

Inspection of Waltham Forest London Borough Council

Inspection dates: 29 November to 2 December 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Adult learning programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

Waltham Forest Adult Learning Service is part of the local authority's employment, business and skills team. It offers courses in community and family learning, as well as vocational programmes that support entry to work. It has two main sites and a range of community learning venues. The service places a particular emphasis in supporting those individuals who are furthest away from learning or work.

The service provides a wide range of accredited and non-accredited learning, and teaches courses in the daytime, evenings and weekends. At the time of the inspection, there were approximately 1129 learners enrolled, all of whom were adults. Most learners were studying English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses from entry level to level 2.

In 2021/2022, Waltham Forest Adult Learning Service went through an organisational restructure. This led to lecturer and manager vacancies in a few curriculum areas at the time of the inspection.

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

Leaders have planned an exceptional and diverse extra-curricular programme for learners. Learners' participation in the variety of events is high. For example, ESOL learners complete a visual project about objects that mean something personal to them and exhibit their work in a local museum. Other learners take part in organised walks to make use of the borough's green spaces and promote their well-being, and make friends through conversation clubs run by trained volunteers who introduce topics such as black history. As a result, learners broaden their personal skills beyond the requirements of their course and enrich their life experiences.

Learners have highly positive attitudes to their studies. They are keen to develop their knowledge, and they take pride in their achievements. As a result, they enjoy their learning and are motivated to learn more and do more.

Learners and teachers treat one another with respect. For example, learners listen to each other carefully when others are speaking. Consequently, learners develop their self-esteem and confidence in their abilities.

Learners study in an environment where staff place a specific emphasis on equality, diversity and inclusion. Learners enjoy collaborating and working with people from cultures that are different to their own.

Learners benefit from studying in a well-equipped learning environment, and from having access to good range of resources. For example, they value the opportunity to borrow laptops to use to study, and to borrow books from a community library created by volunteers.

Through their programmes, learners gain a substantial range of new knowledge and skills. For example, in family learning, learners study new strategies to improve children's behaviour. ESOL learners develop their reading skills by using different approaches to text analysis. Consequently, learners can apply their new knowledge to their day-to-day lives.

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

Leaders offer courses that provide clear progression pathways from non-accredited and lower-level qualification-based courses up to level 2. Learners progress well through the levels of learning and achieve additional complementary qualifications. For example, learners on hairdressing courses choose to study an additional barbering course. As a result, learners improve their prospects of gaining meaningful employment.

Leaders have planned a flexible and diverse curriculum that supports the needs of their local community. For example, they provide courses that support entry into work, language courses for ESOL learners, and courses that support the interests

and leisure time pursuits of their local residents. Consequently, leaders add value to the community.

Teachers mostly plan lessons that build learners' knowledge and skills over time. For example, in childcare, teachers sensibly teach safeguarding, communication, and the development of professional relationships early in the course. This ensures learners have a sound understanding of these vital topics before they progress to more complex ideas. However, in one vocational course observed, the pace of the lesson was slow, and learners did not develop their knowledge in a logical order.

Teachers use a good range of useful assessment strategies to identify what learners know and can do, and where there are errors or misconceptions. For example, ESOL teachers routinely identify and correct common errors made by learners, to address gaps in learning. Learners on family learning courses learn to critically analyse their own behaviour, such as their use of disciplinary techniques with their children, to recognise what they do well and how they can improve. These strategies help learners to develop a secure knowledge of their subjects and recognise how they can use what they have learned in the future.

Teachers on most courses have a clear overview of the progress learners make in developing new skills and knowledge. For example, ESOL teachers capture learners' starting points using a range of diagnostic assessment tools. Teachers use these to set personalised targets, against which learners evaluate their own progress. However, health and well-being teachers do not evaluate effectively enough learners' progress in improving their mental health and well-being. Consequently, they do not have a thorough overview of the behavioural changes learners make.

Managers do not ensure that learners achieve their qualifications consistently well across all curriculum areas. For example, while achievement rates on vocational courses are high, those on digital, English, and mathematics courses are lower.

Teachers provide good levels of support to meet the needs of individual learners. For example, learners with disabilities are provided with additional assistance that helps them complete artwork projects alongside their peers. Learners on mathematics courses receive individual support that keeps them on track and helps them to make progress.

Leaders do not consistently enforce their high expectations for attendance and punctuality. Consequently, learners miss out on the valuable learning available to them and do not consistently develop the workplace habits they need for their future careers.

Teachers prepare learners for life in modern Britain effectively. For example, they teach them to recognise differences in family structures, laws and education systems in the UK and in other countries. Teachers ensure that learners know how to look out for signs of extremist or radical behaviours. Consequently, learners are aware of how to keep themselves and their families safe.

Learners receive comprehensive information about careers and further learning. Staff provide learners with information about progression routes within their subjects as well as guidance on working in other areas such as in the creative industries, or the National Health Service. Leaders provide additional learning opportunities, such as the chance to attend jobs clubs, and overall, learners are equipped well to take their next steps.

Leaders have put in place effective governance arrangements. Governors hold leaders to account, challenge them to think differently about their strategies and provide comprehensive external scrutiny. This supports leaders to manage and lead the service well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is experienced and has completed the training necessary to carry out the role. The deputy safeguarding lead is also suitably qualified and experienced.

Staff all undergo safeguarding training during their induction period and have refresher training every three years. Leaders keep staff informed of any local safeguarding issues through staff briefings and training.

Students know who they can report any concerns to. There are many informative posters that provide information about a range of issues and who learners can contact if they have any concerns. As a result, learners feel safe, including when they are learning online.

The DSL responds to safeguarding issues well and keeps a log of all issues. Leaders recognise the need to improve the way in which follow up actions are recorded.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders must ensure that they create an organisational culture of high expectations of attendance and punctuality.
- Managers must ensure that they improve achievement rates across the range of qualifications they offer.
- Managers should ensure that they have systems in place to capture and record the qualitative changes in learners' behaviours over time.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53150
Address	97 Queens Road LONDON E17 8QR
Contact number	020 8496 2974
Website	www.lbwfadultlearning.co.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Alan Thompson
Provider type	Adult and community learning
Dates of previous inspection	21 to 24 June 2016
Main subcontractors	Not applicable

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of skills, 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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