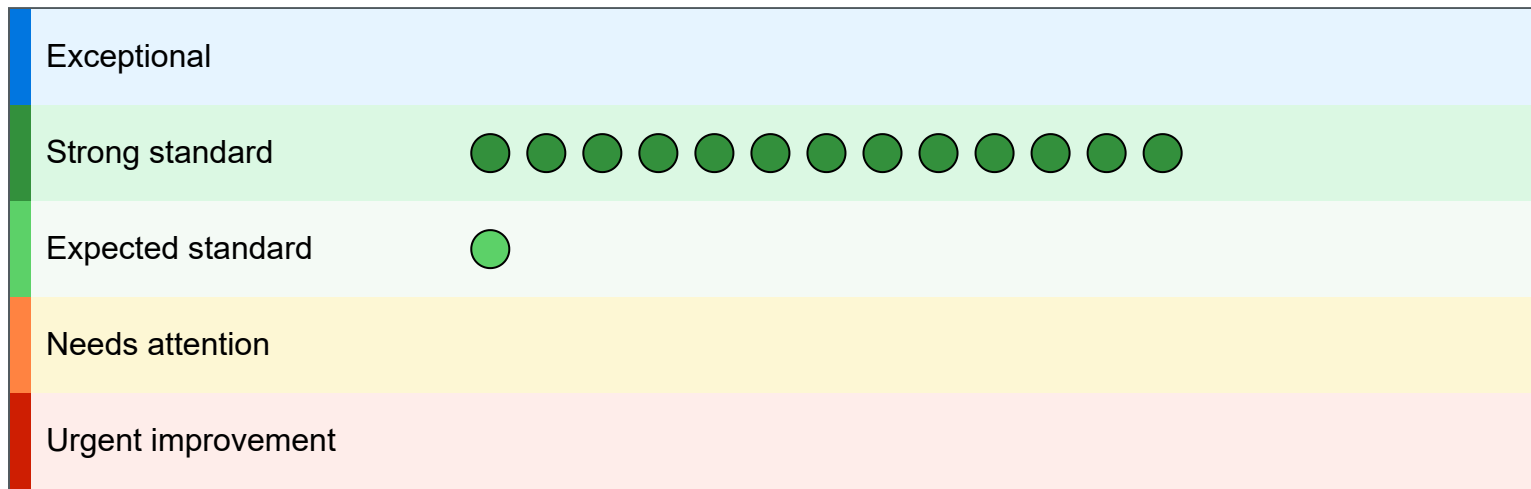


Newcastle upon Tyne City Council

Address: Westgate Community College, West Road, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE4 9LU

Unique reference number (URN): 53504

Inspection report: 10 March 2026



Safeguarding standards met

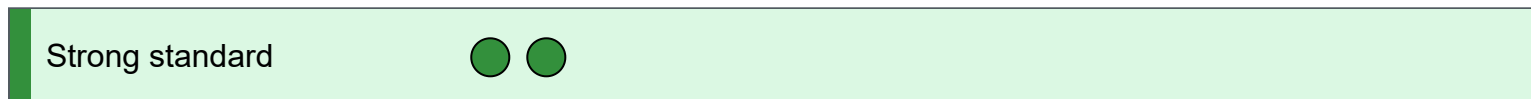
The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, learners are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect providers for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The provider has an open and positive culture of safeguarding.
- **Not met:** The provider has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

1. Inclusion, and leadership and governance



Strong standard ●

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Staff work extremely closely with learners and apprentices prior to starting their course to establish any support needs. Staff quickly implement strategies to reduce barriers to learning, and work alongside practitioners such as social workers and the youth justice team to ensure that learners receive the support they need. Staff share information about apprentices with employers to ensure they receive consistent support during their time at work.

Leaders provide staff with effective training on providing and adapting support for learners and apprentices with additional needs. Staff frequently review barriers to learning and support provided to monitor the effectiveness of their actions. They make informed decisions regarding learners and apprentices' needs. The support staff provide is responsive and flexible, increasing or decreasing as required.

Leaders provide a highly inclusive environment for learners and apprentices. They have a dedicated sensory room and pastoral space where learners can speak to staff in confidence or access when they need to self-regulate.

