

Inspection of Coventry City Council

Inspection dates:

28 February to 3 March 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Education programmes for young people	Good
Adult learning programmes	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

Coventry Adult Education Service is part of Coventry City Council. Most learners are on adult learning programmes. Adults study at one or more community-based centres. At the time of the inspection, 2,704 adults were in learning. The majority of adults study courses that lead to accredited qualifications, including English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), English and mathematics. A minority of adult learners complete non-accredited, community learning courses. Popular subjects include performing arts, sport, and creative arts and design.

At the time of the inspection, there were 54 apprentices who were completing standard-based apprenticeships. There were 16 apprentices on teaching assistant at level 3, with a further 12 on business administrator at level 3. A minority of apprentices undertake management apprenticeships at level 3 or level 5. Finally, 58 learners were completing study programmes. Learners on study programmes follow bespoke timetables to help develop skills for life and work, including in English and mathematics.

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

Adult learners value the access they have to a range of courses. Many learners who are returning to education after a significant break can access local provision that supports them in returning to learning.

Learners and apprentices benefit from teaching and support from well-qualified and experienced tutors. Tutors use their knowledge and experience effectively to teach them the knowledge, skills and behaviours that they need in order to progress in their qualification or apprenticeship or in developing their personal skills.

In most cases, learners and apprentices gain significant benefits from their courses. Adult learners studying ESOL are supported to develop key life skills, such as language for driving. This supports learners to be better prepared to complete driving theory tests, which increases their independence.

Learners and apprentices enjoy attending their lessons. They develop key employability skills, such as improving their digital literacy and ability to communicate effectively. This supports learners and apprentices to be better prepared for their next steps, such as moving into employment.

Learners on study programmes and apprentices benefit from a consistently broad and ambitious curriculum. Level 3 business administrator apprentices gain extensive experience of working across different departments at work. This helps learners and apprentices develop the knowledge and skills they need in order to be successful.

Learners and apprentices develop their confidence over the duration of their courses. They become more confident in participating in the classroom and working with their peers. Learners on arts and crafts courses become confident in critiquing the work of their peers, which helps learners to improve the quality of their work.

Learners and apprentices rightly feel safe when they study, including adult learners who study at local community centres. Learners and apprentices are provided with 'be safe' cards that contain key information linked to safeguarding. Learners and apprentices know how to report any concerns they may have.

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

In most cases, senior leaders plan the curriculum carefully so that it responds effectively to key stakeholders' needs. Leaders have recently revisited their curriculum for adult ESOL, so that there is a broader vocational offer for learners to access. Learners now have access to a more ambitious curriculum that improves their wider lives and prepares learners for employment, in line with the local council's 'One Coventry Plan'. However, for a small minority of adult, non-accredited courses, leaders do not have a clear focus on where learners can move on to following the completion of their courses.

Leaders work efficiently with employers to help plan the curriculum. In adult, sector-based work academy programmes, leaders work closely with employers to help prepare learners to develop the skills that will support them to move successfully into employment. Learners improve their customer service skills and gain valuable qualifications in health and safety and manual handling. In apprenticeships, leaders work diligently with employers, so that apprentices benefit from a well-thought-through curriculum. Level 3 teaching assistant apprentices gain experience of teaching children of all ages. Apprentices are well prepared for their next steps and achieve well in their final assessments.

Leaders and tutors plan the curriculums in a logical way. Tutors on study programmes develop learners' knowledge of more simple formulas when working with spreadsheets, before learners move on to use more complex formulas over time to complete more complex tasks. Apprentices on level 3 business administrator apprenticeships improve their knowledge of key legislation, such as the General Data Protection Regulation, before working with sensitive data in the workplace. Learners and apprentices develop their knowledge and skills incrementally over time.

In most cases, tutors take careful steps to find out what learners and apprentices already know and can do when they start their course. Tutors on study programmes identify learners' specific needs, including for learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Tutors skilfully support learners to move from individual learning to small-group learning over time. Learners develop strategies to manage their emotions, which prepares learners better for their next steps.

Tutors have the subject expertise they need to teach learners and apprentices. Learners accessing courses in arts and crafts benefit from tutors who are professional artists. Tutors use this expertise well to support learners to improve their knowledge of enterprise and to learn how to exhibit their artwork and gain an income from selling their work.

