

Inspection of Maximus UK Services Ltd

Inspection dates: 27 to 30 September 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Adult learning programmes **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Not previously inspected

Information about this provider

Maximus UK Services Limited (Maximus) is a national training provider based in Leicester. It forms part of Maximus UK, which works with partners in both the private sector and government to help people find work, access support and remain healthy.

Maximus holds adult education budget contracts with the Greater London Authority (GLA), and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA). Learners study part-time courses in subjects such as mathematics, English, digital skills, employability, and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). All study at level 2 or below. Many adults study towards more than one qualification at the same time.

Maximus works with seven subcontractors, who deliver approximately half of the training.

At the time of the inspection, there were 740 adult learners. No learners were aged under 19. All learners lived in either London or Greater Manchester. The majority of learners studied via online classes, and a smaller number studied in person at centres in the cities.

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

The large majority of learners enjoy their studies at Maximus. They highly value their courses, and the support that staff at all levels give them.

Many learners develop their confidence levels well. For example, those who study English or ESOL become more confident in expressing their opinions, both in class and in wider society. They feel more self-assured at job interviews, when they speak with their child's class tutor, or at doctors' appointments.

Learners benefit from well-planned and targeted courses that help them reach their career and community goals. This is because leaders work closely with the GLA and GMCA to identify local skills needs and employment opportunities. For example, leaders provide bespoke courses to prepare unemployed learners for identified vacancies in hospitality and customer service.

Learners rightly feel safe when they study. They know how to get help if they are unsafe, and find that tutors act swiftly if their peers behave poorly.

In a few cases, learners who study their courses online do not get enough help from their tutors. They have to work independently with little support, or do not get enough face-to-face study time to discuss key topics with their peers.

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

Leaders and tutors work diligently to ensure that learners study highly relevant topics. They identify appropriately the core knowledge that learners need. For example, on courses aimed at those wanting to work in front-of-house roles in restaurants, learners study customer service, food safety and interview skills. Learners who study ESOL and have little experience of computers develop their English knowledge alongside their digital skills.

In the majority of cases, tutors plan their teaching well. Digital skills tutors use high-quality interactive resources during lessons, which they adapt well according to learners' needs. Tutors also provide significant amounts of additional help in between their lessons. For example, learners who study employability benefit from additional one-to-one lessons that focus on the skills and knowledge they most need when they apply for jobs.

In a minority of cases, tutors do not plan courses thoroughly enough. ESOL tutors who teach online present new punctuation and grammar topics in a way that is too complicated for their entry-level learners. They do not make effective use of web-based technology in order to support their explanations. As a result, learners make too many basic spoken and written errors.

Most tutors carefully plan recap activities. Functional mathematics tutors plan well-structured revision sessions that help learners to recap challenging topics and

practise exam-style questions. This approach helps learners to recall and practice topics they studied earlier in their courses. In a few subjects, however, tutors do not plan assessment or practice activities well enough. ESOL tutors do not check thoroughly enough learners' written or verbal responses. Learners who study online level 2 functional English do not have enough opportunity to practise skills such as formal writing.

Tutors offer appropriate help to learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This includes extra one-to-one support, as well as in-class adjustments. This enables learners with SEND to continue their studies successfully. Leaders also provide learners with substantial help if they cannot afford essential items for their course, such as travel costs and IT equipment.

The large majority of learners develop significant new knowledge and skills. Those who study customer service level 2 gain detailed knowledge of legislation, professional language and contextualised radicalisation. Learners who study digital skills at entry level 3 create eye-catching posters using imported photographs and design tools. Although learners who study ESOL at entry level produce written texts that largely communicate their intended messages, they contain too many grammatical errors.

Across all subjects and levels, the large majority of learners achieve their qualifications. They are well prepared for their next steps, and make clear links between the topics they have studied and their future goals. A high number of learners secure jobs, or continue with higher-level studies, at the end of their courses.

Leaders and tutors focus closely on learners' personal development. They ensure that learners develop knowledge of citizenship. This includes a focus on fundamental British values, such as the rule of law and mutual respect. On a few occasions, however, tutors confuse British values with British culture, and as a result do not cover the values in enough depth.

Tutors promote equality and diversity effectively. Learners study in environments where there is no tolerance of discriminatory or disrespectful behaviour. Tutors support and encourage learners who study ESOL to share their own cultures with their peers – who come from a diverse range of backgrounds – at 'get together' events.

In most cases, staff provide learners with helpful advice and guidance about their possible next steps. Staff continue to offer learners support after they finish their courses. Learners on employability courses receive bespoke, high-quality guidance, and as a result produce very effective CVs. On a small number of courses, such as digital skills, tutors do not plan thoroughly enough how they will inform learners about careers information, advice and guidance.

Leaders and tutors set clear ground rules for learner behaviour and attendance. Although most learners attend their courses at high rates and follow rules closely, in

online ESOL courses too many learners arrive late to lessons, and do not follow set protocols for online study.

Leaders have high expectations for their learners. They have a thorough understanding of the quality of their curriculum, including the performance of subcontractors. When they have concerns about subcontractors, leaders take decisive action. If leaders have concerns about the performance of individual tutors, they offer focused support. However, this does not lead to rapid enough improvements, for example in the quality of online teaching.

Governors have a suitable range of experience and skills. They share leaders' vision of giving learners knowledge and skills to improve their job prospects, as well as their wider lives. Governors monitor performance closely through frequent high-level meetings, at which they offer appropriate challenge and support to leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that there is a strong culture of safeguarding. Managers undertake appropriate safer recruitment checks, including for those staff employed by subcontractors. All staff complete appropriate safeguarding-related training.

Staff with responsibility for safeguarding have significant knowledge and experience. They promptly deal with safeguarding concerns, and refer learners to external organisations, such as those that provide housing support, where this is appropriate.

Learners gain appropriate safeguarding-related knowledge, such as on the signs of radicalisation, and online safety. In a very small number of cases, learners do not study online safety in detail until late in their course, even though they mostly study online.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that tutors in all subjects plan their teaching effectively, and assess learner work thoroughly.
- Leaders should ensure that tutors have the skills they need to teach effectively online.
- Leaders should ensure that all learners receive high-quality and impartial careers information, advice and guidance.

Provider details

Unique reference number	55449
Address	18c Meridian East Meridian Business Park Leicester LE19 1WZ
Contact number	0300 456 8110
Website	www.maximusuk.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Gareth Parry
Provider type	Independent learning provider
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected
Main subcontractors	Rochdale Training Total Training Provision Successful Mums Learning Curve Go Train Ixion Back 2 Work

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the AEB head of contracts, 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

Saul Pope, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Jo Brodrick	Ofsted Inspector
Angela Twelvetree	His Majesty's Inspector
Karen Green	Ofsted Inspector
Stuart Allen	Ofsted Inspector
Ralph Brompton	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

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