

# Short inspection of Southwark Adult Learning Service

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 November 2022

## **Outcome**

Southwark Adult Learning Service continues to be a good provider.

## **Information about this provider**

Southwark Adult Learning Service (SALS) provides adult learning, community learning and courses for families, such as literacy for childcare, across the London Borough of Southwark. Their main site is the Thomas Calton Centre in Peckham. Leaders also use other community spaces, such as schools. Leaders and managers subcontract provision to five organisations across the borough.

At the previous inspection in May 2016, the provider was judged to be good.

At the time of this inspection, there were approximately 700 learners studying with the provider. Of these, roughly half were studying towards qualifications in English, mathematics or childcare.

Through their subcontractors, leaders and managers offer courses including baby well-being, and horticulture, as well as dedicated support for learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They offer a crèche facility to help parents and carers attend courses.

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

Staff create a positive and inclusive environment for their learners, who span a wide range of abilities and backgrounds. Learners appreciate that tutors consider their individual backgrounds and experiences to plan a curriculum that is valuable for them. Learners are respectful towards one another and towards staff. They are keen to share their knowledge and to collaborate with each other.

Learners speak highly of the encouragement they receive from tutors to do well and to achieve their learning goals. They take pride in their work and produce work of a good standard. A high proportion of learners have not studied for a significant period, or at all prior to this. Learners develop their vocational knowledge and self-confidence. For example, in childcare, learners become confident in sharing their knowledge of risk assessments to mitigate hazards in nurseries. In arts and crafts,

learners who have children with learning needs learn to support their children through arts and crafts activities.

Learners benefit from being taught by highly experienced tutors. Tutors use their expertise to teach learners how to produce high-quality work. For example, in woodwork, tutors teach learners how to use cutting tools safely when they encounter knots in wood. Learners on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses develop the English language skills and confidence to make and attend a medical appointment without an interpreter.

Learners feel safe and well supported when studying. They know who to speak to if they need help or support and know how to keep themselves safe.

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

Leaders and managers have a clear vision to help adult residents of Southwark gain access to education, work and healthcare. They offer a suite of courses which complement each other. For example, learners who take part in family learning often join ESOL courses, which helps them to progress onto higher-level programmes, such as childcare. Through these courses, learners develop the knowledge and practical skills they need to become more independent.

Leaders take sensible steps to review and update the range of courses they offer to support families to learn together. They provide activities for families in school holidays which enable learners who are parents to continue to access their courses. This helps parents to build positive relationships with their children.

Leaders and managers make effective use of feedback from learners and stakeholders to ensure that the programmes they offer meet the needs of the local community. For example, they have recently started teaching autism awareness courses, and programmes that improve the literacy and information technology skills of waste and cleaning operatives. Leaders and managers use subcontracted provision well to complement their course offer. As a result, they widen their geographical reach across the borough.

Most tutors plan and sequence the content of their curriculum well. Tutors identify what learners already know at the start of their course effectively. For example, in ESOL, tutors assess learners' reading, writing and speaking skills. They use the information from these assessments to adapt the curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of each learner.

Tutors teach topics in a logical order, which allows learners to build on core knowledge to understand more complex ideas. Tutors build in additional content to enhance learners' skills and to create an ambitious programme. For example, in pottery learners first study the different techniques to roll different types of clay before they progress onto the more complex tasks of texturing, glazing and bisque firing.

Tutors use effective teaching techniques to help learners remember what they are taught. They give helpful demonstrations, present new content clearly and use recapping activities effectively. Tutors check learners' understanding through skilful use of questioning and quizzes, and correct learners when they make mistakes. As a result, learners gain new knowledge and a high proportion achieve their learning goals and qualifications.

Tutors give most learners appropriate advice about possible options for their next steps once they complete their courses. Learners have access to advice from the local council about curriculum vitae preparation and higher-level courses. However, leaders and managers acknowledge the need to develop careers guidance across the curriculum, so that learners are aware of the range of roles available to them beyond their immediate next steps.

Leaders do not systemically monitor the next steps of learners who complete their courses. Only for childcare learners do staff know whether learners have moved into work on completion of their course.

Tutors provide learners with SEND appropriate support, such as additional printouts and activities, and feedback written in different coloured ink. Learners with additional needs produce a good standard of work and most achieve their learning goals. They achieve at least as well as their peers.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, managers and those who provide governance ensure that staff receive training and implement suitable policies for safeguarding and 'Prevent'. Knowledgeable safeguarding leads refer learners to appropriate support, such as talking therapies, where they have any concerns.

Leaders check that staff and subcontractors are suitable to work with vulnerable adults. Tutors ensure that learners work safely in lessons.

Staff teach learners about safeguarding at the start of their courses, but do not revisit these topics frequently enough for learners to retain an in-depth understanding.

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

- Leaders and managers should ensure that they include careers information systematically across the curriculum, so learners know about the options available to them.
- Leaders and managers should monitor more closely where learners progress on completion of their courses.

- Leaders should make sure that tutors teach learners about potential safeguarding risks and how to keep themselves safe so that they can remember what they have been taught.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	53145
<b>Address</b>	Thomas Calton Community Education Centre Alpha Street London SE15 4NX
<b>Contact number</b>	0207 358 2110
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://www.southwark.gov.uk/schools-and-education/adult-learning">https://www.southwark.gov.uk/schools-and-education/adult-learning</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Dolly Naeem
<b>Provider type</b>	Local authority
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	17 and 18 May 2016
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Blackfriars Settlement Learning Unlimited Ltd Stepping Stones Learning and Leisure The London Wildlife Trust Walworth Garden Ltd

## Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since Southwark Adult Learning Service was judged to be good in May 2016.

The inspection team was assisted by the family 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

Rebecca Jennings, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Joanna Walters	His Majesty's Inspector
Sherrilee Dougan	Ofsted Inspector

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