

Open Door Adult Learning Centre

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		24–27 March 2015
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Outstanding-1
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- not enough learners successfully complete their courses and achieve their intended qualifications
- target setting for learners is insufficiently specific, challenging or measurable to drive progress in learning
- teaching in information and communication technology (ICT) does not develop learners' English and mathematics skills sufficiently
- there is insufficient strategic oversight and direction to coordinate the delivery of the contract
- the management of the subcontracted elements of the contract require improvement
- the three organisations involved in the delivery of the contract do not share good practice with each other sufficiently to improve the learners' experience on their courses
- partnership working between the three centres is underdeveloped and they lack an overarching curriculum management structure.

This provider has the following strengths:

- learners develop a good range of life enhancing skills and in ICT become increasingly adept in the use of a variety of applications
- progression to higher levels onto other programmes and into further education and other positive destinations is good
- learners are highly motivated and dedicated to improving their skills
- initial assessment and subsequent tracking of learner progress are good
- individual coaching and support is good
- social inclusion is good; learners are drawn from a variety of deprived and disadvantaged groups
- operational management within each delivery centre is good and each organisation meets the particular needs of learners in its local area well.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Appoint an appropriate management board to provide strategic direction, challenge and support across the contract.
- Strengthen the management of subcontractors by devising and implementing a more rigorous service-level agreement and implement effective measures to monitor and enforce the agreement.
- Formalise arrangements for the sharing of good practice at all levels across the management and delivery of the training provision
- Improve the proportion of learners who successfully complete their programmes and gain the intended qualifications by ensuring that the qualifications they are working towards are the most appropriate to meet the needs of each group and by identifying those at risk of leaving their programme early and taking appropriate interventions and support to retain them.
- Improve target setting for learners by ensuring that targets are more appropriate and are effective in helping learners make progress.
- Ensure that tutors make more of the opportunities to develop learners' English and mathematics skills by ensuring that errors are corrected and that all tutors' own skills in this area are at a sufficiently high level.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Open Door Adult Learning Centre (ODALC) directly delivers around one fifth of the training. Manor Training and Resource Centre (MaTREC) and Swarthmore Education Centre deliver the remainder under a subcontractor arrangement, with MaTREC having the larger share. Almost all of the provision is classroom-based learning with a very small amount of community learning. At the time of inspection, the largest group of learners were on foundation courses with smaller numbers in ICT and health and social care. A large majority of the learners are at level 1 or below with the remainder predominantly on level 2 courses. ▪ The proportion of learners who achieve their intended qualifications requires improvement. For those learners studying with ODALC achievement is high and exceeds the high national average for classroom-based learning. However, the proportion of all learners across the contract gaining their qualification has declined year-on-year for the last three years and has fallen below the national average. ▪ The decline coincided with a switch to a new awarding body, which managers have since decided not to use unless there is no viable alternative for any particular subject. Their analysis indicated that the requirements of the awarding body did not suit their client groups well resulting in low achievement rates and contributing to a decline in retention. ▪ The success rate for learners at the Swathmore education centre is very close to the average rate for the whole provision and that for MaTREC is significantly lower. Over the same period, ICT learners have maintained a success rate just below the high national rate making the decline in the rest of the provision more marked. ▪ There are no significant achievement gaps between different groups of learners. The achievement rates for male and female learners are almost identical as are those for learners who have learning disabilities and/or difficulties and those who do not. There is little difference in achievement between the large majority of White British learners and others. The largest minority groups have ethnic origins in the Indian sub-continent or are from African or Caribbean 	

backgrounds. The former each have higher success rates and the latter each lower success rates than the provider average.

