

Nacro

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates

4–7 March 2019

Overall effectiveness			Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	16 to 19 study programmes	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good	Adult learning programmes	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good	Apprenticeships	Good
Outcomes for learners	Good	Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Requires improvement

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Leaders, managers and staff hold high ambitions for learners that help them make good progress, achieve well and take positive next steps in their education and employment.
- Leaders and managers have made significant improvements to the quality of provision since the previous inspection.
- Trustees' and senior leaders' close scrutiny of the provision ensures that the improvements needed take place quickly.
- Centre and area managers play a major role in ensuring that learners receive a good-quality education. For example, they develop work experience placements that help learners gain the knowledge and skills they need for employment.
- Managers ensure that learners in subcontracted provision receive the same, good-quality education and support as other learners.
- The progress that current learners make from their starting points is good and the large majority achieve well.
- Teachers enable learners who have a history of repeatedly starting and not finishing courses to stay and achieve. A high proportion of learners gain qualifications for the first time.
- Teachers guide learners skilfully to make important small steps in their learning. This gives learners the confidence and belief that they can achieve.
- Learners grow in confidence and develop their personal and social skills rapidly. They behave well and treat each other with respect.
- Learners develop pride in their work and the gains they make in their skills and knowledge.
- In a few subjects, teachers' feedback on learners' work does not help learners to improve their skills.
- Attendance is improving but remains low, mainly in English and mathematics lessons, and overall requires improvement.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Nacro is a national social justice charity which provides education, housing, offender management and substance misuse treatment services across England and Wales. A council of trustees has oversight of the charity's work. The chief executive officer (CEO) devolves the management of education and training to the principal/director of education and skills. Currently Nacro subcontracts a small proportion of provision out to two partner organisations.
- Learning centres and subcontractors at 16 centres across the country provide 16 to 19 study programmes, apprenticeships and adult learning programmes. At Totton College, Nacro also delivers discrete provision for high-needs learners. Most learners are on 16 to 19 study programmes. A very high proportion of learners live in low-income households, have low prior educational attainment, special educational needs, and are offenders, in care or are care leavers.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Increase the attendance of learners, including those attending English and mathematics lessons.
- Improve teaching and learning, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers help learners to learn at a pace that is right for them
 - providing feedback to learners on their work that helps them to improve their skills.
- Increase the proportion of learners who achieve a grade 4 or above in English and mathematics, and who pass their level 2 functional skills examinations in these subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Through highly effective performance management arrangements, leaders and managers have made significant improvements to the quality of provision since the previous inspection. They have redesigned the study programme to good effect. As a result, fewer learners leave before completing their programmes, and more achieve their qualifications.
- Leaders, managers and staff work tirelessly to minimise poor performance and raise the standard of education. Their actions ensure that the quality of education across centres is consistently good and learners achieve well at whatever training centre they attend.
- Leaders and managers have a thorough understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of provision, based on their good use of performance data. Their self-assessment of the effectiveness of the provision is accurate. As a result, they target action well to make the improvements needed.
- Leaders, managers and staff hold high ambitions for their learners and successfully engage young people and adults who experience multiple disadvantage and barriers to learning. Throughout the organisation, they promote a caring and aspirational culture that helps learners to make good progress, achieve well and take positive next steps in their education and employment.
- Measures to monitor and improve teaching, learning and assessment are effective. Observations of teaching, learning and assessment are accurate. Staff development and training improve teaching and build the capacity and skills of teachers well. Managers have taken effective action to help teachers to develop better learners' English and mathematical skills. This is leading to a notable increase in the proportion of learners who achieve their English and mathematics functional skills qualifications.
- Managers frequently monitor the quality of provision Nacro delivers through subcontracting arrangements. They are quick to identify and respond to any decline in performance. This ensures that learners at subcontractors receive the same, good-quality teaching, pastoral support and enrichment opportunities as other learners.
- Operational management is effective. For example, at centres, managers play an important role in developing local partnerships that ensure that learners get the help they need for their mental well-being. Managers have successfully improved the availability and effectiveness of work experience for young people. They track and monitor learners' progress well and ensure that learners get the help they need to stay on track in their learning.
- Managers work effectively with local employers to develop the curriculum. They consider carefully a wide range of factors, including labour market intelligence on growing employment sectors such as warehousing and logistics. In the large majority of centres, the curriculum offer reflects local employment opportunities well.
- Managers ensure that learners benefit from effective careers advice and guidance. As a result, many move into further learning and employment. Managers form effective local links that enhance the careers guidance that learners receive. For example, in Middlesbrough, they have established an effective relationship with the Royal Navy, which

