

Inspection of Hillingdon London Borough Council

Inspection dates:

12 to 14 February 2025

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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

London Borough of Hillingdon's adult education service, known as Learn Hillingdon, is managed by the council's children's services directorate. At the time of the inspection, there were 1,264 learners. Most learners study courses at level 1 or below with a third studying courses at level 2 and 3. Approximately half of all learners study courses that lead to a qualification.

Courses are provided to build learners' vocational skills, primarily in childcare, supporting teaching and learning in schools, and in the health and social care sector. English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), English and mathematics form a large part of the curriculum on offer. The service also delivers provision aimed at building the independent living skills of adults who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and provision for learners who have mental health needs. Courses are taught at three main sites, at outreach locations across the borough and online. Since the previous inspection, Learn Hillingdon has relocated to new centres in Uxbridge town centre and Hayes.

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

Learners study in safe, friendly and welcoming learning environments wherever they learn. Courses are taught in various locations and online at times that suit learners' personal circumstances. Subsequently, learners from a diverse range of communities attend the courses offered. They enjoy socialising at the Uxbridge sites' communal areas. Many make new friendships that they maintain outside of attending classes. Learners, who come from diverse backgrounds, feel valued and included.

Tutors develop respectful and caring relationships with learners. Learners show high levels of respect for each other and their tutors. For example, during online breakout groups learners hold robust but respectful discussions about supporting children in care settings. Learners practising for interviews listen to each other's views and give positive feedback to each other. This helps them to look at things from other people's points of view.

Learners take part enthusiastically in their classes. Tutors explain things clearly and this helps learners understand topics. Tutors show patience towards learners and provide extra sessions when learners need additional support. Learners value greatly the support that tutors and staff provide. They diligently complete work in and out of the classroom because they are motivated to achieve. In classes, they work cooperatively with each other.

Learners have access to a wide range of activities outside of classes. For example, learners attend a UK Parliament week debate and develop the confidence to express their views. Adults who have SEND have good opportunities to study additional courses, such as entrepreneurship. They volunteer and organise a clothes and toy bank for other learners. Visiting speakers motivate and inspire learners to achieve. Learners enjoy these additional activities that help boost their confidence. However, not all learners are aware of the range of activities on offer.

Learners are well prepared for their next steps once they complete their course. Tutors provide learners with effective advice and guidance so that they are well informed about the opportunities available to them. For example, learners studying vocational courses benefit from individual guidance, where they plan their potential career route. ESOL learners understand the different levels of course they can progress to. Many learners progress to higher-level courses and a high proportion achieve their qualification.

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

Leaders and managers make sure that the curriculum offer meets local needs effectively. Vocational courses equip adults with the knowledge they need to progress towards their career goals in areas where there is high demand for qualified staff, such as in the education and care sectors. Courses for adults who have SEND help them maintain and develop their independent living skills very well, such as managing money and cooking. Courses that promote good mental health

and well-being have a strong social impact, such as reducing feelings of isolation. ESOL courses help learners in their day-to-day lives to, for example, communicate with teachers at their child's school or their doctor.

Leaders and managers collaborate very well with partners to make sure courses reach learners who face significant barriers in their lives. For example, by working with public health, children's centres and voluntary organisations, they successfully engage learners from traveller communities and those living in temporary accommodation.

Tutors mostly complete thorough assessments of what learners know and can do at the start of their course. They use this information well to make sure that learners are on courses that meet their needs effectively. ESOL tutors review learners' progress early on to check that learners are on the right course. However, in a few instances, for example in functional skills mathematics, tutors do not use this information effectively in order to plan teaching, and, as a result, learners do not make the progress they are capable of.

Tutors, who have good subject knowledge and expertise, teach the curriculum well so that learners remember what they are taught. For example, ESOL tutors teach the alphabet and develop simple day-to-day vocabulary before teaching learners how to construct a simple sentence. As the course develops learners understand how to ask and respond to questions and have simple conversations. In vocational subjects, such as preparing to work in schools, tutors design industry relevant scenarios on topics such as behaviour. They use these skilfully to show learners how the theory they learn is used in practice.

Tutors use questioning effectively, to make sure that learners have a secure knowledge of previously taught content. Tutors who teach learners with SEND break down tasks into small, manageable steps. They reinforce learning through repeating information using different methods and resources, such as worksheets, mini whiteboards and clear verbal explanations.

Tutors mostly provide useful feedback to learners on how to improve their work. For example, tutors correct learners' spelling and grammar and show them how to avoid future errors. This encourages learners to improve their work to a good standard. Learners are proud of the work they produce. Those on English courses create well-written formal letters. ESOL learners complete forms correctly, structure sentences and use punctuation accurately. However, in a few instances tutors do not provide good enough feedback so that learners know specifically what they need to do to improve.

Through the curriculum, tutors promote learners' mental and physical health effectively. For example, learners attend workshops where they learn strategies to help them prepare for examinations. Learners understand the link between good physical and mental health. Tutors encourage ESOL learners to set goals to support their physical health. Those with SEND cook healthy meals and take part in exercise classes.

Leaders and managers are considerate of the workload and well-being of their staff. Staff say they are proud to work at Learn Hillingdon. Leaders and managers provide a range of good opportunities for tutors to develop their teaching skills. For example, tutors who teach learners with SEND benefit from specific training on sensory processing and neurodivergence.

Leaders and managers take effective action to assure themselves of and improve the quality of the provision. They are self-critical, reflective and committed to continuously improving the provision. They intervene effectively when the quality of the provision is below the standards expected. Through well-considered action, they make the improvements needed.

Senior leaders and the advisory board provide good oversight and scrutiny of the provision. They are knowledgeable about what the service does well and what needs improving. Leaders and managers provide the advisory board with a good range of useful information on the quality of the provision. This allows them to understand the strengths and areas for improvement and challenge managers on any underperforming areas.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Consistently use information on what learners know and can do to teach learners a curriculum that meets their individual needs.
- Provide learners with specific feedback on how to improve their work.
- Promote more widely the good range of activities on offer that support learners personal development.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53129
Address	Learn Hillingdon Adult Community Education, Hillingdon London Borough Council Civic Centre High Street Uxbridge UB8 1UW
Contact number	01895 556455
Website	www.hillingdon.gov.uk/adult-education-centres
Principal	Debbie Scarborough
Provider type	Community Learning and Skills - Local Authority
Date of previous inspection	4 December 2019
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the service manager, 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

Jon Bowman, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Christina Christou	Ofsted Inspector
Sam King	Ofsted Inspector
Daisy Agathine-Louise	Ofsted Inspector
Julia Stevens	Ofsted Inspector
John O'Connell	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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