

Inspection of Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College

Inspection dates: 17 to 20 January 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education	Requires improvement
Behaviour and attitudes	Requires improvement
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Education programmes for young people	Requires improvement
Adult learning programmes	Requires improvement
Apprenticeships	Requires improvement
Provision for learners with high needs	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Information about this provider

Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College is a large, general further education college with four main sites at Ealing, Hammersmith, Park Royal and Southall. It recruits learners from across west London and neighbouring boroughs.

Courses are offered in most subject sector areas with the vast majority of learners studying from entry level through to level 2. There are 4,200 learners on adult learning programmes, mostly attending the college part time on programmes, such as English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and access to higher education. There are 1,700 learners on education programmes for young people. These learners are mostly studying vocational full-time courses from levels 1 to 3. There are 207 apprentices studying a range of apprenticeship standards from levels 1 to 5 in areas, such as electrical installation, plumbing, management and human resources. There are 285 learners in receipt of high needs funding.

What is it like to be a learner with this provider?

The quality of education that learners receive on education programmes for young people is too variable across courses. Learners are not following a sufficiently challenging curriculum and tutors' expectations are often too low, meaning that they do not encourage learners to aim beyond the minimum requirements to pass the qualification. Too often, learners on education programmes for young people have their learning disrupted due to lesson cancellations, as a result of staff absence or shortages.

Across adult learning programmes, too many learners do not receive good enough teaching. Consequently, in too many programme areas, including ESOL, access to higher education in science and accountancy, a low proportion of learners achieve their planned learning aims.

The quality of education provided to apprentices varies too much. For example, in areas such as electrical and carpentry, the quality of training is not of a consistently high enough standard. In carpentry, apprentices produce work of a professional standard, but tutors do not coach them well in developing professional behaviours and standards towards maintaining their workspaces. However, in areas such as business, human resources and project management, apprentices have a positive experience.

Learners who have high needs benefit from an ambitious curriculum that meets the requirements of a wide range of learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Learners develop greater independence in their everyday lives and become prepared for adulthood. Where appropriate, learners successfully move on to further education, employment or training.

Learners and apprentices appreciate that tutors go out of their way to help and support them if they have concerns. For example, tutors offer extra help and guidance, going above and beyond learners' expectations. Tutors refer learners and apprentices to specialist advisers if they require support with their well-being. As a result, learners feel confident to turn to staff for help when they need it.

Most learners and apprentices do not benefit from opportunities to develop their wider talents and interests beyond what they are studying in their subjects. Despite there being a wide range of enrichment activities on offer, very few learners are aware of these sessions or activities, or they are not able to attend them due to timetable restrictions.

Learners feel safe and they benefit through learning in an inclusive environment. They are aware of the values expected of them, and staff are good role models. Learners report that they do not hear discriminatory language at college.

Contribution to meeting skills needs

The college makes a reasonable contribution to meeting skills needs.

Leaders engage positively with a broad range of stakeholders to understand local skills needs. These include employer representative bodies, local authorities, funding councils and sub-regional partners. Consequently, leaders and governors have a thorough understanding of the skills needs in the west London area.

Leaders do not involve external partners sufficiently well in the planning and teaching of the curriculum. For example, in most areas, including information communications technology and business, leaders and teachers do not yet have any direct contact with employers to work on curriculum planning or delivery. As a result, in these areas, learners do not learn the most up-to-date skills needed for industry.

Leaders have made significant progress in driving forward the green skills agenda in the local area. For example, they lead on the mayor's construction and green skills hub, host several employer groups and hold influential positions on cross-party working groups. As a result, leaders have sound plans to develop a curriculum that equips learners with the current and emerging skills they need to work in this key growth sector.

Leaders play a key role in leading pan-regional activities. For example, they successfully take the lead on joint funding bids, such as the Strategic Development Fund, and are part of the development of the local skills improvement plan. Consequently, leaders work well with stakeholders to ensure the curriculum aligns well to local skills needs.