visits the centre regularly to raise awareness of career prospects in the Navy.

The governance of the provider

- Governance arrangements are highly effective. Trustees and the CEO have excellent knowledge and understanding of the provision. Together with senior leaders and staff, they have helped drive the improvements made. Through very effective and frequent scrutiny of the provision, trustees and the CEO have contributed significantly to the rapid improvements in the quality of provision. They ensure that the actions that managers take are looked at closely to ensure that they have an impact.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders, managers and staff place a very high priority on safeguarding learners. Managers provide effective oversight of safeguarding arrangements. They use external scrutiny well to provide assurance on the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. They make sure that all necessary pre-employment checks are undertaken to verify that staff are suitable to work with young people and vulnerable adults.
- At centres, managers and staff have a good understanding of local safeguarding issues such as county lines and the dangers of extremism. For example, at the Chatham centre, staff have a good awareness of the risk to young people of criminal exploitation through gangs. They demonstrate vigilance in watching for the signs of exploitation such as learners being pressurised to use their bank accounts for money laundering. When staff need to act to safeguard learners, they do so effectively.
- Leaders and managers have responded effectively to the 'Prevent' duty. British values are effectively promoted at centres and most learners develop well their understanding of the dangers of extremism and radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers carefully assess the skills and knowledge of learners at the start of their courses. This means that learners start on a course that is right for them. Teachers regularly record the progress that learners make and are fully aware of learners' developing capabilities throughout their course.
- Teachers care well for their learners and are aware of their vulnerabilities. They provide effective targeted support for learners. They are patient and listen carefully to learners. Learners trust their teachers. For many learners, this care and attention were missing from their previous experience of education.
- Teachers build learners' confidence well so that learners overcome their barriers to learning. They understand learners' complex needs and provide them with the help they need to complete their studies. Most teachers plan lessons effectively for different groups of learners and, as a result, learners develop their skills and knowledge well.
- Teachers are adept at breaking down concepts so that learners can make good progress. Teachers make sure that learners understand the topics that they are teaching. Teachers guide learners skilfully to make important small steps in their learning and so learners

work with increasing independence.

- Teachers use their expertise well to enrich learning. This includes using training that they have had in order to support vulnerable learners who have mental health problems. Teachers create real-life working environments that closely reflect industry standards. Consequently, learners gain a good insight into what is expected in the world of work.
- Teachers are accomplished at improving learners' English and mathematical skills and knowledge. They use information and communication technology (ICT) effectively to help learners understand key concepts. They engage learners in meaningful and thought-provoking tasks, which learners enjoy trying to solve. Teachers prepare learners well for functional skills examinations. Learners show improved confidence and skills when performing calculations and writing tasks that they had struggled with for years.
- In a small minority of lessons, teachers do not help learners to learn at a pace that is right for them. For example, a few learners do not complete tasks as they do not grasp the essence of the content being taught. In a few lessons, learning activities do not address the needs of the most able learners, who became distracted and lose focus.
- In a few subjects, teachers' feedback on learners' work does not help them to improve their skills. Feedback does not help learners improve their work. In their feedback, teachers affirm what learners do well, but not what they need to do to improve further.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Teachers work skilfully with learners to help them to become more self-confident and self-assured. Learners value the support they receive. They develop a positive attitude to learning, take increasing pride in their work, and grow in confidence and self-esteem.
- Since the previous inspection, managers and teachers have strengthened links with employers. This has enabled teachers to arrange for a high proportion of learners to complete meaningful work experience and work-related activities in a wide range of settings such as shops, farms, garages and hospitals. These placements enable learners to acquire and improve their workplace skills in areas such as time management and customer service.
- Staff devise imaginative projects for learners who do not yet have the breadth of skills they need to complete an external work placement with an employer. For example, at one centre, a group of learners organised and ran a coffee morning to raise money for a national cancer charity. Learners promoted the event, prepared food and hosted visitors. This helped them develop a broad range of skills, including working cooperatively with others.
- Learners improve their English, mathematical and ICT skills and knowledge well. Teachers frequently create good opportunities in lessons for learners to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. This helps learners make progress on their course. For example, long-term unemployed adult learners develop basic word-processing and internet skills to produce posters and presentations. This helps them to build their confidence and acquire the skills they need to apply for Universal Credit online.
- Most learners develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to increase their employment prospects. For example, catering learners confidently prepared a variety of pancakes for other learners at their centre to celebrate pancake day. They demonstrated