- Learners develop a range of life-enhancing skills. ICT learners gain useful information technology (IT) skills which enable them to function more effectively in the modern work and social environments. Many recognise that IT skills are now essential for almost all employment. Learners' improved mathematics and English skills enhance their employability and enhance their ability to support their children or grandchildren with their school work. Learners with a history of mental illness make rapid progress towards rehabilitation both into work and social life.
- Learner progression is good. At ODALC, ICT learners progress well through the levels of qualification, with many who have no previous IT skills exceeding their planned outcomes and progressing by at least one level. Many learners who remain at MaTREC progress over time through the levels in ICT, mathematics and English. However, the rates at which learners achieve their intended qualifications or progress further are depressed through the transient nature of the client group and number of learners who, although referred by the local Job Centre, then leave to attend mandated training elsewhere. Progression at Swarthmore is good from entry level to level 1 and to level 2 and the proportion of those progressing to positive destinations is high with a majority progressing to further education and a significant number into employment.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment for current learners are good. This is not reflected in the declining proportion of learners gaining their intended qualifications in recent years, which is largely attributable to areas for improvement identified under leadership and management. However, it is reflected in the progress being made by current learners, by their improved personal and employability skills and heightened self-esteem and confidence.
- Tutors provide good support for learners, especially for those with low prior attainment. Group sizes are small and teaching assistants are deployed well to provide additional in-class support. However, staff do not always set sufficiently challenging targets to stretch learners to maximise their learning potential. The good support and encouragement enables learners, who would otherwise be too apprehensive to enter a teaching establishment, to access learning. Staff and trustees include former learners, who both empathise with learners and provide role models to motivate them further to succeed.
- In the Swarthmore centre, the level of care and support for the high percentage of learners who have or are recovering from mental health issues is excellent. At MaTREC, the good staff awareness of dyslexia, dyscalculia and other barriers to learning is a particular feature. It enables them to identify issues and provide good practical support to learners, refer them to specialist support and help them to develop strategies to overcome their disabilities.
- Staff are experienced and well qualified to teach in the sector. They use their skills and expertise well to use very effective teaching methodologies to promote learning and meet learners' needs. The use of workshops to facilitate 'learning by doing' in ICT is particularly effective and the combination of individual coaching, small group and whole-class work in mathematics and English is appropriate. However, tutors do not always plan individual learning sufficiently to ensure that each learner has a level of challenge suited to them. Teaching in British Sign Language lessons is good. The tutor uses the target language as the medium of instruction and as a model for learners particularly well.
- Learning resources are good. Computing hardware and programmes are fit for purpose although some computer software is not the latest version. Adaptive technologies are used well to support learners with disabilities. ODALC has a virtual learning environment with a mixture of in-house produced and other, particularly IT, related material, which is accessible to all learners. At MaTREC, tutors make good use of learning resources, developed to suit particular

awarding organisation's qualifications. Tutors use good contextualised support materials to aid learners' development.

- Each of the three organisations initially assess learners effectively using a variety of questionnaires, observation and diagnostic tools and monitor and record learners' subsequent progress well. They use weekly record sheets effectively so that the monitoring and recording of learners' progress is very good. Tutors and learners are well aware of what the learners have achieved so far and what remains to be done in order to complete their qualification.
- Tutors give good verbal feedback to learners during learning sessions and written feedback on marked work is timely. Consequently, learners know how they are progressing and how to correct identified errors or improve their work. However, tutors do not correct all grammatical or spelling errors in written work, allowing learners to perpetuate the same errors. Learners receive frequent and regular feedback on their progress. Tutors also encourage them to reflect on their own learning and progress.
- Learners develop English, mathematics and functional skills well in both discrete provision and in other programmes. However, outside the discrete provision and particularly in workshop sessions, some tutors pay insufficient attention to systematically and progressively improving learners' English skills through effective embedding in the sessions or through picking up spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors in learners' written work. Some learning materials and written feedback contain errors indicating possible weaknesses in tutors' own standard of English.
- In a few cases, learners' progress in mathematics is inhibited by their low levels of English skills and an inability to understand the tasks or problems being set.
- Information, advice and guidance are good. At MaTREC, staff take particular care to ensure that potential learners are aware of the commitment they will be making by enrolling on a course and that they have plans to cope with, or overcome, any barriers to attendance or work completion. Staff at each centre provide good advice on potential career choices and appropriate courses of study to meet learners' needs. ODALC's website contains some good material to consolidate induction.
- Equality and diversity are central to the ethos of all three organisations. The centres promote equality and diversity through their socially inclusive approach and through recruitment from among the more disadvantaged or deprived sections of their communities. Learners feel that they are treated fairly and that they are safe, particularly those vulnerable adults who have a history of mental illness.

