

# Inspection of Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council

Inspection dates: 7–10 December 2021

<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>
Adult learning programmes	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## Information about this provider

Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council (OMBC) manages Oldham Lifelong Learning Service (the service) within its Children's Services Directorate. The service provides programmes throughout the borough. The service offers a range of accredited and non-accredited learning opportunities, funded by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. The provider currently has 1,244 learners enrolled on courses. The largest numbers are in English, mathematics, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), information technology (IT) and digital skills. The remainder of learners study vocational courses in childcare and education. Approximately two thirds of the courses lead to qualifications.

Programmes are taught in six lifelong learning centres and a small number of other community venues.

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

Learners display positive attitudes to their learning. They enjoy their courses, feel valued by staff and are proud to be learners at OMBC. Learners who have additional learning needs feel well supported by tutors and learning support workers.

Learners build their confidence and self-belief with the help and encouragement of tutors. For instance, learners on English courses are able to independently help their children with homework.

Learners improve their skills as a result of their courses. Level 2 IT learners develop the work skills they need to successfully create emails, letters and presentations. ESOL learners develop skills that help them become more independent in their everyday lives, such as when shopping at the supermarket, speaking to health professionals or to their children's teachers.

Most learners receive effective guidance at the start of their course. As a result, they are enrolled on to the right level of course for their abilities and future aspirations. However, not all learners are clear on how to achieve their next steps or longer-term career aspirations.

The vast majority of learners feel safe. They know whom to go to if they have any concerns. However, most learners only have a basic understanding of safeguarding, radicalisation or extremism. This is because tutors do not routinely and consistently check learners' understanding.

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

Leaders' clear strategy for their adult learning provision is built around the needs of the local community. They have designed the curriculum so that learners can improve their lives by developing their confidence, self-esteem and skills to prepare them for training, employment or self-employment. It is leaders' unwavering intention to help learners become self-sufficient, responsible and active citizens.

Tutors teach the curriculum in a logical order. In English, mathematics, ESOL and IT, learners incrementally build their knowledge and skills. For example, mathematics learners learn about place value, estimating and rounding before moving on to more complex processes, such as handling data and probability. Level 1 IT learners learn how to proofread and edit text before moving on to more complex tasks, such as using spreadsheets.

There are variations in the quality of education for learners following the IT curriculum. It is better at level 1 than at entry level. The curriculum at entry level lacks ambition. This is because all learners follow the same curriculum, despite what they already know and can do.

Tutors have the appropriate experience and qualifications to teach their subjects. Leaders provide tutors with a range of effective training to develop their teaching skills further. This includes skills to teach remotely, for example using videoconferencing technology, breakout rooms and digital registers.

Most tutors help learners to know more and remember more throughout their courses. They use assessment effectively to identify gaps in knowledge and inform teaching. In mathematics, tutors systematically check learners' understanding of a topic before moving on to the next topic. However, entry level IT tutors do not effectively question learners to check learning or identify any gaps they may have. As a result, the majority of entry level IT learners are unable to recall what they have learned.

Leaders' and tutors' support extends beyond the taught curriculum. They routinely promote inclusion and put the learner and the community at the heart of everything they do. Tutors provide wraparound support to learners that breaks down barriers of isolation and crosses cultural divides. Learners who need additional support receive appropriate help in class or one-to-one coaching sessions outside class.

The majority of tutors do not review and update learners' individual learning plans well enough. In English and mathematics, tutors do not consistently review learners' long-term goals. In level 1 and entry level IT, tutors do not set clear or meaningful short-term targets for learners to achieve. This means that learners do not know the progress they make towards their targets and goals.

Most learners are making at least their expected progress, with a few making good progress. Most learners achieve their learning goals. A small minority of learners progress on to higher level courses and a few progress into employment.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers ensure that safeguarding and the safety of learners are high priorities. The designated safeguarding lead and staff have the appropriate training and experience to carry out their roles effectively. Staff use links to external agencies to signpost learners to additional help relating to mental health aspects, such as stress, anxiety or depression.

Managers ensure that staff are recruited safely. Staff have regular training in safeguarding, including how to identify any potential mental health concerns. They know how to keep learners safe and report any concerns they may have.

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

- Leaders should ensure that staff receive appropriate training and subsequent support to enable them to successfully set clear, short-term targets and set and review long-term goals for learners.
- Leaders and managers should ensure that their careers guidance helps learners to understand the full range of next steps and career options available to them.
- Leaders should support tutors to routinely check learners' understanding of safeguarding, radicalisation and extremism, so that learners know how to keep themselves, and others, safe.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	53722
<b>Address</b>	Civic Centre West Street OLDHAM OL1 1UT
<b>Contact number</b>	0161 770 4780
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.oldham.gov.uk/">www.oldham.gov.uk/</a>
<b>Director of Education, Skills &amp; Early Years</b>	Richard Lynch
<b>Provider type</b>	Local authority
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	17–20 November 2015
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the assistant head of service, 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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