

# The Working Men's College

Community learning and skills

## Inspection dates

13–16 November 2018

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

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good provider

- Governors, leaders and staff have formed partnerships with organisations outside the college which they use very effectively to shape the curriculum. They ensure that the college is a welcoming place for local residents.
- Leaders make good use of the funding available for adult learning. They target effectively those learners with limited or no formal learning, ensuring that learners gain valuable new skills.
- A high proportion of learners make good progress in their learning. They develop self-confidence in their ability to succeed in their learning and in life.
- Learners benefit from high levels of personal care from staff across the college. Many learners who have had personal difficulties return to living an active and purposeful life because of their studies.
- Learners develop a good understanding of the cultural and social aspects of life in a cosmopolitan city. They enthusiastically embrace the different customs and values of their peers and British society.
- Teachers are skilful in relating learning effectively to employment and everyday life. As a result, learners develop good skills for employment.
- The proportion of learners who achieve a grade 4 or better in GCSE English and mathematics is high.
- Learners on arts programmes make good use of high-quality workshops and studios to extend their skills and produce work of a high standard.
- Leaders and managers do not have sufficiently detailed information on learners' next steps on completing their programmes, either within the college or elsewhere, or on how their current learning influences those choices.
- The proportion of learners who achieve their reading and writing qualifications in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) is low.
- A small proportion of teachers do not ensure that the most able learners develop new skills and knowledge or further develop their existing skills.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- The Working Men's College (WMC) is a specialist institute of adult learning situated in the London Borough of Camden. It is the oldest adult education institution in Europe. It has two centres in Camden. WMC provides learning for adults seeking vocational qualifications from entry level to level 3 and/or art-and-crafts-based programmes for personal enjoyment and fulfilment. Provision is mainly part time and designed to enable learners to study alongside their work and caring responsibilities.
- Camden Borough is culturally and socially diverse. Over half of residents are qualified to degree level or higher; the proportion of school leavers who achieve high-grade passes in GCSE English and mathematics is lower than the London and national rate. The proportion of households where residents are classed as 'workless' is significantly above the rate for London, as is the proportion of children who live in poverty. Many learners attending WMC live in wards that are among the poorest in London.

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

- Eliminate the small amount of teaching, learning and assessment that is not of a high standard, by ensuring that teachers:
  - set and agree demanding targets with the most able learners that extend their skills and knowledge further
  - make effective use of information on learners' starting points to plan and measure learners' ongoing progress
  - provide learners on ESOL programmes with good opportunities to scrutinise and correct their own work for spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors.
- Ensure that leaders and managers have detailed information on learners' next steps to inform their planning of the curriculum, by:
  - systematically collecting information on the programmes learners choose to follow when they complete their current programmes
  - understanding how learners' current programme choices influence the programme(s) they choose in the future.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders and senior managers have taken strong steps to halt the recent decline in the achievements of learners on ESOL programmes and in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. In doing so, they have maintained the rich breadth of programmes WMC provides and ensured that learners on art-and-craft-based programmes continue to achieve well.
- Leaders make good use of the funding available for adult learning. They target those learners with limited or no formal learning and ensure that teachers and staff provide a caring and nurturing environment within which learners thrive. Learners say that they feel comfortable in this small college and consequently attend well and gain valuable new skills.
- Leaders and managers work very effectively with partners, such as institutes of adult learning, the Borough of Camden and community leaders. For example, the principal has worked closely and effectively with senior leaders from London's institutes of adult learning to inform the adult skills agenda for London. Unemployed residents of Camden benefit from high-quality advice and guidance on how to access learning to achieve the skills and qualifications they need for employment.
- Leaders and managers evaluate effectively the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the learners' experience. They have a detailed understanding of the strengths and areas to improve. Teachers and staff across the college contribute well to the review of all aspects of learning. Leaders and managers have improved their scrutiny of learners' outcomes and communicated their findings effectively to staff. Teachers and staff understand the improvements required and are committed to improving the quality of learning further.
- Leaders evaluate and improve teachers' work and develop their skills effectively; teaching across most subjects is good or better. Teachers make good use of the many opportunities that managers provide to update and refresh their skills and are keen to implement new skills they have learned. For example, teachers are confident in leading challenging conversations with learners on the benefits of living in a democratic society; they incorporate cultural events such as the annual armistice commemorations very effectively into their discussions. Managers evaluate the teaching, learning and assessment provided by individual staff accurately through observations. They use their findings effectively to inform staff appraisal and professional development.
- Governors, leaders, managers and staff retain the harmonious culture and ethos of WMC as a welcoming place to study. Managers and staff reflect closely the local community of learners and their diverse range of cultural backgrounds. Teachers and staff celebrate the cultural heritage of learners through a broad range of events. This enables learners to develop a good understanding of, and appreciation for, people of different faiths, sexual orientation, age, gender and ability. Learners of all ages and backgrounds enjoy sharing their learning experiences.
- Good-quality English and mathematics provision for Camden learners remains a strategic priority for leaders and managers. The senior leadership team has acted promptly to remedy the shortcomings within the ESOL programmes. A recently introduced curriculum

