

Open Door Adult Learning Centre

Community learning and skills

Inspection dates

14–17 March 2017

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

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Since the last inspection, senior leaders have implemented rigorous monitoring and scrutiny of the subcontractors, which has resulted in improved quality and outcomes for learners.
- Achievements have improved, and are now high and above those of similar providers.
- Staff are particularly successful in providing effective support so that the hardest to reach, isolated and most disadvantaged people can engage in education.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and are instrumental in helping learners to enjoy their lessons, make good progress and be proud of their achievements.
- Tutors effectively plan group activities to encourage learners to discuss and share ideas freely so that they understand topics and can apply theory to practice.
- As a result of their learning, the large majority of learners are motivated, more confident and better skilled, and this helps them contribute more fully to society.
- Learners make good progress in developing their skills in mathematics and English and can clearly describe how this helps them in everyday life.
- Managers do not collect and use progression and destination data to give them a sufficiently clear picture of the effectiveness of the provision.
- Some tutors do not develop learners' understanding of radicalisation and extremism sufficiently well.
- A small number of learners, including on some information technology courses, do not achieve as well as their peers.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Open Door Adult Learning Centre (ODALC) is an independent adult education organisation based in Sheffield with strong roots in its local community. ODALC works in collaboration with its two subcontractors, Manor Training and Resource Centre and Swarthmore Education Centre, to provide learning in their local communities.
- ODALC is located in a well-established, traditional community of mixed private and social housing stock on the outskirts of Sheffield. Manor Training and Resource Centre, situated less than three miles away, serves a community with high levels of deprivation and homelessness. Swarthmore Education Centre is in the centre of Leeds and draws learners from all parts of the city. Many of its learners have a history of mental health issues or have learning disabilities or difficulties.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Continue to share good practice between subcontractors so that all learners experience the same high-quality provision received by the majority of learners and more learners can achieve their qualifications.
- Collect and analyse data on the destination of learners following completion of their programmes to ensure that the courses offered give learners the maximum opportunity to progress into appropriate further training or employment.
- Further develop the confidence of tutors, so that they can more easily integrate opportunities into learning sessions that help learners understand how to protect themselves and others from radicalisation and extremism.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders and managers at ODALC, and their subcontractors, ensure that community learning programmes meet the learning and skills needs of local people and contribute positively to the economic development of the communities they serve. The quality of the provision has significantly improved and a larger proportion of learners successfully complete their courses because managers ensure that their individual needs and any barriers to learning are successfully addressed.
- Since the last inspection, senior leaders have implemented rigorous monitoring and scrutiny of the subcontractors, which has resulted in improved outcomes for learners. A new subcommittee of trustees is now well established and oversees the work of all three settings. A particularly effective post-inspection action plan has successfully driven improvement. This has resulted in higher achievement rates for learners, increased focus on learners' development of skills in mathematics and English, clear individual targets for all learners and effective sharing of good practice between the subcontractors and key partners. Managers meet each month to review the progress of all courses and to identify aspects of performance requiring attention.
- Managers and trustees listen carefully to local residents and have a very good understanding of their needs. They use this awareness to ensure that the courses offered match those needs and successfully engage new learners in interesting and purposeful activities that make a positive difference to their lives. The good range of courses on offer is aligned to the priorities of the local authorities and the local enterprise partnerships where the centres are located. This ensures that the good progress made by learners contributes effectively to the development of a skilled workforce to meet the needs of existing and new businesses.
- Leaders and managers have established good partnerships with other local community support organisations, such as mental health charities, and have developed a shared ambition for the success of all learners. The good progress made by learners ensures that they are better prepared to engage confidently and successfully with Jobcentre Plus, employers, voluntary sector organisations and other training providers. Managers and staff are particularly successful in providing effective support for the hardest to reach, isolated and most disadvantaged people. ODALC and its subcontractors have established a strong reputation for helping people to overcome barriers to learning.
- Leaders and managers have a very positive approach to improving the quality of provision. This is because their core values all relate to ensuring that every learner is successful. All staff demonstrate that they are fully committed to supporting learners to become more involved in the world around them. The centres are attractive and welcoming places where all learners can meet new people, develop new skills and receive effective advice and support to make important decisions about their next steps.
- Managers ensure that all staff receive effective training to continue their professional development and improve their effectiveness. This includes gaining a better understanding of how to integrate mathematics and English activities in lessons and the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism. Staff are well qualified and have very good levels of experience which they use effectively to support and motivate learners.