Leaders have developed collaborative relationships with other further education providers in the region. This enables them to have a clear understanding of each institution's areas of expertise and specialisms. As a result, leaders avoid unnecessary curriculum duplication, which leads to a broader curriculum offer for learners in the area.

Leaders understand well the needs of the local communities that the college serves. They deliver targeted provision to support disadvantaged learners. For example, leaders provide learning opportunities for refugees, recruiting individuals from local hotels to teach them English. They also work with the local council to develop a programme to equip learners with the skills needed to work in general practitioners' surgeries. Leaders focus closely on developing the skills of individuals who are furthest away from learning and work.

What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?

Since the previous inspection in 2017, college leaders and managers have had to manage challenging situations regarding the college's financial position. This has had an impact, in the intervening years, on the ability of governors and leaders to maintain the quality of education, which subsequently declined.

Governors and leaders have a very realistic understanding of the quality of learners' experiences, and evaluate this honestly and self-critically in their self-assessment report. They have an ambitious vision to improve the quality of the provision and have a well-set-out plan to do this. Leaders monitor improvements closely and report their progress to governors. Many of the actions leaders and managers have taken are newly implemented and are not yet having a considerable beneficial impact on learners and apprentices. As a result, the quality of education across the college requires improvement. For example, leaders identify that learners on level 3 courses need more support and preparation to succeed in examinations. While most teachers are improving how they help learners to revise and prepare for examinations, level 3 achievement rates remain very low.

The board of Governors includes members who have the appropriate mix of skills, knowledge and experience they need to challenge leaders effectively. Governors receive accurate and detailed information from leaders to inform their oversight. As a result, governors provide leaders with robust challenge and support to ensure improvement. For example, they have challenged leaders to strengthen the support offered to underperforming teachers and, as a result, leaders have recruited teaching and learning managers to provide more focused coaching to improve teachers' teaching skills.

On most courses across the provision types, teachers have put in place a well-planned and appropriately sequenced curriculum. For example, in adult hairdressing, teachers sequence learning well, so that learners first gain confidence in the foundation skills of washing and blow-drying hair before progressing to more challenging activities, such as styling and finishing, culminating in bridal hair styling. On bricklaying apprenticeships, teachers start by teaching apprentices about the fundamental principles of bricklaying, such as how to gauge, level, and plumb, before moving on to more complex tasks, such as producing decorative arches.

Across the different provision types, too few teachers and tutors provide constructive feedback to learners on their work and in formal reviews of their progress. Consequently, too few learners know the steps they need to take in order to improve the standard of their work.

On education programmes for young people, teachers do not always check learners' knowledge and understanding well enough in lessons. For example, in GCSE mathematics, teachers model the translation of shapes on a white board. However,

they do not check whether learners understand the topic securely before moving on. As a result, teachers do not have sufficient awareness of learners' understanding, and the areas with which they may need extra help.

Leaders provide staff with a wide range of professional development opportunities. These are particularly effective for underperforming staff. However, leaders do not provide teachers with enough training on the strategies that they can use to help learners to remember more of what they learn.

Staff encourage learners and apprentices to adopt behaviours expected in the workplace. As a result, learners and apprentices enjoy learning in a positive and respectful environment. Learners are motivated to succeed.

In provision for learners with high needs, teachers ensure that for those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, there is a clear focus on developing learners' communication through adaptive technology or pictorial communication aids. Teachers focus very well on developing learners' social and employability skills. As a result, many learners make good progress and achieve their targets.

Leaders do not ensure that apprentices receive sufficient high-quality reviews of their progress with their employer present. As a result, too many apprentices and their employers do not know how apprentices can improve their performance. For example, there have been very few reviews over the last year in electrical installation or brickwork apprenticeships.

Teachers and tutors provide useful information about healthy relationships to learners on education programmes for young people. However, teachers and tutors do not recap this topic enough. As a result, learners struggle to recall what they have been taught. For example, while learners at Hammersmith and Fulham college remember attending sessions on sexual abuse and sexual health at induction, they cannot remember the content from these sessions.

