

Learn Plus Us

Independent Learning Provider

Inspection dates

6–8 March 2018

| 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 | | Not previously inspected | |

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- The proportion of adult learners who achieve qualifications in childcare and health and social care is too low. Too few learners stay to the end of their course, and not enough students from minority ethnic backgrounds, or male students, achieve their qualifications.
- During their reviews of learners' progress, staff do not identify well enough the skills that learners need to develop in order to help them achieve at a high level.
- Directors, leaders and managers do not have an accurate overview of the performance of learners and the quality of teaching and learning.
- Staff do not use information on learners' prior educational attainment in order to plan learning that meets their individual needs.
- Leaders have not put in place adequate governance arrangements in order to provide sufficient challenge and independent scrutiny of their actions to raise standards and performance.
- Tutors and assessors do not provide good enough feedback to learners on their work so that they know how to improve.
- The minority of learners do not have a sufficient understanding of how the risks of radicalisation or extremism relate to them and their workplace settings.

The provider has the following strengths

- Leaders and managers have created a supportive culture within the provider; learners' behaviour is very good, they enjoy their learning and work well with individuals from a variety of backgrounds.
- Leaders and managers have implemented a curriculum, based on childcare and health and social care, which meets the needs of learners and employers.
- The proportion of learners who achieve functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics is high.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Learn Plus Us is a small independent learning provider based in Barnet, north London. The provider opened in 2008 and since 2014 has offered courses for adult learners in childcare, education, and health and social care. Since January 2018, the provider has also been offering a very small number of apprenticeships in the same subjects.
- Most learners study part-time at level 2 or level 3 while working in either a nursery, childcare or care home setting. The vast majority of adult learners fund their studies through an Adult Learner Loan and register with the provider from across London. Most learners are already in work prior to starting their course; however, the provider supports learners to secure an appropriate workplace to enable them to complete their course.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Senior leaders should implement a rigorous system of governance that provides sufficient external challenge and scrutiny and holds leaders and managers to account in order to promote and support improvement in the quality of the provision.
- Senior leaders should implement a robust system for bringing together, recording and critically evaluating a range of information, so that they can improve the quality of the training provision by setting specific, measurable performance indicators for the organisation.
- Senior leaders should evaluate why male students, and those from minority ethnic backgrounds, achieve less well than their peers, and put in place suitable actions to reverse this trend.
- When observing lessons, leaders and managers need to have a stronger focus on the impact of teaching on the progress that all learners make in lessons, in order to bring about sustained improvements in teaching, learning and assessment.
- Tutors and assessors should:
 - set targets for learners that are clear and identify what skills the learner needs to develop or improve and how they are to achieve these
 - record these targets accurately, with a date by which the learners need to achieve them
 - monitor progress towards these targets with learners at subsequent reviews.
- Tutors need to make better use of information gained prior to the start of the course on the skills and experiences that learners have, to ensure that they teach lessons that meet the needs of all learners.
- Tutors and assessors should ensure that feedback on learners' work is specific enough so that learners know what they need to do to improve.
- Staff should ensure that students have a more comprehensive understanding of the dangers posed by radicalisation and extremism.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Senior leaders and managers do not have an accurate view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Staff who observe teaching, learning and assessment do not focus on what learners are learning, and the progress that they are making. Their judgements on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are overly generous. Managers do not sufficiently identify themes from observations to inform the training and development of staff.
- Leaders and managers do not make sufficient use of available data to identify and improve trends in performance for all groups of learners. As a result, leaders and managers do not have an accurate overview of the performance of learners.
- Senior leaders and managers are aware of a number of strengths and weaknesses in the provision. However, they do not adequately evaluate important aspects of the provision such as the effectiveness of governance, safeguarding or the development of the curriculum. Where they have identified areas for improvement, they have not always made sufficient progress in rectifying them, such as in their use of data.
- Leaders and managers create an inclusive, supportive and learner-centred culture that promotes learners' welfare effectively. For example, during learners' induction, tutors use workplace scenarios to explore issues such as discrimination in the workplace. As a result, learners feel well supported during their course.
- Leaders and managers collaborate well with local employers and partner organisations in developing the curriculum to meet local needs. For example, staff developed an introductory childcare course for tenants of a local housing trust, all of whom successfully progressed to a level 1 course. They also developed a range of short courses on food and nutrition and understanding children with autism for unemployed parents at a local children's centre.
- Leaders and managers plan the delivery of training effectively to suit the needs and circumstances of learners and employers. For example, they adopt a flexible approach to when learners can start their training, and teach courses at weekends and through online learning. Because of this, learners can access training quickly and at times that suit their lifestyles.
- Leaders and managers have implemented an effective strategy to support learners to develop their English and mathematics skills. This includes timetabled classes in the training provider's own centre, in community venues and through sharing resources with assessors for use with their learners. As a result, the proportion of learners who achieve their functional skills qualifications in both English and mathematics is high.

