

# London Borough of Lewisham - Community Education

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**Unique reference number:** 53137

**Name of lead inspector:** Andy Harris

**Last day of inspection:** 24 February 2012

**Type of provider:** Local Authority

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## Information about the provider

1. Community Education Lewisham (CEL) provides adult learning opportunities across the borough of Lewisham in south-east London. It operates from three main centres and a range of community locations. Two of the main centres are adapted old schools, and one is a modern centre, purpose-built for adult and community learning. Although the number of centres and learners has reduced over the past four years the service maintains a wide range of accredited and other courses. In 2010/11 it offered around 900 courses in 10 subject areas and enrolled around 3,800 learners. Around 63% of learners are enrolled on non-accredited provision with the remainder working towards a recognised qualification, although the proportion of learners on accredited courses has reduced in 2011/12. The vast majority of the learners are aged over 19. Provision for the very small number of young learners was not directly inspected. Teaching, learning and assessment in the areas of crafts, creative arts and design, literacy, and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) were inspected in depth as a sample of CEL's provision.
2. CEL receives around £4 million a year from the Skills Funding Agency, with additional support from the council. It currently employs approximately 250 staff; 150 of whom are part-time tutors. CEL is part of the Cultural Services Division of the council's Community Services Directorate which provides libraries, adult education, arts and leisure services in the borough. Like many London boroughs Lewisham has a significant number of residents who were not born in the United Kingdom (around 24%), with many languages being spoken in the borough. It has areas of particular deprivation although the council has a goal of making Lewisham "the best place in London to live work and learn". In 2010 just under 10% of the local population was unemployed; this was slightly higher than the London figure of around 9%. CEL has no formal contracting arrangements with other providers.

## Overall inspection summary of Community Education Lewisham

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching, learning and assessment</b>	<b>Grade 3</b>
<i>Crafts, creative arts and design</i>	<i>Grade 2</i>
<i>Literacy</i>	<i>Grade 3</i>
<i>ESOL</i>	<i>Grade 2</i>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>

## Overall effectiveness

3. The overall effectiveness of CEL's provision is satisfactory. Strong leadership and management have helped to improve the provision over recent years. On courses leading to qualifications a satisfactory proportion of learners now gain their qualification. In areas such as ESOL and crafts and arts a good proportion of learners achieve the relevant qualification. However, in other areas, such as literacy or numeracy, performance is only just at the levels seen in other adult and community learning providers. On courses that do not lead to formal qualifications learners generally achieve the aims of the course or their personal goals. CEL works hard to ensure that different groups of learners perform equally well. The vast majority of learners enjoy their courses and improve personal skills and self-confidence alongside the skills they gain from their courses.
4. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies across CEL, but it is generally satisfactory. Learners in many classes benefit from close support from their tutors, and a range of imaginative activities that make learning both fun and effective. Examples include lively cookery classes that entertain and inform learners with a range of top tips on pastry making, to fascinated learners in jewellery classes considering the use of cuttlefish moulds. However, a substantial number of classes have a fairly basic approach to learning with, for instance, an over-reliance on working through standard exercise sheets. Where appropriate, assessment is used to help learners to understand what they need to do to improve. The effective use of individual learning plans, questioning technique in class, and approaches to continuous assessment varies across the provision and a minority of learners are not fully clear on their progress. Equality and diversity are reinforced in some classes, but insufficient lesson planning and insufficient staff training mean that sometimes appropriate opportunities to improve learners' understanding of equality and diversity are missed.
5. Leaders and managers at CEL are properly focussed on improving teaching, learning and assessment. This is being done well, in spite of reductions in funding and a goal of keeping a wide range of courses to meet individual interests and add to the improvement of skills in and around Lewisham. Despite some challenging targets for improvement staff feel well supported by leaders and managers. CEL is working closely with tutors to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, and this work includes observing classes to ensure they are of a good standard. However CEL recognises that these observations could be more rigorous and is making appropriate changes. Managers use a variety of ways, and an impressive amount of well-presented data, to monitor what is going on at CEL and put in place improvements. These systems are proving effective in helping the service improve, although again CEL recognises it can make the detail, in such areas as improvement plans, even better. CEL ensures that safeguarding, and health and safety arrangements protect all its learners. All the learning centres have a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere with staff and learners showing welcome mutual respect.

