

The Voluntary and Community Sector Learning and Skills Consortium

Not for profit organisation

Inspection dates

15–18 November 2016

Overall effectiveness		Requires improvement	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement	Adult learning programmes	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement	Apprenticeships	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good		
Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			Good

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Trustees and senior managers have not provided effective challenge to secure sufficiently rapid improvements in outcomes for apprentices.
- Trustees and senior managers have not improved the quality and effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment sufficiently since the last inspection, particularly target-setting and feedback to apprentices and learners.
- Assessors do not monitor apprentices' progress closely enough and therefore they do not make the progress to enable them to achieve their qualifications within planned timescales.
- Insufficient strategic oversight and challenge from senior managers did not identify problems with three providers early enough to remedy the issues that led to too many apprentices not achieving their qualifications.
- Managers do not make effective use of information on learners' progress and achievements when undertaking quality assurance activities and self-assessment.

The provider has the following strengths

- Trustees and managers plan the curriculum successfully to meet local and regional needs and get people into education and training.
- Excellent partnerships with local groups, the local authority and the local enterprise partnership enable trustees and senior managers to provide highly appropriate programmes for learners, many of whom have poor experience of education and few educational qualifications.
- Training for subcontractors is well planned. Tutors and assessors receive good training and support, and improve their practices.
- Good provision for adult learners that enables them to take part in further learning that improves their employment prospects and life chances.
- Learners and apprentices enjoy their courses and the feedback from learners over time consistently shows that they have benefited from participating in learning and training.

Full report

Information about the provider

- The Voluntary and Community Sector Learning and Skills Consortium trades as 'Enable' from shared premises in Nottingham. The organisation provides basic skills and employability for people living in the most deprived communities in the regions where it operates. All the provision is subcontracted.
- Since 2011 Enable has been funded to run apprenticeship programmes in addition to its core business of Community Learning programmes. Since 2013 it has provided workplace training for those without a level 2 qualification. All Enable's community learning provision is now non-accredited and aligned to the local enterprise partnership's priorities.
- The majority of learners are adults on short courses that develop learning, personal and social skills. Many of these courses do not lead to a formal qualification but lead to further training, learning or eventually employment. Approximately a third of learners are apprentices. A very small proportion of learners are 16- to 18-year-olds.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that trustees and senior managers are more challenging and decisive in seeing through actions to improve teaching, learning and assessment and apprentices' achievement of qualifications within planned timescales.
- Make sure that trustees and senior managers scrutinise information on the performance of subcontractors more rigorously so that they can identify issues early and take corrective action quickly.
- Support tutors and assessors to improve target-setting that will enable learners and apprentices to make good progress and achieve their qualifications.
- Make sure that managers of Enable and managers of subcontractors analyse and use information on learners' progress and achievements effectively to identify areas for improvement and improve the rigour and accuracy of quality improvement activities and self-assessment.
- Make sure that assessors plan the assessment timetables and assessment practices for apprentices more carefully and review their progress more closely so that apprentices make swifter progress in completing assignments.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Trustees and senior managers were unable to prevent the drop in the number of apprentices who did not achieve their qualifications within the planned timescales. However, they took action to help most of the learners gain their qualification at a later stage.
- Trustees and senior managers exercised insufficient strategic oversight and challenge and as a result did not identify problems with three providers who failed to support and monitor the progress of apprentices well enough. Consequently, a significant proportion of apprentices did not gain their qualifications.
- Managers have made sound progress in implementing most of the recommendations from the last inspection, such as recording more systematically learners' achievements and starting points. However, they have been less successful in making sure that learners receive clear and specific targets and carrying out improvements quickly through effective analysis of information about learners.
- The procedures to improve quality, including self-assessment, have not led to managers taking early and effective actions to support learners at risk of not completing their courses or more effective assessment and feedback to apprentices and learners. They do not make full use of the very positive and useful feedback they receive from learners.
- Managers' monitoring of all the subcontractors and partners is now comprehensive, thorough and well planned. They rigorously scrutinise the learning plans of all learners to ensure that they meet high standards of quality. However, these actions have not yet improved the progress that learners make.
- Managers conduct supportive and challenging observations of teaching, learning and assessment and identify good practices such as strategies to motivate unconfident learners. Their approach also challenges weaker practices and motivates tutors and assessors to improve.
- Managers help tutors and assessors to improve their teaching of English and mathematics by providing insightful and helpful training and individual support and coaching. They provide frequent, engaging and productive continuous professional development for tutors and assessors.
- Excellent partnerships with local organisations, voluntary groups, the local authority and job centres enable managers to develop appropriate courses for learners, many of whom have poor experiences of education and few educational qualifications.
- The range of the curriculum meets local priorities and the needs of local people effectively. For example, managers have developed suitable courses in health and care as well as short courses that help learners to overcome their apprehensions about learning, build their confidence and resolve to improve their skills to gain employment.
- Managers ensure that learners receive effective information, advice and guidance before they start their courses. However, the quality of advice and guidance when they leave their courses is variable, with a minority of adult learners not receiving clear advice on progression routes.

