

Short inspection of Telford and Wrekin Borough Council

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 October 2022

Outcome

Telford and Wrekin Borough Council continues to be a good provider.

Information about this provider

Telford and Wrekin Borough Council (Learn Telford) is an adult and community learning provider based in Telford, Shropshire. Learning programmes are delivered across a wide variety of community venues located throughout the borough. Courses are targeted at those new to learning, with low levels of qualifications and those seeking employment.

At the time of the inspection, there were 318 learners on adult courses with a focus on functional skills in English and mathematics, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). There are 13 learners on access to higher education courses. There were 106 learners on community learning courses; 76 of whom were on family learning courses, with the remainder on craft-related courses.

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

Learners from a range of communities and backgrounds are supported to effectively take part in learning. For example, refugees from the Ukraine are supported by an interpreter to ensure that they fully understand the initial advice and guidance they receive.

Learners are encouraged to be ambitious in their learning and careers. Tutors support learners to progress to the next level of their learning at Learn Telford and at other institutions, such as progressing to university, once they have completed access to higher education courses.

Tutors create a learning environment that is inclusive, encouraging, stimulating and friendly. As a result, learners enjoy their learning and are motivated to do well.

Tutors use helpful 'introduce and talk about' topics, relevant to learners' starting points and to take account of their recent life experiences. For example, life in

modern Britain is contextualised to the subject that they are studying. As a result, learners have an appropriate understanding of these topics.

Learners feel safe and know who to report any concerns to, that they may have.

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

Leaders work closely with a range of council and community partners to design and teach a curriculum that meets the needs of the community. For example, working with the Job Box in Telford to progress learners into education and work more quickly.

Leaders have a sound understanding of their areas for improvement and have in place clear strategies to respond to these. Since the previous inspection, leaders have implemented improvements to the use of recognising and recording progress and achievement (RARPA), to ensure that tutors continue to use qualitative feedback to support learners to progress in their studies. They have also made improvements to ensure that learners consistently receive effective initial advice and guidance on learning and employment options. They have made good progress towards improving the quality and consistency of the feedback that learners receive, to help them to improve their work.

Managers have an appropriate understanding of the progress that learners make in their studies. However, they have not yet fully formalised this process and as such, they do not always identify or respond to issues swiftly. As a result, some learners are not encouraged to achieve to their full potential.

Leaders continue to develop the governance of Learn Telford. They are currently implementing a board structure to replace the linear leadership approach to governance. The revised board, while still in its early stages of implementation, has the expertise and understanding of the provision to make a continued contribution to the improvement of Learn Telford.

Leaders do not sufficiently develop tutors' understanding of how to teach mixed-ability groups. While tutors use a range of resources and plan their teaching to ensure that learners are supported to catch up in their studies, there is no overall strategy for dealing with this challenge. As a result, a few higher level learners are insufficiently challenged by the focus of the teaching.

Tutors are skilled and knowledgeable and use these skills to support learners to acquire the knowledge and skills they need to progress. English tutors clearly explain complex grammar concepts, such as comparatives and conjunctions. As a result, learners understand new language concepts quickly and are able to practise using them.

Tutors establish learners' starting points effectively, using screening tools, discussions and diagnostic tools. These are used to create challenging targets for individual learners which are captured in learners' RARPA booklets. As a result, learners report that they are able to use the targets set, to study appropriate grammar topics at home and improve their skills more quickly.

Tutors design and adapt the curriculum with careful consideration of learners' progress throughout their studies. For example, in mathematics, they assess learners regularly to identify gaps in learning. They modify and re-sequence learning so that learners develop new knowledge, and gaps in learning are quickly revisited.

The large majority of tutors review learners' targets regularly with learners; they praise their achievements and discuss and agree new targets as appropriate. For example, intermediate ESOL learners are set targets to practise the pronunciation of the 'ed' sound at the end of many verbs when using the 'simple past'. As a result, learners understand what they need to do to improve, are able to see their progress and are motivated to learn and practise and refine their skills.

Learners produce written work at or above the expected standard. They use feedback from their tutors to make improvements to their work. For example, learners studying English are able to identify more spelling and punctuation errors in their own work. However, a small minority of tutors do not systematically mark the work that learners have completed. As a result, a few learners make the same errors throughout their learning.

Managers and tutors provide a range of advice and guidance for learners regarding their next steps for both education and employment, such as community outreach and Job Box activities. However, this is not always sufficiently targeted to ensure that learners understand the qualification that they need, to progress into identified roles and careers in certain sectors. For example, learners do not have a clear understanding that they will need to achieve English and mathematics qualifications to follow a career in the childcare sector.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have appointed a suitably trained designated safeguarding lead. All staff complete appropriate training and receive regular updates in safeguarding. The service adopts and uses Telford and Wrekin Borough Council safeguarding policies which provide a clear referral mechanism into the local authority safeguarding department in a timely manner.

Learners feel safe in learning. They have a good understanding of safeguarding and its application to their daily lives. As a result, learners can use this knowledge to help keep themselves and their families safe.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should continue to improve the monitoring of learners' progress, ensuring all learners complete their courses on time and to the best of their ability.
- Leaders should implement a strategy to ensure that tutors are supported to teach mixed-level groups, ensuring that all learners progress at the pace of which they are capable.
- Tutors should systematically mark the work that learners have completed, ensuring that learners understand the mistakes they are making and do not repeat them throughout their learning.

Provider details

Unique reference number	54774
Address	Floor 6A Darby House Lawn Central Town Centre TF3 4JA
Contact number	01952 380800
Website	http://learntelford.ac.uk/
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Richard Probert
Provider type	Adult and Community Learning
Date of previous inspection	15 to 18 March 2016
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since Telford and Wrekin Borough Council was judged to be good in March 2016.

The inspection team was assisted by the Adult and Community Learning Group 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

Sharon Dowling, lead inspector

Ian Smith

Joanne Keatley

His Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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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