# Main inspection report

## Key findings

- Outcomes for learners have improved significantly over the past four years; overall the performance is satisfactory with some high performing areas such as ESOL and crafts and arts. Literacy and numeracy success rates are only satisfactory.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory overall, with a reasonable proportion of classes that engage and enthuse learners and facilitate effective learning. Too many classes still provide a no more than satisfactory experience.
- Learners are well-motivated, actively participate in and generally enjoy their learning. Learners improve their specific skills, and in many cases their self-confidence and communication skills.
- In-class resources are varied and used effectively and, in some instances, imaginatively to support learning. CEL's on-line learning system has potential but does not yet have enough material to fully help independent learning.
- Assessment aids most learners in understanding and improving their performance. However this varies across the provision with some weak aspects, such as occasional ineffective use of individual learning plans, limited questioning technique in class, and an insufficiently structured approach to continuous assessment in relevant classes.
- Learners receive a high level of support that allows for successful engagement in learning. Learners and staff show a positive level of respect for each other, and their cultures. Opportunities to promote equality and diversity in lessons are occasionally missed.
- CEL makes significant effort to analyse the performance of differing groups of learners and takes effective action to narrow any identified gaps.
- Strong and effective leadership and management, based on sound strategic planning and inspiring a culture of improvement, have raised standards significantly over a two-year period.
- Thorough and well-informed curriculum planning ensures a broad and appropriate range of provision well suited to national and local priorities as well as addressing the needs of local people.
- The introduction of a range of well planned quality improvement measures has given the organisation a clear direction and knowledge of those things which require further work to raise the quality of the provision.

## What does Community Education Lewisham need to do to improve further?

- Raise the standard of teaching to that of the best through improved monitoring, more effective systems for professional development and increased opportunities for sharing good practice.
- Increase the effectiveness of individual learning plans through the better development of focused and timely individual targets for learners, and using

the review process to give learners more detailed feedback on how to progress.

- Enhance strategies to improve learners' independent learning skills through encouragement in class, and further development of CEL's virtual learning environment and other out-of-class activities.
- Ensure that, where appropriate, continuous assessment, including simple things such as improved questioning techniques, are routinely used to help learners better understand how to improve their skills.
- Encourage the better promotion of equality and diversity in the curriculum through effective training for all teaching staff.

## **Outcomes for learners**

## **Grade 3**

6. Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Over the past four years CEL has significantly improved low overall success rates on accredited courses to around the average expected for similar providers. In some subject areas, however, rates are still below national averages. On non-accredited courses a good proportion of learners achieve their learning goals. Retention rates on non-accredited courses have remained consistently high for the last three years.
7. In 2010/11 success rates for long courses at level 1 and 2 were satisfactory, but rates for entry level courses, about 28% of long provision, declined to well below average. CEL responded to this particular concern by, amongst other things, changing many entry level courses to more appropriate, shorter qualifications that fitted in with learners' lifestyles; these actions appear to be having a positive impact.
8. In ESOL accredited courses results are good. Literacy success rates have improved over the past two years although they are generally still below national averages; this improvement appears to be continuing in 2011/12. In numeracy a range of well considered changes to the provision has led to a significant improvement to a near satisfactory level. In the smaller areas of accredited provision there was, in 2010/11 underperformance in child development, ICT for users and training for direct learning support staff, but good performance in arts and media and in crafts. Attendance of learners has improved slightly over the past three years to a satisfactory level.
9. CEL has put significant effort into identifying and dealing with any gaps in performance between differing groups of learners. Those receiving additional learning support and those with a declared disability now have results above the CEL success rate average. Where minority ethnic groups have been underperforming CEL's actions have generally resulted in improvements. For instance, below average results for those of Chinese and other Asian origin improved to around CEL averages following the introduction of additional support classes and help to a specific tutor.
10. Development of learners' skills is generally satisfactory. In ESOL classes learners improve their skills and confidence well. In non-accredited classes enthusiastic learners, aided by experienced staff, improve their competencies

and understanding in areas including modern languages, personal relationships or singing. In literacy and numeracy development of skills is at a slower, but satisfactory, pace. The vast majority of learners are enjoying their course, and in nearly all cases the experience of participating in adult learning is having a positive impact on learners' self-confidence, and personal skills such as communication.

11. Progression from accredited courses is satisfactory. The vast majority of learners continue with some form of education and training, with a small number using their learning to help them into employment or into other forms of further and higher education. In non-accredited learning a good proportion of new learners enrol alongside those continuing to develop their skills by returning to the same or higher level courses.