provides appropriate 'top-up' learning sessions for those learners who require more time to be confident in their reading and writing skills before moving to the next level of learning.

- Managers use data effectively to identify the reasons behind differences in the achievement of groups of learners and have taken prompt action to instigate improvements. For example, they have provided improved support to learners who require specialist help with their learning and ensured additional management help to improve the quality of ESOL learning.
- Leaders and managers do not have sufficiently detailed information on learners' next steps on completing their programme. They do not have a good understanding of what programmes learners choose to do next within college or how their current learning influences those choices. For example, managers' understanding of which learners continue into employment, volunteering within their community or other non-paid roles is largely based on anecdotal evidence.

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

- Governance is effective. Governors come from a variety of backgrounds and professions, such as architecture, finance and education. They use their wide-ranging skills to scrutinise diligently the college's finances and the quality of learning and resources. They are passionate advocates of retaining English and mathematics as a strategic priority for leaders.
- Governors challenge senior leaders appropriately and ensure that leaders maintain the culture and ethos of a high-quality institute of adult learning. They listen carefully to the views of learners and ensure that leaders respond suitably to improve the quality of the learners' experience.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders of safeguarding ensure that safe recruitment practices are adhered to. They keep comprehensive, up-to-date records of staff's eligibility to work with learners, many of whom are vulnerable because of their physical and/or mental frailty. Managers work effectively with local agencies such as the police and healthcare services to ensure that they have a detailed understanding of how to protect and safeguard their learners.
- Leaders and staff at all levels are comprehensively trained and respond appropriately to any incidents that could place learners at risk of harm. Staff have a good understanding of the 'Prevent' duty. They ensure that learners know what to do if approached by those who may pose a danger through their radical and/or extremist views.
- Teachers pay close attention to identifying and helping learners with fragile mental health. They assess skilfully whether learners are ready to learn and what help they may need to complete their studies before they start their course. Teachers focus appropriately on the health and safety of learners in practical workshops and studios. They instil in learners the importance of working safely. Teachers and learners feel safe at college during the day and evening classes.
- Teachers and learners know what to do should they have any safeguarding concerns.

Learners know whom to go to if they feel afraid. Learners are respectful and behave tolerantly towards each other around the college.

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

**Good**

- Teachers use their very good specialist subject knowledge to provide high-quality learning. They use their skills effectively to teach lessons that are lively and enjoyed by learners. In arts, teachers encourage learners to benefit from mistakes they make by becoming more daring in their use of colour and form.
- Teachers ensure that learners understand their progress and are clear about what they need to do to improve further. Most teachers set frequent homework tasks to help learners consolidate and enhance their understanding, often suggesting trips and visits learners might make or topics to research on the internet.
- Learners on foundation art programmes and childcare programmes at level 3 make good progress in their learning. Learners' use of reflective journals to monitor their own learning and progress is highly effective in enabling learners to improve their skills and knowledge.
- Staff provide effective help in class for learners who need extra time to achieve as well as their peers. Following recent training, in-class assistants have the confidence to allow learners to work at their own pace and develop their own strategies to become independent learners and succeed. They encourage learners who lack confidence to persevere and help those who lose focus to settle back into their learning quickly. Teachers provide in-class assistants with clear instructions on how to help learners with planned tasks and activities.
- In English, teachers are skilful in providing activities that deepen and extend learners' understanding of living a good life and treating everyone with respect. They frequently lead discussions on sensitive subjects, such as whether parents should smack their children, or what is meant by the term 'individual liberty', allowing learners to develop good skills in debating and reasoning. Materials for developing learners' grammatical skills are often well-chosen pieces highlighting everyday life in Britain.
- A small proportion of teachers do not ensure that the most able learners develop new skills and knowledge and/or further develop their existing skills. Teachers are not sufficiently demanding when setting and agreeing personal learning goals over time. They often do not review and sharpen these goals carefully enough as the course progresses, to ensure that goals reflect learners' improved skills and knowledge.
- In ESOL for reading and writing qualifications, teachers often do not prompt learners to correct their own work thoroughly, so learners repeat the same mistakes frequently.

