

Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council

Local authority

Inspection dates

26 February–1 March 2018

Overall effectiveness		Good	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good	Adult learning programmes	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good		
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good		
Outcomes for learners	Good		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Requires improvement	

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Since the previous inspection, senior leaders, managers and governors have worked hard to improve the quality of provision. As a result, teaching, learning, assessment and outcomes for adult learners are now good.
- Leaders and managers have developed good partnerships with a range of organisations that are of considerable benefit to learners. These include the National Careers Service, a housing association and Jobcentre Plus.
- Leaders and managers are responsive to the local residents' training needs and they provide courses for a wide range of adult learners, including the hardest to reach and those in the most deprived communities in Tameside.
- Successful relocation of the service to the centre of town benefits staff and learners. Staff create an inclusive and safe learning environment that supports learners well.
- Rigorous and accurate assessment of learners' starting points contributes to the good progress they make on their courses.
- Learners on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses improve their English skills so they can become more involved in their communities.
- Learners benefit from good, impartial careers information, advice and guidance to help them plan their next steps and longer term career aspirations.
- Good learning and pastoral support help learners to stay on their courses, make good progress and achieve their goals.
- Learners on information and communication technology (ICT) courses develop good and useful practical skills and achieve well.
- Staff who observe teaching, learning and assessment give insufficient attention to learners' progress and what they have learned.
- Too few learners progress from their courses to further education, apprenticeships, volunteering or employment.
- Attendance, while improving, is not yet high enough.
- Learners make slow progress in developing their knowledge and skills in English because their spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors are not always checked or corrected.
- Learners' achievement rates on ICT courses are high, but require improvement on functional skills English and mathematics at levels 1 and 2.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Tameside Adult and Community Education (the service) is part of the Employment and Skills Directorate within Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council. The service currently delivers courses in English, mathematics, ICT, ESOL, retail, childcare, family learning, British Sign Language and employability. Approximately two thirds of learners are enrolled on courses that do not lead to formal qualifications. Courses range from pre-entry to level 2. The service works with learners who are hardest to reach, including those who have been away from education for extended periods of time. Many learners are from areas of high deprivation.
- Tameside is one of 10 metropolitan boroughs of Manchester. It has a population of approximately 223,200 residents. Tameside has the third highest proportion of residents with no qualifications in Greater Manchester. The unemployment rate in the borough is slightly higher than for the north-west region and the national rate.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Analyse carefully the destinations of learners who leave Tameside Adult and Community Education to inform the planning of courses and increase the proportion of learners who progress to further education, apprenticeships, volunteering or employment.
- Develop strategies to improve learners' attendance further.
- Ensure that tutors help learners improve their English knowledge and skills by identifying and checking spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors in their work.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the actions that have been implemented to improve English and mathematics qualification outcomes.
- Ensure that the observations of teaching, learning and assessment focus on what learners are learning and the progress they are making, so that feedback to tutors helps them to improve their techniques for managing learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the previous inspection, senior leaders and managers have been unremitting in their attempts to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and outcomes for learners. As a result, the quality of provision and outcomes for learners have improved and are now good.
- When the service was inspected previously, training was delivered in two separate learning centres, one in Ashton-under-Lyne and the other in Hyde. Senior leaders and managers made a carefully considered, rational and strategic decision to bring the service together in one location. They acquired new premises and relocated the service very successfully in central Ashton-under-Lyne. Tutors now have many more opportunities for working collaboratively, including identifying and sharing good practice, and developing learning resources. Staff are enthusiastic and their morale is high.
- Senior leaders and managers have high expectations of staff and learners. They have promoted equality, inclusion and diversity very successfully and created a culture of mutual respect in which learners flourish and succeed in learning new skills and gaining confidence. Leaders and tutors have zero tolerance of harassment, discrimination, unfair treatment and bullying. Learners feel safe and are safe. They have a good understanding of fundamental British values. Their knowledge of radicalisation and extremism is underdeveloped.
- Performance management of staff is now good. Staff are much more accountable for the quality of learners' experiences, including retention, attendance, progress and achievements. Through the annual performance reviews and monthly one-to-one meetings with managers, the performance of staff is evaluated thoroughly. When leaders and managers identify unsatisfactory performance, swift action is taken to ensure that it improves. If it does not improve, capability procedures are implemented effectively.
- Managers and tutors recruit a wide range of learners successfully, many of whom are unemployed or from areas of high deprivation in Tameside. They have a good awareness of, and are very responsive to, the training needs of learners. They work hard to ensure that the courses meet learners' needs and enable them to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding that will enrich them personally and socially, and prepare them for employment.
- Leaders and managers have been particularly successful in obtaining specific funding to meet the increasing need for courses in ESOL, enabling them to support an additional 125 pre-entry ESOL learners in the current academic year. In response to learners' requests for higher level courses, they have also introduced successfully GCSE mathematics and the diploma in caring for children at level 1 in the current academic year.
- Leaders and managers have developed very good partnerships with a range of organisations, including several employment-related organisations. They work closely, for example, with the National Careers Service, Jobcentre Plus and the local authority supported employment team, which offers advice, support and practical assistance to local residents who have a disability or mental health condition or are substance misusers. These partnerships are of considerable benefit to learners.