## **The quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Grade 3**

12. In line with the current satisfactory outcomes, teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory overall. In classes and on their courses learners are well motivated, actively engaged and appropriately challenged. Tutors inspire a positive attitude towards learning through high expectations and establishing a well-managed and caring environment. Peer support is strong as learners are encouraged to work collaboratively and often learn informally from each other, particularly in art and media. However, too much teaching is no better than satisfactory, and there are weaknesses in assessment practice in some courses where it is not a helpful and regular feature.
13. All learners identify their individual targets through an initial assessment process but these targets are not always clear enough or linked with a time for completion. In good lessons these targets are used to effectively personalise learning for learners, enabling them to progress at an appropriate pace and a suitable level. For programmes aimed at those with learning difficulties or disabilities well-planned learning aims are used as a basis for each learning session. However, in other areas targets are insufficiently rigorous to enable tutors to satisfactorily meet the individual needs of learners within a class. Support for improving literacy and numeracy skills is not yet embedded into all courses where it could be of benefit to the learners. Examples of good practice occur, especially in art and design, and CEL are increasingly sharing this good practice across all curriculum areas.
14. Learning is satisfactorily assessed but opportunities for routine, continuous assessment are sometimes missed. When undertaken, especially in non-accredited provision, reviews of the learners' individual learning plans credit success but little feedback or advice on how to improve is given to ensure learners progress. At times a lack of targeted questioning to check learners' understanding, and in a few cases insufficient written feedback, gives little direction to help the learner develop. On some courses, including ESOL, assessment and feedback are good.

15. A variety of resources are used imaginatively and effectively by tutors to support learning, although there is a limited range within literacy classes. The use of technology varies across classes, but tutors do make good use of more routine resources, for instance suggesting that learners on fitness courses for the active elderly can use tins of baked beans for home exercise.
16. Tutors provide advice and guidance in a positive manner, and this is recognised and appreciated by those in their classes. On non-accredited courses tutors make reasonable adjustments to their lessons and resources for their learners with specific learning difficulties. Learners on accredited courses have satisfactory access to additional learning support. Support workers are used effectively to aid individual learners.
17. The way that learners are helped to develop ways of completing work by themselves is not yet fully effective; CEL acknowledges this and is reviewing ways to improve this. A virtual learning environment is available to learners; it is being increasingly used but it does not yet adequately support the majority of learners' out-of-class learning. However, there are examples of good practice where learners can find videos, links and interactive quizzes relevant to their learning, and a working party has been formed to share this good practice across the curriculum. Formal out-of-class activities are not set for learners on some appropriate courses.
18. Teaching and learning are inclusive and tutors ensure that all learners can participate in learning. However, explicit promotion of equality and diversity is not sufficiently planned or delivered within learning sessions and opportunities for unplanned promotion are missed. Where equality and diversity are part of the curriculum content, the awareness and celebration of different cultures are good.

## **Crafts, creative arts and design**

## **Grade 2**

19. Teaching, learning and assessment are good in crafts, creative arts and design. This performance is matched in both accredited and non-accredited outcomes. Tutors provide good guidance to learners as a result of getting to know the learners' aspirations and abilities well. All learners have a very useful initial assessment on their first day which helps tutors to shape the course. Learners set themselves challenging learning goals that they agree individually with the tutor. These ensure that learners are able to progress at a pace and level that is right for them even when classes contain beginners alongside practising artists. Tutors set high expectations for their learners and learners make good progress during lessons. They produce work of a high standard.
20. Resources are good in the craft subjects; less so for painting and drawing at the Brockley Centre. Resources are used effectively by tutors to provide interesting and stimulating activities for learners. In jewellery classes, learners make an item in their first lesson and use a range of materials such as metal clay and cuttlefish bones to good effect. In print making, learners have a wide choice of resources that the tutor uses imaginatively with them to exercise their creativity well. Beginners are provided with well-structured activities that raise their confidence in their chosen art form. Learners enjoy their courses and

appreciate the artistic freedom they are encouraged to develop by the tutor. A high proportion of learners achieve their goals at the end of their course. Tutors' subject knowledge is good and they share their expertise well through demonstrations that enthuse learners.

21. Learners receive good verbal feedback on their progress but, for a significant minority, the written feedback from the tutor does not provide them with sufficient information about their progress and how they can improve. Although a small number of tutors provide very good written reviews of progress this good practice is not sufficiently shared.
22. In too many lessons tutors make insufficient use of questioning to check learners' understanding and to encourage them to reflect on their progress. In these cases, tutors provide learners with answers and solutions to challenges rather than encouraging them to think independently.