Tutors share new content with learners and apprentices clearly. On adult, non-accredited courses in arts and crafts, tutors use demonstrations successfully when supporting learners to improve the range of stitches they can use in their patchwork, such as shamrock stitch. Tutors in family learning share the use of phonics clearly with learners. Learners are better able to support their children with learning to read and to look for digraphs and trigraphs to help decode words more accurately.

Tutors use assessment well to check on learning. In apprenticeships, tutors use a range of probing questions to check what apprentices now know and can do. In adult family learning, tutors encourage learners to maintain useful, reflective diaries to reflect on their learning. Tutors use the information from assessment to challenge any misconceptions that learners and apprentices have. Tutors reorder the curriculum where needed, so that learners' and apprentices' new knowledge is secure before moving on to the next topic.

Tutors support learners and apprentices to apply theory to practice routinely. In apprenticeships, on- and off-the-job training is systematically planned. On level 3

teaching assistant apprenticeships, apprentices develop their understanding of child development theories before applying these in the workplace. In adult, non-accredited courses in arts and crafts, tutors support learners to understand how to use masking fluid when producing a watercolour. Learners then apply this understanding in their practical work. Learners and apprentices develop fluency in their knowledge and skills over time.

In most cases, tutors provide clear and useful feedback to learners and apprentices on their work. Tutors on study programmes provide routine and helpful feedback to learners accessing work placements. Learners improve their confidence over time as a result. However, in a few cases, tutors on adult, non-accredited courses and apprenticeships do not provide feedback that helps learners and apprentices to improve. Where this is the case, learners and apprentices are not challenged to make the progress of which they are capable.

Leaders and tutors support learners and apprentices to be active citizens in their communities. On adult learning programmes, learners frequently work to help raise awareness of charities. ESOL learners regularly benefit from volunteering opportunities to support local communities. This helps learners to understand the localities in which they live and work better.

Leaders support learners and apprentices to access a broad and rich curriculum. Level 3 teaching assistant apprentices benefit from completing additional training in the synthetic phonics process. ESOL learners participate in a 'photo voice' project. This encourages learners to access key landmarks in the city and to share photographs with their peers. Learners and apprentices are well prepared for their next steps into further education, training or employment.

Tutors support learners to improve their understanding of equality and diversity. ESOL learners work in classroom environments that harness and promote respect. Learners become more considerate and aware of each other's different cultural backgrounds. Learners improve their understanding of fundamental British values and how these apply in their wider lives and communities.

Leaders have developed a clear structure for monitoring the quality of the teaching they provide. They have a structured calendar of quality assurance activities throughout the year that inform improvement plans. Leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and have plans in place to rectify any identified weaknesses.

Leaders have access to a range of management information and data for apprenticeships and accredited adult learning programmes. Leaders know the areas in which apprentices perform well at their final assessments. They use this information intelligently to inform the curriculum. On the level 3 business administrator apprenticeship, there is now a closer focus on supporting apprentices to be better prepared to complete their final assessments, specifically when undertaking examinations. However, leaders do not have access to sufficient

information for non-accredited courses to improve the quality of education that learners receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff promote a positive culture of safeguarding. Clear policies and procedures are in place to report any safeguarding concerns. Where concerns are raised, designated safeguarding leads respond quickly and appropriately. Leaders benefit from swift access to local council resources to support the safeguarding of learners and apprentices. All staff receive regular and useful safeguarding training. Leaders work closely with organisations to help inform their understanding of the 'Prevent' duty. They help learners and apprentices to improve their understanding of risks in their local communities. Leaders follow clear processes to support the safer recruitment of staff.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders and managers should review the purpose of a small minority of their adult, non-accredited, community learning courses. Leaders and managers must be clear about the purpose of each of their courses so that they know what they are preparing learners to move on to.
- Leaders should ensure that they have access to a range of useful management information and data on the impact of their adult, non-accredited, community learning courses. Leaders should use this information so that they can regularly review the impact of the curriculum on learners' progress.
- Leaders and tutors should ensure that all learners and apprentices benefit from feedback that is precise and helps them to improve the quality of their work and achieve their potential.

Provider details

Unique reference number	51385
Address	Adult Education Service Southfields Old School South Street Coventry CV1 5EJ
Contact number	02476 975200
Website	www.coventry.gov.uk/adulted
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Judy Hallam
Provider type	Community learning and skills local authority
Date of previous inspection	11 November 2013
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the senior lead (adult education), 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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Jenny Murphy	Ofsted Inspector
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