

Inspection of Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole Council

Inspection dates:

26 to 29 September 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

Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole Council (BCP Council) is a local authority provider delivering adult, 16 to 18 and apprenticeship programmes on behalf of BCP Council and Dorset Council. The public name for the education element is Skills and Learning Adult Community Education. BCP Council has approximately 30 centres located across the two council areas of Dorset.

At the time of the inspection, 3,204 adults were studying a wide range of programmes, including English, mathematics, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), bookkeeping and counselling. Learners study on courses at entry level and up to level 4. This includes short introductory programmes through to longer programmes for advanced learners. Twenty-seven learners aged 16 to 18 were studying on education programmes for young people. Five apprentices were studying business apprenticeship standards, mostly at level 3.

BCP Council works with 10 subcontractors. One of the 10 only teaches young people. Two of the 10 teach both adults and young people, while the rest teach only adults.

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

Adults, young learners and apprentices enjoy their learning at BCP Council. This is because leaders, managers and tutors place a great emphasis on teaching curriculum content that promotes the personal development of learners. Younger learners studying at Aim Community take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, such as visits to local cafés and leisure activities, which helps them to socialise with community members and widen their social circle. As a result, learners and apprentices increase their levels of confidence, resilience, and self-esteem.

Most learners and apprentices are motivated to learn. This is because tutors and support staff help them to understand the opportunities available to them in developing new knowledge and skills and successfully completing their programme. For example, adults studying ESOL improve their speaking and listening skills over time. This helps them to become more outgoing and socialise with new friends and first language speakers in the community.

Learners and apprentices behave well in learning sessions. This is because tutors teach them about the professional behaviours required and are positive role models. Learners agree with the behaviour guidelines developed and set by tutors, which are revisited as and when required. As a result, learners understand what is expected of them and interact positively with their peers and staff.

Adults, young learners and apprentices feel safe when studying with BCP Council. Tutors create a friendly and supportive environment in which learners feel they can be themselves. For example, tutors and learning support staff provide learners studying information technology for beginners with helpful praise and feedback that encourages them to overcome difficulties with their studies and stay on programme. Learners and apprentices are supported well by staff and know how to keep themselves safe in the community and online. Learners feel confident that any concerns they raise with staff will be resolved.

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

Leaders and managers have an ambitious strategic vision: to provide high-quality and inclusive education and training to disadvantaged adults and young people, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, in Bournemouth, Christchurch, Poole and the Dorset area. They have developed successful partnerships with local organisations, such as Bournemouth and Dorset councils, and local refugee community organisations. These partnerships help BCP Council to be proactive and, when required, to react by providing provision to help the most disadvantaged learners. For example, leaders and managers responded quickly to support the influx of Ukrainian families by providing additional community-based ESOL programmes.

Leaders and managers ensure that the curriculum content is logically sequenced on most programmes. For example, ESOL tutors provide individual training plans that

take into account the starting points of learners. In hairdressing, tutors begin teaching learners fundamental knowledge, such as how to work with a range of different hair types. As a result, most learners make good progress in building on and deepening their knowledge over time. However, a small minority of tutors do not teach a few key concepts early enough.

Most tutors are well qualified and have high levels of subject-specific knowledge. Those teaching subjects such as hairdressing and beauty therapy are industry professionals. Most tutors take part in professional development activities to ensure that they remain up to date with industry requirements. For example, tutors who teach bookkeeping watch webinars developed by HMRC to ensure that they are teaching knowledge aligned with the latest UK taxation rules. Hairdressing tutors take part in update skills and product training with nationally recognised companies.

In most sessions, tutors teach learners in a calm and purposeful learning environment. Tutors of counselling use learners' reflections on their time outside of college, as well as activities that help them to concentrate and focus before the teaching begins. However, in a few classes, adults lose concentration, get distracted and create low-level disruption, which hinders the learning of others.

Most tutors use a wide range of teaching and learning methods in sessions. These include questioning techniques, providing learners with clear explanations, and using case studies to deepen understanding. Tutors of programmes for young people use visual strategies to enable learners to create and use action plans to help organise their thoughts. As a result, learners make good progress in developing their knowledge and skills over time.

Leaders and managers do not ensure that all tutors develop and improve their teaching knowledge and skills well enough. A few tutors use teaching strategies with learners at the beginning of their programme that are too complex for their ability. As a result, learners do not develop a secure understanding of the lesson content.

