

Short inspection of Hammersmith and Fulham Adult Learning and Skills Service

Inspection dates:

31 January and 1 February 2023

Outcome

Hammersmith and Fulham Adult Learning and Skills Service continues to be a good provider.

Information about this provider

Hammersmith and Fulham Adult Learning and Skills Service is part of the local authority's economic development, learning and skills team. It offers courses in family and community learning, and foundation level courses that help learners improve their English, mathematics, and digital skills. It also runs vocational programmes that support entry to work and programmes for learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Most courses are from entry level to level 2. It has three main sites and teaches courses in a range of other local community venues. Most of its learners are from the local borough. The service places a particular emphasis on supporting those individuals from marginalised or hard-to-reach groups.

The service provides a range of accredited and non-accredited courses and lessons take place in the daytime, evenings, and at weekends. Learners study face-to-face and online. At the time of the inspection, there were approximately 3,400 learners on roll, most of whom are adults. Most learners were studying English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) or creative arts courses. A small proportion of younger learners were completing a motor vehicle course.

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

Learners have a positive attitude towards their studies. They are keen to develop their knowledge and skills, they enjoy their learning and are motivated to learn more and be able to do more.

Learners develop the confidence and resilience they need to participate ably in community life. For example, ESOL learners improve their English speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills and as a result can make hospital appointments independent of their family members.

Learners benefit from studying in environments that are well-resourced with the equipment and tools they need to complete their project work. For example, on creative arts courses learners use soldering equipment to make jewellery and air guns to upholster furniture. Leaders and managers make laptops available for those learners who need them. Learners value highly the resources that leaders make available to them.

Learners take pride in their work and staff create a very positive culture to celebrate their achievements. On creative courses, learners have the chance to display their completed work at local galleries and exhibitions. Learners with SEND participate in dance and drama performances at a local theatre and staff organise end-of-year celebratory events for learners.

Learners study in an environment that is highly diverse and inclusive, and where many communities are represented. Learners are respectful of their tutors and each other.

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

Leaders and managers create valuable opportunities for adults who are furthest from learning and work to engage in education. For example, they teach courses that are aimed at improving learners' English, mathematics, digital and work-related skills. They develop projects that improve individuals' life chances, including those with drug and alcohol issues, through the Get Connected project. Through these programmes, learners develop the skills and behaviours they need to play a positive role in community life.

Leaders and managers work closely with external partners to devise programmes that respond well to the needs of local communities. For example, when planning their ESOL courses, managers visited local refugee events to talk to Ukrainian refugees about English language classes. This enabled leaders to adapt their curriculum to better support refugees to fit quickly into life in London.

On most programmes, managers plan and sequence the curriculum so that learners develop knowledge and skills well over time. For example, photography learners learn how basic camera equipment works before they learn how to use it to take pictures. This helps them to see how the components of a camera fit together before they take a photograph. In English courses, teachers start by teaching speaking and listening units before focusing on reading, and then writing skills. This helps learners develop confidence in their oral skills before they learn how to do more challenging tasks such as reading a book or writing a letter.

Leaders do not plan a sufficiently ambitious curriculum for learners on creative arts courses. In a few instances, learners with higher level skills return in the following year to mixed-ability classes. Leaders and tutors do not prepare learners with advanced skills in creative arts effectively for their next steps in learning.

Teachers use a good range of teaching strategies to help learners remember what they are taught. For example, ESOL learners have frequent opportunities to read aloud in class. Jewellery teachers use skilful demonstrations and effective use of step-by-step instructions to guide learners to create pieces of jewellery that range in complexity and detail. Tutors who teach learners with SEND use soft fabrics and music to help learners make sensory dance movements. Learners consequently learn more and can do more over time.

On most courses, tutors make effective use of assessment to check what learners know and can do. For example, tutors of mathematics courses provide learners with feedback that helps them to correctly complete mathematical calculations when they have made a mistake. English tutors provide useful feedback on learners' written work that helps them to improve their spelling and grammar. However, in mixed-ability creative arts courses, tutors do not routinely assess more-advanced learners' skills as they progress through their course. While some learners have journals and project plans that demonstrate what they know and can do, these are not used consistently to check progress when learners work independently. As a result, more-advanced learners are not clear about the skills and knowledge they are learning.

Learners who need extra help benefit from good levels of support which enables them to study and make progress. This is because tutors use class profiles that specify the type of support that learners with SEND need, and they adapt their teaching strategies to help them. Learning support assistants complement the support that tutors provide. As they make progress, learners with SEND become more confident and increasingly more able to self-advocate and make life choices for themselves. Staff provide ESOL learners with additional language support that helps compensate for the language barriers that they face when trying to complete mathematics assessments. As a result, learners on ESOL courses are supported to achieve well in their additional mathematics qualifications.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) and deputy DSL are experienced and suitably qualified to undertake their roles.

Staff complete mandatory safeguarding training during their induction period and refresh their knowledge regularly. Leaders complete all necessary pre-employment checks on new staff before they start to teach. Leaders keep staff informed of any local safeguarding issues or risks through briefings and updates. Learners know how to report any concerns they may have. Staff create an environment that is safe for learners to study in, including when they are studying online.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders and managers must ensure that they develop an arts and crafts curriculum that is sufficiently ambitious and challenging for advanced level learners.
- Managers must ensure that staff make consistent use of assessment strategies to assess accurately learners' knowledge and skills as they progress through their learning.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53121
Address	Macbeth Centre Macbeth Street Hammersmith London W6 9JJ
Contact number	02087 533600
Website	www.hfals.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Andrew Munk
Provider type	Adult Learning and Skills Service
Date of previous inspection	16 and 17 November 2016
Main subcontractors	N/A

Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since Hammersmith and Fulham Adult Learning and Skills Service was judged to be good in November 2016.

The inspection team was assisted by the head of adult learning and skills service, 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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