their understanding of food hygiene and safe working practices when following a recipe.

- Learners behave well in lessons. Most arrive suitably prepared; they are attentive, take notes when required, and play an active part in lesson activities. Learners show tolerance and respect to each other and to staff.
- Teachers provide suitable careers advice and guidance to learners and create opportunities for them to attend local job fairs. This helps learners understand how to prepare for, and move on to, the next stage of their education and training, or into employment.
- Learners have a sound understanding of how to stay safe. They feel safe in their respective centres and know what actions to take if they feel threatened or at risk. The atmosphere at the centres is welcoming and supportive. As a result, learners feel at ease.
- Most learners develop well their understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, how to keep themselves safe online and the importance of British values. However, a small minority do not. While managers have improved the attendance of learners markedly since the previous inspection, attendance is still too low in a minority of lessons, including in English and mathematics.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- A high proportion of learners successfully complete their studies. The proportion of learners completing their courses has increased considerably since the previous inspection. The dedicated work of staff ensures that most learners have the resilience to stay to the end of their course.
- Many learners improve their social skills. Staff help learners to make a marked improvement in their application to their studies.
- Most learners gain the qualifications and skills they need for their next steps in education, training or employment. The proportion of learners who achieve their qualifications has increased since the previous inspection. Most learners on the largest area of learning, the study programme, achieve well. Most adults and apprentices achieve their qualifications.
- The large majority of learners achieve their functional English and mathematics qualifications. Three quarters of all learners start their learning with low educational attainment. A high proportion achieve their first entry-level qualifications in English and mathematics. The vast majority of apprentices pass their English and mathematics qualifications first time.
- The standard of learners' work is good. Learners produce accomplished work. Learners studying for motor vehicle qualifications quickly become adept at changing wheels and exhaust systems. They skilfully take out and install clutch systems. Most apprentices develop new skills that enable them to make an effective contribution to their employers' businesses.
- Most learners make good progress from often low educational starting points. The proportion of learners who are now making sustained progress over time has increased and is high.
- Almost all learners go on to higher level courses in education or move into sustained employment. Learners for whom the provider receives high-needs funding go on to higher

level study programmes or places at university. Most apprentices are employed following the completion of their apprenticeship and go on to study for higher level qualifications.

