

Knowsley Family and Community Education

Local authority

Inspection dates	11–15 January 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for learners	Good
Adult learning programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Learners make good progress from low starting points. They develop well the skills, confidence and knowledge essential for improving their life chances and their education or employment prospects.
- In 2013/14, the proportion of learners who completed their accredited qualifications successfully was high and most learners on courses at levels 1 and 2 in English and mathematics were successful.
- Tutors skilfully plan lessons with activities that involve learners fully and motivate them to produce a high standard of work.
- The council elected member with responsibility for the service's work has a very detailed knowledge of the provision and challenges senior managers well to make improvements.
- Senior leaders and managers have developed the provision well to match the local priorities in Knowsley.

It is not yet an outstanding provider

- On non-accredited courses tutors do not always record learners' personal learning targets and their achievements accurately, making it difficult for learners to assess their own progress.
- Managers do not systematically use information on learners' progression from non-accredited courses to other courses or employment, in order to further develop the provision.
- The quality system has not ensured robust methods of recording learners' personal targets and their progress against them on all non-accredited courses; consequently the data on successful completion of non-accredited courses are not always reliable.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Knowsley Family and Community Education (FACE) is Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council's adult learning service. Non-accredited courses account for three quarters of the provision. Accredited courses range from pre-entry to level 4, with most at pre-entry to level 1. FACE offers courses in over 40 venues in Halewood, Huyton, Kirkby, Prescot, Stockbridge and Whiston, which are the main suburban towns in Knowsley.
- The borough is ranked fifth in terms of the overall indicators of deprivation. The unemployment rate in Knowsley at 7.7% is higher than the national average. Around half of the working population who are claimants of out-of-work benefits suffer from mental and behavioural disorders. The skill levels of Knowsley's working age population are much lower than the all-England average and 15.3% have no qualifications. In 2015, the proportion of pupils achieving five A* to C grades at GCSE including English and mathematics was around 19 percentage points below the national average.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all tutors set and record clear, measurable and challenging targets for learners, and record their progress towards achieving them well, so that learners can gain a good knowledge of their progress and develop independent learning skills.
- Develop robust systems to collect and use the data and information about the progression of learners from non-accredited courses to further courses or employment, so that the provision can be further developed to meet learners' needs.
- Ensure the observation of teaching, learning and assessment process eradicates any weaknesses in the recording of learners' targets and their progress towards achieving them, especially on non-accredited courses, so that the information about learners' success on these courses is reliable.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Leaders and managers are highly committed to offering a wide range of courses to meet the diverse personal, social and employability needs of adult learners at risk of social and economic exclusion in Knowsley. The service makes a strong contribution to the strategic priorities of the local authority relating to the development of individuals and communities. Good collaborative working with the Adult Learning Partnership in Knowsley successfully minimises duplication of courses and ensures hard-to-reach individuals can access suitable provision.
- Managers use their wide-ranging links with employers and community groups together with good up-to-date labour market information well to plan the provision so that adult learners attend courses that develop their personal and employment prospects successfully. As a result of very effective planning, the very large majority of learners recruited are from communities which are disadvantaged.
- Managers have ensured learners receive good information, advice and guidance and are placed on suitable courses with good employment prospects. Learners continue to receive very helpful career advice that helps them to make informed choices about their course options, consequently, most learners are enrolled on the appropriate course and complete successfully.
- Managers are particularly successful in obtaining additional funding for, and responding to, the needs of the most vulnerable learners and those with specific needs, such as learners with mental health issues. Managers' strong working relationships with other council departments have enabled the service to make a very good contribution to improving the authority's employees' skills.
- Senior managers, managers and tutors have prioritised the development of learners' English and mathematics skills well. Almost half of the provision is in English and mathematics, and at a good range of levels, from entry level 1 to level 2. Most learners on these courses develop their skills in English and mathematics well.
- Leaders and managers use a very good range of information, including the views of learners and staff, in the self-assessment process – which is extremely rigorous and very thorough. Although the draft self-assessment report for 2014/15 is comprehensive and analytical the judgements are too generous. The improvement action plan is thorough, detailed and a good tool for further improvement.
- As at the last inspection, staff performance is very effectively monitored and improved and staff at all levels are set appropriate targets for improvement. Staff training is closely linked to the continuous improvement of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Managers use data well to monitor the effectiveness of the provision. However, the collection and analysis of destination data on non-accredited courses is not yet sufficiently established and used to improve the provision further. Managers have not ensured that on all non-accredited courses the success of learners is always robustly measured and recorded.
- The process for, and the outcomes of, observing teaching, learning and assessment are good. Very relevant subject-specific criteria are used by managers to evaluate lessons and all lessons are jointly observed. Managers give tutors a detailed and evaluative observation report that helps tutors improve their teaching practice. Managers have not identified that tutors' recording of learners' progress requires improvement and this has not been given sufficient priority.
- Leaders and managers have successfully developed a culture of fair treatment and respect for different views, backgrounds and experiences. Managers, tutors and learners mutually respect each other and they collectively create positive learning environments in which there is no tolerance of bullying, discrimination, unfair treatment and harassment. Tutors make very good arrangements for learners who need special adjustments or adaptive technology to enable them to complete their courses. Tutors have received effective training on democracy, individual liberty, the rule of law, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- **The governance of the provider**
 - An elected member of the council with responsibility for the service's provision has high expectations of the service and its managers. He has an in-depth understanding of the provision, and as a result he challenges and supports the senior managers well to develop provision best suited to the Knowsley population and to meet the council's priorities.
 - The elected member and senior managers monitor the performance of the provision regularly and in detail; for example, they monitor attendance and the number of learners who successfully complete their courses.

