

Bromley London Borough Council

Local authority

Inspection dates

15–18 January 2019

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

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- The proportion of learners who achieved their accredited qualifications improved dramatically in 2017/18 and is now high.
- Almost all learners on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programmes achieve their qualifications.
- The proportion of learners who achieve a grade 4 or above in GCSE English and mathematics is high.
- Learners' attendance has improved across most programmes and is now high.
- Well-qualified and skilful teachers, with current relevant experience, demonstrate expert knowledge that motivates and enthuses learners to achieve.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, leading to improved outcomes for learners.
- Leaders and managers work very effectively with partners to ensure that the curriculum fully meets the needs of disadvantaged adults.
- Leaders and managers do not collect and analyse a wide enough range of information and data; as a result, they are not able to evaluate fully the impact of their provision on learners once they have completed their courses.
- Too few teachers use a sufficient range of assessment methods to check what learners can do and understand as a result of their studies.
- Senior leaders have ensured that the curriculum of Bromley Adult Education College (BAEC) effectively meets the needs of adult learners locally.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Bromley Adult Education College (BAEC) is part of the London Borough of Bromley (LBB) and provides adult and community learning across the borough through its main sites and in 35 community learning settings. Bromley is one of the most prosperous areas of Greater London, though some of its wards are among the most deprived in England. Unemployment within the borough is low.
- BAEC provides part-time learning for adults seeking vocational qualifications from entry level to level 2 in ESOL, information and communication technology (ICT) and English and mathematics. Programmes for enjoyment and interest include subjects in arts, media and publishing, and modern foreign languages. Programmes provided in partnership include family learning, provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and craft-based programmes for elderly residents of local care homes. Most learners are female.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the small amount of teaching, learning and assessment that is not of a high standard, by ensuring that teachers use a sufficient range of assessment strategies to assess learners' understanding and their progress over time accurately.
- Ensure that leaders and managers collect and analyse a wider range of information and data, such as learners' next steps on completion of their programmes, the reasons for the low participation of male learners and the impact of programmes on those that LBB specifically seeks to help.
- Use this information to further strengthen the positive impact BAEC has on the adult learners of Bromley, in particular to:
 - understand how learners' current programme choices influence the programmes they choose in future
 - understand fully the impact of careers advice and guidance on the lives of adult users
 - inform the planning of the curriculum to continue to make best use of available funding.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders have taken strong and decisive action to improve the achievements of learners on ESOL programmes and the quality and consistency of teaching, learning and assessment. Most ESOL learners achieve their qualification and much teaching is good. Leaders and managers have achieved this against the background of service-wide restructuring, a significant reduction in teaching staff and consolidating qualification-based learning into the two remaining centres in Orpington and Penge. Staff morale remains high.
- Leaders and managers work very effectively with colleagues at the LBB to provide a curriculum that best meets the requirements of adults in Bromley. For example, BAEC provides family learning in children's centres and primary schools as part of the borough strategy to improve underperforming schools. Adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities living in sheltered housing benefit from the valuable opportunity to continue learning and to engage with their local community, through arts, drama and dance programmes.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Leaders and managers have developed a wide range of approaches to improve teachers' practice. They evaluate thoroughly the impact of training on improving the quality of the learners' experience. Teachers and staff understand the improvements required of them and willingly undertake training. They and their learners welcome observations of learning.
- Leaders' and managers' assessment of the college's performance is detailed, thorough and accurate. Quality monitoring is rigorous and strengthened further by new curriculum leaders who help and guide staff appropriately. Staff at all levels have a realistic understanding of the strengths and areas to improve and are committed to raising standards still further.
- Managers monitor performance, including that of subcontractor partners, closely and efficiently. They take swift and decisive action to remedy poor-quality provision. For example, they terminated contracts with subcontractors providing programmes for adults with fragile mental health when outcomes for learners were not good enough and value for money was not maintained.
- Leaders and managers make very effective use of the funding available for adult learning. The curriculum reflects clearly the strategic priorities of LBB to give adults the skills needed to improve their economic prospects. Good-quality English and mathematics provision remains a high priority and has led to good outcomes for learners. Managers ensure that careers advice and guidance are readily available for the adults of Bromley.
- Leaders, managers and staff have improved the accuracy and timeliness of information with which to monitor the quality of learning and the learners' experience, including data on attendance and learners' achievements. In doing this, they have tackled a weakness identified at the previous inspection. Leaders recognise that more work is required to capture, analyse and act upon data that reflects the impact of their work. For example, they have insufficient information on learners' next steps on completion of their learning, the impact and usefulness of careers advice and guidance, or how effectively the

provision meets the needs of disadvantaged adults.