Leaders and staff use appropriate alternative settings for their learners where required, including those with high needs. They have well-established work placement opportunities that meet the needs and interests of their learners. Learners are equally well supported at their placements.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders and governors have a clear purpose to provide learning and training for adults, young people and learners with high needs who are disadvantaged and/or have a previously poor experience of education. They provide an inclusive and supportive environment for learners and apprentices who engage positively and are well prepared for their next steps.

Leaders and managers have an accurate overview of the quality of the curriculum across all courses and apprenticeships. They conduct curriculum reviews focusing predominantly on the quality of teaching and assessment. Leaders identified the need to further improve progress reviews and feedback for apprentices. The improvements made have resulted in an increase in the proportion of apprentices who gain a distinction in the final assessment, which is now very high.

Governors provide highly effective support and challenge to leaders and managers. Governors with a responsibility for the quality of education provide extremely helpful guidance and support in the development of high-quality teaching standards that all staff work towards.

Leaders and managers provide teachers and other staff with valuable training and development to maintain and improve their teaching skills. They set inspiring standards for teachers to reach through their 'Going for Gold' programme which promotes high-quality teaching.

Leaders provide effective support for staff regarding their workload and wellbeing. Their wellbeing strategy promotes mental and physical wellbeing for all staff. Wellbeing champions help staff to talk about their feelings, encourage them to keep active and to take breaks to maintain positive health.

2. Education programmes for young people

Strong standard



Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

A very high proportion of learners complete their courses and gain qualifications. They consistently achieve the goals set by staff and meet their learning objectives in lessons. The very few learners who leave early do so due to mental health or anxiety needs. Staff work closely with these learners to access relevant support agencies, which often helps learners to re-enrol once they are able to cope with their challenges.

Learners make rapid progress from their starting points. Most learners who take GCSE mathematics improve by at least one grade. They produce written and practical work of a high standard, such as professional standard brickwork in construction.

Learners' progression is very positive, almost all go on to higher-level courses at colleges, into related work, apprenticeships or enrol on another course at the local authority. Staff embed a culture of aspirational and realistic expectations for learners' next steps

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders and managers have an accurate overview of the curriculum they provide for young people. They accurately identify areas for improvement and take effective actions to rectify them.

Leaders have developed a highly effective curriculum that enables learners with a range of educational needs and/or poor previous experiences of education to succeed. They provide training in a broad range of areas such as construction, retail, hair and beauty and health and social care. Class sizes are small and pastoral staff provide support in exploring careers and preparing for adulthood.

Teachers are well qualified and have relevant experience to teach young people with social and emotional needs. Teachers have experience of working for example, in secure

environments and youth justice. They fully understand how learners who experience trauma in their lives present themselves. Teachers quickly identify learners' individual needs, set achievable goals and monitor progress against them frequently.

Teachers plan learning tasks to ensure that learners work towards personal targets and learning goals in a logical way. They provide effective and engaging teaching using a range of strategies such as chunking and interleaving to enable learners to build on their prior learning and to develop new knowledge and skills.

Teachers skilfully check learners' understanding of the topics they teach. They use effective techniques such as questioning, probing, scaffolding and peer assessment. Teachers assess learners work accurately and provide helpful developmental feedback to enable learners to improve. Learners use this feedback and recall learning well from previous lessons to deepen their knowledge.

Participation and development

Strong standard 

Learners receive excellent careers advice and guidance to help them identify their next steps. Careers advisers and teachers support learners to apply for a range of courses in further education colleges, gain employment or an apprenticeship. Learners are well prepared for the future.

Leaders set high expectations for the behaviour of learners. Learners behave very well and have high attendance at lessons and other activities. Learners who have a history of non-participation in education and training enjoy the supportive, small classes, in which they develop their confidence to participate positively in their studies.

Learners undertake very useful external work placements where appropriate. Staff ensure that learners attend work experience that relates to their career aspirations. For example, construction learners attend placements with construction companies and receive very positive feedback about their behaviour and attitudes to work from these employers.

Learners develop a deep understanding of what constitutes healthy relationships. Staff and external guests, including the local police, provide helpful training for learners on toxic relationships including the risks of coercive control and domestic violence. Learners feel confident to report any concerns they may have and are confident that these will be dealt with quickly by staff.

3. Adult learning programmes

Strong standard



Expected standard



Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Learners make swift progress towards their goals. A high proportion gain qualifications including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Learners produce work and develop high quality skills. Learners on level 3 supporting teaching and learning courses produce written work demonstrating their thorough knowledge of topics such as inclusive practices, childhood theories and behaviour management. Learners with English as an additional language on beauty courses develop their confidence in conducting consultations with clients and recommending treatments.

