

Short inspection of London borough of Newham Adult Learning Service

Inspection dates: 13–14 November 2019

Outcome

Newham Adult Learning Service continues to be a good provider.

Information about this provider

Newham Adult Learning Service (NALS) is part of Newham London Borough Council. NALS delivers courses at six local authority venues, 25 schools and children's centres, and a variety of libraries and community centres across the borough. NALS offers around 870 courses each year. The largest area of the curriculum is English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). Other areas include courses in English and mathematics, community learning and childcare. In the previous academic year approximately 5,000 learners studied with NALS. At the time of inspection around 1,500 learners were taking courses with the provider. More than three quarters of adult learners in the borough are women.

The main aim of NALS is to provide courses that help improve employment for learners, promote social inclusion and community cohesion, and improve the health and well-being of the community.

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

Learners like the convenience of attending classes in venues local to where they live, within their own communities. This strategy helps attract learners that might otherwise be reticent to engage in education. It helps place learners at ease and widens participation.

Learners gain new knowledge, and a real sense of pride from what they achieve. This helps develop their self-confidence. For example, learners on a creative arts course, who previously felt socially isolated, explained how their course has enabled them to expand their social network and discover an artistic side they never knew they had. Learners who speak English as an additional language develop good skills and self-confidence to complete domestic tasks, such as shopping, without the support of other family members.

Learners recognise the longer-term opportunities that education provides for them. Attendance is good, and most learners turn up to lessons on time.

Learners who have recently moved to the UK particularly value how teachers deepen their understanding of life in Britain. For example, learners explore and discuss a wide range of topics such as the historical significance of Armistice Day, British electoral procedures and democratic processes.

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

Managers have maintained the good quality of teaching at NALS on a programme of courses that caters well for members of the community. Teachers help learners re-engage with learning, acquire valuable knowledge and skills and grow in confidence. For example, on community courses in subjects such as sewing and cookery, vulnerable women who have been trafficked, or have suffered domestic violence gain the confidence they need to go about their daily tasks and re-establish their sense of self-worth. Many then go on to study subjects such as GCSE English and mathematics.

Teachers generate a strong sense of tolerance and respect among learners, particularly in relation to cultural and religious diversity. They encourage learners to formulate and share their opinions. Teachers create a calm, purposeful and inclusive environment in lessons. They encourage learners to think and work both independently and in teams. For example, one group of learners formed a social media network to help share ideas and support each other with research and homework tasks.

Learners receive good advice about the courses they wish to study, and about what they can do on completion of a course. Teachers assess learners' prior knowledge and starting points accurately. Most then use this information to plan suitable lesson activities. For example, in information and communication technology, teachers review learners' understanding of simple equations and use this information skilfully to instruct learners how to embed equations in spreadsheets. Occasionally, teachers do not check learners' understanding fully before moving on to the next task. When teaching learners to speak English, teachers at times do not correct learners' errors in pronunciation with enough attention to detail.

Leaders and managers have developed strong and effective partnerships with different stakeholders across the borough. For example, they work closely with managers from Newham College to structure a borough-wide approach to ESOL. This helps create a high-quality programme and good progression opportunities for learners as they develop their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. Other borough-wide partnerships also help strengthen the wider work of the local authority. For example, NALS supports the expansion of the borough youth service by providing good training opportunities for newly recruited youth workers. Managers also work with the local hospital to provide therapeutic courses for those who are recovering from mental illness.

Leaders and managers are ambitious for the service. Over the past year, senior colleagues have established an advisory board to oversee the quality of the adult provision. This group has good representative membership from stakeholders across the borough. The group has established ambitious terms of reference and is beginning to have a positive influence on helping to shape further the educational character, and quality of the adult provision.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding arrangements are effective.

Leaders and managers ensure that they fulfil their obligations under the 'Prevent' duty. Staff are aware of the actions they should take if they have any concerns relating to the safety or welfare of learners. Managers carry out appropriate pre-employment checks both on staff and on those learners on childcare courses, prior to their work placements. All staff have received suitable training around the safety and welfare of learners. They take appropriate actions to help ensure that learners are safe.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Ensure that teachers use information from initial and ongoing assessment more thoroughly to help plan and structure how they teach their subjects so that learners continuously build on their knowledge.
- In ESOL, teachers should focus in more detail on developing learners' clarity and accuracy of pronunciation.
- Leaders and managers should continue to embed the role and contribution made by the advisory board, so it can add increasing value and further influence the strategic direction and quality of provision across the service.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53139
Address	Beckton Globe 1 Kingsford Way Beckton E6 5JQ
Contact number	020 3373 6817
Principal/CEO	Ms Angelique Grygorcewicz
Provider type	Community learning and skills – local authority
Date of previous inspection	9–10 and 14–15 March 2016

Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in March 2016.

The inspection team was assisted by the principal, 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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