City Lit

Inspection report

Unique reference number:	130401
Name of lead inspector:	Rosy Belton HMI
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Type of provider:	Specialist Designated Institution
Address:	City Lit Keeley Street Covent Garden WC2B 4BA
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Information about the provider

1. City Lit is located in Covent Garden, in the London Borough of Camden. It was established in 1919 by the London County Council as one of five literary institutes and as such is a specialist designated institution. City Lit was incorporated in 1990 and is a company limited by guarantee with charitable status. City Lit's original brief was to stimulate demand for evening study among office workers, mainly in the arts and humanities. This is still part of its mission, although its provision has broadened extensively and now includes courses in a number of specialist areas such as deaf studies.

2. In 2005, City Lit moved to new premises. The building is the largest adult education centre in Europe and has 58 classrooms, providing learning opportunities to over 28,000 people every year. City Lit serves a number of communities, both local and throughout London and attracts learners from outside London because of the specialist nature of many of its courses. In recent years, it has developed a growing programme of community outreach provision to meet the learning needs of underrepresented groups of adults in local neighbourhoods.

3. Just under half of its income in 2010 came from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) for adult safeguarded learning, learner and employer responsive provision. In 2010, City Lit employed 1,104 staff (302 full-time equivalents), of whom 876 were part-time, sessional, teaching staff. Since the last inspection, City Lit has reorganised to create a reduced, senior management team. This inspection included four of the fourteen subject areas provided by City Lit.

4. City Lit provides training on behalf of the following providers:

   ■ London Borough of Barnet (Family learning)

   ■ London Borough of Camden (Family learning).

Type of provision	Number of learners in 2010
Young learner provision: Further education (16-18)	154 part-time learners
Adult learner provision: Learning for qualifications Learning for personal and social development	27 full-time learners 2,054 part-time learners 41 full-time learners 20,790 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain	59 learners

Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 1

Capacity to improve	Grade 1

	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	1
Leadership and management	1
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	1

Learning for social and personal development	Grade
Performing arts	1
Visual arts	1
Humanities	2
Languages	2
English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)	2

Overall effectiveness

5.   The overall effectiveness of the provision is outstanding. Learners' outcomes are good overall, and continually improving. Success rates in visual arts are high and good in humanities. The standard of learners' work is particularly high and many learners progress through course levels, on to other courses or in to employment and higher education. Learners enjoy learning, feel safe and benefit personally and socially from attending their courses. Their contribution to the community, through performance, fundraising and volunteering is outstanding.

6.   Teaching and learning are good with outstanding features. Tutors are inspirational and highly professional, providing interesting and varied activities to engage learners. Learners are enthused and excited by their subjects; however, the processes to record and monitor progress and achievement are inconsistently applied and do not accurately capture all success. The range of

provision to meet the needs and interests of learners is outstanding, providing a rich and varied offer. The excellent partnerships add value to the learners' experience. Care, guidance and support are highly effective, and include a particularly wide range of 'in house' support services and specialist provision.

7. Leadership and management are outstanding. Leaders and managers set very high expectations and curriculum management is highly effective. Governors have excellent involvement in setting strategic direction, and arrangements to safeguard young people and vulnerable adults are good. The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding as are the learner engagement arrangements. Managers have generated a strong ethos for improving quality and provide good value for money.

Main findings

■ Success rates are high in visual arts and good in some humanities subjects. In other non-accredited subject areas and on accredited courses, they are broadly satisfactory and improving. Those receiving additional learning support do particularly well compared to their peers.

■ The standard of learners' work is high and the development of employability and work-related skills is generally good and is outstanding in humanities. Progression rates to further learning and higher qualifications are high and learners gain good personal and social skills as well as additional qualifications.

■ Learners' health and well-being are promoted well and learners feel safe. They enjoy learning and make an excellent contribution to the community, successfully fundraising to support, for example, the student bursary scheme, volunteering in the community and promoting courses at local events.

■ Teaching and learning are good with outstanding features. Learners benefit from teachers who are highly experienced, inspirational professionals. Learners are excited by their studies and in the best lessons they are active learners readily supporting others. However, weaker lessons are too teacher led.

■ The variety of procedures to record progress and achievement in non-accredited learning often matches the subject area and course aims well, building on learners' initial assessment or prior learning. However, inconsistent application of processes to capture learners' success in achieving their learning goals results in insufficient evidence of success in some subjects.

