

# Short inspection of Wokingham Council

Inspection date:

11 November 2022

## **Outcome**

Wokingham Council continues to be a good provider.

## **Information about this provider**

The adult and community learning service of Wokingham Borough Council is part of the children's service division of the council. The service is small and has until recently subcontracted the large majority of education programmes. Managers target courses to meet the needs of residents in the most deprived and isolated areas and the refugees and asylum seekers located in the borough. Classes take place in a range of community and neighbourhood learning centres.

At the time of the inspection, there were 220 adult learners studying community learning and skills courses. The large majority study courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and digital skills. Most of the current learners study entry levels courses.

Wokingham Borough Council works with one subcontractor.

At their previous full inspection in July 2016, Wokingham Council was judged to be a good provider.

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

Learners enjoy attending their lessons. They value the knowledge and skills they develop and the opportunity to socialise with their peers. For example, retired learners learn digital skills which enable them to plan trips and communicate online. Attending lessons has a positive impact on their mental health. They build resilience and regain confidence lost during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Learners on ESOL courses research different types of jobs available to them. Tutors support learners to research and apply for jobs, including developing useful and relevant language to include in their curriculum vitae (CV) and cover letters. Through role-play activities, learners develop their confidence in speaking on the telephone and preparing for interviews.

Learners appreciate the opportunity to learn either in local community venues or through online classes. This enables them to overcome barriers to learning such as

childcare and travel, particularly for learners in remote areas of the borough with little or no access to public transport.

Learners feel safe. They like the friendly and safe environment in which they learn.

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

Leaders and managers continue to plan and implement an effective curriculum that meets the needs of the different communities they serve across the borough. Learners gain the skills they need to meet regional and national skills targets.

Leaders have a clear and ambitious vision for the service. They have carefully aligned the curriculum offer to the priorities identified by Wokingham Council. These are to tackle loneliness amongst priority groups. These include residents living alone in identified wards within the borough, elderly residents and those with poor health and recent parents.

Leaders use careful planning and effective partnership working to ensure that the curriculum offered aligns with, and does not replicate, provision being delivered by partners. This enables learners to progress in their learning. For example, those considering returning to work complete taster courses such as teaching assistant. They benefit from support and guidance that enable them to plan next steps, for example support in writing a CV or searching for a job. They develop the ESOL skills they need that will enable them to progress.

Tutors accurately identify learners' starting points, including their work and study experience from their home countries at the start of their course. They use this information effectively to plan individual learners' English language development needs. They support learners with good verbal skills to develop their written English using structured sentences and conditional language in discussions and debates.

Most tutors set clear targets within learners' individual learning plans. This ensures that learners understand what they are learning and swiftly achieve their personal targets.

The recently implemented adult education governing body provides good support and challenge to senior leaders. Governors have the appropriate experience and expertise to hold senior leaders to account.

Leaders do not analyse information to identify trends or changes in employment opportunities and the demographics of their learners. As a result, they do not have a sufficient overview of the impact of the curriculum on meeting the needs of learners, particularly Ukrainian refugees and migrants from Hong Kong.

Senior leaders and managers have successfully improved the weaknesses identified at their previous inspection. For example, managers have improved the usefulness of individual learning plans to meet the needs of learners and tutors. However, they

have not ensured that self-assessment reporting is more evaluative and focused on learners' progress and the quality of teaching and learning.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure robust safer recruitment processes are followed. They provide all staff with appropriate safeguarding training. Staff are aware of their responsibility to safeguard learners. There are two designated adult safeguarding leads within the service. They work collaboratively with colleagues in the local adult safeguarding service and welfare services. However, the recording of concerns and incidents is weak. Information captured is not thorough or detailed enough to enable leaders to analyse the information for trends and plan appropriate update training for staff.

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

- Leaders should improve the quality of safeguarding information that is recorded when concerns or incidents are raised so that it is thorough and detailed.
- Leaders should ensure that self-assessment reporting is more evaluative and focuses on learners' progress and the quality of teaching and assessment.
- Leaders and governors should analyse data to identify trends to inform curriculum planning that meets the needs of learners, their families and local employers.

## **Provider details**

<b>Unique reference number</b>	50246
<b>Address</b>	Adult & Community Learning Shute End RG40 1BN
<b>Contact number</b>	07808 143 635
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.wokingham.gov.uk/">www.wokingham.gov.uk/</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Susan Parsonage
<b>Provider type</b>	Adult and community learning
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	5 to 8 July 2016
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	ASD Family Help

## Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since Wokingham Council was judged to be good in July 2016.

The inspection team was assisted by the adult education 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

Carolyn Brownsea, lead inspector  
Colin Smith

His Majesty's Inspector  
Ofsted Inspector

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