

Inspection of Newham College of Further Education

Inspection dates: 4 to 7 October 2022

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

Information about this provider

Newham College is a general further education college located within east London. Courses run from two main sites in East Ham and Stratford. The college runs the London City Institute of Technology in conjunction with the Queen Mary University of London, next to the Royal Docks Enterprise Zone. The college also runs four community venues in conjunction with Newham local authority's adult learning services. These operate across the borough in Beckton Globe, Forest Gate, Little Ilford, and West Ham.

The college has learners of all ages and teaches a broad range of courses from entry level up to level 4. The largest subject area in the college is English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). Other large subject areas include health and social care, engineering and construction, and science and mathematics. Learners come from across East London but predominantly from the borough of Newham.

At the time of the inspection, there were 1,680 learners on study programmes, 4,209 learners on adult learning programmes, 145 learners on discrete courses for

learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and 139 learners on apprenticeships. Fifty-three learners were in receipt of high needs funding.

Newham College subcontracts its sports study programme provision to Academy 1 Sports Ltd.

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

Learners benefit from a friendly and inclusive place in which to study. They greatly appreciate the college's diverse and welcoming environment. Learners demonstrate high levels of respectful behaviour towards each other. Learners enjoy their studies.

Leaders and staff set learners and apprentices clear expectations for standards of behaviour, attendance, and punctuality. For example, on study programmes in sports, learners sign a code of conduct that sets out the ground rules for behaviour in the classroom. On courses for learners with high needs, teachers explain and reinforce frequently to learners the boundaries for acceptable behaviours. Learners self-regulate their behaviour appropriately when they begin to feel anxious in crowded spaces. As a result, learners show good levels of motivation to learn in calm, orderly classrooms.

In most cases learners and apprentices attend their lessons regularly and are punctual. Apprentices arrive promptly, well-prepared to learn, and take part enthusiastically in lessons. In a very small minority of tutorial lessons, learners' attendance is poor, and a few learners are late.

Learners have very positive attitudes to learning. For example, learners with high needs enjoy lessons and keenly complete the work that teachers set. Learners gain the skills they need to join in community activities, voluntary work, and employment.

Learners develop their confidence while studying at the college. Learners on ESOL study programmes who are new to the country make good progress in their knowledge of English language. They find lessons inspiring and exciting. Teachers prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

Learners appreciate greatly the upgraded, good-quality resources and facilities around the college. For example, in the newly refurbished information technology suites, learners gain industry-standard skills and knowledge in cybersecurity and games design.

Learners spoken to overwhelmingly say the college is a space in which they feel safe, comfortable, and relaxed. They value greatly the well-established security guards and the visible staff presence around the college.

Learners have a good understanding of who to go to if they have a concern. Female learners particularly know about the wide range of help available if they had concerns that they or their friends were at risk of experiencing sexual harm. They have confidence that leaders take issues raised seriously and deal with them quickly.

Contribution to meeting skills needs

The college makes a strong contribution to meeting skills needs.

Leaders have carefully evaluated the curriculum they offer. They have focused their future strategic plans around four key areas of skills. These are in health services, digital skills, engineering, and construction. They align exceptionally well with the skills needs in the local and regional community.

Leaders have thoughtfully redesigned the content of the large amount of ESOL programmes they teach. Teachers ensure that learners develop the English skills they need for work. For example, teachers plan business administration courses to teach learners the specific medical terminology they need for clerical roles in health care settings.

Leaders play a prominent role as members of local and regional skills forums. Consequently, they gain an excellent understanding of the skills needs in Newham and further afield. They work very effectively with the Greater London Authority (GLA). As a result, leaders are at the forefront of playing a significant part in shaping and planning the skills priorities in east London. For example, leaders contribute to GLA-defined skills objectives by running employment-related short-skills courses, in green, digital, and healthcare industries.