### **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Good**

- Learners benefit from a broad choice of programmes that enable them to return to learning. Their studies enrich their lives and those of their family and community. Learners relish the opportunity to work within a community of learning that attracts people from culturally and socially diverse backgrounds.

- Learners develop high levels of self-confidence and effective social skills. For example, on ESOL programmes, learners feel able to travel independently of their family, speak to their doctor or social workers without the need of an interpreter, and help their children with their schoolwork. Learners recognise how these social skills prepare them effectively to live and work in a cosmopolitan city.
- Learners receive high levels of personal care from staff across the college. Many learners who have had personal difficulties are able to return to living an active and purposeful life because of their studies at WMC. On creative arts programmes, teachers encourage learners to critique sensitively their own and their peers' work. Those with previously poor physical and/or fragile mental health find that their learning gives them renewed purpose to undertake new challenges and achieve well-being.
- Learners are very safe while studying at WMC. Staff across the college focus closely on ensuring that learners know how to keep themselves and their families safe while studying, working and travelling around London. Learners develop a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle, and benefit from the popular college café that serves inexpensive, freshly cooked food and beverages.
- Learners' attendance has improved across all programmes and is good. This was an area for improvement at the previous inspection. Teachers and learners have a clear understanding of the importance of regular attendance. Teachers follow up quickly any non-attendance.
- Managers and staff across the college ensure that learners receive good, impartial advice on the most appropriate programmes to study. They make effective use of the result of pre-course assessments to ensure that learners are on the right level of programme.
- Learners have access to effective advice on all aspects of career planning. Appropriately qualified staff provide learners with good opportunities to plan and review their work and study options. For example, learners can practise their interview skills, refine their job application letters and attend one-to-one careers coaching sessions. Managers do not currently evaluate the impact of this aspect of the provision or comprehensively record learners' next steps on completion of their studies.

## Outcomes for learners

**Good**

- The majority of learners are on programmes that do not lead to formal qualifications. They study programmes in subjects that inspire their interest. Many decide to develop a new-found interest in greater depth after completing one of the many introductory level art- or craft-based programmes. Most learners continue to study at WMC.
- Learners on art-and-craft-based programmes develop good English and mathematical skills that prepare them well for employment and self-employment. For example, they learn how to price accurately the items that they make, and to label them clearly and present them attractively for sale.
- A high proportion of learners working towards a foundation diploma in art and design achieve their qualifications. Most continue their studies at university on completion of their foundation year. Those who do not continue their studies usually become self-employed artists.
- The proportion of learners who achieve GCSE English and mathematics qualifications at

grade 4 or above is high. The small proportion of learners working towards qualifications at entry level in functional skills in English and/or mathematics mostly achieve their qualifications.

- Current learners make good progress in their studies. On creative arts programmes, learners develop good skills and often produce work of a high commercial standard. For example, in a beginners' class in woodworking, learners skilfully carved and shaped wood into three-dimensional objects such as small birds and kitchen utensils. In jewellery-making, learners experimented with different casting techniques to make identical earrings, pendants and bracelet charms to their own design.
- Too few learners who enrol on ESOL programmes achieve their writing or reading qualifications. Teachers do not focus closely enough on encouraging learners to review and scrutinise their own work for spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors. Over time, the proportion of learners achieving their reading qualification continues to decline. Most learners working towards ESOL speaking and listening qualifications pass their examinations.
- Small differences in achievement rates exist between different groups of learners. Female learners achieve better than their male peers. In 2017/18, learners who require additional help to achieve their learning programmes did slightly less well.
- In 2017/18, the achievement of the small proportion of learners on qualification-based programmes at level 2 was low. Too few learners working towards qualifications in hairdressing and medical administration achieved their qualifications.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	130403
Type of provider	Community learning and skills
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	4,100
Principal	Helen Hammond
Telephone number	0207 255 4700
Website	<a href="http://www.wmcollege.ac.uk">www.wmcollege.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)	0	3,215	0	273	40	34	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:	N/A							



## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the deputy principal, 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, and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions and assessments. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

## Inspection team

Jules Steele, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Philida Schellekens	Ofsted Inspector
Saul Pope	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Stanley	Her Majesty's Inspector
Linnia Khemdoudi	Ofsted Inspector

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