■ The range of levels, in accredited and non-accredited learning, the variety of subjects, timing of lessons and coverage of courses across all days of the week, are outstanding. Learners' needs and interests are met particularly well including the most vulnerable learners. Learners find the flexibility of course timetables and the range of subjects a considerable strength of the college.

■ City Lit has excellent partnerships that tutors use extensively to enliven and enrich lessons and the curriculum. Partners provide some outstanding opportunities for learners to progress to work, for volunteering or for further studies. Managers are exceptionally responsive in working with partners, sharing their expertise and working collaboratively to the benefit of learners.

- Learners have access to an extensive range of support services including counselling, learning support, specialist dyslexia support, help with study skills and the provision of adaptive technology. Information, advice and guidance very successfully signpost learners to internal support and external agencies. Learners receiving additional learning support are very successful in achieving their learning goals.

- Leaders set high expectations for excellence through clear strategies and objectives. Data are used successfully to monitor performance and drive improvement. Innovation is actively encouraged. Success rates are improving steadily.

- Good safeguarding arrangements, including policies, procedures and training, promote awareness and practices to protect young people and vulnerable adult learners well. A safe ethos is created through the good relationships between all staff and learners. Records of referrals and investigations are good and clear; however, they are not routinely reported to governors.

- City Lit's promotion of equality and diversity is excellent and is helping to raise learners' awareness of different cultures. Strategies to increase participation by new learners and those from minority and hard-to-reach groups are exceptionally effective. Managers systematically check achievements by major learner groups, which compare favourably.

- Managers are exemplary in the way they use learners' views to make improvements. Learners have an extensive range of ways they can give feedback, some being very innovative. Managers make excellent use of partners', learners' and staff views to inform future provision and tailor courses to meet their needs.

- City Lit has made significant improvements to many aspects of the provision. Tutors receive excellent training and development to help improve the quality of lessons. Self-assessment is very accurate, but managers do not sufficiently analyse outcomes and the quality of the provision across the whole organisation.

What does City Lit need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop appropriate methods of recording progress and achievement to ensure the accurate recording of learner success and to reflect learners' positive experience of City Lit.

- Ensure governors are routinely kept abreast of safeguarding referrals and investigations to enable them to monitor the quality of policies and procedures, interventions and records.

- Further improve the self-assessment and quality improvement process by providing an overview of all Common Inspection Framework aspects across all subject areas to inform the quality improvement plan.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors
What learners like:
- the expertise, professionalism and knowledge that tutors share with learners
- the wide variety of courses that provide clear progression from one level to the next
- the wide age range of learners and strong sense of inclusivity promoted by City Lit
- the very high levels of support and advice they receive which help them learn and also prepare them for employment, the outside world and performances
- the regular individual feedback and constructive criticism they receive
- the way their learning has enriched their lives, maintained their good health and been transformational.

What learners would like to see improved:
- some of the accommodation that is affected by noise intervention, is not well ventilated or unsuitable for drama and music practice
- more challenging of non attendance and lateness
- some of the class sizes which are too large and often contain too wide a range of abilities.

Summary of the views of partners and employers as confirmed by inspectors
What partners and employers like:
- the opportunities through peer review groups to reflect on subject area trends, share best practices and participate in structured networking across providers
- the flexible approach taken by City Lit to tailor courses it offers around the partners' needs
- the very professional tutors who provide good quality training and provide sound practical examples to support theory
- the stepping stones that City Lit provides to enable its learners to progress into employment or further training and education
- the way that City Lit works with them to reduce the potential barriers that learners face in accessing learning
- the unique and very specific courses offered for deaf and visually impaired learners and teachers.

What partners and employers would like to see improved:
- there was nothing that partners and employers would like to see improved.

Main inspection findings

Capacity to make and sustain improvement   Grade 1

8.   Leaders and managers set high expectations for improvement which staff enthusiastically embrace. City Lit makes outstanding use of learners' views to improve a wide range of services and courses. Self-assessment and subsequent action planning are very successfully driving improvement and overall success rates are steadily increasing. The significant investment in staff, resources and accommodation is providing learners with a high-quality learning experience. Observers thoroughly evaluate the quality of lessons and give particularly developmental feedback to tutors to help them improve. Since the last inspection, City Lit has rectified the key weaknesses and improved its systems for measuring and recording progress and achievement on non-accredited courses. The inspection grades awarded to English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and music subject areas have improved and all other subject area grades have either been maintained as outstanding or good.

