulnerable by their personal circumstances. You have established effective safeguarding practices and tutors are confident in making referrals to you or to a senior colleague.
- You maintain an incident log which accurately records referrals made and the actions taken to resolve them. You respond promptly and make onward referrals to the police, social services or to local mental health agencies where

appropriate.

- You and your managers have taken effective action to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that learners are safe at the adult education college and at the community learning venues they attend. Learners report that they feel safe and that tutors value and respect them.
- Managers responsible for recruitment apply appropriate selection processes to ensure learners' safety. All current and new members of staff have appropriate background checks where their roles warrant this. Your staff maintain a suitable and up-to-date single central register of all employees who have received a background check.
- You have implemented your obligations under the 'Prevent' duty particularly well, with effective and regularly updated staff training. Your tutors have developed a wide range of accessible and relevant learning resources and materials on fundamental British values and on the dangers of radicalisation and extremism that they use well in learning sessions.
- Teachers adapt learning materials for learners working at different levels and to suit those who speak English as an additional language. As a result, learners articulate clearly their understanding of 'Prevent' and of fundamental British values. They can explain the risks of radicalisation and know how to keep themselves safe from the dangers of extremism.

### **Inspection findings**

- You and your managers know the provision well and you continue to address weaknesses identified as a result of internal improvement activities and through self-assessment. As a consequence, the service continues to provide high-quality adult and community learning.
- The proportion of learners who successfully complete their programme has remained high for the last three years. Few learners leave their programme early. In-year data for 2017/18 indicates that the pattern of high overall achievement is continuing.
- Teaching, learning and assessment continue to remain good. Tutors plan learning sessions well and they use their experience and passion for the subject to engage and enthuse learners. Most learning sessions are effective. Tutors use a wide range of carefully devised learning materials and teaching strategies to ensure that learners participate and make progress.
- Learners of English for speakers of other languages rightly comment favourably on their safe and friendly learning environment, and are highly appreciative of the support they receive from tutors and support staff. They enjoy their learning activities, work collaboratively and take pride in their work and learning environment.
- Learners attending one of your wide range of personal well-being courses confirm that they enjoy their learning and the beneficial impact on their mental and physical health. Learners on childcare courses clearly understand the challenges of working with children from diverse backgrounds and the importance of

safeguarding children in their care when they are on a work placement.

- Partnership working is outstanding. You and your managers have developed effective and innovative partnerships with a wide range of local stakeholders to promote the city council's strategic objectives of improving the life chances of residents through participation in learning and work.
- Your 'Leicester market project' supported 13 city residents on an intensive course that subsequently led to five of them setting up their own market stall in the city centre. Another initiative involved working with women from the Sikh community to produce a needlework tapestry depicting the contribution of Sikh men during the Great War. The promotion of family learning initiatives throughout the city resulted in particularly high rates of participation from minority ethnic groups in deprived areas. This helps parents from these communities to support their children with schoolwork.
- Your recent appointment of an employment progression leader and careers adviser has reinforced the quality and impact of impartial careers advice and guidance. The adviser is centrally based in the adult education college and therefore accessible to learners from across the city.
- Learners rightly comment on the high quality of advice and guidance they receive and the willingness of staff to help them. As a result of good-quality careers advice and guidance, learners in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance have successfully submitted applications for a business loan through the government's New Enterprise Allowance initiative. Several learners have gone on to set up their own business, while others have found paid employment or voluntary work in the community.
- Self-assessment is a rigorous and inclusive process. You make good use of a range of evidence to support self-assessment judgements and you clearly identify the strengths and areas for improvement.
- The previous inspection found that tutors on a few courses did not always provide appropriate stretch and challenge for all learners. This continues to be an area for improvement. Though most teaching is effective, a minority of lessons are characterised by lack of a variety of learning activities to suit all learners. Consequently, a few learners find the work either too easy or too difficult for them, and consequently do not make the progress of which they are capable.

### **Next steps for the provider**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the quality of teaching and learning improves by ensuring that tutors set suitably challenging tasks and activities that enable all learners to reach the standards of which they are capable
- they identify the reasons for the poorer performance of learners on functional skills courses in English and mathematics at level 2 and in GCSE English language and take appropriate action to improve achievement rates
- managers improve arrangements for collecting accurate information about

learners' destinations so that they can make informed judgements about the impact of LASALS' learning programmes.

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

Yours sincerely

Jai Sharda

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Ofsted Inspectors, assisted by your senior manager for curriculum and quality as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors took account of your most recent self-assessment report, position statement and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used individual and group interviews to gather the views of learners and tutors. They reviewed key documents, including those related to safeguarding, learners' achievements and progression.