

Inspection of Southend-on-Sea City 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	Requires improvement
Adult learning programmes	Good
Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

Southend-on-Sea City Council provides education programmes through Southend Adult Community College (SACC). SACC provides adult learning programmes, education programmes for young people and provision for learners with high needs. Programmes are mainly offered through centres at Southchurch, Belfairs and Westcliff. SACC offers adult skills, employability and community learning courses. At the time of the inspection, there were 998 enrolments on these courses. Fifty-one young people were studying on study programmes.

SACC offers specialist programmes for learners with profound and multiple disabilities and learning difficulties at its Westcliff and Southchurch centres. At the time of the inspection, 45 learners were studying these programmes. SACC also offers a study programme for young people with special educational needs. Eight learners with high needs were studying this course. A further 23 learners with high needs were studying other courses at the college.

SACC no longer offers apprenticeships and does not work with any subcontractors.

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

Learners value highly the inclusive and welcoming culture of SACC. Adult learners celebrate the diversity within their local community. Adult learners in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses frequently hold days when they celebrate their different cultures. Learners studying community arts courses learn about how Asian art influences modern Western art.

Learners value the supportive environment at SACC immensely. Adult learners in mathematics courses appreciate that their classes are a safe place to make mistakes. Learners enjoy working collaboratively with their peers. Learners positively support each other. During community art classes, for example, they helpfully critique each other's work. Young people value the individualised help provided by tutors and support staff. The confidence of these learners improves over time. Learners with high needs learn about positive social behaviours, such as being kind and thoughtful. They learn to identify and value positive traits in each other.

Younger learners treat each other respectfully. They value the way tutors treat them as adults. Learners with high needs consider each other's views and opinions during sessions. They allow each other to take turns when speaking in class.

Learners demonstrate positive attitudes towards their studies. They are keen to learn, confident to contribute during their sessions and take pride in their achievements. Learners studying ESOL courses work hard to improve their English skills.

Adult learners acquire a strong sense of community through their learning programmes. They enjoy meeting new friends, as well as developing new skills. Learners studying Spanish have established a social media group to practise their Spanish and share holiday experiences as part of their learning about the country and the culture.

Most adult learners attend their sessions. However, too few learners on study programmes have high attendance. As a result, they miss too much of their studies.

Learners feel safe at SACC. They do not experience bullying and harassment.

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

Leaders have developed highly effective and ambitious courses and qualifications for adults that meet the needs of the local community. This includes a new digital qualification for adults and young people and courses for learners with profound and multiple disabilities and learning difficulties. Leaders have developed an ESOL qualification that meets the growing demand locally to integrate refugee communities. Leaders have worked closely with local stakeholders to develop a course to train adults to work within the care sector. However, leaders have not been sufficiently ambitious for the small proportion of learners on study

programmes. Learners study qualifications that do not challenge them. For a few learners, the qualification they are studying will not help them to progress to their desired career pathway.

Tutors on early years workforce programmes are ambitious for adult learners. Tutors make sure that learners understand the wider context within the early years sector. Tutors skilfully teach conflict management and de-escalation techniques. These help learners when working with children and their carers. On completion of their courses, most adult learners carry on with further study, gain employment or gain promotion in their current roles.

Leaders have ensured that the qualifications for learners with high needs are appropriately demanding. Leaders have developed highly effective relationships with feeder schools and local authorities. Managers work closely with these partners to ensure that the curriculum meets the individual needs of learners and that their transition into college is effective. Most learners with high needs achieve their qualifications. Those on study programmes achieve better than their peers.

Leaders and managers have developed courses that are sequenced effectively. As a result, most learners develop substantial knowledge, skills and behaviours over time. Young people studying health and social care learn complex terms relevant to roles within the care sector. They then learn about the day-to-day activities included within these roles. Learners then explore the skills required for these roles.

Tutors provide very clear explanations during sessions. This enables learners to understand and build on their existing knowledge and develop their technical language. Mathematics tutors, for example, explain different multiplication vocabulary, such as the meaning of the term 'product'. Learners then use this language while learning to multiply using the grid method of multiplication. As a result, adult learners have a good understanding of the specialist vocabulary within the subject.