Outcomes for learners   Grade 2

9.   Success rates in non-accredited courses in visual arts are high and good in subjects related to literature within the humanities area. Success rates in other non-accredited subject areas are satisfactory and improving. In accredited learning, success rates are satisfactory and improving on long courses at intermediate level. Different groups of learners are equally successful and those receiving additional learning support do as well or better than their peers. Learners in most subject areas produce a high standard of work and outstanding work in visual and performing arts.

10.   Learners make good progress in lessons and demonstrate good and sometimes outstanding development of employability and work-related skills. Progression rates to further learning and higher qualifications in visual arts are high. The development of social and personal skills and the achievement of additional qualifications to enhance primary learning goals are good.

11.   Learners have a good understanding of safeguarding and feel safe. They confidently use safe working practices. The e-safety policies and procedures are clear and effective with helpful guidance for learners. Subject areas promote health and well-being well. Many learners make an excellent contribution to the community through performance, sales of work, and fundraising activities. Staff and learners are able to draw on the local theatre and creative scene in central London to motivate and inspire learners.

The quality of provision   Grade 1

12.   Teaching and learning are good overall with outstanding features. The expertise of teachers is excellent in many subject areas, with their knowledge and skills exceeding industry standards. Learners benefit from inspirational teachers who

hold substantial status in their fields. In the best lessons, learners are proactive, enthused and excited by their subjects. They work collaboratively, are keen to apply their developing knowledge and skills and are eager to support less able learners in their classes. However, weaker lessons are too teacher led, with insufficient planning for learners' individual goals.

13. Initial assessment clearly identifies the level and appropriateness of the courses learners enrol on. For learners at a foundation level, it informs the planning for learning well. Procedures to record progress and achievement are varied and often rightly suit the subject and course aims as well as learners' prior knowledge and skills. However, the capturing of learners' success in achieving their learning goals is inconsistently applied.

14. The range of provision is extensive. Learners can access pre-entry to advanced levels of courses and a particularly broad selection of subjects including those aimed at very vulnerable groups, and rare provision. One-day events, short and long courses and many popular courses are available at weekends, early mornings and evenings. Learners find the flexibility of course timetables and the range of subjects a considerable strength of the college.

15. City Lit works with an outstanding range of partners. Curriculum managers and tutors make exemplary use of partners to enliven and enrich lessons, often giving learners the chance to work alongside industry professionals. Learners have excellent opportunities to progress to work, volunteering or higher education through City Lit's partners. Managers work very flexibly with partners and employers to devise specific and tailored courses that meet their needs exceptionally well. In particular, this is very effective in deaf education and training, often with joint delivery of courses.

16. Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Support for dyslexic learners is particularly effective. Records show the development of their knowledge and skills particularly well. Support for specific groups of learners is excellent, as is, for example, the provision available in deaf studies. The Skills for Life support has improved considerably since the previous inspection and is included in schemes of work and lesson plans. Learners are benefiting from a more focused attention to improving their skills. Information, advice and guidance are highly effective, ensuring learners are signposted to the right courses, matching learners' needs to appropriate provision and directing them to external and internal support services. Learners can access study support, adaptive technology, additional tailored resources and counselling services, 'in house'. The communication between all parties involved is carefully coordinated and strong links between departments ensure learners do not slip through the net.

Leadership and management   Grade 1

17. Leaders and managers set very high expectations which they communicate consistently and well to all staff. Staff have challenging, yet realistic, targets. Managers regularly and thoroughly monitor progress by staff and for subjects and assiduously challenge under performance. Strategic planning is outstanding

and exceptionally successful in increasing the number of learners taking courses, success rates and room usage. City Lit's carefully-thought-through policy for fees is ensuring the organisation's sound financial stability while supporting the most disadvantaged learners with bursaries. Managers have implemented a very effective Skills for Life strategy across the whole organisation. Leaders and managers actively encourage innovation in course design and, as a result, the curriculum offer is outstanding.

18. Curriculum management is highly effective and instrumental in driving improvement. Tutors receive extensive training, support and mentoring. On the whole, curriculum managers use data exceptionally well to monitor performance.

19. Governors have excellent involvement in setting the strategic direction and mission of City Lit. They have a sound awareness of the provision and use their knowledge and expertise to critically, yet supportively, challenge important issues, new policies and self-assessment judgments and grades. Governors very effectively assess City Lit's performance through using very focused and concise data reports.

