

Inspection of The Wiltshire Council

Inspection dates: 1 to 3 November 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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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	Requires improvement

Information about this provider

The Wiltshire Council provides adult and community education programmes. The aims of the service are to provide adults who have a range of barriers to learning with services that will improve their quality of life, well-being and skills for independent living and work. The Wiltshire Council also provides programmes in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), and a Life in the United Kingdom course for refugees who are resettling in the county. The programmes provided by Wiltshire Council are designed to engage adult learners and to build their skills. Courses are offered in a wide variety of locations across the county. This ensures that learners can take part in training whether they live in a Wiltshire city, town, or in more rural and isolated locations.

At the time of the inspection, 216 learners aged 19+ were studying learning programmes at entry level. Of these, 98 studying on ESOL courses and the others studying a range of adult and community programmes, such as mental health and well-being courses.

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

Learners enjoy their courses and attend regularly, and most complete their learning programmes in full and successfully. Learners feel well supported by tutors who help them build their self-confidence and improve their well-being. For example, tutors provide learners with useful strategies for managing their mental health and independent living.

Tutors plan and teach lessons that help learners to gain the knowledge and skills they need to improve their lives. For example, learners who have learning difficulties and disabilities learn how to cook meals safely, clean and maintain a habitable home and manage their finances. As a result, they become more independent over time.

Learners who are refugees and study on ESOL courses value the practical language skills they learn to use in everyday situations, such as travel, shopping and form filling. A few ESOL learners make very quick progress in learning new knowledge. They improve from having very little understanding of reading, writing and speaking English, as well as having little understanding of listening to spoken English, at the start of their course, to constructing complex sentences and holding conversations with confidence.

Tutors help learners studying on well-being courses to work as a team and solve problems together. For example, learners improve their planning skills by planning charity fundraising events and presenting their proposals to an audience.

Learners feel safe. They know who to speak to if they have a concern. They value that their tutors provide all learners with the opportunity to practise their speaking and pronunciation in lessons, and that they are supportive and respectful.

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

Leaders and managers ensure that learners benefit from studying a curriculum that has appropriate subject content and is well planned. They have established productive partnerships with charitable and community organisations and work together to plan and introduce courses that meet the needs of residents who are disadvantaged or socially isolated. For example, as part of a collaboration with a free school meals charity, leaders carefully scheduled training at a venue close to where the adult learners' children participated in healthy eating activities.

Leaders have responded quickly and devised an ambitious curriculum to meet the needs of refugees resettling in the United Kingdom. They work closely with other services provided by Wiltshire Council, such as housing, transport, and children's services, to support adults and their families to take part in learning and be part of their communities.

Leaders provide tutors with the training they need so that they have good knowledge of the subjects they teach. For example, some tutors gain qualifications in teaching ESOL. Tutors' digital skills are enhanced by participation in a project with other adult learning providers focusing on improving online teaching.

Tutors plan, sequence and teach the curriculum well. They use teaching strategies that help learners to know and remember more subject content. In ESOL lessons, tutors ensure that learners learn what they need to integrate safely and positively into their communities. Tutors use roleplay effectively, so that learners can practise skills that are relevant to their everyday lives. For example, learners learn how to greet and converse with people when using public services. Tutors encourage learners to further their learning in their own time. For example, learners studying ESOL courses listen to the radio, watch television, and read books and newspapers to improve their reading, writing, speaking and listening skills.

Tutors provide learners with helpful careers advice and guidance and work closely with a partner organisation that provides free support to adults facing significant barriers to entering employment.

Managers provide governors with useful reports on the service's performance, and governors are well informed about operational aspects of the curriculum. Governors challenge leaders and managers robustly. For example, they question managers and seek assurances on enrolment strategies. However, leaders do not evaluate the impact of improvement and development action plans well enough.

Tutors' feedback to learners about their work varies in quality. Although most tutors clearly highlight learners' strengths and areas for development, a few do not provide comprehensive feedback, tick learners' work if correct in order to indicate that it has been seen, and do not tell them what they have done well or how they can improve further.

Leaders have sensible plans to increase enrolments on adult and community courses through partnerships and increased digital marketing. However, they have been slow to gain approval from governors to implement these plans.

Leaders and tutors are careful to address the lessons learned because of the effective quality assurance. For example, they recognise that to date they have not put in place a sufficiently challenging and ambitious curriculum for the small number of learners who are refugees with professional backgrounds and more advanced skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers ensure that safeguarding learners is a priority. They carry out enhanced checks to ensure that staff are suitable to work with vulnerable learners. Staff are appropriately trained in safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty and receive

regular updates. Managers responsible for safeguarding benefit from regular external supervision and support. Learners have an adequate recall of the risks associated with radicalisation and exploitation. However, tutors do not ensure that all learners have a deep knowledge about how to be vigilant so they can keep themselves and their families safe.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders must ensure that learners on resettlement programmes who have more advanced skills and prior professional qualifications study a challenging and ambitious curriculum.
- Leaders must ensure that tutors on all programmes consistently provide learners with constructive feedback on their work so that they are clear about what they have done well and what (and how) they can improve.
- Leaders must monitor and evaluate more robustly the implementation of improvement and development plans so they can evaluate the impact and take additional remedial actions.

Provider details

Unique reference number	50245
Address	County Hall Bythesea Road Trowbridge Wiltshire BA14 8JN
Contact number	01225 770478
Website	www.workwiltshire.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Amanda Timbrell, Head of Employment and Skills
Provider type	Community learning and skills – local authority
Dates of previous inspection	21 to 23 January 2020
Main subcontractors	Not applicable

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the family and community 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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