Tutors use a range of highly effective approaches to ensure that learners develop and retain knowledge in their long-term memory. Tutors on ESOL courses encourage and support learners to participate actively in sessions. Tutors task learners with asking each other questions about their own families. Learners write down phrases, numbers and words in their notebooks. Tutors continually repeat phrases and correct any mispronunciation. During numeracy lessons for learners with complex needs, tutors skilfully use practical demonstrations to help learners to understand the concept of addition. As a result, learners are better able to perform basic sums independently.

Most tutors on adult courses make good use of learners' starting points to plan training programmes. Within mathematics courses, tutors use initial assessments to adapt their schemes of work appropriately. Tutors consider the time learners take to complete tasks and their areas of strength and adjust their teaching accordingly.

Tutors provide very helpful feedback to learners that clearly identifies their areas to improve. As a result, most learners produce work of a good standard. Within community learning arts courses, learners appreciate the individual guidance they receive. This improves the quality of work they produce. Learners making pots using terracotta coils first make a smaller version with clay. Following feedback, learners refine their technique and develop their pot on a larger scale.

Tutors on programmes for learners with high needs use the information in education, health and care plans to plan learning goals effectively. Tutors review learners' progress frequently. Tutors provide learners with feedback that helps them to improve their skills, such as not interrupting when others are speaking. However, managers and tutors do not ensure that these learning goals are recorded in a way that learners easily understand.

Learners develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours. Adult learners studying on children and young people's workforce courses know about the importance of early identification of additional learning needs in children. Learners know how to refer and access additional support services for children, such as speech and language therapy. Learners with complex needs learn to recognise safety signs within the college and understand what they mean. Learners on study programmes in creative media know how to apply branding strategy principles to a specific item or product.

Most adult learners achieve their qualifications or learning goals. Achievement rates in basic skills English and mathematics are extremely high. A high proportion of adult learners who sit their GCSE mathematics and English qualifications achieve grade 4 and above. Most learners pass their functional skills examinations on their first attempt. However, previously, too few adult learners on level 3 and 4 qualifications have achieved their qualifications promptly.

Leaders have not ensured that learners on study programmes undertake suitable, work-related activities. Leaders have not ensured that work experience for learners with high needs matches closely enough with their interests and aspirations. These learners do not sufficiently experience the world of work.

Too few learners on study programmes achieve their qualifications. This is due to learners leaving the new study programme for younger refugees. Leaders have now amended the programme offered, but it is too early to see the impact of this. Most learners who complete their courses move on to the next level of study at the college.

Most learners are supported effectively with planning their future careers and next steps. Tutors on the level 3 early years workforce course frequently discuss the next steps and progression routes with learners. Tutors support adult learners who are applying for new and promoted job roles. Leaders have provided a helpful job club to provide learners with the support and resources they need to apply for employment. Careers staff helpfully visit teaching sessions to ensure that learners know who to go to for help with job searches and applications. Leaders have

recently implemented changes to the careers programme for learners on study programmes. This is to ensure that young people have continued access to careers information and guidance throughout their programme. It is too early yet to see the full impact of this new programme.

Governors have a comprehensive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the college. They challenge leaders' decisions appropriately on the quality of education and training and have ensured that the programmes and qualifications provided continue to meet the evolving needs of the local community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Increase the academic rigour of qualifications on study programmes.
- Increase work-related activity for learners on study programmes to enable them to acquire experience of the world of work.
- Ensure that the attendance of young people to their study programmes increases and is high.

Provider details

Unique reference number	54519
Address	Southend Adult Community College Southchurch Centre Ambleside Drive SS1 2UP
Contact number	01702 215000
Website	https://southend-adult.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Stuart Wesselby
Provider type	Local authority provider
Date of previous inspection	31 October 2017
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of quality improvement, 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

Georgina Ager, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
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Maggie Fobister	Ofsted Inspector
Helen Morgan	His Majesty's Inspector

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