The governance of the provider

- Governance requires improvement to be effective. Currently there is no external, independent scrutiny of the management of the provision. The owner has sole oversight of the provision and responsibility for providing support and challenge to senior leaders and managers. Senior leaders are not sufficiently held to account for the performance of Learn Plus Us.

- Senior leaders and managers do not analyse and use management information to improve the provision. This hinders them in making the improvements needed to ensure that the learners' experience and outcomes are enhanced.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff understand well their responsibilities for safeguarding learners. When learners raise safeguarding or welfare concerns, staff take prompt action, provide good support and maintain records of incidents.
- Leaders and managers have ensured that tutors routinely promote British values and the 'Prevent' duty to learners in lessons. As a result, learners have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including from the risks posed by extremism and radicalisation, and of staying safe online. In a minority of cases, learners do not always understand how the issues of radicalisation and extremism relate to their own workplace.
- Leaders and managers ensure that all the necessary pre-employment checks are in place and that staff are suitably qualified to work with learners in childcare, education and social care settings.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Tutors and assessors do not have consistently high expectations of what learners can achieve. Learners, many of whom have considerable experience of working in or managing childcare or health and social care settings, do not receive sufficient challenge to ensure that they make good progress towards achieving their qualification.
- Tutors and assessors do not make consistently good use of information gained on what skills and knowledge learners have prior to the start of the course. Because of this, tutors and assessors set work that is too easy for some and too challenging for others.
- Tutors and assessors do not always check learners' level of understanding sufficiently. For example, assessors do not allow learners sufficient opportunity to ask questions or to demonstrate what they are learning. As a result, tutors and assessors do not always know whether learners have understood the topic.
- Tutors and assessors use individual coaching sessions in the workplace for adult learners and the small number of apprentices, which focus strongly on the presentation of useful knowledge, such as the stages of child development, or language acquisition. However, in too many cases assessors do not ask learners how they could improve the standards of care that they provide, as a result of their learning.
- Assessors routinely set targets for learners, but in the majority of cases, these focus only on the completion of units towards the qualification. Assessors do not set targets for learners that help them to understand the skills they need to develop in order to achieve their units. Consequently, learners do not always know what steps they need to take to make the progress of which they are capable.
- Tutors and assessors provide learners with regular verbal and written feedback on the standard of their work. In too many cases, tutors' and assessors' feedback on the quality

of learners' work is not sufficient to help learners understand what they need to do to improve.

- Tutors and assessors place appropriate priority on helping learners to improve their English and mathematics skills. Because of this, learners on early years education programmes are confident in helping children in their care develop these essential skills.
- Tutors and assessors provide learners with a range of very good resources to support their learning, including a large number of online resources. However, too many learners make insufficient use of these to support their independent study.
- Tutors and assessors provide learners with advice, guidance and coaching during, and between, formal learning sessions, which is highly valued by learners. Tutors and assessors often respond to learners' queries in the evening and at weekends when learners are studying. For example, tutors and assessors support learners with caring responsibilities for family members in order that they can complete their studies at times that suit them. As a result, learners are able to accommodate their studies around their personal commitments.
- Tutors and assessors have good relationships with employers and keep them well informed about the progress of their learners. Employers value the contribution that learners are making to their businesses.
- Tutors and assessors skilfully ensure that learners develop a good understanding of the diverse communities in which they live and work. They make sure that learners understand the need to respect the backgrounds and cultures of the families that they support.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

