

Thurrock Adult Community College

Report following a monitoring visit to a 'requires improvement' provider.

Unique reference number:	54975
Name of lead inspector:	Georgina Ager, His Majesty's Inspector
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Type of provider:	Local authority
Address:	Old Court House Orsett Road Grays Essex RM17 5DD

Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

Thurrock Adult Community College was inspected in May 2023. At that time, inspectors judged the overall effectiveness of the provision to require improvement.

The focus of this monitoring visit was to evaluate the progress that leaders and managers have made in resolving the main areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection.

Thurrock Adult Community College (TACC) offers adult education courses in the Borough of Thurrock. At the time of the visit, 411 learners were studying adult learning courses. Two-thirds of adults were studying qualification or non-qualification courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and functional skills English. The remaining adults attend a range of courses including vocational courses and community learning courses in arts and crafts, family learning and well-being.

Since the inspection in May 2023, leaders have stopped offering apprenticeship courses as well as their mathematics programme for the NHS. Leaders now offer most of their mathematics courses through the Multiply scheme. Leaders have introduced new health and social care and childcare qualification courses. They have introduced a new course for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities as a pilot.

TACC does not have any subcontractors and does not have learners in receipt of high needs funding.

Themes

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that tutors plan and tailor the learning to enable adult learners to develop substantial new knowledge and skills?

Significant progress

Tutors use their assessments of learners' starting points skilfully. Courses are designed to concentrate on areas learners need to improve or where they lack knowledge or expertise. Leaders have introduced a more individualised approach to teaching mathematics. This ensures that learning activities are closely aligned with topics learners need to improve. Once these skills have been mastered, learners move on to applying these skills to different contexts. Learners gain a good understanding of concepts they had previously struggled to master, such as calculating averages. Tutors of childcare courses add extra training on supporting children with special educational needs and/or disabilities for learners who need to improve their skills in this area.

Most tutors use extensive information on learners' starting points to set effective individualised targets for learners. Tutors use these targets expertly to plan learning activities. In functional skills English, tutors set learners individual tasks in areas, such as writing complex sentences and improving punctuation. This helps learners develop substantial and useful new knowledge and skills.

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that adult learners stay on their programmes and achieve?

Significant progress

Previously too few learners studying qualification courses in English, mathematics and bookkeeping passed their examinations. Leaders and managers have taken swift action to improve examination pass rates in these areas. In functional skills English, leaders have introduced introductory courses that learners can complete before studying at a higher level. This develops the underpinning knowledge and skills learners need for the qualification. Leaders and managers have amended the curriculum in level 1 and level 2 bookkeeping courses effectively. Learners now move quickly between the levels and without a gap in learning. Learners receive more face-to-face teaching from newly appointed specialist staff. Learners are better prepared for their examinations. In year first-time pass rates on examinations in these areas have improved considerably.

Leaders and managers have improved how they monitor learners' progress. Leaders ensure that staff intervene swiftly when learners are at risk of not achieving their qualifications. Consequently, most learners are on track with their studies.

Governors challenge leaders effectively to ensure that they are making swift improvements. They have increased their monitoring and scrutiny of the quality of provision. Governors now have link roles and visit frequently to speak to staff and learners. Governors assure themselves of the progress leaders are making to implement their quality improvement plan. Governors challenged leaders on the areas where too few learners remained on their courses and achieved their qualification. As a result, leaders reviewed and improved their enrolment processes to ensure that learners were studying the right level course.

How much progress have leaders made in designing a well-planned personal development curriculum to develop adult learners' understanding of local risks in the area they live and work?

Reasonable progress

Since the previous inspection, leaders have considerably strengthened their wider personal development curriculum. Leaders have ensured that tutors embed personal development themes throughout their teaching. Tutors contextualise these themes effectively, making the concepts relevant to their learners. Learners studying preparing to work in adult social care courses know the safeguarding risks that they

may come across when working locally with vulnerable adults. Learners know about cuckooing and how to identify the warning signs. Learners know how they would refer any concerns. They have an effective understanding of the wider safeguarding risks, such as sexual abuse, physical abuse and neglect. Learners studying ESOL complete an interesting and relevant living in Britain module. ESOL learners studying on entry 3 courses know about a variety of personal development topics, such as crime in the local area, the importance of voting and jury service, environmental sustainability, and tax requirements in the UK.

Most learners are aware of the risks of radicalisation and who to report concerns to. Learners studying entry 3 ESOL courses know about the risks of terrorism and the run, hide, tell approach. Most learners are aware of the local risks in Thurrock. They know potential crime hot spots in Grays' town centre and local risks, such as sexual assault and gang-related activity.

A few learners studying introductory ESOL courses cannot recall local safeguarding risks or the risks of radicalisation.

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