- A small minority of learners do not achieve the qualifications they came for. For example, of the handful of learners who take English and mathematics GCSEs, too few achieve high grades. Not enough learners achieve their functional skills qualifications at level 2. Too few of the very small proportion who are on level 4 apprenticeships achieve, and a few vocational courses have low achievement rates.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- Study programmes make up the majority of the provision. At the time of the inspection, 1,340 learners studied at levels 1 to 3, with the large majority on level 1 programmes of study. Most learners follow vocational pathways in retail, motor vehicle and construction.
- The large majority of learners on study programmes achieve well and complete their learning. Managers and staff plan the study programme carefully so that it provides learners with the best chance to succeed. As a result, the retention and achievement of learners have improved and are now good.
- Learners make good progress from their starting points. The assessment of learners' abilities when they start their studies is very thorough. Staff continue to evaluate learners' progress and individual needs throughout the programme. Through comprehensive induction arrangements, staff put in place the personal and academic support learners need. This helps learners make a good start on their programme and ensures that they make good progress.
- Teachers in vocational lessons develop learners' English and mathematical skills well by using examples in lessons that relate to learners' career interests. For example, motor vehicle learners use micrometres accurately to measure brake pads. Painting and decorating learners know how to measure walls to calculate the number of tiles that are needed to cover them for the lowest cost. In retail lessons, teachers enable learners to develop the technical vocabulary needed to progress in their careers.
- Staff ensure that relevant work experience is widely available for learners. For example, learners participate in initiatives such as the ambassador scheme, which provides them with extensive opportunities to work with local employers. Consequently, learners with a challenging range of personal and social barriers to learning improve their employability, and personal and social skills. They approach the next stage of their training or employment with confidence.
- The large majority of learners benefit from good careers advice and guidance that focus on existing job opportunities. Careers advisers and teachers work collaboratively to provide learners with this service. Learners, many of whom previously had low aspirations, become clear about their next steps and are ambitious for the future. However, in a small minority of centres, learners are unclear as to whom to talk to about progression to the next steps in training or careers.
- The large majority of learners progress to education, training or employment. Most learners stay in learning, and many others find employment, often at employers with

whom they completed their work experience.

Adult learning programmes

Good

- At the time of inspection, around 300 adult learners attended centres in Totton, Walsall, Sandwell, Sheffield, Wisbech and Boston. The majority study at entry level and take courses in English, mathematics, ICT and English for speakers of other languages. A small proportion study a range of vocational qualifications such as health and social care, childcare and hairdressing.
- The courses offered provide a valuable range of basic knowledge and skills to learners, essential to their success in employment, further training and in their personal lives. Managers maintain very effective links with a broad range of partner organisations. This ensures that those adults who have personal, social or emotional problems, such as those relating to mental health, domestic violence and substance misuse, are successfully engaged in learning. For example, job centres refer many learners who have been unemployed for a significant period of time to improve their chances of employment.
- Learners on vocational programmes acquire good skills and knowledge which help improve their employment prospects. Many gain relevant work experience. For example, a group of learners on a media programme produced a promotional video for a local heritage charity that helped them to acquire the skills and experience they need.
- Learners receive good advice and guidance on going on to further education and training, or into employment. A high proportion of learners on entry level and level 1 programmes continue to higher level courses.
- Staff work well with learners to develop their confidence and the skills they need to take charge of their own lives. Learners on short programmes progress to more substantial courses. Over the course of their study they gain the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to successfully gain places at university.
- Learners' attendance is good in most centres; however, it is too low on a few courses. Learners are generally punctual to lessons. However, occasionally, they are slow to return to learning activities after breaks. This sometimes leads to low-level disruption for other learners.
- Learners feel safe in the centres. They know to whom they should speak if they have any problems or concerns. They develop a suitable understanding of e-safety and the risks associated with extremism and radicalisation.

Apprenticeships

Good

- There are currently 87 apprentices enrolled on apprenticeships in a range of sectors, the largest of which are management and team leading, hairdressing, health and social care, and business and administration. Two thirds of apprentices are adults. A third of apprentices are on advanced-level apprenticeships and two thirds are at intermediate level. Most 16–18 year-olds are on intermediate apprenticeships. There are 23 apprentices on standards qualifications in business and administration, care and hairdressing. The large majority of these are on intermediate apprenticeships.