20. Safeguarding policies and procedures are comprehensive, making clear the legislative framework and the duties of the college. Safe selection and recruitment practices are applied including approriate records of Criminal Records Bureau checks, references and qualifications of staff. Records of referrals are good and investigations are dealt with approriately. However, reports from investigations are not routinely shared with governors. Staff understanding of safeguarding arrangements is good. Safeguarding is promoted to learners well through induction activities, the learner handbook and posters in classrooms. Despite the college having an open access foyer and canteen area, the reception and facilities staff are vigilant, observing well the flow of learners and visitors. Learners value the relaxed, but supportive, environment and the safe ethos created through the good relationships with, and the attentiveness of, reception staff.

21. City Lit promotes equality and diversity strongly within its key strategies, processes and targets. The socially inclusive ethos and curriculum are successfully increasing participation by new learners, including those from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds and from very hard to engage groups. Staff training in equality and diversity is excellent. Tutors are extremely effective in promoting equality and diversity with learners. In particular, humanities, languages and visual arts tutors skilfully use diversity to strengthen community cohesion and learners' awareness of global topics and different cultures. Senior and curriculum managers routinely analyse, and take successful action to improve, success rates by different groups. As a result, success rates compare well across City Lit's main learner groups. Learners' complaints are resolved well and governors and the learner panel receive a regular analysis of the nature of these complaints.

22. City Lit has outstanding learner engagement arrangements. Learners have an exceptionally wide range of opportunities to give their views. Managers take learners' views very seriously and use these extensively towards improvement. Levels of learner satisfaction are very high. City Lit has innovative online and course reviewer systems for gathering the experiences of specific groups of learners over a long time period or on identified topics they want to improve. Learners make a significant contribution into major decisions and are well represented on the governing body and the well-established learner panel.

23. Managers have generated a strong ethos for improving quality, which is reinforced through a well-written quality handbook. Tutors carry out thorough course reviews and evaluations, incorporating learners' feedback and success rate data, which are used effectively in self-assessment reports. City Lit's self-assessment is largely accurate and very inclusive. Although the quality of teaching and learning and outcomes are meticulously analysed in subject areas, this has not happened for the provision as a whole, making it unclear how the rationale for some of the overall grades and judgements were reached. Tutors' lessons are regularly observed through a very well-established and accurate system. Observers give tutors very supportive and developmental feedback, but actions identified during observations are not always followed up in a timely way.

24. City Lit provides good value for money. The assessment of risk is systematic and well managed. Staff have extensive training that is highly relevant to their job and improving of the quality of teaching. A significant investment was made in designing high-quality, purpose-built facilities at Keeley Street. However, a small number of classrooms are hindering the learners' experience due to space, poor acoustics and ventilation. The picture of overall success rates is very mixed across subject areas; some are good whereas others are satisfactory.

Learning for social and personal development

> **Other social and personal development learning provision considered as part of the main findings but not separately graded:**
> *Health, care and pubic services, science and mathematics, information and communication, leisure, travel and tourism, education and training and family learning*

Performing arts   Grade 1

Context

25. The performing arts faculty covers drama, dance, speech and music subject areas. There are 2,741 learners on a range of music courses, 875 on dance courses, 535 on a range of speech courses and 2,550 learners study drama. Courses are both accredited and non-accredited. Most courses are held at the main site, with some courses taking place in nearby venues, and are available every day of the week, at all times. A head of faculty is supported by a head of music and a head of drama, dance and speech and 173 part-time tutors

Key findings

■ Success rates on non-accredited provision are satisfactory and improving, presenting a significant increase on previous years. Success rates for different groups of learners compare favourably. Learners display excellent practical and technical skills. They enjoy highly collaborative sessions, are highly focused and actively comment on the strong sense of trust existing between tutors and learners.

■ Learners make an excellent contribution to the community by creating performances to support the bursary fund and other charities. Others lead community-learning sessions or act as volunteers. Many achieve their desired role in industry. In some cases learners have secured prominent roles. Learners feel safe. Learners display safe working and learning practices in vocal, physical and technical sessions.

■ Outstanding practitioners lead inspiring sessions. Excellent tutor demonstration adds to the dynamic mix of learning activities. Inspiring handouts, reading lists and written resources support learning. Creative teaching and learning activities are developed well.

■ High standards are demanded. Learners display good critical reflection. Excellent opportunities are created for enrichment activities. However, in a few sessions, tutors provide solutions too quickly, limiting the potential for securing and extending learning.

■ Information and learning technology is used effectively to support learning, research and assessment. The faculty has developed well its processes for recording learners' achievements including the use of audio-visual and virtual tools. Very good tailored recording approaches are in use. However,

opportunities to develop innovation in the use of alternative media to accelerate and further illuminate the progress made by learners are missed.