On the majority of programmes, leaders work very closely with employers to plan the curriculum. Consequently, courses prepare learners effectively to progress into employment and apprenticeships. For example, medical clinicians provide expert advice on the content of the curriculum to ensure learners can gain health care assistant roles.

Governors have a very strong awareness of local skills needs. They invite key stakeholders such as the employer representative body, BusinessLDN, to contribute to the college's strategic curriculum planning events.

Leaders form highly collaborative relationships with local further education providers. They agree jointly sensible plans to offer courses that broaden rather than duplicate the curriculum across Newham. As a result, local learners have a rich choice of courses to study in the area.

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

Senior leaders have a clear rationale for the courses they offer. They have put in place well-planned and appropriately sequenced curriculums, including for learners with SEND. For example, leaders have planned a wide range of courses for adults in ESOL. Learners develop knowledge of English language at different levels first, before moving on to vocationally related ESOL courses. On courses for learners with high needs leaders have planned a range of appropriate new courses for school leavers. For example, learners can join short vocational courses, courses that prepare them for adult life, and supported internships. Learners with high needs learn successfully how to live independently. Leaders have high ambitions for all learners to succeed in their chosen career paths. A high proportion of learners gain

valuable skills, knowledge, and behaviours, and progress effectively on to further study or into employment.

Teachers plan the content of courses in a logical order. On access courses in nursing, learners spend the first few weeks practising study skills such as notetaking and referencing. This prepares them well for writing their first assignments. On study programme digital courses, learners gain knowledge in communicating with customers before using these in work experience placements. Teachers teach learners the key topics necessary to support their ambitions to work in cybersecurity and e-sports jobs.

Leaders have recruited teachers who are well qualified and have suitable experience in vocational subjects. For example, on fashion courses teachers have previously held highly relevant roles in the fashion industry. On courses for learners with SEND, a few teachers and support staff have specialist qualifications for working with learners with specific conditions and disabilities. For example, teachers hold qualifications in British sign language, and for supporting learners with dyslexia.

Most teachers use their skills highly effectively to teach learners new knowledge and skills. In apprenticeships, trainers use diagrams and questions and answers to support apprentices struggling with understanding complex tasks such as fault-finding activities. On ESOL courses, teachers skilfully repeat pronunciations when using learning resources such as analysing job advertisements. Learners gain confidence in speaking and can recall key vocabulary. On study programmes in sport, learners remember what they have learned about the cardiovascular system. They competently explain the function of white blood cells. Learners acquire new knowledge about the anatomy of the body. On most programmes learners stay on the course and make good progress in their studies.

Teachers' use of assessment information to plan future learning varies between courses. On ESOL study programmes, teachers test learners' starting points to ensure that learners are on the correct level of course. Teachers frequently check learning and correct misconceptions. Consequently, they help learners on ESOL courses set achievable learning goals. On other study programmes, teachers lack information about learners' prior knowledge. As a result, they do not have a clear understanding of what learners already know and can do. They do not always know if learners need extra support in lessons. On courses for learners with SEND, teachers prepare detailed profiles for each learner. They set clear and specific learning goals based on learners' education, health and care plans. However, for learners with high needs on vocational courses, this is not the case. Learners, therefore, do not know the steps they need to take to achieve their learning targets.

Teachers provide learners with helpful feedback on their work. On access courses and apprenticeships teachers give learners clear suggestions of what they need to do to correct mistakes to improve their grades. As a result, the majority of learners on healthcare access courses achieve the grades they need for their university courses.

Too many apprentices do not receive regular and frequent enough reviews of their progress. Leaders and managers have not planned to teach apprentices knowledge of English and mathematics early enough in the programme. Consequently, a small proportion of apprentices do not take their final assessments, and do not complete the course in a timely way.

Leaders and managers have made positive progress on improving the quality of apprenticeship programmes. Apprentices recruited more recently receive a better assessment of their starting points than previous cohorts. Leaders have begun to check apprentices' progress more closely. As a result, newer apprentices mostly successfully achieve their qualifications.

