

Inspection of Wandsworth London Borough Council

Inspection dates: 28 April to 1 May 2025

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| 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 |
| Apprenticeships | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Good |

Information about this provider

Wandsworth Council's lifelong learning (WLL) service is part of the council's education division in the children's services department. It supports over 2,500 adults annually and delivers half of this directly from the main site in East Hill, community venues and online. The service commissions nine subcontractors, who teach from multiple venues across the borough.

Courses for English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), English and mathematics form a large part of the curriculum on offer. Vocational courses leading to skills for employment are primarily offered in health and social care and hospitality. The service offers apprenticeships to a small number of local authority staff in level 2 customer service practitioner, level 3 business administrator, level 3 team leader, level 5 coaching professional and level 5 operations manager.

Since the previous inspection, the lifelong learning service has relocated to the Gwynneth Morgan Centre, increased its online learning offer, vocational curriculum and the proportion of courses it directly teaches.

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

Learners and apprentices, many of whom return to education after a long time, learn in a highly nurturing environment. They value the genuine care staff have for their well-being, and desire for them to succeed. Adult learners value the positive and inclusive atmosphere in classes, online and at the various centres they attend. Learners and apprentices feel safe and well supported.

Tutors teach learners and apprentices to appreciate and respect each other, regardless of the country they come from, their religion or background. Learners thrive in this environment. Learners and apprentices are enthusiastic about their studies.

Learners gain new knowledge and skills that prepare them well for their next steps. They develop confidence in using digital applications, such as creating and using databases. ESOL learners become more independent in their lives and at work. They develop their confidence to communicate in English and begin to use English in their everyday lives. For example, they begin writing in English as well as speaking English with others.

Apprentices adopt professional behaviours that help them become valued members of staff. They acquire up-to-date and relevant knowledge that they apply confidently in the workplace. Apprentices overcome any challenges they face with effective support from coaches that helps them achieve well in training and at work.

Learners and apprentices receive helpful guidance about further training courses and career options. Consequently, they are clear about what they want to achieve. For example, learners on ESOL courses taught directly by WLL know the level of English they need to achieve to become a teaching assistant or to be able to practise their profession in the UK.

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

Leaders and managers make sure that the courses they offer meet local and regional skills needs. They collaborate very effectively with stakeholders, such as Jobcentre Plus and other council services, to shape the curriculum. For example, leaders work with the council's job brokerage service to provide a clear pathway for unemployed adults to gain the skills and knowledge they need to gain employment in sectors where there are local jobs, such as in construction.

Leaders and managers work effectively with subcontractors to engage disadvantaged groups in learning. Leaders select subcontractors with suitable expertise to teach specific groups within the borough. For example, at the Katherine Low Settlement, female learners take part in introductory courses in mathematics that successfully lead to accredited courses and employment and through which they improve their health and well-being.

Tutors plan and teach the curriculum in a logical order. For example, at Deaf First, sign language tutors teach basic productive and receptive skills, such as fingerspelling, so that learners learn to spell simple vocabulary, including their names. They then move on to learn more complex signs to develop their vocabulary and construction of sentences, such as using names of food and formulating sentences to communicate in a restaurant.

Most staff assess effectively what learners and apprentices know and can do at the start of their courses. Tutors use this information well to set individual targets for learners and apprentices to plan their learning. However, in a few non-accredited courses, such as ESOL, tutors do not always use the information they collect to set meaningful targets for learners. At South Thames College, although ESOL learners make progress in their studies, managers do not plan a curriculum that is closely enough matched to learners' specific needs.

Tutors use a range of effective teaching methods so that learners have a good recall of what they are taught. Digital skills tutors use observation well to check learners complete tasks correctly. In mathematics, tutors make sure that, through practice, learners develop fluency in their mathematical processing before moving on to new topics, such as converting measurements and simplifying ratios.

Learners and apprentices attend well. At a few smaller subcontractors, attendance is not high enough. Leaders and managers work with these subcontractors to develop a variety of strategies to support learners to attend. However, these have not had a significant impact on improving learners' attendance.

Learners and apprentices produce work of a good standard. Most tutors provide helpful and constructive feedback to learners and apprentices on their work. For example, supporting teaching and learning in schools tutors give helpful feedback on learners' reflective accounts. Through the feedback they receive, learners and apprentices improve the standard of their work.

Tutors mostly provide effective support to learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Consequently, learners develop the skills they need to become more independent and employable. For example, at the Katherine Low Settlement, staff and volunteers are trained and experienced to teach learners with SEND. In a few instances, leaders and managers do not share the information they collect about learners' additional needs with tutors in a timely way. As a result, learners do not receive timely additional support when they start their course.

Learners and apprentices develop well their knowledge, skills and behaviours over time. They make good progress. For example, learners on supporting teaching and learning in schools learn how to manage pupil behaviour and resolve conflict. ESOL learners become more independent as they use English more frequently in their everyday lives. A high proportion of learners and apprentices achieve their qualifications, apprenticeship or personal learning goals.

Staff make sure that learners and apprentices are well prepared for their next steps. Learners and apprentices receive helpful guidance about further training courses and career options. When they complete their course, a high number of learners go on to positive destinations, such as further study, employment, volunteering or apprenticeships. Apprentices have clear aspirations about what they want to do once they complete their training.

Leaders and managers monitor effectively the quality of the provision. They frequently visit classes, observe teaching and use a wide range of information, such as attendance rates, learners' views and achievement data, to assess the quality of provision and plan improvement actions. They work effectively in partnership with subcontractors to build their capacity to deliver good-quality provision.

Governance arrangements are effective. Senior leaders from the local authority and the advisory group provide effective support and scrutiny of the provision. They understand very well the strengths and weaknesses of the provision because they review a good range of information that allows them to challenge managers if performance declines.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Use the information on what learners know and can do at the start of their course to set meaningful targets for learners on non-accredited courses.
- Plan the ESOL curriculum at South Thames College so that it meets learners' specific needs.
- Implement strategies so that learners' attendance is good, wherever they study.

Provider details

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| Unique reference number | 53152 |
| Address | Wandsworth Lifelong Learning Gwynneth Morgan Centre 52 East Hill Wandsworth London SW19 2HJ |
| Contact number | 02088718618 |
| Website | www.wandsworthlifelonglearning.org.uk |
| Principal, CEO or equivalent | Santino Fragola |
| Provider type | Local authority |
| Date of previous inspection | 3 to 4 November 2021 |
| Main subcontractors | Adult Education & Employment Training Deaf First at Oak Lodge School LIBSUK Ltd MI ComputSolutions Katherine Low Settlement Ripe Learning South Thames College Strive Training (London) Ltd Wandsworth City Learning Centre Skills Room |

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the deputy head of lifelong 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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| Jon Bowman, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Montserrat Perez-Parent | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Claudia Harrison | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Rochelle Saneria | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Jacque Brown | His Majesty's Inspector |

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