Learners grow in confidence as they learn new skills and the essential knowledge that helps them prepare for further learning and employment. Learners on tailored learning programmes make rapid progress in improving their English and their confidence in using the digital skills they need to access services and communicate online. Staff support learners to improve their health, wellbeing and prepare them well for their next steps.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and learning. They know the strengths of their teaching staff. The very few teachers who need to improve are supported well by advanced practitioners.

Leaders have developed a highly inclusive curriculum to meet the needs of residents in Newcastle. Leaders focus the curriculum on adults experiencing disadvantage and those for whom English is an additional language to support them towards gaining employment and integrating in their communities. They offer a tailored learning curriculum to engage learners who are often isolated and/or have low confidence to participate in learning.

Teachers sequence the curriculum effectively to enable learners to build on their starting points and make positive progress. Tutors conduct comprehensive initial assessments, including considering learners' personal circumstances, to assess their suitability for courses. Staff use this information skilfully to plan lessons, and to establish any barriers to learning such as low confidence, anxiety and health issues.

Teachers use their subject expertise very well to provide highly effective teaching. They use break down tasks and encourage independent thinking. They give learners sufficient time to process their thoughts before each change of activity. Teachers use video clips to set scenarios and to encourage learners to use their listening skills. Teachers repeat tasks to ensure learners understand before completing written activities.

Teachers use assessment strategies very effectively. They use questioning well to establish what learners know and probe further to establish their understanding and reasoning. Teachers provide effective feedback that learners use to improve their work.

Expected standard ●

Participation and development

Expected standard ●

Learners generally receive helpful careers support from staff. Staff take learners to open events to help them move onto college courses and provide access to jobcentre advisors on a weekly basis. However, a few learners do not fully understand the wider opportunities available to them for their next steps. Too often, this information is only provided towards the end of learners' programmes.

Leaders and staff have high ambitions for their learners and set clear expectations for behaviour and attendance. Most learners attend well and are on time. Staff have an accurate overview of the reasons for any absence and set robust reporting procedures for learners if they cannot attend.

Staff ensure learners study in safe and highly respectful environments. They provide information to learners about fundamental British values and learners demonstrate these values in lessons consistently. Learners develop very positive relationships with staff and other learners and know they must maintain the respectful and tolerant culture.

Staff provide additional activities to enhance the planned curriculum. They target these activities at learners who would not access these without the support and encouragement from staff. Learners visit exhibitions, sculpture parks and stimulate their interest in the theatre through guest speakers.

4. Apprenticeships

Strong standard



Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Apprentices make extensive progress from their starting points. Achievement rates are very high, with a high proportion gaining a distinction grade at their final assessments.

Apprentices gain substantial new knowledge skills and can confidently articulate how these aid them in the workplace. In carrying out their jobs, apprentices improve their professionalism, emotional intelligence, and communication skills as a result of their apprenticeship.

Apprentices produce work and demonstrate practical skills of a very high standard. Their written work is professionally structured and clearly reflects how apprentices apply their new

knowledge to their practice at work. Management apprentices enhance workplace policies related to staff appraisal following peer sharing and feedback from tutors.

Apprentices are well prepared for their next steps and fluently articulate how the apprenticeship has aided or will further enhance their career trajectory. Business administration apprentices discuss how they can apply for enhanced roles at work because of their learning.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have a thorough understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement with the apprenticeship programme. They focus the curriculum on the sectors where there is need, such as administration and childcare, and work with the city council and other local employers to meet their needs.

Tutors sequence the curriculum logically, focusing on foundation skills before moving onto more complex tasks. They plan lessons very effectively to enable apprentices to develop their individual knowledge and skills incrementally over time.

Tutors make effective adaptations for apprentices with barriers to learning and provide appropriate tailored support. Apprentices highly value this support to enable them to fully access training and make progress in their job roles.

Tutors collaborate closely with employers to plan and implement high quality on-and off-the-job training. This training is well aligned and interconnected to apprentices' job roles so they can practise and master their skills. Management apprentices use their coaching skills to support their employees' own development.

Tutors are professionally qualified, vocational experts and use their skills very well to build and challenge apprentices' knowledge and skills. They use effective teaching strategies such as interactive teaching, group work, polls and gamification, which builds apprentices' knowledge gradually.