■   The curriculum offer is extensive, with courses in a wide range of subjects such as world and culturally-diverse music, social dance genres and stand-up comedy. Sessions are offered in ensembles, master classes, workshops and in-house companies. Progression from beginner to professional level is very good. The curriculum meets employment, skills and personal and social needs of learners particularly well.

■   The excellent range of partnerships including orchestras, broadcasters, theatre and production companies, festivals, community and specialist organisations for example the Royal National Institute for the Blind, British Voice Association and the Cultural Olympic programme, enhance learning opportunities. The representation of culturally-diverse subjects, materials and artists is broad.

■   Assessment of learning is critically focused and provides a depth of useful feedback. City Lit offers outstanding support for all learners and for those with disabilities to achieve at comparable levels. Individuals are given support for audition preparation and in music, for example, learners with brain injury and other disabilities are offered adapted sessions.

■   Strong curriculum development results in new initiatives including specialist professional development and innovation in access. Tutors' ideas enhance the eclectic nature of the curriculum. Self-assessment is inclusive and actions are reviewed and monitored effectively.

■   Equality and diversity have a strong presence in the curriculum. Examples of work explored include Shakespeare in Jamaican Patois, text exploring Black issues and theatre on Arabic culture. Other courses examine gender, sexuality and age through performance work. An intrinsic sensitivity for inclusivity, a celebration of difference and a proactive advocacy promotes the principles of equality and diversity to learners and staff, particularly well.

■   Systems for observing teaching and learning are robust and drive improvement. Reports are rich with developmental feedback. Teacher training positively influences practitioners in classroom management, transforming delivery, adding structure and providing endorsement of their practice. Specialist subject training is excellent. Contact with learners is good and the area has a very high rate of return for the learner survey.

■   Resources are very good with appropriate spaces, a wide range of instruments and software and excellent written materials. However, accommodation struggles to deal with the demand on capacity of courses with music and drama, dance and speech. Learners feel some of the very large class sizes impacts on the quality of sessions.

What does City Lit need to do to improve further?

■   Improve the suitability of some accommodation for teaching, learning and rehearsals through further consideration of timetabling, class sizes and physical spaces and through external partnerships.

Visual arts Grade 1

Context

26. City Lit has 6,548 learners on 821 courses. The sessions are held throughout the day, twilight and evening and during the day at weekends. The levels of the courses are from beginners through to advanced. Non-accredited learning accounts for 81% of provision. The majority of learners are female. Two heads of faculty are supported by 152 part-time staff.

Key findings

- Success rates are outstanding at 91% and attendance good at 86%. Learners achieve a very high standard of creative work. They are encouraged to use sketchbooks and to continue their work at home. New learners progress quickly and gain excellent skills and techniques. Many learners take more than one course in this area to enhance their skills further.

- Learners develop excellent personal and social skills. They enjoy their sessions and gain confidence to speak about the progress they have made. Learners are able to challenge and support each other in peer critiques. Learners enjoy enrichment activities, visiting more unusual events organised by tutors, such as specialist collections of pottery.

- The promotion of safe learning practices is good with close attention at all stages of the programme to risks and hazards. Many learners work with powerful machinery and are very diligent in their working practices in the studio. All learners feel safe.

- Learners are able to make an outstanding contribution to the local community through activities such as exhibitions, sales of prints which helped to boost the Japanese tsunami fund, and sales of pottery twice a year which contribute to the student bursary.

- Teaching and learning are outstanding. The tutors are particularly well qualified and many are practising artists and specialists in their field. Tutors use challenging techniques, innovative use of technology and well executed demonstrations to inspire and extend the learners' knowledge. Learners work independently and develop and pursue areas of personal interest between sessions.

- Initial and ongoing assessment and recording of learner progress are good. Tutors design their own documents to record learner progress. In most cases this works very well. However, a few tutors do not yet fully appreciate the recording process and the link between the paper work, learning outcomes and how to use the process as a teaching and learning tool.

- Partnerships are good and support City Lit in the courses it develops. For example, the department is in discussion with a company who provide pop-up galleries in empty shops or spaces to extend exhibition opportunities. Some of these partnerships attract a diverse mix of learners through extensive marketing which is particularly beneficial.

■ The curriculum offer is extensive and outstanding in meeting the needs and interests of the learners. The courses on offer are wide and varied. Most sessions are of mixed ability. Learners have the opportunity to progress and 70% progress to higher level non-accredited courses and 62% progress on to accredited courses.

