

Inspection of Leeds City Council

Inspection dates: 11 to 14 December 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Adult learning programmes

Outstanding

Apprenticeships

Outstanding

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Information about this provider

Leeds City Council provides education and training across the city of Leeds through its employment and skills service, which is part of the city development directorate. At the time of inspection, there were 564 learners on non-accredited adult learning courses funded by West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA). The main curriculum areas include English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), preparation for learning and employment and courses in health, well-being and confidence. There were 50 apprentices on standards in team leader, operations manager, chartered manager and senior leader, all of whom are employees of the council. All learners and apprentices are over the age of 19.

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

Adult learners gain valuable skills, which often transform their lives. They benefit from a highly ambitious curriculum that meets a diverse range of needs across the city, widens participation in learning, improves life chances and develops stronger communities. Learners are supported very well to achieve aspiring and personalised targets relevant to their skills, age and phase of education. They are motivated and empowered to make the transition to further learning or employment.

Teachers plan the apprenticeship curriculum very effectively, ensuring that it relates specifically to apprentices' job roles and is aligned to the council's values and priorities. Leaders and managers tailor their apprenticeship programmes to ensure that apprentices gain the relevant knowledge, skills and behaviours needed to be successful. As a result of their training, apprentices take on more responsibility and are able to work independently, and many are successful in gaining promotions.

Leaders and staff have created a highly effective personal and social development programme for learners and apprentices which supports them well for their future employment and in their everyday lives. Teachers consistently and extensively promote the personal development of learners and apprentices under five key themes, which are employability skills, volunteering, digital skills, next steps and health and well-being. They effectively adapt the programme to make it contextually relevant to each programme.

Teachers have high expectations of their learners, many of whom face significant barriers to learning. They know their learners well and take effective action to enable them to participate fully in education. Teachers are clear about the importance of attendance, conduct and hard work. Learners value the support of their teachers and reciprocate by maintaining good attendance, arriving punctually and taking part enthusiastically in learning sessions.

Learners and apprentices demonstrate significant commitment beyond the requirements of their programme. They are actively involved in projects to support their peers and the local community and build their understanding of social issues affecting the lives of others. For example, many adult learners volunteer at local foodbanks, making and selling products to raise money for those in need, and donate toys for local Christmas projects. Apprentices use the knowledge and skills that they gain through their programmes to make positive contributions in their local communities. For example, apprentices have set up and run a community youth football team using their increased confidence in and understanding of project management and finance.

Teachers ensure that learners and apprentices are prepared well for the next phase of education, training or employment. Learners and apprentices receive regular reviews about their progress, which they discuss eagerly. They make practical plans for their next steps and are very well informed about relevant routes based on their circumstances and aspirations. Apprentices are inspired and confident to apply for

new management roles, and adult learners are well informed and prepared to move on to their next phase of learning.

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

Leaders and managers carefully select and work with subcontractors with expertise in community learning to enable them to meet the needs of specific local communities and groups, and to meet skills priorities. Subcontractors deliver highly effective, bespoke programmes to support the most vulnerable learners to access education. For example, one subcontractor works with learners attending a refugee education training centre based in a community with a high level of deprivation.

Leaders and managers provide a curriculum that contributes well to meeting current skills needs by supporting adults into employment or further study. They work very effectively with a wide range of stakeholders, including WYCA and employers such as the NHS, to gather information about local needs. They use this information very well to inform and develop their curriculum to keep it relevant and current.

Leaders, managers and teachers plan the curriculum carefully and skilfully. Learners and apprentices develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to be successful on their programmes and to progress to their next steps. For example, team leader apprentices learn about individual development planning before moving on to principles of team management, development and dynamics. Teachers on ESOL for job seeking courses establish key terminology relevant to job seeking, such as 'advert', 'reference' and 'per annum', and help learners to understand acronyms such as 'p/t' and 'f/t', before moving on to the application of these terms through practical tasks, such as searching for roles and completing application forms.

Teachers use a wide range of teaching strategies very effectively to help learners and apprentices understand key concepts and new terminology and develop new knowledge and skills rapidly and securely. In ESOL classes, teachers use pitch and tone adeptly to demonstrate pronunciation, and frequent recall and retrieval of information to secure learners' knowledge of the structure of language. On apprenticeship programmes, teachers use a wide range of teaching techniques effectively in face-to-face and online sessions. They use digital learning technologies very well to create quizzes and virtual whiteboards so that apprentices can share their ideas. Apprentices appreciate that all sessions are recorded, and they revisit their sessions to consolidate their learning and aid their recall.

Teachers use assessment methods skilfully to identify how well learners and apprentices are progressing. They expertly question learners and apprentices to check recall and consolidation of learning. They adapt their questions to give learners and apprentices full opportunity to demonstrate their understanding, encouraging them to reach their own solutions. Teachers monitor progress vigilantly, correct misconceptions and set additional tasks in response to how well individual

learners are progressing. As a result, learners and apprentices make fewer repeated errors and build their knowledge steadily.

Teachers support learners and apprentices very well to develop essential mathematical and digital skills in readiness for life and work. For example, teachers on introduction to special educational needs courses develop learners' skills in using percentages and fractions through contextualised scenarios. Learners on ESOL courses are taught how to use digital applications to support everyday tasks, such as planning a bus route to an interview and booking a medical appointment.

Teachers have frequent and very purposeful progress reviews with apprentices and their line managers. They skilfully elicit helpful contributions from apprentices and line managers through useful discussions about work carried out by the apprentice. Teachers carefully link this to plan on- and off-the-job training effectively, which enables apprentices to develop and apply their skills seamlessly throughout their programme.

Most adult learners complete their courses successfully, and a high proportion progress from non-accredited courses to courses leading to qualifications at other providers. Many others gain employment on completion of their course. Most apprentices complete their programme and achieve, with a high proportion gaining high grades.

Leaders have a very secure understanding of the quality of provision, including at the subcontractors. They carry out reviews of the quality of teaching, hold meetings with learners and apprentices and scrutinise learners' work to assess the quality of their provision. Leaders make good use of the information that they gather from these activities to identify and provide highly effective and focused staff training and development opportunities. Staff, including those at the subcontractors, rapidly improve and sustain their high-quality teaching skills and practice.

Governance processes are very strong. Those with governance responsibility are confident to support and challenge senior leaders and have sustained a strong focus on securing improvements in all aspects of the provision. Leaders receive support, challenge and scrutiny from various bodies within the council, including the executive board, the scrutiny board and the community committees. Governors and senior leaders work together effectively to maintain the positive reputation of Leeds City Council's employment and skills service in the community. They are justifiably proud of the positive contribution that it makes to the local area.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Provider details

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|-------------------------------------|---|
| Unique reference number | 52985 |
| Address | Employment and Skills Service Floor 10 (West) Merrion House 110 Merrion Centre Leeds LS2 8BB |
| Contact number | 0113 3781777 |
| Website | www.leedsadultlearning.co.uk |
| Principal, CEO or equivalent | Dawn Hall OBE |
| Provider type | Local authority |
| Date of previous inspection | 15 April 2013 |
| Main subcontractors | Luminate Education Group The Conservation Volunteers Groundwork Learning Partnership Nari Ekta PATH Yorkshire Limited Refugee Education Training Advice Service Swarthmore Education Centre Vera Media AALFY |

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. 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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|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Sarah Seaman, lead inspector | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Joanne Stork | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Mark Keen | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Alison Dennis | His Majesty's Inspector |
| Claire Griffin | Ofsted Inspector |

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