On most courses, learners' standard of work is good. On apprenticeships, learners' work is well presented and correctly referenced. Learners use appropriate technical terminology in discussions and written work. In a minority of instances, on study programmes, teachers do not check thoroughly for the origins of learners' work. A few learners produce work that is similar to that of their peers.

Leaders have planned a useful range of interesting and varied extra-curricular activities to teach learners about British values. For example, on ESOL courses, teachers arrange visits to the Houses of Parliament. Learners widen their knowledge of concepts such as democracy and the rule of law. On access courses, teachers encourage learners to use their debating skills during sessions on mock elections. Learners discuss values such as tolerance, and the importance of respecting each other's cultures.

Learners have a good understanding of how to keep physically and mentally healthy and maintain an active lifestyle. Learners benefit from well-resourced facilities such as a gym. Younger learners, and learners with high needs in particular, take part in sports such as football, cricket and running. They excel in these activities and often win competitions. On ESOL study programmes, learners know about the importance of a balanced diet. For example, in reading tasks, learners use scanning skills to analyse the quantity of grams in an energy drink. A few learners on adult learning programmes cannot recall how to learn online safely, or how to keep themselves physically safe.

Most learners receive high-quality careers education, advice, and guidance. For example, on study programmes in sport, learners enjoy hearing from visiting speakers. They learn about subject-specific employment opportunities such as sports scholarships. A very high proportion of study programme learners undertake work experience in vocationally relevant sectors. On apprenticeships, however, apprentices do not receive sufficient information on their next steps. Consequently, too many apprentices do not have a clear idea of their future career plans.

Leaders have thoughtfully planned a tutorial programme for young learners that covers relationships and sex education. Most learners discuss issues confidently and maturely. Male learners explain coherently the meaning of consent in relationships. Female learners describe in detail the actions they would take to help friends if they

were experiencing relationship difficulties. They feel secure that staff would give them appropriate support.

Leaders support staff very effectively. They have put in place measures to ease workloads and assist their well-being. As a result, staff morale is high.

Teachers receive highly relevant training that helps them improve their practice. Leaders provide very helpful feedback on their teaching skills. For example, ESOL teachers now instruct learners to repeat new language concepts more frequently in lessons.

Leaders and governors have very effective oversight of the provision. Governors have relevant backgrounds and expertise in education, finance, law, safeguarding, and human resources. They identify knowledgeably the strengths and main areas for improvement in the curriculum. Governors robustly challenge leaders to improve the quality of education where required. As a result, leaders have taken positive steps towards making improvements where needed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong safeguarding culture across the college. All staff annually refresh safeguarding training. As a result, they know their responsibilities, and take swift action to safeguard learners.

The designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) are very well trained and experienced for their roles. They have a detailed understanding of the local risks in the area. DSLs work closely with the police to share information, such as known gang members.

Learners have a suitable understanding of how to keep themselves safe from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

Governors responsible for safeguarding monitor thoroughly any safeguarding concerns.

Most learners have a sufficient understanding of sexual harm and sexual violence. They feel confident that leaders would deal promptly with issues reported.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that teachers across study programmes and apprenticeships assess learners' starting points to identify prior knowledge. They should use this information to plan a curriculum that more effectively meets learners' individual needs.
- Leaders should continue to improve the quality of apprenticeship programmes so that it is as good as other provision types. Notably, they should ensure that

teachers plan regular, good-quality reviews of apprentices' progress jointly with their line manager. Apprentices should have access to careers information to help them identify their next steps. Apprentices should also receive high-quality teaching of knowledge of English and mathematics skills earlier in the course, so that they can complete their studies within expected timescales.

Provider details

Unique reference number	130451
Address	East Ham Campus High Street South East Ham London E6 6ER
Contact number	02082 574000
Website	http://www.newham.ac.uk/
Principal	Paul Stephen
Provider type	General further education college
Date of previous inspection	26–29 April 2016
Main subcontractors	Academy 1 Sports Ltd

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.

Inspection team

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