■ Support and guidance for learners are particularly effective. The team of tutors works very closely together. Learners access specialist tutors to develop their interests. The learners value the advice and guidance they receive from practitioners that makes a difference to their learning.

■ Leaders' and managers' communication is excellent. Managers work hard to bring about continuous improvement and the sharing of good practice takes place formally every month. Positive and decisive action on identified causes for concern is effective. Internal observation of lessons is particularly good and support for tutors is very good. Many access a wide range of training opportunities.

■ The celebration of equality and diversity in the curriculum is particularly good. References in lesson planning to the influences of other cultures in textiles, painting and sculpture are good. However, male participation is low on all courses. The department has yet to develop strategies to improve male participation rates.

■ All course subjects use excellent accommodation. The studios have up-to-date industrial-standard machinery and are large and well lit. City Lit acts swiftly to accommodate the growing demand of some courses and is at present extending facilities for textile courses. Quality improvement systems have maintained the high standard identified at the previous inspection and the self-assessment report is broadly accurate.

What does City Lit need to do to improve further?

■ Market the courses using targeted activities to increase male participation rates.

Humanities Grade 2

Context

27. Currently, 5,187 learners follow 433 courses for social, personal and professional development. The courses include creative writing, history and politics, literature, philosophy, journalism and study skills. Almost all of the provision is part-time and non-accredited. Most lessons take place at City Lit's main site. A full-time head of curriculum leads three curriculum coordinators, and they manage 120 part-time tutors.

Key findings

■ Success rates are very high in literature and related subjects and satisfactory or better in other subjects. Attendance was low during inspection week.

■ Learners make very good progress in lessons. They feel safe and secure, and develop valuable personal and social skills, such as increased self-confidence, better communication with a wide range of people, and a greater sense of well-being and personal fulfilment. Many learners develop their ability to present arguments in sharp analytical and critical ways.

■ Learners acquire excellent vocational and professional skills in specialist areas, and these help them in their chosen careers or increase their future employment prospects. Learners make very good progress in writing, journalism, public relations and marketing, using knowledge and skills from their learning.

■ Teaching and learning are good. Some lessons are outstanding. Teachers are enthusiastic and very knowledgeable, and they often have considerable recent commercial and industrial experience. They manage their lessons well and use a good variety of different methods to engage and motivate learners. Learners value the stimulation and support given to them by their teachers and peers in lessons.

■ In weaker lessons, the aims, objectives and structure of lessons are insufficiently clear and insufficient use of information and learning technology is made to enhance learning.

■ The range of provision is far reaching and reflects the needs of the local community particularly well. The extensive range of courses available over seven days, covering a large number of both specialist topics and more general areas of interest, is particularly good. Courses take place at different levels and many learners progress to higher level learning.

■ Partnerships are very productive. Learners gain very good experience from their contacts in the wider commercial world including the Public Relations Academy and the British Film Institute. A recent agreement with the London Borough of Camden to deliver journalism skills and informal links with museum services, adds value to learners' experiences.

■ Advice and guidance to new learners are good. Tutors are approachable and friendly and give learners effective individual support and encouragement.

Additional needs are identified well and the formation of a learning support plan gives learners access to support from specialist staff. Learners value the financial support they receive from City Lit, enabling them to complete their studies.

■ The operational management of a complex curriculum area is very effective. Managers set high standards and expectations which they communicate well to tutors. They are approachable and tutors feel that their managers support them well. Tutors have good access to professional development opportunities and they are encouraged to use them.

■ Managers use a variety of methods to improve the quality of provision well. They talk to tutors, listen to learners, review lesson observations and look at particular course data on attendance and other issues frequently. However, managers do not review and use headline humanities data routinely to set, monitor and measure targets for improvement for the whole curriculum area systematically.

■ The promotion of equality and diversity is excellent. Learners come from a very wide range of cultures and backgrounds and stimulate debate in lessons using their own experiences. Teachers develop excellent and diverse resources. Learners value an extension of the curriculum offer which includes subjects of developing interest such as Israel, Palestine, and Arab history.

■ Quality improvement is good. Self-assessment is largely accurate although few tutors participate. The observation of teaching and learning results in accurate judgements and helps tutors to improve their lessons. The promotion of safeguarding learners is good and understood by tutors and learners. Resources are of high quality. Managers and tutors are experienced.

What does City Lit need to do to improve further?

■ Review lesson plans to promote a clear structure, and enable learners to better understand the aims and objectives of lessons more clearly.