- Learners' attendance at English and mathematics lessons within the provider's centre is not yet good enough. Too few learners regularly attend sessions. However, learners' attendance is better at community venues and their attendance at progress reviews is good.
- Leaders and managers do not rigorously monitor learners' attendance and punctuality overall. As a result, they have been ineffective in improving the proportion of learners attending taught sessions.
- The proportion of learners who study for additional qualifications, such as in food hygiene and anaphylaxis first aid, to supplement their learning or extend their learning beyond the requirements of the course is low. As a result, learners do not develop skills that would enhance their employment prospects further.
- Leaders and managers do not have a well-thought-out approach to ensuring that learners understand issues relating to their own health and well-being beyond the context of the curriculum. Leaders and managers are developing this, but it is too early to assess the impact. As a result, tutors and assessors do not know whether learners know how to keep themselves physically and emotionally healthy.
- The minority of learners do not have a sufficient understanding of how the risks of radicalisation or extremism relate to them and their workplace settings. A minority of assessors are not confident to reinforce learners' understanding of the dangers of

radicalisation effectively in the workplace. As a result, learners' recollection and understanding of relevant these topics are underdeveloped.

- Learners are motivated and keen to achieve their qualifications and develop their self-confidence as part of their learning. As a result, learners are more confident in their role within their workplace setting.
- Learners feel safe and are confident in keeping themselves safe when using online learning resources and using social networks. Learners are well behaved and respectful to their peers and their tutors and assessors, and know whom to turn to should they be concerned about themselves or others.
- Learners have a good understanding of British values and can use this knowledge in their work place. For example, learners in early years settings introduce topics related to British values to children by setting rules for their behaviour in language that they understand.
- Tutors develop learners' English and mathematics skills effectively through their workplace setting and through taught classes. As a result, learners develop confidence and skills in English and mathematics and can support children in childcare settings in developing these important skills.
- Tutors and assessors provide learners with sufficient independent information, advice and guidance to help them make decisions about their next steps in training and employment. Learners understand the potential value of their training and qualifications, but few have yet formed longer-term career development plans.
- Learners and the small number of apprentices are confident in their understanding of equality of opportunity and demonstrate positive attitudes towards diversity in modern Britain. They use appropriate language and clearly relate their learning on these themes to their workplace activities.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- The proportion of adult learners who achieve their qualifications in health and social care and childcare, and who do so within their planned time, is too low. However, the proportion of learners who achieve their level 3 qualification in specialist support for teaching and learning is high. Not enough current learners are making good progress relative to their prior attainment.
- Learners' work is of an appropriate standard for the level of course that they are studying. As a result, learners develop the skills in working with young children in nursery and early year settings, and with adults in care settings.
- Too few learners from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic backgrounds achieve their qualifications at the same rate as those learners who are white British. The proportion of female learners who achieve their qualification is high, and above the rate for male learners.
- Leaders and managers collect data on where the majority of learners who achieve their qualification progress to. However, the proportion of learners who progressed to employment or gained promotion because of their course declined in 2016/17 and is low. The proportion of learners who stay to the end of their course is too low and requires improvement.

- The proportion of learners who achieve their level 1 or 2 functional skills English and mathematics is high and is on an upward trend.

Provider details

| | |
|---|--|
| Unique reference number | 1237195 |
| Type of provider | Independent learning provider |
| Age range of learners | 16–18/19+ |
| Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year | 36 |
| Principal/CEO | Judith Wayne |
| Telephone number | 020 8444 4304 |
| Website | www.learnplusus.co.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 | |
|---|------------------|-----|----------|-----|---------|-----|------------------|-----|
| Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships) | 16–18 | 19+ | 16–18 | 19+ | 16–18 | 19+ | 16–18 | 19+ |
| | – | 24 | – | 18 | – | 27 | – | 9 |
| Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age | Intermediate | | Advanced | | Higher | | | |
| | 16–18 | 19+ | 16–18 | 19+ | 16–18 | 19+ | 16–18 | 19+ |
| | 2 | 5 | 2 | 8 | – | | | 1 |
| 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 | – | | | | | | | |
| At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors: | None | | | | | | | |

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the owner, 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 |
| Gerard McGrath | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Jon Bowman | Her Majesty's Inspector |

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