

Short inspection of Nottingham City Council

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 May 2024

Outcome

Nottingham City Council continues to be a good provider.

Information about this provider

Leaders offer community and family learning (CFL) for adult learners. CFL forms a key part of the council's economic and regeneration strategy for the city.

All courses are non-accredited. They focus on areas such as parenting, health and well-being, personal development for employment, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and Family English, Maths and Language.

CFL leaders work with seven sub-contracting partners who provide the teaching. The CFL team provides the careers advice and guidance.

There are currently 124 learners in training.

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

Tutors are highly supportive and reassuring. As a result, learners, who often face significant barriers to learning, enjoy their classes greatly. They rightly value the nurturing environment they study in.

Tutors skilfully help learners acquire new knowledge and skills that has a positive impact on their lives. For example, they become more proficient in spoken English or gain a better understanding of good parenting.

Learners describe the courses they undertake as a 'confidence boost'. They now feel more hopeful about their futures and are more ready to achieve their goals.

Leaders work closely and effectively with their partners to provide well-tailored next steps advice for learners. As a result, most learners progress on to appropriate positive destinations.

Learners receive easy-to-understand information about keeping safe. Tutors talk to them about risks they may face. Learners know how to contact staff about safeguarding or welfare concerns should the need arise.

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

Leaders have very high expectations for their CFL provision. They know well the powerful impact this training has on the hardest to reach adults within the city. Leaders have positive relationships with their stakeholders and use this understanding well to inform the curriculum. They work with local schools and ESOL referral agencies to align course offer with local needs.

Course content is well focused on the knowledge and skills learners need for the next stage of their lives. ESOL learners develop basic reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. This enables them to become active citizens in their community. On the 'Equipped2Succeed' course, learners develop personal skills that help them to live more autonomously and thrive.

Tutors plan their courses logically. They organise topics so learners secure new knowledge and skills first, then build up to more complex ideas and concepts. For example, the 'feel good families' course commences with basic parenting principles. After this, learners move on to learn about behaviour management theories and how to resolve conflict peacefully.

Most tutors help learners grasp new knowledge and develop new skills successfully. ESOL tutors use images to help learners master key words. 'Equipped2Succeed' tutors use analogies well, so learners gain an understanding of more complex language, for example positive and negative thoughts become optimistic and pessimistic.

Most tutors use effective strategies to check and reinforce learners' understanding. They revisit topics from previous classes and help learners make links between content. ESOL tutors use assessment well to support learners' ability to formulate questions with the correct verb and tense. 'Feel good families' tutors set learners reflection and evaluation tasks about how well they use the new parenting techniques previously learned.

Tutors understand well any barriers, challenges or additional needs learners may have. Leaders and tutors support learners appropriately both during initial assessment and within classes, for example effective deployment of support staff, or provision of individual support and additional explanations.

Leaders and tutors work with a challenging demographic of learners, many of whom face significant hardship or are difficult to engage. Despite this, a high proportion of learners complete their courses and fully achieve their learning aims.

There is extensive and highly appropriate next steps and careers advice. Learners watch an informative and inspiring next steps video that outlines support available. They benefit from a clear and comprehensive next steps handbook. Careers coordinators provide in-class goal setting support as well as individual sessions. Learners are well informed about how to seek further advice that meets their aspirations and needs.

Many learners progress on to other CFL courses. A significant number move on to higher level study, for example at local colleges. Most learners who do not continue in their studies, secure positive destinations. Learners report increased confidence, undertake voluntary activity, or commence job seeking.

Leaders adopt a collaborative but performance-focused relationship with their partners. They undertake productive half-termly contract review meetings. These are well focused on areas such as course outcomes, learner feedback, and tutor training needs. Leaders explore any areas of concern thoroughly. For example, they scrutinise any low attendance and jointly implement improvement strategies.

Leaders are ambitious for provision to be high quality across all their partners. Partnership meetings and annual conferences provide valuable networking with a strong focus on best practice. Leaders have revised their approach to lesson observations. They involved partners in a new development of joint classroom visits. However, at the time of inspection, these were not yet fully in place.

There are effective arrangements for governance. The board meets frequently and considers pertinent topics, such as performance, learner views, safeguarding and quality improvement. Board members have a good understanding of strengths and remaining areas for improvement. CFL leaders value board members' scrutiny as it drives standards. For example, there is now a closer focus on performance data.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Fully establish the new approach of joint classroom visits to provide effective oversight of provision across all partners.
- Ensure all tutors use effective teaching and assessment strategies.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53664
Address	Loxley House Station Street Nottingham NG2 3NG
Contact number	01158 762 523
Website	Community and Family Learning – Nottingham City Council
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Nicki Jenkins
Provider type	Community Learning and Skills – Local Authority
Date of previous inspection	5 March 2018
Main subcontractors	Belong Creative Paths East Midlands Groundwork Five Counties Life Education East Midlands National Ice Centre Nottingham College Second Chance Learning Academy

Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since Nottingham City Council was judged to be good in March 2018.

The inspection team was assisted by the quality and learning officer, 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

Vicki Locke, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Houghton	His Majesty's Inspector
Michael Worgs	His Majesty's Inspector

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