■ The arrangements for safeguarding are effective

- Arrangements for safeguarding are thorough and include appropriate checks on staff. Staff receive good information and training about how to keep learners safe and are vigilant about safeguarding issues.
- The designated safeguarding officer's contact details are systematically communicated to tutors and learners.
- Most staff are very well aware of their new responsibility to protect their learners from extremism and radicalisation and the majority have completed the relevant training courses. Managers are taking action to ensure all tutors complete their training about these issues as a matter of priority.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Tutors have high expectation of learners and a detailed knowledge of their starting points and barriers to learning. They use this information well to agree learning goals and targets with learners, and often motivate them to excel. However, not all tutors record learning targets in sufficient detail. Often the targets they record are too general and insufficiently challenging. Consequently, learners cannot monitor their own progress and develop good independent learning skills.
- Tutors plan sessions well to motivate learners, many of whom have had few positive experiences of earlier education. They plan to ensure all learners take part fully in a good range of learning activities that reflect their interests. For example, tutors arrange learners to work in groups to further develop their ability to work with different people and explain their points of views rationally. They set them individual tasks so that learners develop research and independent thinking skills.
- Tutors successfully challenge learners to link theory to practice, raising their awareness of how they can use principles to solve practical problems. For example, learners on creative craft courses use their knowledge of angles and basic geometry to design and make high-quality greeting cards.
- Tutors assess learners' progress effectively using a range of good techniques such as tests and presentations in lessons. Learners check each other's skills and understanding, and as a result develop their evaluative skills. For example, learners following dressmaking courses give each other helpful advice on how to add further detail such as bows and piping to garments. Learners on cake making courses evaluate the quality of each other's icing and finishing techniques. Tutors set, mark and return learners' work promptly, helping them to improve their learning. However, a minority of tutors do not provide sufficiently detailed written feedback for learners to refer to when doing similar work.
- Tutors pay good attention to learners' progress and the development of new skills, especially in English and mathematics. They integrate the development of these skills in their lessons well. For example, in painting lessons, learners are enthused when tutors help them to calculate mathematical ratios of oil paints and sand. However, not all tutors correct learners' mistakes in spelling and grammar.
- Tutors promote a strong culture of respect for individuals, their differences and backgrounds. They are particularly skilful in using opportunities in lessons to develop learners' awareness of fair treatment. They use learners' experiences well to promote discussions about valuing and taking account of people's different backgrounds and lifestyles. For example, in dressmaking lessons they discuss the fabric preference of other cultures such as Indian and Pakistani. They also further develop learners' understanding of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Tutors promote a good awareness of transgender issues for learners. However, lesbian, gay and bisexual characteristics are not discussed well enough.
- Tutors offer learners very effective support to help them overcome their barriers to learning. All learners on courses longer than a few hours receive a comprehensive assessment of their skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology, and are directed onto courses to develop these skills. Tutors skilfully and sensitively identify and discuss any other barriers which learners may have and support them well to stay on their courses and achieve.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

- Learners significantly enhance their personal skills which help them to improve their life chances, often from a very low base. They grow in confidence and self-esteem and therefore make better decisions about their employment options or supporting their families. For example, on family learning courses they learn how to help their children with their education. Learners are courteous, considerate and respectful of their peers and tutors. Attendance and punctuality are good.
- Learners improve their use of English and mathematics and become more confident to progress from non-accredited English and mathematics courses to other courses. However, the standard of their written work is not always high because not all tutors routinely correct their use of English.
- Learners with emotional and mental health difficulties benefit significantly from specially designed courses which increase their self-esteem and desire to attend courses regularly. Many join these courses to reduce their isolation as a route for recovery and improve their social and economic well-being.
- Learners respond positively to the high standards and expectations set by their tutors. They follow tutors' guidance and direction well, work productively and take pride in their achievements.
- Staff give learners good individual guidance about learning and routes to different qualifications. Learners attend taster sessions to help them make informed choices. Learners can also attend accredited courses, but after the first term can choose to continue on these courses or take a non-accredited route; most continue on accredited courses. However, tutors do not record clearly the advice and guidance they offer, or the taster courses learners try out to ensure their progression can be planned well.
- Learners have a good knowledge of how to stay safe; staff take learners' welfare and well-being very seriously. They discuss well with them health and safety matters and how to work safely online.

Outcomes for learners are good

- Learners make good progress from their often very low starting points. They enjoy their courses and achieve their learning objectives. However, on non-accredited courses not all tutors accurately record learners' personal targets, and the information about their achievements is not always reliable. Too often tutors fail to record the progress learners make. There are no significant performance gaps between different groups of learners.
- In 2013/14, the proportion of learners who completed their accredited courses was high. The very large majority of learners on level 1 and level 2 English and mathematics courses completed successfully. The small number of learners on GCSE English and mathematics courses were also successful. However, too many did not gain high grades at GCSE.
- The standard of most learners' practical work is exceptionally high; for example, on courses in cake making, floristry and card making. The large majority of learners on accredited courses progress to study on other courses, find paid or voluntary work or set up their own businesses.
- Based on a small sample of leavers from non-accredited courses, many progress to useful further study, including accredited courses or employment. However, the service's arrangement to collect and use this information requires improvement.

Provider details

Type of provider	Local authority
Age range of learners	16-18, 19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	2,963
Head of service	Angie O'Neil
Website address	www.knowsley.gov.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	5	1,126	3	276	2	45	n/a	29
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> N/A 							

Information about this inspection

Inspection team

Shahram Safavi, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ken Fisher	Ofsted Inspector
Stella Owen	Ofsted Inspector

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

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