

Inspection of WM College

Inspection dates: 6 to 9 February 2024

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

WM College is a specialist institute of adult learning situated in the London Borough of Camden. It has two main centres in Camden and uses 15 venues across London, such as schools, homeless charities and community centres.

WM College provides a broad curriculum for adults. Subjects include visual and performing arts; information and communication technology (ICT); modern foreign languages; humanities and culture; health and well-being; and English and mathematics. Most adult and community courses are part time, and the majority do not result in qualifications. A significant number of learners take courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). WM teaches a small number of vocational courses that provide qualifications from level 1 to level 3 in teaching and accounting and bookkeeping.

WM College teaches bespoke provision for adults over the age of 25 with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Learners can study courses in drawing and painting, ceramics, photography, English, mathematics, photography and ICT.

WM College teaches a small level 3 art programme in Camden for young learners who aspire to move on to study at university or gain employment.

At the time of the inspection, there were 3,088 adult learners, including those with SEND. There were 50 young learners aged 18 and over who study a level 3 foundation diploma in art and design.

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

Learners are motivated and enthusiastic about their studies. Tutors use interesting activities in lessons to provide learners with opportunities to work collaboratively. The activities help learners to develop their resilience and their English language, critical thinking, and teamworking skills. Learners quickly develop the knowledge and skills they need for further study and employment. For example, learners on the foundation diploma in art and design work on projects where they present products and designs to industry employers.

Learners of all ages learn in welcoming environments, where learners are courteous and respectful of each other. Learners enjoy their time at college. Tutors set clear expectations for the behaviour and attitudes of learners from the start of their courses, particularly regarding classroom rules, respect and tolerance. However, learner attendance and punctuality across courses are not consistently high.

Learners feel safe and well supported during their time at college. Staff have a strong focus on the safeguarding and well-being of learners. They work closely with community and charity partners to support learners who are often socially excluded. While at college, learners thrive in the supportive community. Learners know who to contact if they have any concerns.

Contribution to meeting skills needs

The college makes a reasonable contribution to meeting skills needs.

Leaders have a good understanding of the part they play in meeting local skills needs. They know how their curriculum contributes to meeting these needs. They make sure that their strategic targets and curriculum plans align to these needs. For example, the college offers a broad range of easily accessible community learning courses, as well as courses in ESOL, English, mathematics and basic ICT skills. These courses help to support local residents to improve their skills, as well as their social mobility.

Leaders work successfully in partnership with other local adult community learning providers and councils to design their curriculum. This ensures the courses they offer complement the curriculum offered by others.

Leaders work effectively with a range of local employers and stakeholders to agree the specific timing of courses in high demand. For example, leaders arranged a bespoke ESOL course for a multi-national cleaning company that wanted to improve the English skills of its employees. Employers and stakeholders appreciate that leaders and managers respond quickly to these requests.

On a small number of courses, leaders and tutors involve employers and partners in planning the content that is taught. For example, leaders added content about volunteering to an ESOL course designed for a local community partner. This helped learners understand how they can contribute to their community. In other areas,

such as in fashion and design, managers have worked with employers to set work-related projects for learners to complete. However, leaders do not ensure that the majority of curriculum areas involve employers sufficiently in the planning and teaching of courses.

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

Leaders have developed a curriculum for young and adult learners that provides good opportunities for learners to be economically and socially active. For example, tutors ensure that adult learners, many of whom are new or returning to study after a significant time away from education, improve and build on their English, mathematics and digital skills and knowledge. Learners are well prepared for further learning or employment. Most learners achieve their planned learning goals.

Tutors plan courses well to build learners' knowledge over time. Teachers teach fundamental knowledge first, which learners then apply in different and more complex tasks as they move into specialist areas. For example, in printing, tutors first teach learners how to create basic artwork in single colours before moving on to more complex techniques whereby learners apply different ink colours to a single printing plate.

Tutors carry out a thorough assessment of what learners know and can do at the start of courses to make sure they are on the correct programme. Tutors carefully track learners' progress against their starting points to make sure that their work and targets are sufficiently challenging. Consequently, as learners develop new skills and knowledge, they can see the progress they make.

Most tutors use a range of good strategies and resources to help most learners understand and remember the content they have been taught. They organise and adapt learning tasks well for the different levels and abilities on courses. They use clear demonstrations and work skilfully with learners on a one-to-one basis to guide them through what they need to do.

Tutors use questioning in lessons to good effect to check learners' knowledge and understanding. For example, in digital skills, tutors use questions and activities at the beginning of lessons to check that learners can remember key content from previous lessons. ESOL tutors use effective questions to help learners securely develop their knowledge of past and present verb tenses. As a result, most learners demonstrate secure knowledge over time, and tutors correct any misconceptions they have.

Tutors give learners constructive verbal and written feedback on their work. They provide specific guidance to learners on how to improve the standard of their work. Learners find the feedback helpful, and most know what they need to do to improve their next piece of work. Consequently, most learners produce work to a good standard. However, in a few instances, tutors do not correct spelling, punctuation

and grammar errors, meaning that learners do not know how to avoid making similar mistakes in future tasks.

Most tutors provide useful additional activities for learners within their subject areas to enrich the curriculum. This includes educational trips and guest speakers from employers and industry experts. Tutors support learners studying art to set up exhibitions to showcase their work. As a result, learners develop a wider understanding of work within their specific industry. However, there are limited opportunities for learners to develop their wider talents and interests outside of their courses.

Leaders and managers provide tutors with a good range of opportunities to develop their teaching practice further. Tutors across the college are subject experts, and they share their expertise with learners through their teaching. This means most learners receive high-quality teaching and learning. However, in a few instances, learners with SEND do not receive suitable teaching and support strategies to meet their individual needs. This is because leaders do not provide sufficient SEND training to staff in curriculum areas where they are not SEND specialists. Consequently, these learners do not make progress as rapidly as their peers.

Leaders, including the board of governors, have good oversight of the quality of education learners receive. They use information and a variety of effective processes to review frequently the quality of the provision. Governors have a wide range of skills and expertise that they use well to hold leaders to account. As a result, they continuously improve learners' experience at college.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Improve learners' attendance and punctuality so that they are consistently high across courses.
- Increase the range of opportunities learners have to develop their talents and interests outside of their courses.
- Provide SEND training and development for staff who teach and support learners with additional needs.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130403
Address	44 Crowndale Road London NW1 1TR
Contact number	02072554700
Website	www.wmcollege.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Dipa Ganguli
Provider type	Specialist designated institution
Date of previous inspection	13 to 16 November 2018
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the deputy principal for curriculum and quality, 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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