- Self-assessment processes are thorough and effective. Leaders and managers are self-critical in their approach, analysing information from a wide range of sources, including lesson observations of tutors and learner surveys. They use this information effectively to identify the strengths and areas for improvement of the organisation. The current self-assessment report is largely accurate, although it does not identify that more could be done to monitor learner progression and destination data. Managers make effective use of the quality improvement plan derived from the self-assessment report to ensure continuing improvement.
- Managers do not collect and use information about the proportion of learners who progress to higher-level courses within the organisation and with other providers, or to employment. Many learners do progress to other courses, but once they leave the provider there is no further contact to gather information to help establish whether their course had helped them to find work or achieve career goals.

The governance of the provider

- A very active and committed board of trustees, provide appropriate challenge and increasingly effective scrutiny, to ensure that the provider and their subcontractors meet their targets and performance measures.
- Trustees have a very good understanding of the unique needs of the learners and their local communities. They are well informed about how efficiently and effectively the courses offered provide good value for money.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Managers responsible for safeguarding keep detailed records of staff vetting checks. All staff promote the welfare of learners effectively and ensure that learners feel and are safe.
- Staff ensure that learners have a good understanding of staying safe when using the internet and social media. Learners who have children at school increase their awareness of e-safety and how to protect their children from cyber bullying and the risk of grooming.
- All staff have a good understanding of how to help learners remain safe. Regular update training is effective and has included the 'Prevent' duty and the risks learners may face of radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Managers and tutors provide good-quality teaching and learning that enable learners to enjoy attending, make good progress and take pride in their achievements. Tutors accurately assess learners' literacy and numeracy needs and use this information well in planning learning that takes account of their starting points. As a result, learners gain confidence in their ability and ambition to successfully achieve their qualifications and move towards their career aims.
- Well-qualified tutors plan learning well to ensure that learners attend, gain confidence and develop skills that improve their quality of life in the community. In one information

and communication technology (ICT) class, learners developed photo-imaging skills to create artistic images from photographs. A few learners felt sufficiently confident to use their skills and produce images for commercial purposes. Others talked enthusiastically about how they felt less isolated due to the friendships they had made on the course.