Tutors assess apprentices' work and progress accurately in lessons and reviews. They provide apprentices with helpful feedback on how to improve and apply their skills at work. Employers provide helpful feedback on apprentices' application of knowledge and skills at work. This helps apprentices to identify how to improve and to make swift progress.

Participation and development

Strong standard ●

Tutors set high expectations for apprentices to progress successfully through the apprenticeship. They make lessons enjoyable and engaging and apprentices look forward to their college days. As a result, attendance is high and apprentices participate and engage very well.

In lessons, apprentices collaborate and benefit from sharing their experiences at work, which they value highly. This allows them to demonstrate their professionalism and understanding of workplace practices and improvements.

Tutors provide detailed careers advice and guidance throughout the apprenticeship. They show apprentices how they can use their apprenticeship to progress to higher levels in their career. Where required, tutors support apprentices to apply for jobs by helping them to match job descriptions to what they have learned on their apprenticeship.

Tutors are very aware of the cultural diversity of their apprentices and the local area. They adapt teaching well to ensure apprentices can participate and learn from each other. Tutors ensure apprentices demonstrate respect, tolerance and embrace difference.

Apprentices are very aware of their responsibility for safeguarding and are knowledgeable of the risks of radicalisation and extremism. They articulate how this supports counterterrorism and to be vigilant observing how people act and what people do.

5. Provision for learners with high needs

Strong standard



Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Learners achieve very well and make extensive progress from their starting points across accredited and non-accredited programmes. Learners have targets, goals and outcomes within education, health and care plans that are highly individualised are meaningful and relevant to them. This contributes to their strong engagement and motivation.

Learners produce written and practical work of a high standard and take pride in what they achieve. In horticulture lessons, learners are eager to display the work they complete in the garden, demonstrating practical skills that support sustainability initiatives.

Learners on supported internships confidently use appropriate workplace language to communicate effectively, knowing who to contact in an emergency and the correct steps to follow if unwell. Learners articulate the skills they have developed, including communication, writing and digital skills. They talk confidently about applying these in the workplace.

A very high proportion of learners progress to positive destinations, including further study and employment.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders and managers have a clear overview of the strengths and areas for improvement in the curriculum and in teaching for learners with high needs. They take appropriate actions to make improvements where necessary.

Leaders have established a well-planned and aspirational curriculum that meets the needs of learners with high needs. They structure programmes to allow learners to progress through clearly defined pathways, at a pace that reflects their individual starting points.

Leaders coordinate a range of specialist services to ensure that learners receive the support required to make progress towards their goals. They have strong working relationships with external specialists, including speech and language therapy, visual and hearing impairment teams and counselling services. Learners are supported very well to work towards their educational health and care plan outcomes, in areas such as emotional regulation, confidence, and speech and language development, enabling them to engage fully in learning and thrive.

Teachers have a wealth of experience in supporting learners with high needs and skilfully use teaching methods and tools to engage learners in lessons and ensure learners strengthen their knowledge. These include the use of scaffolding techniques, visual prompts and communication approaches such as Makaton to support understanding and participation.

Teachers make effective use of assessment information to adapt learning activities and provide feedback that helps learners improve their core skills over time. They provide learners with feedback that is purposeful and focused on helping learners understand what they need to do next and how to improve.

Participation and development

Strong standard ●

Learners benefit from access to very effective careers advice and guidance through external specialists who meet with them to help explore options that align with their interests and aspirations. Leaders ensure that transition planning is prioritised, with learners' annual reviews completed early in the year, allowing sufficient time for effective and supported transitions to their next destination.

Staff set clear expectations for learners' behaviour and participation, which are reflected in learners' attitudes to learning. Learners attend well and participate positively in lessons. Where learners become dysregulated staff have clear support strategies in place and dedicated spaces. Leaders provide a dedicated sensory room for learners who need structured time out.

Learners take part in tailored enrichment activities including a learner-led neurodiversity support group, gym, music and cooking. These support learners' preparation for adult life, employment and further study, particularly those who may find it more difficult to engage in college life. Staff actively encourage learners to contribute to the development of activities.

Staff create safe and supportive environments where learners explore sensitive or complex topics with confidence. Staff carefully introduce topics such as sexual health in an age-appropriate way, ensuring that learners develop an accurate understanding when discussing these subjects.