■ Extend the use of e-learning in lessons to stimulate different interests and engage learners in more ways of learning.

■ Review headline data more frequently and systematically to ensure that managers have a clear understanding of performance and can set targets for improvement more regularly to further improve success rates.

Languages   Grade 2

Context

28.   Currently 6,473 learners are accessing 877 language courses across four sites, including in employer premises. Courses are offered in 20 different languages at 7 levels during the day, evening and week-ends. The centre for deaf education offers 27 courses including British Sign Language (BSL) and lip-reading to 278 learners. There are two programme heads who manage the area, supported by six tutor coordinators, 10 tutors with coordinating responsibility and 113 part-time tutors.

Key findings

■   Success rates in languages are satisfactory and improving. Strategies are in place to improve this further. Success rates on courses in BSL and lip-reading are good. Learners enjoy their courses very much and respond well to very challenging activities in their classes. They display high levels of concentration and make good progress.

■   Learners improve their economic and social well-being considerably by attending the language classes. Many learners attending BSL and lip-reading classes progress into employment or develop their career opportunities. They increase their confidence and communication skills. They make friends and feel less isolated in their lives outside the classroom and are better able to make a positive contribution to society.

■   Courses are well planned by highly qualified and experienced tutors. Tutors use the target language very effectively. Learners have good opportunities to extend their vocabulary and develop their listening skills. At higher levels, learners negotiate very stimulating and topical learning courses. However, opportunities to engage in peer learning and assessment are limited.

■   The use of information and learning technology in most classes is satisfactory. Some tutors make effective use of video clips and internet links to stimulate discussion on song lyrics. Recent initiatives to encourage tutors to make better use of the virtual learning environment have been beneficial to learners. However, few tutors make use of some excellent uploaded materials.

■   Personalisation of learning in language lessons is insufficient. Initial assessment practice is variable, leading to insufficient identification of personal learning goals, which prevents the appropriate planning of learning. Group learning targets are often too general and the recording of outcomes is insufficiently clear. However, in BSL and lip-reading classes tutors very effectively record and monitor the progress and achievement of learners.

■   The range of provision is outstanding. Learners have access to a very wide range of languages at different levels and unique learning opportunities in classic and Celtic languages. The courses in BSL and lip-reading have a national reputation and provide specialist progression opportunities in those skills as well as vocational routes to careers in interpreting and rehabilitation work.

- Partnership arrangements are very good. City Lit works very closely with universities and major charities for the deaf on research courses to benefit the learners from linguistic backgrounds who attend the BSL and lip-reading courses. The languages department works very effectively with employers to provide courses and language clubs on their premises for the benefit of employees.

- Support for learners is good. Deaf learners receive very good personal support, care and advice on matters specifically related to their deafness. Learning is optimised through the provision of appropriate adaptations in the classroom. In language classes tutors know their learners well and pay close attention to their specific individual needs.

- Operational management and internal communication are highly effective. The recent departmental reorganisation in the centre for deaf education has much improved communication, team work and support for staff. All staff feel valued. Access to continuous professional development is excellent and the monitoring of attendance at such events is rigorous.

- The observation of teaching and learning process is particularly effective in monitoring and supporting new tutors or tutors who have an identified development need. However, insufficient strategies are in place to further improve the teaching skills of the many better tutors. Judgements are broadly accurate but action plans need to be more comprehensive.

- The promotion of equality and diversity is outstanding and well embedded in the curriculum. Tutors make good use of inclusive practices in the classroom. They acknowledge and promote language varieties and culture well in lessons.

- The self-assessment process is inclusive and the report is broadly accurate. Many of the strengths and areas for improvement identified in the self-assessment report agree with those made by inspectors.

What does City Lit need to do to improve further?

- Improve the success rates for languages by ensuring that all learning statements are fully completed and returned.

- Increase the personalisation of learning by using a more learner-focused initial assessment process and negotiation of course content at lower levels.

- Implement strategies to further develop the teaching and learning skills of better tutors by enabling them to explore a wider range of interactive teaching and learning techniques and to support all tutors to develop skills to make better use of information and learning technology in their classes.

English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) Grade 2

Context

29. Currently 139 learners are following accredited courses in ESOL and courses have attracted 222 enrolments since September 2010. Nine learners are on non-accredited courses. Lessons are held in two venues, on a five-hour-per-week basis over eighteen weeks. Most courses are externally accredited. A full-time Skills for Life development manager manages the ESOL team and is supported by two part-time coordinators and seven teachers.