- Tutors effectively structure group activities to encourage learners to discuss and share ideas freely. Learners develop their understanding of key concepts and develop a broader understanding of topics. For example, learners on a counselling course used case studies from the workplace to provide insight into current practice and to stimulate group discussions. Learners found the activity invaluable to understanding the diverse client issues they may face in their future roles.
- Learners receive regular, detailed and constructive feedback on their work that helps them to understand what they have achieved and what they could improve further. Tutors and learners meet frequently to review progress and set short-term targets that keep learners focused on their goals.
- Learners benefit from highly effective individual support and coaching that helps them to overcome barriers to learning and develop independent learning skills. The majority of learners identified as at risk of falling behind receive timely individualised support, resulting in almost all remaining on track to complete their course. At one subcontractor, learners who have learning disabilities, such as dyslexia, benefit greatly from using specialist computer software that uses sounds to accelerate their ability to improve their English skills. However, at another subcontractor, tutors do not always support learners who fall behind in their studies to catch up. As a result, a small minority of learners make slower progress than expected.
- Tutors effectively help learners to develop their English, mathematics and ICT skills. Learners studying ICT courses develop the skills to use various software packages that increase their participation in the community and, for a few, the potential to set up their own businesses. Mathematics learners improve their chances of success in examinations by developing their literacy skills to help them accurately interpret and answer questions correctly.
- Learners develop a good understanding of issues in relation to living in modern Britain. Tutors regularly include opportunities to discuss current themes within their lessons. In one lesson, learners consolidated their understanding of democracy, liberty and the rule of law in Britain while practising speaking and listening skills for future examinations.
- Tutors do not always sufficiently plan learning to stretch and challenge those learners who are capable of higher-level study. For example, assessments in a GCSE maths session required all learners to complete the same exercises, with no additional tasks for those who completed early.
- A small minority of tutors do not always plan learning well enough to ensure that all learners understand the next steps in their learning. As a result, in a small number of lessons, learners lose confidence and motivation, and make slow progress as they struggle to link learning activities to previous knowledge and more complex tasks.
- A significant minority of learners do not always know what they need to do to achieve their expected grades and other employment-related skills by the end of the course. As a result, these learners do not make the strong progress they are capable of because they are unable to plan additional practice or work outside of the lesson.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Learners enjoy their studies and significantly improve their confidence and life skills, particularly those learners who have learning disabilities. Tutors provide good support to help them seek employment and contribute more fully to society. Adults with mental health difficulties acquire strategies to alleviate their anxiety, while gaining an interest in developing new skills. As a result, learners demonstrate well the characteristics of social integration, tolerance and being thoughtful, caring citizens.
- Those learners in employment further enhance their skills to contribute more effectively to their employer's business. They recognise the importance of these skills in how they contribute to forming their future career plans. For example, one learner, who on commencement of their course had only basic computing skills, developed further skills and can now construct spreadsheets, which is of value to their employer.
- Learners develop good personal, social and employability skills which prepare them well for future employment. They gain confidence, which helps them enhance their communications skills through engaging with their peers, tutors, support workers and the wider community within each centre.
- Most learners receive good information, advice and guidance which prepare them well for the opportunities available for their potential career pathways. Learners receive independent careers advice both in class and in weekly job clubs. Further specialist staff also support learners to develop their curriculum vitae, identify job opportunities online and complete job applications.
- Learners feel safe in the centres and value the support and guidance provided by centre staff. They know who to go to if they have concerns about their own and others' well-being. Learners have a good understanding of how to stay safe online and are aware of the dangers associated with mobile technology and social networking sites.
- Learners know their rights and responsibilities as a learner, which is reflected in their behaviour and attitude to learning. They respect the provider's strong promotion of equality and they celebrate diversity well. For example, one centre held a week-long cake-selling activity to promote gender transition awareness.
- Learners improve their awareness of how to stay healthy. In lessons, tutors promote healthy eating as a vehicle to promote or reinforce other skills. For example, in a numeracy lesson, the tutor used food nutrients as a basis for developing learners' understanding of number skills.
- Most learners are punctual and attend regularly. Tutors contact those learners who do not attend without prior notification and record this for later discussion with those learners. A well-received reward system at one subcontractor has successfully improved attendance. However, attendance is not high enough for a significant minority of learners.
- While most tutors effectively raise learners' awareness of radicalisation and extremism, at one subcontractor, they do not develop their understanding sufficiently well. As a result, some learners do not know how to protect themselves from the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- Since the last inspection, learners' achievements have improved significantly and are above those for similar providers. Nearly all learners now achieve their qualifications or learning goals. GCSE achievement rates for English and mathematics are high, with the large majority gaining grades at A* to C.
- The large majority of learners make good progress towards their qualifications or learning goals. Many quickly progress to the next level of learning. For example, some learners on computing courses commence at entry level and quickly progress through to level two. Learners on counselling programmes progress from level two to level four, where they receive valuable work placements that enhance their opportunities for sustained employment and higher-level study.
- Standards of work are high for many learners, particularly those on distance-learning programmes. Portfolios of work from craft courses are of a professional standard.
- Most learners are very enthusiastic about their experience in learning. They value the improved confidence this brings, especially those learners who had a poor experience of formal schooling. For some, simply getting out of the house and taking part in a group has been a big step forward for them. A small number of learners become volunteers in lessons, helping others with their learning, and two have become trustees of the board.
- Learners who have identified learning needs make progress at a similar rate to their peers. A minority of learners, for example on some information technology courses, do not achieve as well as their peers. Achievements in English GCSE examinations are lower at one subcontractor. Some small variations in achievement exist for small groups of minority ethnic learners, but the reasons for this are being addressed by managers.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53746
Type of provider	Community learning and skills
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	822
Principal/CEO	Terry McHale
Telephone number	0114 264 8101
Website	www.opendoor-learn.com

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	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	-	393	-	303	-	8	-	22
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	-							
Funding received from:	Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Swarthmore Education Centre Manor Training and Resource Centre							

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 questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions and took into account all relevant provision at the provider and its subcontractors.

Inspection team

Kathryn Townsley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Dan Grant	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Deane	Her Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Scanlan	Ofsted Inspector

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