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Mr Gerald Jones
Adult Learning Manager
Lewisham London Borough Council
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Dear Mr Jones

Short inspection of Lewisham London Borough Council

Following the short inspection on 11–12 October 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in February 2014.

This provider continues to be good.

Since your previous inspection, leaders and managers have worked effectively to ensure that learners continue to enjoy a good standard of training and education. Staff are strongly committed to maintaining the quality of the programmes. They ensure that the curriculum offered meets the diverse needs of individuals who are seeking to develop their skills to enhance their employment prospects or improve the quality of their life. Leaders and managers have created a culture whereby staff morale is high and staff turnover is very low.

The organisation has expanded since the previous inspection and now offers more accredited learning, while maintaining its breadth of community learning courses. Managers have successfully worked with a range of partners to support learners in achieving their aspirations. For example, learners make effective use of mental health services available through a link with a National Health Service trust to help them succeed on their course. Learners also benefit from links with local arts-based organisations in order to sell the products they have made on their courses. Leaders and managers work closely with other council services through a referral system, whereby learners undertake education and training to support their health needs and improve their employment prospects.

Leaders have developed a vision for the organisation, which is shared by all staff, learners and council leaders and focuses on encouraging individuals to learn and flourish. Staff are strongly committed to supporting learners in having clear aspirations of what they want to achieve and how their course will support this. Staff do this from the beginning of a learner's course. They recognise that for many learners their aspirations are greater than completing a single course, and work with learners to determine how the courses available help them to achieve their aspirations. They provide ongoing advice and support so that learners gain the training and education they need to progress successfully to the next stage of their careers.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders have maintained effective safeguarding policies and procedures since the previous inspection to help ensure the safety and well-being of learners. Learners feel safe in classrooms and in the various centres used for teaching. Council staff carry out appropriate pre-employment checks on new staff and visiting speakers.

In the event of any safeguarding concerns, staff provide suitable support to the learners and maintain accurate records of any issues. All staff have received training on the 'Prevent' duty since the previous inspection. Most learners are aware of the risks posed by extremism and radicalisation, and know how to keep themselves safe online. Staff have suitable strategies in place to help broaden learners' understanding of how to keep themselves safe, including their 'keeping everybody safe every day' campaign.

Inspection findings

- Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have maintained the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Leaders and managers have put in place a range of support for teachers, which has led to improvements in teachers' skills to the direct benefit of learners. For example, they have developed different approaches to teaching reading, so that learners can improve the way they extract information from text. Teachers use a range of carefully selected activities to help learners practise new skills. For example, in English lessons learners use speaking tasks to develop their pronunciation, while in dance lessons learners develop their technical skills in foot mobilisation and isolations, in preparation for a performance. Teachers use homework well to support learners to increase their confidence in using the newly learned skills.
- A small minority of learners do not make rapid enough progress. In a minority of cases, teachers do not sufficiently check learners' understanding of new ideas. Most-able learners are not set more challenging and complex work so that they can make the progress of which they are capable. A small number of teachers lack confidence in using the online learning platforms and information technology resources to support learning.
- In 2016/17, the majority of learners successfully achieved their qualifications. The proportion of learners achieving on entry level and level 1 courses, including in English and mathematics, has increased. However, there has been a slight

decline in the proportion of learners achieving level 2 qualifications. The proportion of learners achieving high grades in GCSE English has increased. This is not the case in mathematics, which saw a decline in 2016/17.

- The achievement gaps seen at the last inspection have reduced between male and female learners, and now both groups achieve equally well. Likewise, there have been improvements in the differences in achievement of learners who have identified themselves as having a learning difficulty and/or disability and those who have not. The achievement of these two groups is now broadly the same. However, further work is needed to improve the achievement of individuals from different ethnic groups. For example, learners from a Bangladeshi background do not achieve very well. In textiles and family learning, staff have started to reduce the gap in achievement of different ethnic groups, but this has not been so successful in English, information and communication technology, and languages.
- Since the previous inspection, staff have adopted an approach to target setting that is now consistent for most learners. This helps learners to have a greater insight into the progress they are making. Most teachers use the results of information gained at the start of the course to help learners to set realistic targets, and they plan learning that meets the needs of learners. However, a small minority of learners are not making the progress of which they are capable, because teachers are not planning lessons to respond to the range of learners' abilities, and targets set lack detail and information for learners on how they can improve.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and governors should ensure that:

- staff continue to improve the impact and effectiveness of target setting and monitoring to ensure that targets are relevant and achievable
- teachers make better use of the information they obtain on learners' starting points when planning teaching and learning activities, so that all learners make the progress of which they are capable
- staff improve the proportion of learners who achieve qualifications at level 2, including mathematics
- staff continue to reduce the gap in achievement between different ethnic groups of learners.

I am copying this letter to the Education and Skills Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Steve Lambert
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Ofsted Inspectors visited the provider for two days. The curriculum learning manager, as nominee, assisted inspectors. Inspectors met with the service manager and a number of key senior leaders and managers, as well as with a number of tutors and trainers/assessors. Inspectors visited several centres in south-east London and met with learners. Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment, and reviewed learners' written work and lesson planning documentation. They reviewed important policies and documents, including those related to self-assessment, quality improvement, performance management and safeguarding. They also considered the views of learners and employers.