

# Inspection of Kent Community Learning and Skills

Inspection dates: 11–13 December 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Education programmes for young people	<b>Good</b>
Adult learning programmes	<b>Good</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Information about this provider

Kent County Council Community Learning and Skills (KCCCLS) is located within the Education and Young People's Services Directorate and provides learning opportunities for adults, young people and families across Kent. The majority of courses are non-accredited and focus on three key themes that align to the council's strategic aims. These are to improve lives whatever people's circumstances, to promote social renewal and to increase the economic well-being of individuals, families and communities.

At the time of the inspection, there were 10,767 learners enrolled on adult learning programmes. KCCCLS delivers a wide and varied curriculum offer, from pre-entry level to level 4. Adult learners follow accredited programmes in English, mathematics and vocational programmes. Non-accredited courses aim to provide adults with the skills needed to gain and sustain employment or further learning. There were 91 learners on an education programme for young people, eight learners enrolled on a traineeship and 227 16- to 18-year-old apprentices and 386 19+ apprentices. The majority are on level 2 standards-based apprenticeship programmes in business, customer service and adult care.

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

Learners and apprentices benefit from a highly inclusive, caring and safe learning environment where everyone is treated with respect and dignity. Learners and apprentices are well prepared for their next steps. They develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they require to be successful and move on to their next steps. Learners benefit from good support from patient and highly supportive tutors, which enables them to develop a passion for learning.

Learners and apprentices build their confidence and resilience. As a result, learners develop a broad range of personal and social skills and gain increased self-belief that increases their independence. Adult learners who have previously felt isolated learn new skills that improve their physical and mental well-being and health. This enables them to make friends with similar interests and combats isolation and loneliness.

Apprentices develop new skills in the workplace, such as confident resolution of customer complaints. Assessors use their vocational expertise to inspire apprentices. Many quickly gain increased responsibilities in the workplace. However, too few apprentices complete their apprenticeship within planned timescales.

Adult learners who are unable to attend lessons due to shift work use well-planned online learning to keep up to date with their English and mathematics work.

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

Leaders and governors have established a culture of high expectations and unwavering commitment to helping adults and young people improve their lives. They make sure that learners develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need to achieve their goals.

Experienced and skilled tutors plan learning logically so that learners and apprentices build their knowledge and skills progressively over time. They plan learning activities that enable learners to acquire and practise new skills as they move through their programmes. For example, learners on English for speakers of other languages programmes develop their written and communication skills so that, for instance, they are able to attend a doctor's appointment independently. This enables them to move to further learning, voluntary work or employment.

Tutors and assessors use their subject and vocational expertise well. They present new concepts clearly and encourage discussion. They use resources effectively to aid understanding. For example, in mathematics lessons, learners develop mental arithmetic skills that enable them to complete calculations without a calculator. In Spanish lessons, tutors help learners improve their vocabulary by discussing their family tree. The supportive atmosphere that tutors create improves learners' confidence.

A minority of tutors do not always check or consolidate learning sufficiently well. As

a result, not all adult learners can remember what they have learned in the long term. Too few tutors support learners and apprentices to develop their written English or vocational mathematics skills so that they can apply these in their learning or workplace activities.

Assessors and employers use a range of practical activities to help apprentices gain substantial new knowledge and skills. Assessors use their expertise to help them develop skills such as problem solving. This enables apprentices to identify and resolve problems independently. For example, apprentices working in customer service learn how to respond effectively to complaints. Employers value the contribution that apprentices make to their businesses.

Too few tutors and assessors give constructive and precise feedback to apprentices. Apprentices do not always know how to improve their work or what they need to do next. Not all assessors help the apprentice or employer to understand fully the skills and knowledge that need to be developed and practised. As a result, too few apprentices can demonstrate their competence and long-term knowledge.

Not enough apprentices complete their qualifications in a timely manner. Leaders and managers have taken swift actions and have dedicated high levels of resources and expertise to improve the numbers who complete their apprenticeships. However, it is too early to judge the impact of these actions.

Learners benefit from well-planned, high-quality careers advice and guidance. Leaders and tutors work closely with the National Careers Service and community agencies. They ensure that learners can access information and guidance on a range of progression opportunities with KCCCLS and partners. Learners understand the benefits of their courses and most move on to further training, volunteering or employment.

Learners enjoy learning and benefit from social interaction. They develop personal skills such as confidence, motivation and resilience and take pride in their achievements. Learners who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit from high levels of support that prepare them well for the workplace. For example, learners on supported internships with very low confidence at the start of their course develop the skills and confidence required to enable them to work independently in customer service roles.

Leaders and managers provide high levels of support to develop tutors' and assessors' subject expertise, pedagogical skills and personal well-being. Tutors benefit from a well-structured staff development programme that promotes self-care and the development of specific skills. For example, tutors attend useful courses on mental health, first aid and managing challenging behaviours. Tutors use the information they gain from the courses to support learners effectively. For example, tutors of younger learners develop strategies to improve their challenging behaviours.

Governors understand the community learning and skills service and its role within

the authority. They use their extensive experience effectively to support and challenge leaders and managers and to inform the strategic direction of the service. They scrutinise performance and set leaders challenging targets for continual improvements.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a county-wide team of highly trained designated safeguarding officers. This team works effectively with external partners such as specialist children's services and the police. They use local intelligence to keep staff and learners up to date with information on local concerns.

Learners and apprentices feel safe in lessons and at work. Staff make sure that they know how to keep safe, including when online. They understand about the implications of British values in their studies and lives. They have a basic understanding of the dangers of radicalisation, but are less aware of its relevance to their lives.

## **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Leaders and managers should improve the number of apprentices who complete their apprenticeship in a timely manner.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that tutors improve the standards of learners' written English and increase their understanding of mathematics in their chosen course.
- Tutors should ensure that they use an appropriate range of teaching and assessment strategies, providing opportunities for learners to recall topics and improve the retention of their new knowledge and its application to their learning or workplace activities.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	52836
<b>Address</b>	Unit A–B London Road Trading Estate Sittingbourne ME10 1SX
<b>Contact number</b>	03000 415598
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://communitylearningandskills.co.uk/">https://communitylearningandskills.co.uk/</a>
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Terry Burgess
<b>Provider type</b>	Local authority
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	14–17 June 2016
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	First Intuition Maidstone Hi Kent Kent Fire and Rescue Service

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of curriculum and quality, 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

Carolyn Brownsea, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Alan Winchcombe	Ofsted Inspector
Alun Maddocks	Ofsted Inspector
Sherrilee Dougan	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Blowman	Ofsted Inspector
Louise Preston	Ofsted Inspector
Mike Finn	Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

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