

Inspection of Croydon London Borough Council

Inspection dates:

14 to 17 November 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

Croydon London Borough Council provides adult and community learning in Croydon, south London through Croydon Adult Learning and Training (CALAT). CALAT has three main teaching sites in addition to a range of community learning venues.

CALAT teaches adult, community learning, vocational and employability courses, and courses for learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). It provides accredited and non-accredited courses from entry level to level 3. It places a particular emphasis on supporting individuals who are furthest away from education and work.

At the time of the inspection, there were 1,025 learners studying English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses from pre-entry level to level 2, 79 learners studying functional skills and GCSE English and mathematics courses, 177 learners studying digital skills courses, and 107 learners studying independent living courses. There were fewer than five apprentices on the level 3 standards-based team leader or supervisor and teaching assistant apprenticeships.

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

Learners and apprentices have highly positive attitudes towards their studies. They appreciate the good teaching and one-to-one support they receive from tutors and the quality of resources they use. Learners and apprentices are motivated to do well and they take pride in their achievements. Most attend well. However, a few tutors do not consistently reinforce high expectations of attendance and punctuality.

Learners and apprentices study in inclusive learning environments. Tutors make sure that all learners and apprentices have opportunities to participate in lessons. They promote a culture of teamwork and peer support. Learners and apprentices are polite, respectful of each other's opinions and listen to their peers in lessons. They have good relationships with each other and with their tutors.

Learners and apprentices greatly improve their confidence and independence. For example, ESOL learners learn how to make doctor's appointments and join local libraries. Learners on independent living courses learn basic budgeting skills and how to cook nutritious meals. As a result, learners are better able to participate in their local communities and make life choices autonomously.

Learners receive effective support to find work. This is because staff work well with their community partners to help them. For example, they work with the job centre to identify and prepare learners for employment by offering interview practice and CV-writing classes. A few learners have progressed into employment in the national health service and the transportation industry.

Staff prioritise learners' and apprentices' safety and well-being. Learners and apprentices appreciate the visibility and accessibility of security and reception staff at the centres and understand clearly the importance of wearing identity badges. Learners and apprentices know whom to report any concerns to. As a result, learners and apprentices are safe in learning.

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

Leaders and managers know the diverse communities in their borough well. They have developed their courses to help a range of community members improve their skills. They have put in place an ambitious curriculum with a broad range of subjects, levels and progression routes that meet the needs of these learners effectively. As a result, learners on courses such as ESOL, English and mathematics progress to higher levels of learning and a few progress into employment.

Managers and tutors plan and teach their curriculum in a logical sequence. This enables learners and apprentices to develop their knowledge and skills incrementally over time. For example, on level 1 digital skills, tutors teach learners how to produce digital brochures. They start off by teaching learners the skill to add pictures to content before teaching them how to format brochures.

Most tutors use initial assessment results effectively to identify learners' and apprentices' gaps in knowledge and skills. For example, ESOL tutors set, review and adjust learners' targets according to their assessment results. As a result, learners and apprentices know the steps they need to take to achieve their learning goals.

Mathematics tutors do not routinely set learners helpful learning targets. Nor do they provide feedback consistently on learners' work. As a result, learners do not always know what they need to do to improve their knowledge and skills. Achievement in this area is too low.

Tutors use assessment strategies effectively. For example, in level 1 and 2 ESOL, tutors highlight to learners when they misspell words and use incorrect grammar and punctuation in their written work. In art lessons, tutors give detailed individual feedback on learners' drawings which helps them to develop their techniques. As a result, learners and apprentices know what they need to do to improve their work.

Most tutors use a range of teaching strategies effectively. They demonstrate and explain topics well, give learners clear guidance on their work, correct misconceptions and frequently recap on prior learning to remind learners about what they have learned. Apprenticeship tutors prepare apprentices for their end-point assessments well by using mock professional discussions and portfolio preparation. However, ESOL tutors do not routinely integrate pronunciation in their lessons. This means that learners miss out on opportunities to hear and say language accurately.

Learners and apprentices develop good knowledge, skills and behaviours. For example, level 3 team leader or supervisor apprentices learn about the characteristics of effective leadership. They learn how to use different management styles in different situations at work. Employers value the positive contributions apprentices make to their businesses and a few apprentices gain promotion to higher level managerial roles.

Staff provide good advice and guidance on future opportunities available to learners and apprentices. For example, careers advisors offer learners and apprentices one-to-one careers sessions. Learners and apprentices have a good understanding of their next steps and their intended progression routes. Most apprentices and learners progress on to positive destinations, including work and further learning.

Staff provide a wide range of activities to help learners widen their interests and explore their talents. For example, they organise fundraising and sports events, arrange for guest speakers to talk about topics such as saving energy, and run events on themes such as Black History Month. They also promote a community kitchen where learners on independent living courses serve customers and offer menu choices. However, too many learners do not know about these events and managers do not routinely check on how well learners participate.

Most learners achieve their planned learning goals. However, leaders do not make sure that apprentices, level 1 and level 2 English and mathematics learners, and learners with SEND achieve as well.

Leaders and governors work well together to continually improve the quality of the provision. Governors use their skills and experience to support leaders effectively. They carry out visits to lessons and use the information leaders give them on the quality of education, safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty to provide suitable external scrutiny and challenge. As a result, governors have a good understanding of the provision and how to help leaders make improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Make sure that tutors consistently set and reinforce high expectations of attendance and punctuality, so that learners attend their lessons regularly and are punctual.
- Make sure that learners and apprentices achieve their planned learning goals.
- Make sure that tutors use the results of learners' initial assessments to set and monitor individualised learning goals.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53112
Address	Strand House Zion Road Croydon London CR7 8RG
Contact number	020 8726 6000
Website	www.calat.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Carol Squires
Provider type	Adult Learning and Skills
Date of previous inspection	October 2016
Main subcontractors	N/A

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the Strategic Service 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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