- Learners and apprentices feel safe and know where to go if they need help or support if they experience bullying or harassment. Managers make sure that staff receive training on their responsibilities of the 'Prevent' duty and that they promote understanding of fundamental British values. However, the extent to which learners and apprentices fully understand the risks of extremist behaviour varies greatly between subcontractors.
- Managers keenly promote the values of tolerance, respect for differences and equality of opportunity with the subcontractors and partners. They give excellent support to the initiatives to promote good understanding of diversity.
- Although senior managers monitor the progress of different groups of learners and apprentices, there is little evidence of challenge to subcontractors to improve the progress of apprentices and learners from groups who achieve less well than others.

The governance of the provider

- Trustees promote very positively and enthusiastically the ethos of Enable to provide opportunities for learning, education and training for those who have few or no qualifications and who have not been in education or employment.
- Trustees and senior managers ensured the stability of the organisation when they were confronted with severe financial challenges. They acted decisively, maintained the confidence of their subcontractors and their staff and have continued to provide a valuable service to learners who most need the opportunities for education and training.
- Trustees are aware of what managers and staff do well to achieve the aims of Enable but are less challenging and critical about aspects of weaker performance of apprentices.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding of learners, particularly vulnerable adults, is effective and the procedures are well considered, up to date and checked carefully. Staff receive training on current priorities that take account of the latest guidance. They understand how to keep vulnerable learners safe and the importance of ensuring that learners know how to protect themselves from the risks of grooming and radicalisation.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Assessors do not rigorously ensure that apprentices meet deadlines for handing in their work before commencing new assignments. Apprentices therefore have too much work to complete at the end of their courses, resulting in them not gaining their qualifications within the agreed timescales.
- Assessors and tutors do not pay sufficient attention to the different starting points of apprentices and learners when planning lessons. Following good assessment of learners starting points, activities planned by tutors do not distinguish well enough between the capabilities of the most able learners and those who are less confident. As a result, these learners do not make good progress within these lessons.
- Apprentices and learners do not have sufficiently detailed or measurable targets to help them assess progress towards personal goals or skills. This renders discussions on

individual goals with tutors and assessors less effective and consequently slows the progress that learners and apprentices make.

- Apprentices and learners with higher-level English and mathematics qualifications do not receive sufficient specific help to improve their knowledge and skills to a higher standard. Only a few of Enable's subcontractors offer discrete and planned sessions to support the explicit development of English and mathematics skills or knowledge.
- Tutors and assessors are well qualified and experienced and use their expertise well to engage the attention of learners and apprentices in lessons.
- Overwhelmingly, learners and apprentices enjoy their courses. The feedback from learners over time consistently shows that they have benefited from their participation, such as in their use of information learning technologies to support their learning.
- Tutors quickly assess and provide effective additional help and support for those who need it. For example, a group of learners, newly arrived in England, received timely help to improve their English and learn about how to get medical assistance for their long-term suffering. More-vulnerable learners and those who have not been in learning or training for a long time benefit particularly from secure and welcoming environments.
- In lessons, the majority of learners respond well to encouraging feedback from tutors and make progress in their personal development. They work well with one another, and benefit from, for example, sharing their experiences of lessons learned when volunteering or attending job interviews.
- Tutors and learners accurately assess the progress and achievements learners have made at the end of their courses and as a result the majority of adult learners receive constructive advice and guidance about their next steps.
- Learners feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe if confronted with extremist views or if their peers should appear to behave in ways that cause them concern. Tutors of adult learners integrate into their lessons, particularly through class discussions, the importance of fundamental British values such as tolerance and respect for differences.
- In lessons, assessors and tutors effectively promote understanding of equality and diversity. They also ensure that learners and apprentices are aware of health and safety.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Learners and apprentices enjoy and value their learning. They improve their confidence and develop good personal and social skills, especially improving their English and numeracy skills that enable them to deal more effectively with the challenges of daily life or their jobs.
- Most adult learners have few academic qualifications or poor experiences of formal education or significant barriers to learning. Taking part in the courses develops their knowledge of working environments and gets them into routines that greatly enhance their chances of undertaking further training or gaining employment.
- Apprentices take pride in their work and acquire good professional habits in their workplaces. They develop good technical and interpersonal skills and work to high professional standards appropriate to their job role.

