

Short inspection of Lambeth Adult Learning Service

Inspection dates: 29–30 October 2019

Outcome

Lambeth Adult Learning Service continues to be a good provider.

Information about this provider

Lambeth Adult Learning Service (LALS) is part of Lambeth London Borough Council. LALS offers around 500 accredited and community learning courses each year, taught in 150 community venues across the borough. It delivers all learning through five subcontractors: Morley College, High Trees, Spires, Training Associates and London Learning Consortium. At the time of the inspection, approximately 630 learners were enrolled on a range of predominantly non-accredited courses, including family learning, health and well-being, digital skills, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), English, mathematics, pre-employment training and employability skills. In the previous academic year, a total of around 3,200 learners studied with LALS.

The main aim of LALS is to widen participation and promote social and economic inclusion. These priorities align with the council's borough-wide plan to reduce inequality and build strong and sustainable neighbourhoods. Managers from LALS help ensure the borough's priorities also align with the priorities of London-wide organisations, such as the Greater London Authority.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

Learners at LALS value the opportunities they have to engage in the community through learning. They enjoy acquiring new skills and knowledge, which helps them progress in their studies, improve their job prospects and find employment.

Learners benefit from activities that take place in venues local to where they live. For example, lessons in a children's centre enable learners to concentrate on their studies, knowing that others are caring for their children and keeping them safe.

Tutors are friendly, knowledgeable and approachable. They create a welcoming, safe and calm environment, which helps to put learners at ease. Teachers generate a real sense of enjoyment for learning. For example, learners state that their tutors have

given them greater confidence and have made the learning interesting and fun.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Managers at LALS design and deliver a relevant community learning programme that meets the needs of adults from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Managers use subcontracting arrangements with partner providers very well to embed the provision in the heart of the Lambeth community. This helps ensure that the courses meet the needs of local residents. For example, courses are well-suited to learners who are unemployed, homeless, those with mental health issues, lone parents, and older people who may otherwise be socially isolated. As a result, these learners are able to extend their skills, raise their self-esteem and build greater confidence.

Teachers give clear instructions in lessons so that learners know what to do. They break learning down into small steps, which helps learners gradually improve their work until it is of a high quality. Teachers are skilled at checking what new knowledge learners have acquired in lessons. They use questioning well to help build learners' confidence and check they understand. Teachers show learners how to practise what they are taught in lessons so that they can continue developing their skills at home.

Teachers are very effective at making sure they understand what students need to do to improve. They give clear individual guidance. They are skilled at working with groups of students who have quite diverse backgrounds and educational starting points.

Teachers support learners well. They have the skills and expertise they need to design and teach high-quality lessons. Teachers accurately identify gaps in learners' knowledge, and they structure learning well to fill those gaps. For example, learners who have never used computers before are taught how to set up email accounts and use the internet successfully. This is particularly important for learners on universal credit, who develop the skills they need to access their benefits.

Learners receive valuable information about suitable next steps in their development. As a result, they develop the skills and confidence they need, for example to seek and apply for jobs.

During lessons, teachers give information to learners in a manner that is clear, useful and easy for them to understand. For example, teachers made sure learners on an ESOL programme developed their language skills, so they understood more about topics such as health-related issues and availability of local community services.

Teachers use subjects such as yoga, art and sewing to engage and motivate learners who were previously disengaged from learning. They support learners to become increasingly independent and self-reliant in lessons. They create a learning environment where learners feel safe, able to relax and enjoy learning. For many

learners, this is their first positive experience of education.

Most classrooms are well-equipped and maintained. This helps teachers create a positive and industrious learning environment. At times, attendance at lessons is low.

Managers and subcontractors arrange a thorough programme of staff meetings and staff development activities. This helps ensure teachers receive regular updates and adopt a common approach to their lessons. Some staff indicate that, at times, they find it difficult to attend team meetings due to competing work commitments.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Teachers create a safe and welcoming environment for learners. Teachers raise learners' awareness of the dangers posed by radicalisation and extremism. For example, in an ESOL lesson, a tutor extended learners' vocabulary by introducing the concept of run, hide, tell. Managers are conscious of the heightened risks in the local area. For example, they practise lockdown and evacuation procedures in the event of a terrorist incident.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Use a range of strategies to raise learners' attendance in lessons where it is too low.
- Schedule meetings with teachers at times that will improve staff attendance rates, thereby improving communication across the teaching team.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53135
Address	Town Hall Brixton Hill London SW2 1RW
Contact number	020 7926 7412
Principal/CEO	Ms Lesley Robinson
Provider type	Community learning and skills – local authority
Date of previous inspection	6–9 October 2015
Main subcontractors	Morley College The Spires Centre High Trees Community Development Trust Training Associates London Learning Consortium

Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in October 2015.

The inspection team was assisted by the quality and curriculum manager, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements, including observing learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

Inspection team

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