

Inspection of Luton Borough Council

Inspection dates: 25 to 28 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
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

Luton Adult Learning (LAL) is part of Luton Borough Council. LAL provides adult learning, community learning and apprenticeship programmes across Luton.

At the time of the inspection, there were approximately 1,300 adults in learning. Most learners on the adult skills pathway, study courses such as English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), and functional skills courses in English and mathematics. LAL offer a full range of programmes from Pre-entry Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement to Functional skills level 2. The remainder study a wide range of community learning courses such as digital skills, life skills, health and well-being, employment support, family crafts, cookery and healthy eating.

LAL had 77 apprentices on standards-based apprenticeships. There were 24 apprentices aged 16-18 years and 53 apprentices over 19 years. Most apprentices were training on level 3 programmes and 20 apprentices on level 2 programmes. The largest apprenticeship areas were level 3 teaching assistant and level 3 business administrator. Other apprenticeship programmes include customer service, early years, team leader, leisure team member and community activator coach curriculum areas. LAL had six apprentices training on level 5 operations or departmental manager programme.

LAL had no apprentices in receipt of high-needs funding. LAL works with two main subcontractors, the NOAH Enterprise for community learning and Active Luton for apprenticeship provision.

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

Learners and apprentices enjoy their courses and are keen to learn. They value the calm and welcoming environment that staff create in their local community. Learners and apprentices are supportive and respectful towards each other. They enjoy contributing to their lessons. As a result, they develop greater confidence and share their pride in their progress and achievements, with one another.

Learners and apprentices feel staff treat them with respect. Tutors provide effective support that allows them to overcome substantial barriers to learning. A high proportion of adult learners speak English as an additional language or have a learning difficulty or disability. These learners receive effective support to enable them to achieve their personal goals.

Learners develop good English and maths skills that they need to gain employment. They become more confident to write accurate emails, letters and curriculum vitae when they apply for jobs. Learners in community learning benefit from courses to improve their physical health and mental well-being. These include courses in sexual health, cooking and managing their household costs.

Most apprentices develop the skills they need to be successful at work. For example, level 3 business administrator apprentices become confident to work independently. They can complete a wide variety of administrative tasks expected by their employer. They understand how the economic environment affects their organisation, such as the impact of the rising cost of living and energy costs on budgets.

Learners and apprentices feel safe. They trust teachers and staff at the Luton training centre to take appropriate actions if they were to report any concerns.

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

Leaders work effectively with the local community. Leaders have developed an effective curriculum that improves learner's prospects for employment or progression to further learning. Leaders plan creative and effective programmes, such as maths for taxi drivers. Leaders aim to meet the needs of learners who are most disadvantaged or furthest from the labour market. For example, they have developed craft courses with embedded maths, such as sewing with maths. These community programmes are effective in helping learners to engage in learning in the first instance. Furthermore, learners engage positively with mathematical content, such as shapes and measurements. Teachers support learners to overcome

psychological barriers to learning. Most adults complete their courses successfully. A high proportion of adult learners progress to new jobs in areas, such as social care and the volunteering sector.

Most teachers plan lessons that effectively build adult learners' knowledge, skills and behaviours over time. For example, on ESOL courses, teachers teach learners how to pronounce the different sounds in English. Teachers then move on to teaching vocabulary that learners need for activities in their daily lives, such as shopping or helping their children with homework. Learners gradually build their confidence in speaking and listening in English, before moving on to develop their skills in reading and writing. Learners gain the skills they need to integrate quickly into their local communities, such as being able to communicate with their neighbours and book appointments with their doctor.

Teachers have planned a logical and effective apprenticeship curriculum. For example, level 3 teaching assistant apprentices start by studying key safeguarding legislation, which they use at work. They then move on to learn about the different stages of child development through school, such as the transition between key stages. Furthermore, apprentices learn how to assess children effectively. This enables them to set appropriate targets to support each child's development. As a result, apprentices develop substantial new knowledge and skills that employers value.

Most teachers use a wide range of appropriate techniques and resources in their lessons. Teachers encourage learners to work together and share their learning. For example, teachers make effective use of pair and small group work through quizzes, matching exercises and games. In community learning, most classes are small and learners benefit from highly individualised support. As a result, learners enjoy coming to their lessons, are motivated to keep learning and make good progress.

Most teachers and assessors provide regular, useful verbal feedback during lessons. Learners and apprentices value this feedback and make improvements as a result. However, on community learning programmes, most teachers' feedback is superficial and congratulatory. Too few teachers identify and correct learners' punctuation and grammatical errors. Consequently, learners are not clear on what they have done well or what they need to do to improve.

Teachers provide good support to meet the needs of individual learners and apprentices. For example, learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive additional support from a learning support assistant. This includes one-to-one teaching to reinforce their learning and to keep them on track with their work. As a result, learners and apprentices with SEND make good progress in line with their peers.

Most adult learners on accredited courses achieve their qualifications. Leaders ensure that outcomes for learners, including learners with SEND, are good. However, too few apprentices achieve their qualifications within the planned time frame. Leaders have taken appropriate steps to rectify this. For example, leaders have

developed a pre-apprenticeship programme. The programme is for learners who have not yet secured an English and maths qualification. Learners now study English and maths functional skills before enrolling on an apprenticeship programme. However, at the time of the inspection, it was too early to see the impact of this.

Teachers meet with individual adult learners frequently to discuss their next steps. Leaders ensure that adult learners have access to a careers hub where they receive appropriate careers support. Teachers plan for employers and charities to visit the hub to discuss job vacancies and volunteering opportunities. However, too few apprentices have a sufficiently broad knowledge of career routes beyond their workplace. For example, level 3 business administration apprentices are not informed about the broad range of careers open to them on completion of their apprenticeship.

Leaders have a limited oversight of the quality of their subcontracted provision. Leaders receive frequent monthly updates from subcontractors on learner progress. Leaders hold subcontractors to account for learners' progression and achievement of qualifications. However, leaders do not check the quality of teaching taking place at the subcontractor. Leaders are taking appropriate steps to address this but it is too early to see the full impact.

Leaders and governors have a good understanding of the key strengths and weaknesses of the provision. Governors receive the appropriate information they need to hold leaders to account. They meet frequently to review the quality of education and training that learners and apprentices receive. Governors provide appropriate support to help leaders improve the curriculum. For example, they carry out lesson visits and collect feedback from learners on their experiences.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established an appropriate culture of safeguarding and protection. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is experienced and understands their role and responsibilities. All staff have completed suitable safeguarding training.

Learners and apprentices receive the appropriate training and support they need to keep themselves safe at work or in their everyday lives. For example, they benefit from fraud and scam workshops taught by a high street bank. As a result, they know how to remain safe online and they learn how to avoid financial ticketing scams when organising their travel arrangements.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders must ensure that apprentices achieve within the planned time frame.
- Leaders must ensure that apprentices understand the range of career opportunities available to them in the wider employment market.

- Leaders must ensure that learners on community learning courses receive good quality developmental feedback so that learners are clear on what they have done well and what they need to improve.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53201
Address	2nd Floor, The Mall Arndale House Luton LU1 2LJ
Contact number	01582490033
Website	www.lutonacl.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Merielle James
Provider type	Community learning and skills (local authority)
Date of previous inspection	27 and 28 September 2017
Main subcontractors	NOAH Enterprise Active Luton

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the adult skills delivery 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

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