- Current apprentices make good progress and are on track to complete their qualification in a timely way. If an apprentice falls behind in the programme, staff help the apprentice get back on track. On completing their apprenticeship, the large majority of apprentices remain in the same sector and most gain promotion within three months of completing their qualification.
- Apprentices develop their understanding of the professional standards of their sector and their wider knowledge through a good range of activities. These include training at their employer, external visits, and workshops and study days at college. Staff carefully monitor and record apprentices' off-the-job training.
- The vast majority of apprentices develop new skills and knowledge that enable them to make an effective contribution to their employers' businesses. Many apprentices gain additional responsibilities at work early in their programme. A small minority of apprentices in health and social care and team leading who are existing employees do not develop sufficient new skills in their workplace. However, these apprentices learn new knowledge which directly benefits their employers and service users.
- Apprentices develop good English and mathematical skills as a result of the high-quality teaching they receive from tutors and assessors. The majority achieve first-time passes and apply their new knowledge and skills in the workplace.
- Apprenticeships are well planned and managed to meet the principles and requirements of an apprenticeship. Employers understand off-the-job training requirements. All apprentices receive their entitlement to this training.
- Managers have effective relationships with local employers, who value highly the support they receive. Learners develop a good insight into their long-term career prospects and wider training opportunities. This has a positive impact on the retention of current apprentices. Staff work closely with employers to plan the training and monitor apprentices' progress.
- Assessors and teachers provide good professional and pastoral support to apprentices. They have a detailed knowledge of their apprentices' progress and personal welfare needs, and they use this information effectively to set realistic targets and plan future training.

Provision for learners with high needs

Good

- There are 82 learners at Totton College for whom Nacro receives high-needs funding. Of these, 57 are enrolled on foundation courses that focus on independent living, employability and life skills. The remaining learners study on a range of vocational courses at levels 1 to 3.
- Provision for learners with high needs meets the individual requirements of learners well. Staff manage effectively learners' transition from school to college. Staff help learners settle well into college because of the effective links they have with local authorities, schools, parents and carers, and support agencies.
- Managers consult well with the local authority and ensure that statutory requirements of learners' education, health and care (EHC) plans are met. Staff identify learners' needs accurately and in a timely way. This leads to the effective use of the funding to provide

practical support to learners.

- Learners on vocational programmes integrate well with their peers and have appropriate support to complete tasks and achieve. On these courses, learners achieve at a level well above that of their peers.
- Managers ensure that work experience is provided to the large majority of learners. A few learners carry out work experience at the college that builds their confidence well and is followed by an external placement. These opportunities improve the skills of the learners and their chances of paid employment.
- The personal care provided for learners is effective in helping them to make progress. Learners who require specialist therapies benefit from good occupational therapy, physiotherapy, and speech and language therapy. A full-time nurse liaises effectively with external bodies to ensure that external specialist support is in place for learners.
- Staff assess learners' progress effectively on courses that do not lead to a qualification. Teachers set learners personal targets and frequently track the steps learners take to achieve them. This close tracking by teachers enables learners to understand the progress they are making and identify their next steps. Formal qualifications enhance the employability prospects of learners.
- Staff provide good careers advice and guidance to learners. A careers adviser contributes to the annual review of learners EHC plans. As a result, learners make independent choices and decisions about life after college with a good awareness of their options.
- Several learners progress to paid employment and university after taking higher level programmes. Staff work effectively with other providers to ensure that learners whose needs cannot be met at the college are directed towards more appropriate provision. As a result, learners are successfully supported onto other further education or training, volunteering in the community, or employment. A few learners are ready to live more independently.
- A minority of teachers do not provide tasks and activities that interest and challenge learners and do not routinely check learners' understanding. As a result, a small number of learners are not sufficiently involved in the learning process and do not make progress as swiftly as they could.

Provider details

Unique reference number	50170
Type of provider	Independent learning provider
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	3,395
CEO	Jacob Tas
Telephone number	0207 902 5426
Website	www.nacro.org.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)	955	121	266	134	56	42	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	17	35	10	20	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	14		2		16			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	86							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Five E Workpays							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the principal and director of education and skills, 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

Jon Bowman, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
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