

Short inspection of Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 November 2021

Outcome

Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council continues to be a good provider.

Information about this provider

Knowsley's Family and Community Education (FACE) is Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council's adult learning service. FACE is placed within the local authority's directorate of children's services. The service delivers online learning and classroom-based learning in six centres across the borough. Courses offered meet the needs of the most vulnerable residents within the borough and include English and mathematics, digital skills and mental health awareness. FACE delivers accredited and non-accredited programmes.

At the time of inspection, there were 477 learners on funded programmes. Of which, 118 learners were on family learning programmes; 117 adult learners on accredited level 2 programmes and 65 learners on entry and level 1 programmes. The remainder were on community learning programmes. The council works with one subcontractor to provide education and training to 22 16-19 years old learners. FACE also provides education and training for 12 learners with high needs.

FACE was previously inspected in January 2016.

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

Learners enjoy attending their lessons. They value the knowledge and skills they develop and the opportunity to socialise with their peers. The social interaction they experience as a result of attending their lessons has a positive impact on their mental health. They increase in confidence and build resilience in their personal lives.

Learners are well supported by their tutors and the community centre staff. They believe that tutors genuinely care about them and support them to achieve their goals such as further study and employment.

Learners appreciate the opportunity to learn either in local community venues or through online classes. This removes barriers to learning such as childcare and travel.

Learners develop knowledge, skills and behaviours to help them in their own lives and also their families' lives. They are more confident and capable in their mathematical skills which allows them to help their children with their schoolwork.

Learners feel safe. They like the friendly and safe environment in which they learn.

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

Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for the service. The curriculum offer is closely aligned to the priorities identified by Knowsley Borough Council and the Liverpool City Region. These are to address social disadvantage within the region and increase the cultural capital of its residents.

The service provide courses to help reduce social isolation, improve the health and employability skills of the residents of Knowsley. Courses are designed and delivered to improve learners' confidence, raise self-esteem and, to enable personal, creative and social development. This supports learners in order to progress successfully in further learning, work, health and life.

Learners' starting points are accurately identified at the start of their course. In English functional skills, tutors use this information to plan for each individual learners' English language development needs. Learners who want to study GCSE psychology are offered a short introductory course to build their mathematical, English and study skills. This prepares them for more demanding study at GCSE level.

Tutors plan learning in a structured way to help learners acquire new knowledge and skills over time. For example, in GCSE psychology, learners study crime and punishment. They learn what leads to offending before covering more-complex topics on how brain chemistry is influenced by cultural and social behaviours and societal norms.

Tutors use a broad range of teaching methods to support learners in securing and applying their new knowledge and skills. For example, tutors use exam practice, knowledge quizzes, research tasks and peer work. Tutors provide work for learners to complete outside of the lesson to help reinforce learning. As a result, learners are able to accurately recall and apply learned knowledge and skills.

Assessment is used effectively to support learners' progress. Tutors provide helpful written and oral feedback in one-to-one focused conversations. In English courses, learners are encouraged to proofread work and identify their own errors. This helps them become more confident and fluent in their English language development.

Learners are confident and articulate about their new knowledge. For example, learners on the GCSE psychology course demonstrate a deep understanding of the theorists and can explain why they do or don't agree with them. They are well prepared for their examinations through repetitively checking on knowledge acquisition.

Learners receive highly effective initial advice and guidance to ensure they are guided onto the most appropriate programme to enable them to achieve their short-term learning goals. However, not all learners receive sufficient careers advice that helps them plan and understand how to achieve their longer-term career aspirations.

The quality of target setting and the recording of learners' progress on non-accredited programmes is not consistently good. Too many targets are not specific; they do not help learners to identify what skills they need to gain or the progress they are making which slows their progress.

Leaders and managers have high aspirations for their learners. They have effective oversight of the provision, including the delivery of subcontracted provision. Leaders demonstrate the capacity to continue to drive improvement within the service. During the pandemic, they swiftly responded to ensure staff and learners were provided with the resources needed to support the continuation of learning remotely. Senior leaders have recently restructured the directorate to further support improvements through cross-council working between departments.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure robust safe recruitment processes are followed. They provide all staff with appropriate safeguarding training. Staff are aware of their responsibility to safeguard learners. Thorough and detailed risk assessments are carried out to ensure learning venues are safe. There are two designated safeguarding leads within the service. They work closely with the local adult safeguarding service and community health and welfare services. However, the recording of concerns and incidents raised is weak. Information captured is not thorough or detailed enough to plan targeted staff development on issues raised.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that all learners receive high-quality careers advice and guidance on how to plan to achieve their career aspirations.
- Managers should ensure tutors set all learners on non-accredited programmes clear, measurable and challenging targets against which they can measure their progress.
- Leaders should improve the quality of safeguarding information that is recorded when concerns or incidents are raised so that it is thorough and detailed.

Provider details

Unique reference number	52883
Address	New Hutte Neighbourhood Centre Lichfield Road Halewood Knowsley Liverpool L26 1TT
Contact number	0151 443 2065
Website	www.knowsleyface.co.uk
Head of Service	Angie Kitching
Provider type	Local authority
Date of previous inspection	13 and 15 January 2016
Main subcontractors	Employability Solutions Ltd

Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council was judged to be good in January 2016.

The inspection team was assisted by the adult learning 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 visiting 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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