Most tutors carefully assess what learners already know and can do at the beginning of their programme. For example, learners studying bookkeeping complete short written test papers, and learners studying ESOL take part in written and oral assessments. Most tutors use this information well to inform the planning of the curriculum and their teaching. However, a few tutors of adults do not use information about their starting points well enough to inform the development of their English and mathematics skills.

Most learners and apprentices stay on programme, achieve their qualifications, and develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to move on to their next stage of education, training, or employment. Adults studying level 2 hairdressing develop proficiency in a range of hair colouring techniques. Apprentices studying business administration level 3 learn how to manage difficult customers appropriately. Adult learners studying horticulture at Bournemouth Churches Housing Association use technical vocabulary, such as respiration and rhizomes, well

when discussing the benefits of irrigation. Young learners learn how to use digital editing software and make presentations for businesses.

Most tutors provide learners with developmental feedback on their work. For example, learners studying ESOL receive detailed verbal and written feedback that is presented to them using language that is easily understood. Learners use the feedback from their tutors to develop their skills and knowledge further. However, a few tutors provide learners with feedback that focuses too much on completing the units within the qualification rather than on how they could improve. Errors within written work are not always highlighted. Therefore, learners continue to make the same mistakes over time.

Tutors set learners clear expectations for attendance and punctuality. For example, level 2 hairdressing tutors continually reinforce the importance of timekeeping at work and the consequences of being late for their clients. As a result, most learners and apprentices have high attendance and are punctual. Where attendance is not always high, or learners arrive late for sessions, tutors challenge learners and support them to catch up on missed learning.

Leaders and managers ensure that learners have access to and take part in discussions with highly qualified careers and employability advisors. The advisors provide learners with helpful support in tasks such as writing a detailed CV and preparing for an interview. They also provide a range of useful workshops that help learners to prepare for their next steps.

Leaders and managers use quality assurance arrangements that are effective. These are replicated well with subcontractors. For example, leaders and managers undertake teaching observations, talk to learners, and implement remedial interventions as and when required. Leaders and managers produce a report that is monitored and reviewed at termly meetings. As a result, learners studying at subcontractor provision receive a good quality of education.

Tutors at Aim Community provide learners aged 16 to 18 with beneficial academic and pastoral support. They plan and design the curriculum well so that learners deepen their knowledge of music and creative and digital media. Learners also improve their motivation to learn through life skills and employability sessions. As a result, learners enjoy their learning, with a significant minority achieving their first formal qualifications. However, leaders and managers do not make sure that learners aged 16 to 18 receive wider career guidance beyond the specialist sectors they are studying.

Learners have a detailed understanding of good citizenship. ESOL tutors teach learners in the first weeks of their programme the importance of British values and celebrating diversity. Tutors at Aim Community help young learners to understand the importance of respect and tolerance.

Governance arrangements are effective. Governors are positive advocates for learners and provide senior leaders with robust challenge and support to make well-

informed decisions about the programmes they offer. Senior leaders provide governors with helpful information about new initiatives such as mathematics programmes for adults and programmes for parents. However, senior leaders do not provide governors with enough information on the quality of teaching and learning and its impact on education and training.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Provide tutors with teaching knowledge and skills training and monitor how well they implement the new learning and its impact on what learners know and can do.
- Ensure that all learners receive developmental feedback.
- Provide governors with the information they need to assess the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Ensure that learners aged 16 to 18 receive a broader understanding of the options they have when finishing their programmes.

Provider details

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| Unique reference number | 53936 |
| Address | Poole Adult Learning Centre Unit 109 The Dolphin Centre Poole Dorset BH15 1SY |
| Contact number | 01202123444 |
| Website | Skills & Learning ACE Adult Learning & Education Courses (skillsandlearningace.com) |
| Principal, CEO or equivalent | Lesley Spain |
| Provider type | Local authority provider |
| Date of previous inspection | 15 June 2015 |
| Main subcontractors | Face Family Advice Ltd Dorset Community Action Bournemouth Churches Housing Association Domestic Abuse Intervention Service Whitehead-Ross Education and Consultancy Side by Side Dorset Trade Skills Somerset Skills and Learning Aim Community Mike Taylor Education |

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the curriculum and quality 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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