Leaders have put in place effective subcontracting arrangements. They effectively review how subcontractors perform. Leaders use subcontracting where it strengthens the curriculum offer at the college. For example, one subcontractor works effectively with ex-offenders and other hard-to-reach communities, providing level 1 training in construction skills. Learners on this programme also gain a construction skills certification scheme card and complete employability training. As a result, learners studying at subcontractors achieve well and go on to gain employment in their specific industries.

Leaders ensure that learners gain meaningful work experience, which helps to develop further their employability skills. For example, learners on ESOL programmes benefit from a comprehensive range of work experience opportunities through which they gain skills that prepare them for jobs. Learners on entry level 3 courses attend a number of placements, including retail, business administration, hairdressing and catering. As a result, these learners gain valuable skills, which will support their entry into the world of work.

Too many learners, including those with high needs, do not receive high-quality or impartial careers advice and guidance, so that they understand the full range of options available to them at the end of their courses. For example, level 2 business learners receive advice about progressing to level 3, without learning about wider external options, including apprenticeships. The college offers a careers service, but too few learners know how to access this, and the advice is not always specific enough to meet learners' needs. As a result, learners are not clear about what they need to do to make a positive next step. However, the quality of advice and guidance for apprentices is more positive. For example, apprentices on level 4 and 5 programmes understand the options they can take at the end of their courses to extend their learning further.

Teachers and tutors teach fundamental British values effectively during lessons and tutorials. As a result, the majority of learners and apprentices develop a sound understanding of topics, such as tolerance, respect, law and democracy. For example, ESOL tutors engage with an external organisation to support learners who have little knowledge of civic life in the United Kingdom, to develop their knowledge of citizenship. They also encourage learners to become more active in local politics. As a result, learners know how to become active citizens in the communities in which they live.

Leaders do not set high enough expectations about learners' attendance at lessons, and leaders' monitoring of attendance is insufficient. As a result, in most areas of the college, attendance is too low. Consequently, too many learners and apprentices are not developing this essential skill for employment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and the designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) have a very accurate understanding of the specific risks that learners may face across the four campuses of the college. As a result, they take very effective steps to minimise these risks. For example, at one campus, leaders work well with external agencies, including community police officers and charities, to minimise the risks of learners joining active gangs in the locality.

Leaders and link governors have developed a culture of safeguarding across the college. They ensure staff receive safeguarding and 'Prevent' training appropriate to their roles. DSLs have a very good awareness of their responsibilities. They put in place effective and timely actions where concerns are raised.

Teachers and tutors provide learners with information about how to keep themselves safe through the induction and tutorial programmes. However, for the majority of learners, this information is not revisited enough. Consequently, learners cannot always recall what they have been taught in these sessions. For example, learners

have attended talks about radicalisation and extremism. However, their understanding of this area is cursory.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders must improve the quality of education across the provision. They must ensure that all programmes are sufficiently challenging for learners and that the quality of teaching and assessment is improved, so that a greater proportion of learners and apprentices stay on their programmes and go on to make good progress.
- Leaders must ensure that there is a more rigorous focus on improving learners' attendance, so that a higher proportion of learners develop this vital skill for employment.
- Leaders must ensure that learners and apprentices receive high-quality feedback on work and in progress reviews that helps them to know how to improve their work.
- Leaders need to expand the personal development curriculum, so that learners develop their wider knowledge, talents and interests. Within this, leaders should ensure that learners remember what they have been taught about the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Learners should be fully informed about the opportunities available to them at the end of their programme.
- Leaders need to ensure that on education programmes for young people, they have sufficient staff to teach the courses, and suitable contingency plans in place where staff are absent, so that lessons are not disrupted and learners have a more consistent and stable learning experience, so that they can make good progress.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130408
Address	Gliddon Road Barons Court London W14 9BL
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Website	www.wlc.ac.uk
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Karen Redhead
Provider type	General further education college
Date of previous inspection	7 to 10 March 2017
Main subcontractors	Learning Curve Group Limited Bounce Back Voncap Integer BPP The Rhythm Studio

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the deputy principal, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including visiting learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

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