Key findings

■ Success rates have significantly improved since the previous inspection and have reached satisfactory levels. Attendance has also improved significantly over three years, to a satisfactory level. However, attendance since April 2011 has been poor on some courses.

■ The standard of learners' work is good. Most learners have achieved a good level of fluency and accuracy, and have improved their understanding of language structures. They are very motivated and take pride in their work. Learners progress well through course levels, and enhance their work status and employability. Learners feel safe and highly value their very supportive teachers and friendly groups.

■ Learners increase in confidence and self-esteem. They work collaboratively and enjoy sharing experiences, learning strategies and cultural differences. They have become better communicators both at home and at work. Some use their new skills at work whilst others lead more independent lives and are more confident and effective when interacting with neighbours or in other everyday life situations.

■ Teaching and learning are good overall. Learners participate well and use their time very effectively. In the best lessons, learners benefit from well staged activities, timely feedback and extension activities for more able learners. In the less effective lessons, activities are too tutor led, preventing full learner interaction, and learners are not systematically encouraged to correct errors.

■ Learners on most courses benefit from a good range of e-learning activities and links for self study. The use of information and learning technology has significantly improved, resulting in innovative practices. For example, learners are encouraged to use electronic portfolios to produce book reviews at intermediate level. Other learners gain mentoring skills while developing very effective and sustainable mobile learning with netbooks, in a project that recently received a national award.

■ Individual learning plans are used effectively to record starting points and additional learning needs. However, reviews of progress are not always effective in target setting with learners. On some courses, target setting is weak.

- The range of learning opportunities is satisfactory, with clear progression routes within the ESOL courses and to other learning. Further development of the provision in the community is beginning to increase the range of learning options and enrichment opportunities.

- Partnership working is well established and has resulted in significant improvements in the quality of provision. For example, the peer review partnership has been very effective in identifying areas for improvement and addressing gaps in the provision. Internal partnerships have led to impressive development in the sharing of best practice, particularly in much improved initial assessment, records of achievement and use of available technology.

- Support for learners is excellent. Timely contacts with learners at risk of leaving so they remain fully engaged and catch up with missed work are particularly effective. Excellent use is made of adaptive equipment. Success rates for those who have received additional support are good.

- Managers have been extremely successful in bringing about improvement. Success rates have much improved over years. Very effective reviews and adjustments of assessment and screening tools and practices have resulted in better placement and fewer transfers. Developments in access to, and use of, information and learning technology have enhanced learning both in and outside the classroom.

- Clear communication of targets to staff and access to good opportunities to share best practice both within and out of the ESOL department are very effective. Support for staff is very good and staff have embraced change. The observation of teaching and learning is more robust, and very effectively addresses areas for improvement in the classroom.

- The self-assessment process is inclusive and the report accurately reflected most of the key inspection findings. Safeguarding for learners is well promoted and understood by staff and learners. The promotion of equality and diversity in the classroom is good.

What does City Lit need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all teaching and learning are good or better, by enhancing learner interaction, stretching more able learners and providing effective correction techniques.

- Improve progress reviews so they are more effective in target setting with learners on all courses and lead to the successful completion of courses.

- Continue to focus on developing the provision in the community and provide enrichment activities to widen and enhance learning opportunities.

Information about the inspection

30. Two of of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the City Lit's Deputy Principal, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's monitoring visit and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.

31. Inspectors used group, individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gather the views of learners. They looked at questionnaires learners and partners had completed on behalf of the City Lit. They also visited learning sessions, assessments or progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from courses in most of the subjects the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

City Lit

Learning types: 14-16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships. **Social and personal development:** all adult safeguarded provision

Grades **using the 4 point scale** 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	Social and personal development
Approximate number of enrolled learners Full-time learners Part-time learners	72 13,297	72 13,297
Overall effectiveness	1	1
Capacity to improve	1	
A. Outcomes for learners	2	2
A1. How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2	
A1.a) How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2	
A1.b) How well do learners progress?	2	
A2. How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	1	
A3. Do learners feel safe?	2	
A4. *Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?**	2	
A5. *How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?**	1	
B. Quality of provision	1	1
B1. How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2	
B2. How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	1	
B3. How well do partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	1	
B4. How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	1	
C. Leadership and management	1	1
C1. How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	1	
C2. *How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?**	1	
C3. How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2	
C4. How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	1	
C5. How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	1	
C6. How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	1	
C7. How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2	

*where applicable to the type of provision