

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mr Stephen Jeffery
Chief Executive Officer
London Learning Consortium
Christopher Wren Yard
119 High Street
Croydon
CR0 1QG

Dear Mr Jeffery

Short inspection of London Learning Consortium (LLC)

Following the short inspection on 31 October and 1 November 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 November 2014.

This provider continues to be good.

Managers have maintained the strengths of provision and tackled key areas for improvement since the previous inspection. Learners, the large majority of whom study on adult learning programmes, achieve well. Many go on to further learning and employment.

Managers continue to implement effective performance management measures that support the progress of learners well. Managers ensure that, through thorough monitoring and evaluation of the provision, they identify areas of poor performance in a timely way and act swiftly to make improvements. For example, managers have changed how they organise courses that train those seeking posts as teaching assistants. This has led to a marked improvement in the outcomes that learners achieve.

In 2016, managers successfully introduced new traineeship programmes. Outcomes for learners over the first year were encouraging, with around three quarters of learners successfully completing the programme and a high proportion progressing into employment. Through careful selection of subcontractors, managers ensure that traineeships align well with local employment opportunities. For example, traineeships offering work experience placements at a local international airport prepare learners well for jobs in airline ticketing and administration.

Senior leaders and managers demonstrate a high degree of integrity in their work. They are committed to continuously improving the provision and supporting

learners to succeed. Subcontracted partners share the high standards and ambitions that senior leaders have for learners. Leaders and managers are successful in achieving their vision of reaching disadvantaged learners and improving these learners' prosperity through learning. As a result of successful collaboration with a wide range of like-minded partners, approximately nine out of 10 learners come from disadvantaged communities.

Learners who spoke to inspectors and completed Ofsted's online survey said that tutors and staff provided them with the support they need to make progress, particularly when they needed extra help with their studies. Overwhelmingly, learners said that they would recommend learning with the London Learning Consortium to their friends.

There remain a few areas that managers are working hard to improve. Management action has led to improvements in how well tutors help learners to develop their English and mathematics skills, but practice in this area is not yet good enough. Managers' strategies to arrest the decline in outcomes for those on apprenticeship programmes have been successful, but further improvement is still required.

Safeguarding is effective.

Managers and subcontractors place a high priority on safeguarding learners. They make good information available to learners at the start of courses and ensure that centres, classrooms and work areas are safe places to learn. As a result, learners feel safe and know who to turn to should they have concerns about their own or others' welfare. When staff need to take immediate action to protect the welfare of learners, they do so quickly and effectively.

Managers complete detailed checks when selecting new staff to make sure that they are suitable to work with their learners. Exemplary records of pre-employment checks on staff, their training and qualifications are kept on the single central record.

Through training, managers are steadily building the confidence of staff so that British values become an integral part of teaching, learning and assessment. Many staff are working effectively to raise the awareness of learners of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. They encourage learners to discuss British values and respect the views of others who have different views to themselves. However, not enough tutors are fully confident in supporting learners to deepen their understanding of British values.

Inspection findings

- The board of directors provides effective oversight of performance and ensures that senior managers are accountable. Managers provide directors with regular, detailed reports on performance that help directors both challenge senior staff to make improvements and support them in doing so.
- Directors have a broad range of skills and experience. They have a very good

knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the provision and work very well with senior managers to make improvements. For example, the board supported senior staff well in developing strategies to manage an underperforming subcontractor.

- The management of subcontractors is good. Managers complete thorough due diligence checks on new subcontractors to ensure that they have the capacity to meet the high standards of performance that the London Learning Consortium expects.
- Using a good range of information and data and through direct contact with learners, managers undertake regular reviews of the performance of all aspects of subcontracted provision. This enables managers to identify declining performance quickly and understand the reasons why. Managers work productively with subcontractors to make the improvements needed. Subcontractors value the expertise and experience that managers offer.
- Based on last year's performance, managers rightly assess the apprenticeship programme as requiring improvement. The number of apprentices is small and so, as a result of poor performance at one subcontractor, the overall qualification achievement rate for apprentices declined and was low. The board of directors and senior managers acted appropriately and ceased to fund this provider.
- Managers track the progress of apprentices effectively through a comprehensive monitoring system. Those learners currently studying for an apprenticeship are making at least the progress expected of them and very few are beyond their planned dates for completing their apprenticeship.
- A minority of subcontractors do not use all of the data available to them to monitor performance. As a result, they do not fully understand the reasons for the current underachievement of particular groups of apprentices, such as White British males.
- Managers have an accurate view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the provision. Managers' judgements are insightful and place good emphasis on the impact of teaching on the progress of learners.
- Reports on observations of teaching, learning and assessment are thorough and evaluative. Observers are candid in their assessments and have a good understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement across the organisation.
- Based on the training needs of tutors, managers offer a wide range of training for staff. These sessions are well attended. Tutors and assessors value the opportunity to develop their professional practice.
- Action by managers has led to improvements in how well tutors set learners specific targets. As a result, learners achieve their goals and know what they need to do to make better progress.
- Staff at subcontractors benefit from attending workshops which the consortium offers to help them improve how well they observe teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, subcontractors have an accurate view of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in their own provision.

- Managers have developed a range of strategies to improve the effectiveness of teaching, learning and assessment in English and mathematics. Assessment at the start of learners' programmes is now thorough and a detailed analysis of learners' skills helps ensure that they are placed on the right course at the right level in their subject area.
- Training for tutors to develop their skills in improving learners' English and mathematics is enhancing their confidence and skills. However, not enough tutors place sufficient emphasis on planning the development of English and mathematics or consistently develop learners' literacy and numeracy skills in their lessons.
- Managers have developed a wide range of partnerships that enrich the curriculum on offer to learners and ensure that it reflects local and national employment opportunities. Managers use local intelligence well to plan courses that fill gaps in skills needed for employment. For example, they have responded well to partners' identification of the need for childminding courses, business administration programmes and neighbourhood-based courses in English for speakers of other languages.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they support apprenticeship subcontractors to understand and use data better to develop strategies to improve outcomes for any groups of learners who are underperforming
- tutors place greater emphasis on planning the development of learners' English and mathematics skills in lessons.

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

Yours sincerely

Jon Bowman
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, the director of operations, as nominee, assisted one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three Ofsted Inspectors. We met with you, senior leaders, managers, tutors and learners. We carried out lesson observations and took account of the most recent self-assessment report and development plans and the previous inspection report. We used group and individual interviews and telephone calls to gather the views of learners and staff. We scrutinised data and information on the

performance of the consortium and reviewed schemes of work, lesson plans, key policy documents and records of safeguarding concerns.