- Apprentices and learners, although comfortable with mobile phone technology for personal and social use, improve their skills in using information technology to support their learning. For example, they acquire effective job search skills and improve their independent learning skills in finding out about career development opportunities or topics of work-related interest.
- Apprentices and learners exhibit high levels of maturity, a personal desire to improve themselves and a sense of responsibility. They demonstrate high levels of respect and consideration for others in the group. From the short time they spend together in classes, some learners use the relationships made to support each other outside lessons.
- Most apprentices have clear aspirations in terms of their next career steps. Adult learners receive effective advice and guidance from tutors that helps them consider their next steps.
- Attendance is generally good. However, in a minority of courses the attendance of a few adult learners is low. In these cases, tutors swiftly make contact and follow up the reasons by telephoning or sending a text message. For vulnerable learners this includes visiting them.
- Tutors emphasise the importance of being punctual and of routines, which is important for some learners who have not taken part in employment, education or training for a long time or others recovering from setbacks such as mental health illness.
- Learners and apprentices understand what is meant by equality of opportunity and positive attitudes towards diversity within modern British society. They use appropriate language when in class and understand how to adapt their behaviour and language to fit professional situations.
- Adult learners understand how to keep themselves safe and prevent themselves or others from being harmed by radicalisation. However, a few apprentices do not appear sufficiently knowledgeable about fundamental British values such as specific details about the value of democracy, the rule of law and tolerance.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- Not enough apprentices complete their qualifications within the planned timescales and they make slow progress. However, a very high proportion of adult learners gain their qualifications or certificates.
- The proportion of apprentices who achieve their qualifications successfully has not improved sufficiently in the last few years. The progress of apprentices is slow, largely due to ineffective setting and monitoring of targets.
- Although too many apprentices in the last two years have not completed their apprenticeship, a high proportion achieved their English and/or mathematics functional skills qualifications.
- Female apprentices achieve less well than males and younger apprentices aged 16 to 18 also achieve less well than adult apprentices aged 19+.
- Apprentices have clear progression plans for themselves that show their next steps and how they might achieve them. They increase their prospects for promotion or advance

their careers in the fields of health and care or customer services by improving their English and mathematics skills.

- The majority of adult learners complete their courses successfully; many gain a certificate or qualification that boosts their confidence. Many learners are from disadvantaged backgrounds; some have low educational attainment, some need the learning to help them recover from medical or mental health issues and some need to improve their English in order to take part more fully or function more effectively in modern British society.
- Many learners without any formal qualifications when they start their courses make good progress from low starting points. Their achievement of the certificates is good, reflecting how they enjoy and value these courses.
- Many learners on personal development courses move onto further learning; they acquire qualifications and helpful study habits enabling them to take part in further learning that improves their employment prospects. By developing their social and personal skills they improve their ability to make better progress in life or work.

Types of provision

Adult learning programmes

Good

- Nearly all the learners are adults on short courses. These are designed to develop the confidence and personal skills to enable learners to undertake further learning or training that will lead them into employment or training.
- The venues in the communities attract learners to take part in the courses. For example, the location for learners in an Asian women's class fits in with their domestic situations, and their participation in the classes improves their English and perspectives of life outside the home.
- Sympathetic and well-planned teaching by tutors, who use examples that learners relate to, make learners comfortable and motivated to learn. As a result they develop confidence, self-esteem and skills for use in work and personal situations, such as registering on government websites to check entitlements, job vacancies or projects that may be of interest to them.
- Tutors' use of relevant materials and topics in classes enlivens the lessons and engages learners well to take an active part. For example, they learn how to help children with their homework, how to fill in forms for banks and manage budgets and personal finance.
- Learners improve their speaking and listening skills through taking part in well-organised group work. They enjoy practising how to interact with government agencies or schools in situations based on real-life scenarios devised by tutors.
- Learners develop appropriate skills to prepare them for work as a result of working productively together. Well-planned activities enable learners to appreciate how to constructively assess and give feedback on each other's presentations or curricula vitae.
- Tutors pay good attention to ensuring that learners acquire good study skills that many learners need. For example, learners' use of dictionaries within lessons, routine checking

of their spelling and their improving use of information communication technology helps them to work with more assurance on their own.