- Leaders and managers collect and use a wide range of information for self-assessment purposes. The self-assessment report is detailed and evaluative. Although the key questions are graded accurately, leaders and managers did not identify all the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors. The quality improvement plan is insufficiently focused on the key areas for improvement and the criteria for measuring progress over time are not specific enough.
- Senior leaders, managers and tutors have implemented a number of strategies to improve learners' attendance and punctuality. They ensure that learners understand the importance of attending regularly and on time. Although attendance has improved since the previous inspection, further improvements are required.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have strengthened the arrangements to evaluate and improve continuously the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. In addition to observing teaching, learning and assessment, they also carry out short, focused observations based on particular themes, such as health and safety and the use of individual learning plans. However, observers still do not give enough attention to evaluating what learners learn in sessions and the progress they make. The observation reports are too descriptive and insufficiently concise. Leaders and managers place too little importance on developing tutors so that they can reflect on their teaching and evaluate the effectiveness of the learning they facilitate.

The governance of the provider

- Since the service was inspected previously, governance has improved. The number of governors has increased and so has their diversity. In addition to elected councillors, senior service managers, tutor and learner representatives, an employer and a partnership manager from Jobcentre Plus have been appointed. Governors are aware that defined areas of responsibility have still to be allocated to them.
- Governors endorse fully the priorities of the council, which include supporting economic growth and opportunity, and helping to strengthen the local business community by upskilling Tameside residents and maximising their well-being. They challenge and support senior leaders and managers to assess the extent to which they provide a service that gives value for money and meets the needs of the local communities.
- Before the termly board meetings, governors receive a wide range of statistical information, for example about learners' retention, attendance and performance. However, they still do not have enough detailed information about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to be able to challenge and support leaders and managers to improve continuously the quality of provision.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Senior leaders and managers ensure that all staff are appropriately checked to ensure that they are suitable for working with adult learners, as they did when the provision was inspected previously. They also ensure that caretaking staff who are not directly employed by the council are checked appropriately. Managers maintain an up-to-date

record of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks that are received and when they are due to be renewed.

- Since the previous inspection, senior leaders and managers have given particular attention to ensuring that the new premises provide a welcoming and safe learning environment. Managers follow the council's procedures very closely and take all reported safeguarding and safeguarding-related incidents very seriously. They take the appropriate action and keep detailed records of the actions taken and the outcomes.
- Although leaders and managers raise learners' awareness about keeping safe, including e-safety, staff and learners do not have sufficient periodic update training on radicalisation and extremism. The service has a trained designated safeguarding officer and has recently appointed a deputy designated safeguarding officer, and plans are in place for the selected officer to receive additional training.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Most tutors assess learners thoroughly at the start of their course. They identify learners' starting levels and individual learning needs accurately. As a result, tutors are able to match learning very closely to learners' needs, taking into account their prior learning and their existing knowledge, skills and understanding. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified quickly and assessed appropriately to ensure that the required resources are provided to facilitate their learning.
- Most tutors use their expertise successfully to provide a range of learning activities that stimulate learners and enable them to make good progress. For example, the most able learners on mathematics courses are given additional higher level tasks to extend their understanding, while those who are less able are often encouraged to work together to solve problems.
- Learners who are on ESOL courses are enthusiastic, engaged fully and keen to learn more. Their motivation is high because they know that when they become proficient in speaking and writing English they can become more integrated into British society and will be in a stronger position to apply for, and obtain, employment. They enjoy conversing with other learners and with their tutor.
- Learners make good use of their newly acquired practical skills. For example, learners on short introductory ICT courses send emails, word process and edit documents and use basic publishing techniques. They develop self-confidence and are able to use technical terms to describe the skills they are using. Learners on practical parenting skills courses use the techniques they have developed for managing their children's behaviour, including challenging behaviours.
- Learners have good access to impartial careers information, advice and guidance. Those who want to move into employment or become self-employed enrol on courses that help them to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding that employers value.
- Tutors provide good learning support that makes a strong contribution to learners' progress. They provide good individual support in sessions that enables learners working at different levels to make at least the expected, and often better, progress. Learners on GCSE mathematics courses benefit considerably from additional online learning activities outside the classroom that supplement their in-session learning.