## **Literacy**

## **Grade 3**

23. Overall teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory in CEL's literacy provision. This correlates with outcomes in accredited courses which have improved recently, although they are still generally below national averages. In better lessons thoughtful tutors ensure that a variety of methods and resources engage learners and meet their individual learning styles. Learning activities are well-thought out, introduced clearly and result in motivated learners. These learners enthusiastically link their improved literacy skills to practical subjects, such as how they might support their own children, seek employment or write better letters. Although aspects of this good practice are shared, in a significant minority of classes activities, such as completing basic worksheets, go on for too long and learners become bored. Learners do not work independently enough in the poorer classes to allow them to progress swiftly enough to a more challenging level.
24. Learners generally feel well supported and encouraged by their tutors who understand and attempt to respond to their individual needs. This understanding is helped by regular individual reviews between tutors and learners, and tutors' targeted attention in class. Encouragement is well directed to learners who might otherwise find it a challenge to participate in learning. Learners' chances have also been improved with changes in CEL's literacy provision, including more short courses which are aiding retention and providing a sense of achievement, an increase in class hours, a revised formal assessment system and improved pre-course assessment practices.
25. Attendance in observed classes was unsatisfactory, around 13 percentage points below the CEL average. In addition, punctuality was poor in most classes. The lack of punctuality resulted in latecomers not being fully integrated in, or benefiting from, the learning.
26. Assessment of learning is satisfactory. In some classes constructive and useful feedback is given which learners use to improve their learning. However, in other cases, assessed work lacks appropriate spelling or grammar corrections and provides insufficient feedback for learners.

27. In the better part of the provision, course planning clearly records sequenced teaching and learning activities, methods, resources and planned assessments. Coping with learners with mixed abilities is anticipated well. However a substantial minority of lesson plans lack this rigour and result in only satisfactory teaching and learning. Lack of pre-lesson planning contributes to opportunities for the appropriate promotion of equality and diversity being missed in some lessons.

## **ESOL**

## **Grade 2**

28. Teaching, learning and assessment are good overall and this matches the high success rates on the mostly accredited programmes. Tutors have very high expectations for their learners, engage with and motivate them well. Learners progress well during lessons, and properly develop the full range of language and literacy skills. Lessons help entry-level learners gain confidence to experiment with full sentences and focus on accuracy. Learners on work programmes improve their employability skills, make effective presentations and offer valuable feedback to their peers. Higher-level learners are fluent and accurate speakers, contributing articulately to discussions. Learners progress well between levels of ESOL learning, or onto vocational courses. The well-embedded citizenship topics and spelling activities help learners become more effective citizens, lead more independent lives or support children with homework.
29. Learning is carefully planned to match learners' needs and interests. Tutors have good subject expertise and use a variety of strategies to match various learning styles. For example, kinaesthetic learners are invited to the interactive whiteboard to note down their answers while others with dyslexic needs are encouraged to use their Smartphone to take notes. Activities are kept at a good pace and are sufficiently challenging for more able learners. In the best lessons, errors are systematically corrected and reviewed. Information and learning technology is not always fully accessible or used fully to enhance learning.
30. Learners share knowledge generously and remain fully engaged in activities. Most attend punctually and many are keen to complete a good amount of homework or use e-learning facilities. However, attendance is still low on some courses and exams. Independent learning is not sufficiently embedded for those learners who cannot attend lessons regularly and need to catch up with missed work.
31. Learners are well supported. Initial assessment is effective in placing learners on the right course and in identifying support needs early on. Learners receive robust induction and are very clear about what is expected from them. Individual learning plans are sufficiently well developed and used. Tutors take extensive assessment notes during lessons to inform progress records and verbal feedback. Learners can self-assess and most understand what they need to do to improve. However, some review dates are not specific enough.

32. Learners receive effective advice and guidance for progression at the end of each course and are, in appropriate lessons, encouraged to consider other courses such as childcare or retail.
33. Equality and diversity are well promoted in the classroom. Learners value learning alongside others with different cultures and opinions. They are encouraged to work collaboratively and to welcome different ideas and customs.