The governance of the provider

- Governance arrangements are highly effective. Senior leaders at LBB hold leaders and managers of BAEC to account for their actions and have worked closely with them to make the improvements the previous inspection identified. In recognising the significant investment in time and expertise required for curriculum management, LBB provided additional funds for the appointment of new curriculum leaders to help senior leaders effect sustained improvement.
- A good range of senior-level expertise is apparent among board members. Representatives from adult social care, the local further education college, the voluntary sector and community leaders, as well as LBB's director of education, support and challenge leaders and managers of BAEC in their mission to provide high-quality learning for the adults of Bromley.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers ensure that the good cross-borough safeguarding initiatives help learners to improve their own safety and that of their families and communities. Learners benefit from wide-ranging access to useful information on subjects such as self-harm, forced marriage and mental ill-health.
- Leaders and managers ensure that the relevant safeguarding policies and procedures, including those for recruiting staff who are safe to work with learners, are in place. They implement these policies effectively to promote a strong culture of vigilance and safety.
- All staff are trained to identify and act upon any instances of learners potentially becoming radicalised. Many teachers work hard to build learners' resilience and understanding of the dangers posed by those with radical and/or extreme views. For example, they teach learners how to remain safe while using the internet and social media, discuss current affairs in their lessons, and are attuned to changes in learners' behaviour. However, a significant minority of learners interviewed by inspectors have a limited recollection of the training and advice they received at the beginning of their programme.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Since the previous inspection, managers have taken effective action to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Teachers have benefited from carefully designed and successfully implemented training to help them improve their skills as teachers. Recently appointed curriculum leaders help and guide teachers to consolidate their training effectively.
- Much teaching, learning and assessment is of a high standard. Skilful teachers use their specialist subject knowledge fully to provide good-quality learning that motivates and stimulates learners. Most learners develop a good understanding of the subject they are studying, and work hard to refine and improve their own practice. For example, in

photography, learners' portfolios demonstrate the ability to apply a wide range of photographic techniques to enhance and polish their work.

- The most effective teachers focus closely on encouraging learners to reflect, analyse and think critically. In classroom discussions, these teachers guide learners carefully to discuss thoughtfully and to critique the work of others. In GCSE mathematics, teachers use disciplined and thoughtful dialogue and questioning to help learners develop an insight into why they may have made errors in their calculations. In interior design, learners have project briefs that require them to think critically about ways to apply their new knowledge to the design of a specific room or building.
- Additional help provided to learners is comprehensive and ensures that they make good progress. Teachers work efficiently with learning support colleagues, discussing and agreeing in lessons how best to help learners achieve their personal learning goals. ESOL learners benefit from well-attended drop-in workshops that improve their study skills. Teachers provide effective strategies for those learners requiring help with dyslexia. Online mathematics revision prepares learners effectively for external tests and is valued highly by learners.
- Teachers ensure that community learning programmes are carefully tailored for the specific requirements of those adults who prefer to learn in a less formal environment. Programmes provide good opportunities for adults to take their first steps in learning or to return to learning after many years. Learners with fragile mental health report that attending helps them improve their own well-being, develop greater resilience and feel less isolated. Parenting skills programmes enable parents to help their own children develop good behaviour and effective study skills. A dance class gives learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities the opportunity to take part in performances and to work with professional dancers.
- Learners benefit from helpful and insightful comments on their work and most know the progress they are making. Teachers' feedback includes comments that enable learners to improve their work further.
- Staff at all levels have created a supportive and welcoming atmosphere for learners. Displays on the walls and in cabinets show that teachers and managers value learners' work. Learners feel safe and have the confidence to raise any potential issues of concern with their teachers.
- The teaching on mathematics and English programmes is good overall and particularly good in mathematics. Teachers have a well-developed understanding of learners' progress, and the skills and knowledge they need to acquire in order to succeed in their examinations and in their life and work. In functional skills, learners' lateness to lessons and poor attendance hamper progress for many.
- A few teachers do not demonstrate a sufficient range of strategies to assess learning. They do not routinely plan tasks that enable them to understand fully what learners have understood and can apply. These teachers do not capture consistently learners' progress from their starting points.
- Many learners make effective use of the digital drop-in sessions and open access to the college computers to improve their work and their information and technology skills. However, the digital system is outdated and does not always function fully.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Learners are courteous and respectful of their teachers and peers in classes, around the college and in the many community venues used by BAEC. Teachers, particularly those teaching in community venues, are skilful in helping learners to settle quickly and to become comfortable with their peers when they start a new programme.
- Learners become expert listeners by sharing their views and personal experiences through the tasks and activities they undertake in lessons. For example, in interior design classes, learners compare their views about the lighting they use in their own homes, and older residents of a care home share recollections of their youth when using photos to make scrapbooks.
- Learners' attendance has improved across almost all programmes and is high. Attendance was an area for improvement at the previous inspection. Teachers and learners have a clear understanding of the importance of regular attendance. Managers monitor attendance closely and ensure that teachers follow up quickly any non-attendance.
- Learners enjoy their learning immensely. They gain new skills, and many improve and refine their existing skills and knowledge. On programmes such as 'upcycling', learners enhance their sewing skills through using a wide range of decorative machine stitches. Elderly residents in local care homes learn new skills through using beads to make ornamental placemats, while others practise their knitting and crochet skills.
- Learners benefit from good opportunities to enhance and extend their knowledge and learning through the external visits and activities planned by teachers. For example, learners on ESOL programmes take advantage of the borough libraries' reading scheme to read for pleasure and broaden the language they use in their everyday conversation. In photography, learners visit parks to observe and record everyday life. Frequent trips to the local cathedral provide very good opportunities to refine their techniques in photographing architecture.
- Managers and staff across the college ensure that learners receive useful and impartial advice on the most appropriate programmes to study. Teachers make effective use of the results of pre-course assessments to ensure that learners are on the right level of programme.
- Learners have access to appropriate advice on all aspects of career planning. Suitably qualified staff provide learners with frequent opportunities to plan and review their work and study options. The college provides a weekly digital drop-in work club to help local unemployed adults find work. Staff help them to search for jobs online, refine their job application letters and learn how to use social media effectively to network and engage with potential employers. Teachers are well connected in their professional fields and provide good subject-specific advice and guidance that help learners evaluate their opportunities for work and further study. Managers do not yet evaluate the effectiveness of the careers advice and planning, or record learners' next steps as a result of the advice and guidance they receive.
- Learners feel and are safe while studying at BAEC. Staff at all levels focus closely on learners improving their understanding of how to keep themselves and their families safe. For example, as part of the recent safeguarding awareness week, learners benefited from the work of the LBB trading standards officer, who helped learners to recognise the

