

# Inspection of Liverpool City Council

Inspection dates: 19 to 22 September 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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

## Information about this provider

Liverpool City Council, also known as Liverpool Adult Learning Service, is a community learning and skills provider that delivers adult learning opportunities for the people of Liverpool. They provide a range of adult and community learning courses that support people to go on to voluntary work, further learning or training. Learners study a range of accredited and non-accredited courses funded by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) and the Education and Skills Funding Agency. Six subcontractors provide community learning courses to hard-to-reach learners.

At the time of inspection, there were a total of 919 adult learners. Most learners study courses from pre-entry level to entry 3. The remaining learners follow courses at levels 1 and 2 with a very few learners at level 3. Around half of learners follow adult skills courses and half follow community learning courses. Most learners study courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), English and mathematics. The remainder study courses in digital and well-being, health, and education.

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

Learners at Liverpool City Council thrive in a highly inclusive culture. They are caring individuals, who consistently demonstrate exemplary behaviours. Through their courses, learners have found friendship, support and a focus in what are often extremely challenging personal lives.

Tutors provide comprehensive wraparound support that helps learners to achieve their goals and aspirations. They remove an extensive range of barriers to learning. For instance, learners receive bus passes, laptop loans, food vouchers and debt advice. Learners are exceptionally proud that they have overcome these barriers to improve their job prospects and lives.

Learners vastly improve their confidence and self-esteem because of their courses and the high levels of support they receive from tutors. For example, learners on entry 2 ESOL courses speak confidently to doctors, dentists and teachers at their children's schools.

An exceedingly high proportion of learners are actively involved in their communities. They regularly raise money for charity. Learners consistently volunteer at food banks, drama clubs, community groups, children's centres, charity shops and women's domestic violence charities.

Learners feel safe and know how to report any concerns they have about themselves or others. They know that current local risks in their communities relate to knife crime and loan sharks.

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

Governors and leaders have a sound rationale to provide a curriculum that meets the needs and priorities of the residents of Liverpool. They align their curriculums with the strategic skills priorities of LCRCA. Leaders work very closely with specially selected subcontractors to provide a broad range of courses to the hardest to reach residents in some of the most deprived areas of Liverpool. After completing their courses, most learners go on to further learning, voluntary work or employment.

Tutors are suitably experienced and qualified to teach their subjects. They benefit from training that updates their knowledge on topics, such as adaptive teaching, marking and feedback. Tutors, including those at subcontractors, regularly update their industry knowledge. For example, teaching assistant tutors visit nursery schools to maintain current knowledge of the early years foundation stage. Consequently, most teachers further improve their teaching skills.

Curriculums are well sequenced. In level 2 functional skills mathematics, learners firstly learn to accurately carry out basic multiplication and division calculations before moving on to calculating ratio and proportions. Finally, they learn more

complex calculations in relation to area and perimeter. As a result, most learners incrementally build knowledge, skills and confidence.

Most tutors use learners' starting points effectively to provide an individualised and ambitious curriculum. This ensures that most learners are challenged to meet their full potential. However, a few curriculums are not sufficiently ambitious. A few entry 2 ESOL learners studying the basic digital skills element of their course and level 2 creative craft learners already have very high starting points. This means that they do not learn enough new knowledge and skills.

Most tutors use assessment well to identify gaps in knowledge and to inform teaching. They routinely recap on theory before moving on to new topics. In class, tutors use a wide range of effective strategies, such as quizzes, group and paired activities, class discussions and practice tests. Learners readily recall previously learned knowledge. Level 2 community interpreting learners know the crucial importance of confidentiality, integrity and respect, for instance, when they are working in a court environment. Learners secure learning in their long-term memories.

Most tutors provide clear feedback to learners that helps them to know what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work. For example, level 2 teaching assistant tutors encourage learners to use a wider range of research materials to demonstrate deeper knowledge. As a result, most learners' work improves over the duration of their course. However, in a few cases, feedback to entry 2 ESOL and level 2 creative craft learners is too vague. Consequently, these learners do not improve their work quickly enough.

Most learners, including those with subcontractors, know what their next steps are. They know the opportunities and options available to them once they have completed their courses. Most learners are ambitious to gain qualifications to help them move into employment or voluntary work. The remainder plan to move on to other courses for personal and social reasons.

Leaders have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of their provision, as well as that of their subcontractors. They have in place effective quality assurance and improvement processes to swiftly bring about improvements. Leaders have implemented a range of strategies to improve attendance. They introduced nutrition and breakfast clubs and provided learners with bus passes, food vouchers, laptop loans, free Wi-Fi and well-being sessions. This has helped to improve attendance since the previous year.

Leaders have a strong oversight of their subcontractors. They meet regularly with contract managers to discuss the quality of training that learners receive, staff training and any current safeguarding issues. Leaders focus on ensuring consistency between subcontractors who offer the same curriculums. Most learners with subcontractors achieve their qualifications.

Leaders provide a range of high-quality information, which governors use to monitor closely the areas that need improving. Although governors provide challenge to leaders about the suitability of the curriculums to meet the needs of residents, they do not provide adequate challenge on the quality of the implementation of the curriculums. This means that a few weaknesses in a few subject areas have not yet sufficiently improved.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Enhance the quality of feedback that tutors give to learners studying entry 2 ESOL and level 2 creative crafts.
- Improve how well tutors on the level 2 creative craft and digital element of entry 2 ESOL courses collect and successfully use learners' starting points to provide an individualised curriculum.
- Increase the effectiveness of governors' challenge to leaders to improve the quality of the implementation of the curriculums.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	53073
<b>Address</b>	Liverpool Adult Learning Service Cunard Building Pier Head Water Street Liverpool L3 1AH
<b>Contact number</b>	0151 233 2430
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://liverpool.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/adult-learning/">https://liverpool.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/adult-learning/</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Elaine McCausland
<b>Provider type</b>	Community learning and skills
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 January 2017
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Alt Valley Community Trust Eduk8 Partnership Limited Everton Development Trust Granby-Toxteth Development Trust Liverpool Social Care Partnership Speke Training and Education Centre

## Information about this inspection

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

Kim Bleasdale, lead inspector	His Majesty’s Inspector
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