- Learners receive good individual help from tutors within well-structured lessons. Tutors give helpful and constructive feedback and they help learners to proofread and edit their own written work.
- Well-planned practical activities in lessons make lessons relevant and useful. Tutors provide helpful guidance about how to deal with barriers that learners face in their learning or in what they want to do next. Their advice on managing stressful situations and time is particularly welcome for those learners whose circumstances are more challenging.
- Tutors do not pay sufficient attention to stretching the most capable learners and providing them with sufficiently challenging activities.
- Less-confident learners do not receive sufficiently motivating work and they make slow progress.

Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- At the time of the inspection 157 apprentices were in training, 73 intermediate apprentices and 84 advanced apprentices. Most follow programmes in business administration, customer service, health and social care and management.
- The principles of apprenticeships are well understood and the programmes meet these requirements. Apprenticeships are well designed to meet the needs of local employers and relationships with employers are strong and mutually supportive.
- Too many apprentices do not achieve their apprenticeship and many do not complete the qualification within the planned timescale. The progress of many apprentices is slow, although assessors meet apprentices frequently.
- Assessors do not identify slow progress at reviews with most apprentices and, where they do, they do not always highlight corrective actions to be taken. Many workplace supervisors do not have a clear understanding of their apprentices' progress and are not sufficiently involved in reviewing their progress.
- The majority of apprentices do not know their targets for completing assignments and consequently many do not meet them. Assessors do not set precise enough targets.
- Feedback by assessors to apprentices, although encouraging, does not provide sufficient detail and often it is not timely enough to enable apprentices to benefit from it. Assessors are reluctant to challenge those who are behind with work or who miss targets.
- Assessors and supervisors do not plan training for apprentices away from their place of work with enough attention to developing the technical skills they require in their workplaces. As a result, apprentices' acquisition of these skills is slow.
- Apprentices respond positively to the attention and time assessors give them. They benefit from the flexible approach of assessors to help them in their changing work patterns and when they meet challenging situations.
- The majority of apprentices have a well-thought progression plan for their next steps. For

example, undertaking their apprenticeships led to one business administration apprentice securing a place on an access to nursing course and one customer service apprentice completing a teacher training course in their spare time.

- Employers benefit from the positive impact of apprentices on their business; for example, apprentices develop new social media marketing strategies, make website improvements and introduce new payroll systems.
- Apprentices enjoy their programmes, learn professional behaviours and attitudes quickly and mature; they gain confidence as a result of undertaking their apprenticeship.
- The majority of apprentices develop English and mathematics skills well. They understand the importance of these subjects to their roles and gain their functional skills qualifications.
- Apprentices understand how to keep themselves and others safe in and out of the workplace and speak confidently about the broader aspects of the workplace; for example in discussing the diverse needs of service users in health and social care settings and understanding workplace safety in the security industry.
- The depth of apprentices' understanding of fundamental British values within the 'Prevent' duty varies between subcontractors. Although they receive information about risks of extremism, the need for tolerance and respect for law and differences, not enough apprentices are able to apply their understanding to their working environment.

Provider details

Unique reference number	10004788
Type of provider	Not for profit
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1,575
Principal/CEO	Mr DBE Hayes MBE
Telephone number	0115 7100 200
Website	www.enable.uk.net

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	32						10	
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	25	56	13	73				
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	0							
Funding received from:	Education Funding Agency/Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Riverside Training ■ Scintilla ■ Vernon Community College ■ AG&I ■ Let's Build ■ ESB ■ Nottinghamshire County Council ■ CLIP 							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the chief executive, as nominee. 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 learners 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.

Inspection team

Peter Green, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Martin Ward	Her Majesty's Inspector
Debra Gray	Ofsted Inspector
Jaswant Mann	Ofsted Inspector

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