What it's like to be a learner and/or an apprentice at this provider

Learners and apprentices describe a strong sense of belonging in the Newcastle City Learning community. They are encouraged to take part in activities beyond their courses, develop friendships and build confidence in their abilities. Staff promote an atmosphere where everyone is accepted and celebrated for who they are. The strong sense of community fostered by staff plays a highly effective role in improving the health and wellbeing of learners and apprentices.

Learners, including those with high needs, make extensive progress from their starting points. A high proportion gain qualifications and progress into further learning, employment and apprenticeships. Adults on tailored learning programmes develop their confidence and the skills to support them to gain employment and participate in their communities, thus reducing isolation.

Apprentices gain significant new knowledge and skills and speak highly of how this helps them in the workplace and in their professional development as managers, business administrators and children's early years educators. Apprentices embrace the opportunity to be professionally curious and reflective practitioners, through expertly taught lessons and constructive developmental feedback.

Adult learners describe their experience at the provider as life changing. They thrive with Newcastle City Learning. They are extremely loyal to staff and their peers and quickly realise the benefits of learning. They form new friendships, grow in confidence and improve their employment prospects.

Young learners highly value the support they receive from staff at the provider. Learners who have a history of not engaging in education, very quickly develop confidence to participate well in learning. They enjoy the small, supportive, friendly environment. Staff nurture learners' interests to ensure that they achieve their personal goals, helping them progress towards their career aspirations.

Learners with high needs experience a highly supportive and inclusive environment at the provider. Staff provide comprehensive pastoral support, taking time to understand each learner's individual needs, strengths and goals. This support helps learners to feel valued, respected and well cared for throughout their time with the provider.

Disadvantaged learners and apprentices receive valuable support which enables them to engage and make progress in learning in line with their peers. Staff work tirelessly to provide the individualised support learners and apprentices need. They review this frequently to make sure the support continues to be relevant and effective.

Learners and apprentices feel safe and know how to report concerns. They learn about online risks, phishing emails and how artificial intelligence can be used to spread false information and scams. They are well supported by staff and, where relevant are referred to external agencies for specialist support including guidance for refugees and asylum seekers.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to improve their tracking of learner destinations to enable them to fully demonstrate the impact of the service on learners' lives.
 - Leaders should provide adult learners with high-quality careers information advice and guidance throughout the duration of their course.
-

About this inspection

Following our updated inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with leaders, the advisory board, staff, learners, apprentices and employers during the inspection.

Newcastle upon Tyne City Council, under the name of Newcastle City Learning, is a community learning and skills provider. At the time of the inspection, there were 1,214 learners and apprentices in learning. This comprised of 60 learners on education programmes for young people studying courses in a variety of sectors, such as construction, retail, hair and beauty and health and social care. In adult learning, 1,016 adult learners studied courses such as English for speakers of other languages, tailored learning, English, mathematics, counselling, early years and health and social care. In apprenticeships, 59 apprentices studied management, business and early years apprenticeships from levels 2 to 5. There were 79 learners with high needs studying foundation programmes and supported internships.

Head of Newcastle City Learning: Gillian Forrester

Lead inspector:

Jonny Wright, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Sarah Seaman, His Majesty's Inspector

Alison Gray, Ofsted Inspector

Alex Miles, Ofsted Inspector

Sarah Simpkins, Ofsted Inspector

David Sykes, Ofsted Inspector

Linnia Khemdoudi, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 10 March 2026

Number of learners

Total learners

1214

Education programmes for young people

60

Adult learning programmes

1016

Apprenticeships

59

Provision for learners with high needs

79

Percentage of learning aims successfully achieved

Education programmes for young people

Year	This provider	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24	86	83	Close to average
2022/23	74	81	Close to average

Year	This provider	National average	Compared with national average
2021/22	71	81	Close to average

Adult learning programmes

Year	This provider	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24	94	87	Close to average
2022/23	91	87	Close to average
2021/22	92	86	Close to average

Apprenticeships overall achievement rate

Year	This provider	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24	87	61	Above
2022/23	65	55	Close to average
2021/22	65	53	Close to average

Apprenticeships pass rate

Year	This provider	National average
2023/24	100	98
2022/23	100	97
2021/22	96	98

Our grades explained

Exceptional ●

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other providers can learn from it.

Strong standard ●

The provider reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard ●

The provider is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention ●

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement ●

The provider needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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