

Inspection of Council of the Isles of Scilly

Inspection dates:

19 to 21 April 2023

Overall effectiveness**Good**

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

Information about this provider

The Council of the Isles of Scilly (Learn Scilly) provide community learning to adults on the Isles of Scilly. They provide recreational short courses in a range of different subjects, as well as qualifications in English, mathematics and digital skills. At the time of inspection, they had around 110 enrolments for more than 20 different courses during the academic year. Learn Scilly is the only adult education provider on the islands and provides a signposting service to other partners for education and training located on the mainland.

The Isles of Scilly are situated 28 miles southwest of Land's End and has a population of around 2,200. The majority of the population live on the main island of St. Mary's, with a small minority on four off-islands. Small aircraft provide transport between the mainland and St. Mary's year-round, and a ferry service runs during the summer. In the winter, transport between the islands is generally available once per week by boat, and more regularly during the summer.

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

Learners from a wide range of backgrounds, from all five islands, enjoy a varied range of courses that enable them to follow their interests and talents. Learners are offered courses that are relevant and useful to their lives on the islands. For example, lifejacket courses raise awareness of how to keep boat users safe by teaching them the correct use and maintenance of different lifejackets.

Learners are taught in a friendly and welcoming learning environment. Tutors support learners effectively to develop confidence and learn new skills. Learners reduce the social isolation they experience, particularly through the winter months, through participation in well-planned recreational courses. For example, learners within the community come together to make Christmas wreaths. Tutors also offer this activity on the off-islands to make this more accessible to all.

Learners enjoy courses that are designed thoughtfully to promote inclusion. For example, learners are taught how to sign 'A Christmas Carol' in British sign language learning sessions taught by a specialist tutor from the mainland. These performances are recorded and shared with other island residents on social media for inspiration. Learners on the islands have access to staff with expertise from the mainland to learn new skills, without having to leave the islands as a result of leaders' efficient use of resources.

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

Leaders are clear in their purpose and ambition to provide high-quality community learning for people in the Isles of Scilly. Leaders understand the important role they play in supporting social learning activities that better connects the community and reduces the impact of geographical isolation.

Leaders work very effectively with a range of partners to utilise projects funded through the European Social Fund, such as the Cornwall and Isles of Scilly Skills Hub and People Hub. Through these partnerships, leaders help learners to gain access to highly personalised training, such as floristry, barbering and first-aid training, to support local businesses.

Leaders provide learners with access to high-quality, impartial careers advice and guidance from staff who are knowledgeable and understand the local context. However, not all learners who would benefit most from this support to understand their employment and training options receive it. For example, learners studying English and mathematics qualifications do not receive careers information, advice and guidance.

Leaders maintain high standards and expectations of tutors by recruiting high-quality tutors and listening to learners' feedback. Tutors are experienced and well qualified to teach their courses. They receive useful professional development to further enhance their teaching and technical skills. For example, tutors have

received training on the use of target setting and the use of digital skills to improve their teaching, and hardware training to support learners with the use of their laptop.

Tutors plan and use effective strategies to support learners, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to make good progress in their learning. For example, mathematics tutors use imaginative activities such as board games to help learners who lack confidence to quickly learn mathematical principles. Tutors support learners with dyslexia by providing coloured overlays and through joint reading to help learners understand and process mathematical questions.

Tutors know their learners well and use this knowledge appropriately to motivate learners. Tutors ensure the pace of learning and level of challenge is well matched to individuals. For example, sewing tutors set well-selected individual targets based on learners' technical skills. Peer support is used effectively by pairing more experienced with less experienced learners, which also helps to build new networks in the community.

Tutors do not always check or review the progress learners make towards their goals well enough. A minority of tutors record learners' progress superficially. Not all learners reflect on their progress or achievements to consider what they have learned. Consequently, the information available to leaders to analyse learners' progress is not sufficiently useful in informing future planned curriculums. As a result, future curriculums often do not increase the level of demand and build cumulatively on what learners already know and can do.

Leaders are responsive to the needs of the community and place high importance on learners' views, which they respond to effectively. For example, leaders survey the island residents through questionnaires biannually to find out what skills adult learners want and need. As a result, new courses, such as 'Spanish for beginners', are introduced in response to demand.

Leaders consider learners' working hours, childcare arrangements and travel, including boating needs, when planning courses. For example, tutors provide a valuable IT drop-in service for learners when the off-island residents travel to St Mary's to collect their shopping. Leaders reduce barriers to participation where it is possible. For example, they offer to loan keyboards to piano learners, free boating for off-island residents and support with childcare costs.

Governors are supportive of Learn Scilly and advocate for them strongly within the wider council to raise their profile and support partnership working. However, governors lack the specific educational knowledge to scrutinise the quality of provision effectively. As a result, they are heavily reliant on leaders to accurately evaluate their own strengths and weaknesses in their reports.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure safeguarding arrangements are communicated effectively to tutors and learners through the information they receive within tutor and learner handbooks. Staff are appropriately trained and use clear lines of communication with the designated safeguarding leads.

Tutors are recruited safely through appropriate checks for suitability, including working with vulnerable adults. Vulnerable adults are considered carefully, with important safeguarding information provided for them in an accessible and suitable format.

Learners are given brief information about the risks associated with radicalisation and extremist views at the start of their courses. However, few learners are able to recall this information.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Use information gathered about the progress learners make towards their goals more effectively to inform the planning of future curriculums that are ambitious for all learners.
- Increase all learners' awareness and use of the careers information, advice and guidance on offer and target this support more effectively to those who would benefit most from this service to understand their employability and training options.

Provider details

Unique reference number	52550
Address	Learn Scilly Carn Gwaval Wellbeing Centre St Mary's Isles of Scilly TR21 0NA
Contact number	01720 424445
Website	www.scilly.gov.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Jo Evans
Provider type	Local authority
Date of previous inspection	6 November 2012
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of learning, leisure and customer 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

Lowenna Bradley, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Alexander	His Majesty's Inspector
Cliff Shaw	His Majesty's Inspector

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