

Inspection of Royal Borough of Greenwich

Inspection dates: 7 to 10 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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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

Royal Borough of Greenwich is an adult learning provider located in the London Borough of Greenwich. At the time of inspection, there were about 950 learners on adult community courses. All the provision is subcontracted to 10 other educational organisations. A few courses in areas such as construction and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) lead to a formal qualification. Most courses are short community learning courses in areas, such as arts and crafts, employability, business start-ups and health and well-being. At the time of the inspection, the Royal Borough of Greenwich had a very small number of apprentices who were completing their end-point assessments. Leaders no longer recruit and teach apprentices and this provision was not graded at the inspection.

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

Learners train in safe, and inclusive learning environments at accessible venues across the borough. Learners benefit greatly from the expertise that tutors have in their subjects. Tutors give clear demonstrations and explanations, make sure that learners feel at ease in lessons, and are patient with learners. Learners feel safe and valued when in training and most succeed in their studies.

Learners show high levels of respect for each other and are tolerant of those who hold different views than themselves. Learners on poetry courses designed specifically for members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community at Queercircle, greatly appreciate the inclusive nature of their training environment. Learners confidently discuss and exchange views and opinions on a range of topics and are highly supportive of each other when sharing their own life and work experiences.

Learners display very positive attitudes and show great enthusiasm for their studies. They attend their classes very well. Tutors are highly sensitive and conscious of the personal circumstances of learners. They provide learners with additional support, to help them catch up with work if they are absent or late.

Learners benefit from a culture of support and care wherever they study. Attending classes supports learners' mental well-being very well. Learners make new friends, develop a sense of community, increase their confidence, and meet people from a diverse range of backgrounds and cultures.

Learners gain substantial new skills and knowledge as they progress with their training. For example, those who are unemployed take part in useful mock interviews with their peers. They learn important skills needed for job interviews, such as improving their confidence in speaking to new people and talking about their skills and strengths. This helps those who are unemployed to get jobs.

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

Leaders made excellent use of their subcontractors to offer good-quality courses in subjects, and at locations, that are suited to the needs to the local population. They have made good use of the London skills improvement plan, and their knowledge of the skills need in Greenwich to design the curriculum offer with their subcontractors. They have made sure that they cover all the principles of adult community learning. A wide range of courses are on offer to meet the local community needs.

Leaders and managers have a clear focus on and promote equality of opportunities well. They have introduced specific courses that are based on the needs of learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), Ukrainian refugees and speakers of English as an additional language. Learners with SEND enrol on specialist courses that prepare them well for employment, supported internships and volunteering opportunities.

Tutors have good teaching expertise and subject knowledge and teach their subjects effectively. They share useful examples that learners can apply outside of the classroom and at work. Using examples, tutors in construction teach learners effectively the consequences of working without safety precautions. In flower arranging, they encourage curiosity among learners by asking them to bring in flowers that learners cannot identify. Tutors identify these flowers and teach learners well about the properties of each one. Learners can apply their new skills and knowledge to real life scenarios.

Tutors use effective teaching methods when they introduce new topics and techniques. They are skilled at teaching practical courses online. For example, in an online baking course, tutors clearly explain the recipe and what the learners need to do to create a marble cake. Tutors demonstrate well each step of making a cake while learners observe and follow the instructions in their kitchens. Tutors describe the process clearly, and because of these clear explanations and demonstrations, most learners make good progress.

Tutors teach the curriculum in a logical order and to give learners incrementally the knowledge and skills they need. On the introductory sewing course, learners are taught well how to operate a sewing machine safely, and to sew rudimentary stitches at the beginning of their course. As they become proficient in these skills with practise, they apply them to increasingly complex projects and progress from making simple lavender bags to fully lined zipped pouches.

Tutors frequently check learners' understanding and progress using a range of effective techniques. They use questioning well, monitor learners' work closely, and correct misconceptions. For example, they use probing questions, revisit topics they have previously taught, ensure learners use correct technical vocabulary and set learners suitable homework.

The quality of advice and guidance given to learners about their next steps is not consistently good across all courses. Learners with SEND benefit from internships to prepare for future employment. Tutors signpost garment learners to more substantial courses at other providers so that they can continue to follow their ambitions. In areas such as construction and arts and craft, learners do not receive sufficient advice about their next steps and, therefore, are not fully aware of options available to them.

Tutors do not always set appropriate and clear targets for learners. When this is done well, such as in ceramics, learners and tutors agree on specific targets, such as improving painting and finishing techniques, or experimenting with different types of glazes to help learners develop new skills and knowledge. In other cases, such as in ESOL, teachers set targets that too often are not specific enough to help learners to focus on the skills they need to develop. In these cases, learners are not clear what they need to do to further develop their knowledge and skills.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Give all learners appropriate, high-quality guidance and advice on their next steps.
- Set targets for learners across all courses that are clear, specific and relevant to their individual needs and that help them to know the specific knowledge or skill they need to develop.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53117
Address	The Woolwich Centre, 35 Wellington Street LONDON SE18 6HQ
Contact number	02089215228
Website	www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Debbie Warren
Provider type	Community Learning and Skills - Local Authority
Date of previous inspection	14 May 2013
Main subcontractors	Community Systems Flower Skills Global Solution Greenwich Co-operative Development Agency Limited London South East Colleges Queercircle The Training Place of Excellence Uganda Community Relief Association Unity Works Social Enterprises Volunteer Centre Greenwich

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of adult skills and community learning, 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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