

Thurrock Adult Community College

Address: Old Court House, Orsett Road, Grays, Essex, RM17 5DD

Unique reference number (URN): 54975

Inspection report: 27 January 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	● ● ● ●
Expected standard	●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✔ **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, learners are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect providers for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The provider has an open and positive culture of safeguarding.
- **Not met:** The provider has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

1. Inclusion, and leadership and governance

Strong standard



Expected standard



Strong standard

Leadership and governance

Strong standard 

Since the previous inspection, leaders have been relentless in their approach to improving the quality of the education and training they offer. Their sharply focused quality improvement activities have had a considerable positive impact and the standard of teaching and training is now high. Leaders intervene quickly when they have concerns. They stopped offering courses that were not of a high quality, such as apprenticeships.

Leaders and those responsible for governance have an excellent understanding of their strengths and areas for improvement. Governors know the college very well. They support leaders to ensure that they remain continually focused on meeting the needs of the hardest-to-reach residents in Thurrock. Governors provide ongoing challenge to leaders. They challenged leaders to ensure that they implemented the required quality improvements swiftly following the previous inspection.

Leaders and those responsible for governance care about the wellbeing of staff. Governors supported leaders well through a period of substantial change. They encourage leaders to consider their own wellbeing and any support they may need. Staff feel that leaders are supportive of their wellbeing and workload.

Leaders have a comprehensive professional development programme in place that develops both tutors' subject expertise and teaching skills. Staff who are new to teaching are very well supported. They value the opportunity to gain teaching qualifications and to receive mentoring and specialist subject training.

Expected standard

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders tailor their curriculums suitably to meet the training and development needs of residents who may have low educational attainment, had a poor prior experience of education or are new arrivals to the country. The college is a nurturing, supportive and welcoming learning environment, where staff know learners well. They ensure that learners receive the support they need to flourish on their courses.

Leaders have a suitable approach to both identifying learners' support needs and providing effective support for those with barriers to learning, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Specialist staff produce well-considered learning support plans. Support staff and tutors review these plans and the support provided with learners frequently. They reduce support over time as learners become more independent in lessons. Staff have completed sufficient training to implement this approach successfully.

Leaders carefully monitor the progress of all learners. However, leaders do not monitor the progress or achievement of different groups of learners. They do not use a strategic, evidence-informed approach to monitor the effectiveness of their inclusion strategies.

2. Adult learning programmes

Strong standard



Strong standard ●

Achievement

Strong standard ●

Learners, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and barriers to learning, make substantial progress from their starting points. Achievement is high across all courses and qualifications, and especially high in English and mathematics courses.

Learners develop substantial new knowledge and skills. Learners on tailored learning courses achieve ambitious personal goals. Digital skills learners with no prior skills quickly gain the confidence to cut and paste text and create documents independently. Learners with families are better equipped to support their children with homework. Learners studying childcare courses know the difference between objective and subjective statements and why it is important to use objective statements in their observations of children at play. Learners use their new knowledge and skills to produce work of a high standard.

Learners are very well prepared for their next steps and go on to positive destinations, including employment and further study.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders know their local community well. They offer a coherent curriculum, mainly at entry level and level 1, which is designed to meet closely the needs of the residents they identify as most in need. Leaders carefully select the employers and charities they work with so that they plan provision in the communities that need it most.

Leaders and tutors expertly design courses that support learners, many of whom have multiple barriers to learning and poor prior experiences of education, to be successful.

Tutors set learners clear learning goals. They tailor these to meet learners' personal, social and employability needs. During lessons, tutors adeptly identify where learners need more practise to hone their skills or where they need more challenging goals to be set. Learners make rapid progress against these goals.

Teaching is consistently of high quality. Tutors skilfully use a range of teaching strategies to help learners understand and remember what they have learned. Tutors explain new information clearly. They break learning down into small steps that learners can follow in lessons. Tutors build sufficient time into lessons to allow learners to develop and practise new skills. They use pertinent examples and draw on learners' experiences to bring learning to life. This helps learners to apply new learning to their daily lives.

Tutors use assessment highly effectively. They use questioning skilfully as well as other short activities to assess what learners know and remember. They check for gaps in learning and correct misconceptions quickly, ensuring that learners have a thorough grasp of the concepts and skills studied.