## **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

## **Grade 2**

34. Leadership and management are good. Leaders demonstrate ambition to improve the service and they provide clear and logical priorities that are well communicated to staff. Strategic planning meets local and national priorities and has brought the service into a sustainable financial position. Managers and staff feel well supported by the leadership. The service sets ambitious but realistic performance improvement targets. Systems for monitoring quality and developing the provision are sound, and their implementation over the past two years is beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of learning. Leaders have successfully developed a good ethos of improvement and a structure that clearly identifies roles and responsibilities and reflects the needs of the service. Data management and presentation are good and data are used well in business planning. CEL manages resources effectively to the benefit of its learners.
35. CEL demonstrates a good capacity to improve with a clear focus on improving teaching and learning. CEL has implemented a carefully planned and managed system of observing teaching and learning which identifies areas for improvement well and provides suitable action plans for improvement. Managers recognise that many observations have been over-graded, as confirmed through recent moderation and the grades awarded by inspectors. The service has worked hard to develop tutors' teaching skills with good support and mentoring; however, too many part-time tutors are not participating sufficiently in their own development. Sharing of good practice is good in some areas and greater awareness of the need to improve has led to good informal development activity, but this aspect is not yet sufficiently effective across the whole organisation.
36. Curriculum planning is good. It draws on a wide range of information including learner' feedback and good data analysis. Tutors are encouraged to contribute and curriculum leaders have a good understanding of local and individual needs to ensure that the provision offers a best match to the needs of the local community. A useful management system ensures all planning actions are time bound with specific allocated responsibility. CEL is flexible to changing needs and circumstances and encourages innovation from tutors where appropriate. It is forging stronger links with local community groups and providers to improve the range and appropriateness of provision. Links with employers require further development and this is something which CEL is already improving.

37. CEL listens attentively to learners' views, gathered through many sources, and uses feedback well to effect change. It engages learners in consultation which has resulted in well-planned improvements. Feedback from learners gathered on inspection reinforces CEL's own findings that learners' satisfaction is very high.
38. The self-assessment process is thorough and inclusive. It is based on well presented, comprehensive and accurate data and the effective use of learner and staff views. It draws on assessments from each curriculum area. These generate generally useful individual quality improvement plans though with a variation in detail and quality. Quality improvement plans are sufficiently ambitious and activity is monitored well. This process has been revised and managers recognise the potential for further improvement. The self-assessment broadly reflects inspection findings although elements, for example on the quality of teaching and learning, are insufficiently evaluative. However, quality improvement has driven measurable and sustained significant improvement in outcomes for learners and improved curriculum inspection grades since the previous inspection.
39. Strategic planning prioritises the need to make learning accessible to, and valued by, the whole community. The service carefully monitors recruitment and performance of specific groups. Action to widen participation and improve the achievement of minority groups is effective. For example the arts have moved from engaging learners from predominantly one ethnic group to one representative of the locality. Staff offer very good support for vulnerable learners with particular and specialist needs. Safeguarding arrangements meet current government requirements and health and safety arrangements are good. Learners are made clearly aware of how they should be treated and how they should treat others. Access at the centres for those with limited mobility is good.
40. Equality and diversity are routinely discussed at staff and management meetings; however, formal training is insufficient to satisfactorily reinforce the knowledge and awareness of many tutors. This is exemplified by the lack of opportunities seen in sessions to enrich learning through the use of culturally diverse materials.

## **Information about the inspection:**

41. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by CEL's curriculum and learning manager as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of CEL's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the funding body, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspections, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
42. Inspectors used individual interviews to gain the views of learners. They also looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed for the provider. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF) Community Education Lewisham

**Learning types: 14 – 16 learning programmes:** NVQ vocational units; Diplomas; **16-18 learning programmes leading to qualifications:** FE full- and part-time courses; **19+ learning programmes leading to qualifications:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Apprenticeships;** **Other work based learning:** NVQs, access to apprenticeships; **Foundation learning;** **Learning for social and personal development;** adult safeguarded funded learning;

<b>Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:</b>  1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	<b>Overall</b>	<b>19+ Learning programmes</b>	<b>Learning for social and personal development</b>
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners at the time of inspection</b>			
Full-time learners	-	-	-
Part-time learners	3,636	1,157	2,479
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	3	3	3
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	3	3	3
<b>The quality of teaching, learning and assessment</b>	3	3	3
<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management</b>	2	2	2

<b>Subject areas graded</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Learner Numbers</b>	
Crafts, creative arts and design	2		660
Literacy	3	350	
ESOL	2	265	

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