

Inspection of Adult College of Barking and Dagenham

Inspection dates: 4 to 7 December 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
------------------------------	-------------

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

Information about this provider

The Adult College Barking and Dagenham is based in the Inclusive Economy Employment and Skills department of Barking and Dagenham Borough Council. It provides education and training for residents and employees in the borough and its neighbouring local authorities. Most of its courses are taught from its main site in Barking town centre or its Dagenham centre, with some classes taught at community sites across the borough.

At the time of the inspection, around 1,500 learners were studying courses. Most learners complete accredited courses that lead to qualifications in areas such as English and mathematics, childcare and teaching assistant. A small number of learners enrol on courses that do not lead to qualifications. These courses are primarily aimed at learners with additional learning needs and provide support for employment or support learners to increase their confidence.

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

Learners are enthusiastic about their experience at the college. They trust their tutors, who are very supportive of them. This is particularly the case at the start of the course when many learners feel nervous or anxious about returning to education.

Staff model the behaviours they expect to see in students well. Learners follow this positive example. They are eager to learn, concentrate well in lessons and respect their tutor and their peers.

Learners enjoy working with tutors who are experts in their subjects. For instance, learners on childcare and on teaching assistant courses gain from their tutors' knowledge of working in these sectors. Staff contribute to this by ensuring that they maintain up-to-date knowledge of industry practices.

Learners enjoy developing their information technology (IT) skills. Many learners have not used computers before and value the opportunity to become more confident in their use. Outside lessons, learners make good use of the computing facilities to complete homework. Staff provide good support to learners through the loan of laptops so that they can complete their coursework at home.

Learners with complex learning needs enjoy coming to the college and making new friends. They particularly enjoy the drama lessons, as the tutor makes these engaging and helps learners to improve their communication skills. Learners who become worried or anxious are confident to speak to a member of staff. They receive good support and guidance to become more confident with everyday tasks.

Learners have access to a range of free short courses. These include courses on understanding mental health and autism. Learners attending these courses benefit from a greater awareness of these topics and are more at ease around individuals who experience these additional needs.

Learners on the teaching assistant course enjoy their lessons and are excited about their forthcoming placements in schools. They are keen to apply what they have been taught in lessons to their placement school.

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

Leaders and managers have created a curriculum that meets the needs of residents very well. They focus very successfully on teaching courses to help those who struggle financially and who are new to the area. Leaders have responded well, for example, by increasing courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) for people moving into the borough. They focus on teaching courses to help residents move into sustained employment.

Leaders and managers work well with local partners. For example, the move of London's fruit and vegetable markets to the borough has instigated the creation of a food school, in collaboration with the local further education college, to train residents who want to work in the hospitality sector. In addition, they make good use of their partnership work with Coventry University London. They have created pathways so that learners can move on from the college to Access to Higher Education courses at level 3.

Leaders and managers have developed a curriculum that is structured well and has a clear purpose. They have created vocational, technical and academic pathways that clearly map out individualised learning journeys for their learners. As a result, learners begin their courses with an appropriate line of sight to further education, training and work.

Skilled tutors teach their subjects with a clear purpose. They set an appropriate level of challenge and adapt their teaching strategies according to the needs of different learners. They provide highly effective one-to-one support to learners who need it. They use a range of strategies effectively, including group discussions, role play and demonstrations. This helps learners to develop their confidence and skills quickly and enables them to be more independent, particularly when talking to their children's teachers or in local shops and doctors' surgeries. In lessons, most tutors provide helpful feedback to learners. However, in a few cases, ESOL tutors do not make sure that learners adequately practise their pronunciation. In these instances, tutors do not enable learners to understand the nuances of grammatical structures. As a result, learners do not always hear, say and use language structures accurately.

Most tutors provide effective feedback to learners on their work. They routinely check learners' understanding and help them connect what they already know with new concepts. As a result, learners can correct their misconceptions and avoid repeating mistakes. Tutors prepare learners thoroughly for their final assessments. Tutors carefully identify and plan opportunities for examination practice, mock assessments, regular homework and classroom preparation time. This contributes to learners achieving well in their final assessments.

Tutors do not consistently set targets with learners that help them make progress. For example, on childcare courses, tutors set goals that are not developmental or challenging. They do not routinely review with learners the progress they make relative to their targets and their individual learning plans.

Most learners who start courses at the college achieve their qualifications and progress to higher levels of study or gain employment. However, too few learners on level 1 and level 2 mathematics qualifications achieve.

Staff are highly skilled in supporting learners who are returning to education. They create an environment that is both supportive and inclusive. In mathematics lessons, tutors work well to dispel misconceptions and concerns that learners may have. This helps learners to build their self-esteem and confidence, allowing them to focus on their learning.

Staff help learners to stay mentally and physically healthy. For example, leaders place a high priority on giving information about combating domestic abuse. As a result, learners become confident in speaking out about potentially harmful behaviours.

Leaders and managers work well with Jobcentre Plus and the council's employability team to support learners to find paid employment. Staff have started to work more closely with local employers. However, this work is still in its infancy. This means that learners do not have enough opportunities to engage in useful, work-related experiences during their time at the college. Learners with additional learning needs do not have sufficient opportunities to access suitable employment at the end of their course.

Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the quality of provision offered at the college. They work effectively with another local authority to peer review the provision. They do this by visiting lessons and holding performance review boards in each other's settings. Consequently, staff have a good understanding of the provision and areas for improvement.

College governors and council executives work jointly to oversee the quality of provision. They provide effective challenges to leaders and managers on the provision offered. They frequently visit the college to speak to students and staff. Consequently, they understand the provision well and can support leaders and managers effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Develop links with employers further so that learners can take part in work-related activities that will help them move towards sustained employment.
- Tutors should make better use of individual learning plans, so that learners have a good understanding of the progress they are making and what they need to do to achieve their qualification.
- Increase the proportion of learners who achieve qualifications at level 1 and level 2 in mathematics.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53100
Address	127 Ripple Road Barking IG11 7PB
Contact number	0208 227 3234
Website	https://adultcollege.lbbd.gov.uk
Principal	Simon Beer
Provider type	Community learning and skills
Date of previous inspection	6 to 9 December 2016
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the principal, 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

Steve Lambert, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andrea McMahon

His Majesty's Inspector

Christina Christou

Ofsted Inspector

Eileen O'Gara

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2024