Participation and development

Strong standard ●

Leaders ensure that learners receive high-quality careers advice and guidance that helps them to make informed decisions about their next steps. The local careers hub provides individualised support to learners. Learners attend careers fairs, where the local Jobcentre Plus and careers service staff give learners information about career pathways. For Skills Bootcamp learners, tutors organise visits from employers who give interesting talks on different job roles. They give learners helpful support with CV writing and interview practice. This prepares learners very well for applying for different job roles.

Leaders have developed a well-considered personal development programme. This includes visiting speakers from relevant organisations, such as the local police, and college marketplace events. Learners develop a sound understanding of relevant topics, such as the cost of living, gambling support, drug and alcohol misuse and health and wellbeing.

Leaders offer learners an excellent range of enrichment opportunities that meet learners' individual needs and interests. Learners volunteer with a wide range of associations and charities. They participate in community fundraising activities, such as to support the local food bank. From these activities, learners develop a sense of community.

What it's like to be a learner and/or an apprentice at this provider

Learners learn in a friendly and respectful environment, where staff care about them and frequently check on their wellbeing. Learners on tailored learning courses value highly the support and encouragement they receive from their tutors and support staff. Learners grow in confidence. They work respectfully alongside their peers and many form lasting friendships. They are positive and cheerful about their learning. Learners enjoy coming to college and many describe how it has changed their lives for the better.

Staff help learners to overcome their worries and focus on their studies. They support learners exceptionally well to explore their own personal barriers to learning. During lessons near to examinations, tutors support learners with strategies to manage anxiety. Learners know the importance of taking breaks, listening to music, walking or taking part in sport activities to help manage stress.

Learners' attendance to lessons is high. They do not want to miss lessons. On the few occasions that learners cannot attend, tutors ensure that learners know how to access missed content or join lessons remotely. Leaders support learners who are from low-income households very effectively so that they can attend college frequently. They lend them laptops so they can study at home.

Staff are ambitious for learners and are keen for them to do well. Leaders ensure that learners develop employability skills through the curriculum. They include additional qualifications to prepare learners well for their future steps. For example, level 3 childcare learners complete qualifications in children's mental health, food safety and safeguarding.

Next steps

- Leaders need to ensure that they monitor and review the progress that different groups of learners make to gain an understanding of the effectiveness of their inclusion strategies.
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About this inspection

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with leaders, learners, tutors, governors and employers during the inspection.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the provider:

Thurrock Adult Community College offers adult education courses in the borough of Thurrock. At the time of the inspection, there were 354 learners on adult learning courses. Approximately half studied qualifications or tailored learning courses in English for speakers of other languages. Eight learners were on health and social care or childcare Skills Bootcamps. The remaining adults attended a range of courses, including English and mathematics, digital technology and vocational subjects.

Most learners face barriers to learning. Around a third of learners came from areas with very high levels of deprivation. Many learners were seeking work. Fewer than 5 learners had an education and health care plan.

Since the inspection in May 2023, leaders have stopped offering apprenticeship courses as well as their mathematics programme for a local hospital.

Lead inspector:

Georgina Ager, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Maggie Fobister, Ofsted Inspector

Ruth Harrison, Ofsted Inspector

Stella Hawkins, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 27 January 2026

Number of learners

Adult learning programmes

354

Percentage of learning aims successfully achieved

Education programmes for young people

Year	This provider	National average	Compared with national average
2021/22	S	81	S

'This provider' and 'national average' figures are taken from the publicly available DfE achievement rates. Where the DfE have suppressed the figures, usually due to small cohorts, this has been mirrored in the Report Card and will be shown by an 'S'.

Adult learning programmes

Year	This provider	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24	89	87	Close to average
2022/23	86	87	Close to average
2021/22	81	86	Close to average

Apprenticeships overall achievement rate

Year	This provider	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24	33	61	Below
2022/23	63	55	Close to average
2021/22	54	53	Close to average

Apprenticeships pass rate

Year	This provider	National average
2023/24	100	98
2022/23	100	97
2021/22	100	98

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other providers can learn from it.

Strong standard

The provider reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The provider is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The provider needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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