

Poplar Housing and Regeneration Community Association Limited

Monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 1270753

Name of lead inspector: Andy Fitt, Her Majesty's Inspector

Inspection date(s): 27–28 June 2019

Type of provider: Not-for-profit organisation

Address: 167A East India Dock Road
London
E14 0EA



Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From March 2019, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of adult learning provision which began to be funded from August 2017 or after by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the 'Further education and skills inspection handbook', especially the sections entitled 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly funded to deliver adult learning provision' and 'Monitoring visits'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

Poplar Housing and Regeneration Community Association (Poplar HARCA) is based in East London and serves the training needs of the residents of Tower Hamlets. They deliver short courses lasting between four and six weeks alongside longer courses in English as a second language (ESOL) at entry level. Most short courses are at level 2 and are based around the needs of the National Health Service (NHS). Learners study courses such as safeguarding, information, advice and guidance and the study of common health conditions. Currently around 60 adult learners study at Poplar HARCA, with most of these studying ESOL programmes. Poplar HARCA does not use subcontractors.

Themes

How much progress have leaders and managers made in designing and delivering relevant adult learning provision that has a clearly defined purpose? Reasonable progress

Leaders have a clear rationale for their provision. They concentrate well on preparing local residents, many of whom have been unemployed for some time, for employment, particularly in the NHS. They have designed the curriculum carefully around the courses that give learners training in NHS values, basic safeguarding and employability skills. Leaders prioritise well qualifications that are useful in the workplace. They react quickly to requests for further courses. For example, leaders introduced a new course in counselling to help learners with high instances of mental health problems. Their very close links with Poplar Housing Association make sure that they are fully aware of the needs of residents in Tower Hamlets.

Leaders and managers have formed strong links with the local authority as well as employers and local agencies. Staff in these agencies value the clear communication with leaders at Poplar HARCA. They appreciate the way that leaders design flexible learning programmes that meet the needs of employers.

Leaders analyse the strengths and weaknesses of their provision accurately. They plan well to improve weaknesses. New annual quality improvement meetings help

leaders and managers analyse the actions that they are taking to improve the quality of the provision. Leaders understand the need to develop a more consistent approach to help learners improve their English, mathematics and digital skills.

Members of an advisory board hold leaders to account effectively. The advisory group focuses clearly on the impact of courses that leaders offer.

Leaders concentrate well on the impact of their programmes. They understand which courses help learners to find employment. Although they analyse learners' destinations carefully, leaders recognise the need to show the impact of their courses in more detail by looking at long-term destinations. A high proportion of those who start courses without jobs move into employment after their programmes.

How much progress have leaders and managers made to ensure that learners benefit from high-quality adult education that prepares them well for their intended job role, career aim and/or personal goals? **Reasonable progress**

Learners enjoy their courses. Their trainers are skilled and knowledgeable. Learners value the content of the courses they study and almost all make good progress. Learners improve their confidence and become better at communicating with tutors and health professionals. Those who take short courses develop useful skills which improve their employment prospects. They learn how to present information clearly and improve their time management and interview skills. Staff help learners to appreciate different cultures through events such as Black History Month and topics about the foods they eat.

Staff carry out thorough initial assessments to find out what learners already know. Learners receive a detailed induction. This ensures that they are on the right level of programme and are aware of the demands of their courses. Staff identify learners' additional support needs effectively and ensure that most receive the support they need to complete their programmes on time. Almost all learners remain on their courses and achieve their qualifications.

Tutors give learners detailed feedback on their written work. Most learners know how to improve their work. Although tutors help learners to develop their English skills effectively, few learners develop their mathematics skills during their programmes. Staff do not assess learners' digital skills at the start of most programmes.

Managers track learners' progress through their qualifications in detail. They check the progress that learners studying ESOL make with the development of wider and personal skills. Managers are aware of the need to develop a similar system for non-ESOL learners.

Leaders' observations of teaching, learning and assessment provide an accurate evaluation of the quality of provision. They set tutors clear targets on how to improve but do not focus their subsequent observations sufficiently on ensuring that tutors have improved all the weaknesses identified in prior observations.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Reasonable progress

Learners feel safe. They discuss safeguarding with staff during induction and know how to report concerns. Staff have suitable security systems in place on computers in all centres to make sure that learners cannot access inappropriate material. They use safer recruitment procedures.

All staff undergo appropriate training to make sure that they can recognise safeguarding concerns and report them quickly. The safeguarding lead for education records the few safeguarding concerns in detail and involves local agencies when appropriate. Leaders have recognised the need for the safeguarding lead to have higher-level safeguarding qualifications, which she has very nearly completed.

Leaders have a clear strategy to fulfil their obligations under the 'Prevent' duty. Although staff are aware of local threats facing learners they do not communicate these to learners in enough detail. As a result, learners have only a basic understanding of how to keep themselves safe from radicalisation and extremism.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
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