

# Highfields Community Association

Monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 1270854

**Name of lead inspector:** Bob Hamp, Her Majesty's Inspector

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**Type of provider:** Independent learning provider

**Address:** Highfields Centre  
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## 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' and 'Monitoring visits to providers that are newly directly publicly funded'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

Highfields Community Association (HCA) began offering directly funded adult learning programmes in January 2018. It offers non-accredited courses designed to attract learners who have not previously engaged in education programmes. These courses are in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and information and communication technology (ICT). HCA has provided courses to around 100 learners.

### 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**

Since the previous monitoring visit, managers have undertaken a comprehensive analysis of their curriculum offer to ensure that their current and planned programmes meet the needs of local people. They continue to use their considerable knowledge of the communities they support to ensure the hard-to-reach, disadvantaged and isolated members have access to training that allows them to move into employment or further learning.

Governance arrangements are well developed and provide good oversight for the provision. Governors have relevant experience and provide managers with clear advice and guidance. This has been enhanced by the inclusion of young people onto the board to provide additional local knowledge when considering future curriculum developments.

Managers have introduced quality assurance processes that cover the whole learner journey from initial assessment to individual records of achievement. The quality of education is the focus of observations of teaching. However, it is too soon to judge the full impact of these changes.

Managers have developed course evaluations to gain feedback from learners. They use this to improve the provision or to make changes to the programme. For example, the starting time for the ESOL programme was causing difficulties for some

learners and this was changed to suit the needs of learners who have domestic commitments.

Managers continue to develop relationships with local partners. They work with a wide variety of organisations to develop their curriculum offer and to identify funding sources. Their partnership work also helps them to identify potential learners and to ensure that courses complement other local programmes, provide learners with access to local industries and progression into further study.

**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**

Tutors have improved the planning of teaching. They use learners' starting points to plan a challenging curriculum and to make useful adjustments during courses. For example, ESOL learners learn how to make their own doctor appointments. This approach enables learners to develop valuable personal and social skills.

Learners report that they develop new skills and knowledge and, as a result, can carry out everyday tasks independently. They value highly the difference that learning makes to their lives in a short space of time. For example, ICT learners are able to claim Universal Credit online and use spreadsheets for home budgeting.

Learners on ESOL courses are able to communicate more effectively with their children's teachers and are more confident when communicating with neighbours or when shopping. Although learners value their courses and recognise the progression opportunities that they have, they cannot attain accredited qualifications with the provider. The provider is taking steps to rectify this.

Tutors record individual development that allows learners to recognise the progress they make. However, they rely too heavily on learners' own judgements of their progress, and do not question learners thoroughly to recognise the considerable progress they make and the skills and knowledge they develop.

Tutors have made improvements to the way in which they mark written work and learners describe how this has helped them to make improvements to the sentences they write. In a few instances, learners do not receive enough feedback to learn from the spelling and punctuation errors that they make.

The continuous professional development tutors receive has a clear focus on developing their knowledge of 'Prevent', the curriculum strategy and learner target setting. As a result, they can explain how they design and implement the curriculum to meet the diverse needs of their learners.

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

Learners feel safe and know how to identify and report concerns. They are aware of the importance of safeguarding, the 'Prevent' duty and British values and apply these in their personal lives. ICT learners know how to stay safe online.

Staff check for potential vulnerabilities at the start of courses and are vigilant in ensuring learners' safety throughout.

The designated safeguarding officer is suitably qualified and understands the responsibilities well. All staff receive safeguarding training.

Leaders follow safer recruitment practices, perform suitable background checks on all staff and maintain a central register. They are aware of the need to keep detailed records of safeguarding incidents. No incidents have been raised.

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