potential dangers posed by unsolicited emails and bogus doorstep callers.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- In 2017/18, the proportion of learners who achieved their accredited qualifications improved dramatically and was high. This improvement was largely due to most learners on ESOL programmes achieving their qualifications successfully.
- The proportion of learners who achieve high grades in GCSE English and mathematics remains high; most achieve grades 4 to 9. Learners are committed to learning and improving their skills, and the majority succeed in this intention, by, for example, furthering their careers or being able to help their children with their homework.
- Learners on ESOL programmes develop good reading and writing skills. They become confident in writing letters of a professional standard and pay close attention to increasing their vocabulary by consciously developing their use of new words in their everyday conversations.
- Learners develop and improve their social skills as a result of their learning. Many speak positively about how the friendships they develop in lessons reduce their feelings of isolation. For example, parents of pre-school children talk about how the help they receive from their peers gives them the courage and strength they need to become better parents. Elderly residents living in sheltered housing report that the friendship and company they enjoy while taking part in craft courses give their lives new meaning and relevance.
- The standard of learners' work is often high. In photography, learners produce work of the highest standard, and many achieve success in external competitions. In modern foreign language lessons, learners quickly become skilful at using the target language, and are adept at sensitively correcting their own and their peers' pronunciation and verb endings.
- Not all learners achieve equally well. For example, learners on entry-level qualifications have high achievement, while too few learners at level 2 succeed in passing their qualifications. Learners on functional skills English and mathematics, British Sign Language and counselling at level 2 have noticeably low achievement.
- Managers have a limited understanding of learners' next steps on completion of their programme; they do not know what proportion of learners continue to another level of accredited learning. The information that managers currently collect does not reflect the broad range of programmes on offer at BAEC or provide managers with sufficient information with which to refine further their curriculum offer.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53108
Type of provider	Adult and community learning
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	3,411
Principal/CEO	Carol Arnfield
Telephone number	020 8659 7976
Website	www.baec.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	1,999	0	259	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:	0							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of The Poverest Centre, 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 in the community and in BAEC centres. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Jules Steele, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Jon Bowman	Her Majesty's Inspector
Joyce Deere	Ofsted Inspector

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