- Tutors assess learners regularly during their training to evaluate their progress. In learning reviews, tutors provide clear feedback to learners on the progress they have made and the extent to which they have achieved their personal learning goals. As a result, most learners have a good understanding of what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve further and to make rapid progress.
- Tutors successfully promote equality, inclusion and diversity in learning and teaching. Learners from different ethnic groups work together very successfully. In family learning sessions, learners develop a good understanding of their different family traditions and can explain what they have learned about specific celebration events, for example Eid, the Burmese New Year and the Christian calendar.
- Learners from diverse communities develop a good understanding of what fundamental British values mean to them. They enjoy sharing their opinions in safe and supportive learning environments through which they gain a deeper understanding of their communities and British society. Many learners become increasingly independent in their personal lives and more self-assured.
- In a small number of sessions, tutors do not plan effectively to meet the needs of all the learners. Where this happens, activities are not linked specifically to the learning outcomes and their purpose is not explained clearly. Often the activities are too easy or too difficult. In these sessions, learners are not challenged sufficiently and they do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Tutors do not identify English errors in learners' work systematically. Too many learners make repeated spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors that remain unchecked. As a result, learners do not improve the quality of their written work as much and as quickly as they should do.
- Learners' starting points for the newly introduced GCSE mathematics course are not recorded fully by tutors. As a result, it is difficult for the tutors to measure learners' progress accurately towards achieving their qualification.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Learners are enthusiastic and enjoy their learning. They are punctual and fully prepared for their sessions. Learners who are returning to education after a period away from learning improve their self-confidence and self-esteem as a result of their training. They are proud of the new skills they are learning and the progress they are making. For example, in mathematics, learners become conversant with metric conversions, and in ICT they learn how to send and receive emails.
- Learners receive good information, advice and guidance. Tutors ensure that learners are placed on the correct course and signpost them, when appropriate, to additional or further courses that will help them achieve their aspirational goals.
- Staff have developed very effective partnerships with the National Careers Service. Learners receive good independent careers advice from qualified advisers that helps them make informed choices about their next steps and longer term career plans. Careers advisers support learners in improving their curricula vitae (CVs), completing job applications and developing their interview techniques.

- Learners, many of whom face significant barriers to learning, benefit from the very good support they receive. Staff work with a range of external agencies that provide support and advice on housing, finance and mental health issues. The support learners receive helps them to stay on their courses and achieve their learning goals.
- Tutors plan courses so that learners develop knowledge, skills and understanding that will help them in further learning and employment or in developing greater independence in their everyday lives. For example, learners on retail courses learn how to communicate with customers, use a till and manage money. Learners on 'Get Online Safely' courses learn how pay bills and compare products and services online, as well as how to keep themselves safe online.
- Learners develop good practical skills and produce work of a high standard. For example, on childcare courses, learners take care in creating activities such as jigsaws, story sacks and puzzles that will help develop language skills for young children.
- Tutors integrate diversity and fundamental British values into learning activities carefully. They promote British values very effectively through displays in classrooms and in corridors throughout the centre. Learners have a good understanding of, and demonstrate tolerance and respect. They work cooperatively with each other and their tutors. Learners' behaviour is very good.
- Staff have created an inclusive and welcoming environment in which learners feel safe. Learners have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They know to whom they should report any concerns. However, learners do not have a sufficient understanding of the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.
- While attendance has improved since the previous inspection, it is still not high enough.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- The majority of learners, many of whom have few or no prior qualifications, make good or better progress from their starting points.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have improved the processes for the recognition and recording of learners' progress and achievement. The processes are more rigorous and enable learners' progress to be monitored accurately.
- Learners develop new skills that help them into employment and in their everyday lives. For example, learners on ICT courses learn how to use social networking sites safely so that they can keep in touch with family and friends. Learners on ESOL courses improve their English and ICT skills so that they can apply for employment.
- In 2016/17, approximately three quarters of learners were on courses that did not lead to formal qualifications. Most learners achieved their personal learning goals. There is too much variation in achievement rates between courses. For example, learners on ICT courses have high achievement, while learners' achievements on courses in family learning and ESOL are lower.
- In the current year, the proportion of learners on courses that do not lead to formal qualifications who have achieved their personal learning goals is higher than at the same time in the previous year and is now high.

- In 2016/17, of the learners on courses that led to nationally recognised qualifications, just over half were on functional skills English and mathematics courses. Learners' achievement of functional skills qualifications at entry level for English and mathematics is high. However, learners' achievement of functional skills qualifications at levels 1 and 2 for English and mathematics is too low.
- Managers identified that in 2016/17, achievement for learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities in mathematics functional skills qualifications at levels 1 and 2 was low. Actions to improve outcomes for this group of learners have been implemented and managers are closely monitoring learners' progress.
- In 2016/17, the proportion of learners who left the service after completing their courses and progressed to employment, apprenticeships, volunteering or further education was too low. However, so far this year, two fifths of learners who started courses that did not lead to a qualification have progressed to courses that lead to nationally recognised qualifications.

Provider details

Unique reference number	54739
Type of provider	Local authority
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	754
Principal/CEO	Jean Quinn
Telephone number	0161 342 4063
Website	www.tameside.gov.uk/adultlearning

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	0	248	0	81	0	0	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	0	0	0	0	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	0							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	None							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of service, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

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