Information and communication technology

Good

19+ learning programmes

Teaching, learning and assessment in information and communication technology are good because:

- the majority of learners successfully complete their qualification and produce work of a good standard
- learners make good progress and become increasingly adept at processing text, using spreadsheets, compiling and interrogating databases, accessing the internet and sending and receiving emails; many progress from entry level to level 1 and level 2
- learners confidence and self-esteem improve considerably; many learners who enrol in the beginners' classes are apprehensive having never used a computer before and are amazed at what they achieve in a relatively short time
- tutors provide good individual coaching and tutoring that are especially beneficial to learners when they are developing their ICT knowledge and skills; tutors give particularly good support to learners when they do not know how to proceed

- learners are highly motivated and very committed to developing their ICT skills for personal use, for obtaining employment or for progressing in their careers
- tutors maximise the time devoted to practical work and to ensuring that in all lessons learners' ICT skills are developed as fully as possible through practising the various applications; learning resources are sensitive to, and promote equality of, opportunity, although learners are not making enough use of the virtual learning environment
- learners' progress is systematically monitored and recorded; tutors and learners are fully aware of what they have achieved and what they still have to do to complete their current unit and their qualification
- learners receive encouraging verbal feedback from tutors when they are working through tasks and when they have completed them; written feedback is of variable quality and often the comments are not sufficiently detailed to be of maximum help to learners
- learners receive good information, advice and guidance about the most appropriate qualification to work towards and about the most suitable level for them based on an initial assessment of learners' existing ICT knowledge, skills and understanding.

Teaching, learning and assessment in information and communication technology are not yet outstanding because:

- learners are not set specific, measurable, challenging and achievable targets to drive their learning and against which their progress is assessed; individual learning plans are not effectively used for planning learning
- learners' inputting skills are poorly developed and this is having an adverse impact on their productivity and on healthy and safe computer usage; insufficient ongoing attention is given to other health and safety aspects, for example, chair height and back support, keyboard positions and visual display unit adjustments
- opportunities for developing learners' English and mathematical skills are neglected with the result that their spelling, punctuation and grammatical skills are not improving quickly enough; tutors' ability to correct learners' English errors is also insufficiently developed.

Foundation English and mathematics

19+ learning programmes

Good

Teaching, learning and assessment in foundation English and mathematics are good because:

- learners develop their English and mathematics skills well and many progress to higher-level courses
- tutors support learners very effectively; tutors are particularly adept at supporting those with dyslexia and mental health difficulties
- learners benefit from and enjoy a variety of activities during lessons that are tailored to suit their individual needs; in an English lesson their understanding of the purposes of different types of writing was developed very well through a combination of small group and individual work
- tutors ensure that learning resources, including information learning technology (ILT), are relevant and interesting; where appropriate, they adapt them to learners' particular interests and needs
- tutors use questions very effectively; in a mathematics class, for example, the tutor asked pertinent questions to determine the methods that learners use to convert fractions to decimals that build upon their skills and help them calculate accurately

- tutors encourage learners to work well with their peers; during an assessment of their speaking and listening skills through group presentations, learners assessed and gave feedback to one another and reported that this process had improved their confidence significantly
- tutors track learners' progress well using weekly record sheets; tutors and learners record feedback on completed work, providing a clear summary of learners' progress
- tutors provide very constructive verbal feedback to learners during lessons, which motivates them well.

Teaching, learning and assessment in foundation English and mathematics are not yet outstanding because:

- not all of the qualifications that learners are working towards are suited well to their needs or abilities
- tutors do not consistently set learners suitably challenging targets; tutors' monitoring of targets set at initial assessment is weak.

The effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
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- Leadership and management require improvement. ODALC lacks an over-arching supervisory board to oversee and direct the work of the lead contractor and subcontractors. Each organisation acts more as a partner, delivering its own courses independently without an overall clear strategy for planning, developing and improving learning programmes across the contract as a whole. Trustees for each of the autonomous organisations provide appropriate levels of challenge and support for their managers.
- The three centres communicate very well with one another through frequent meetings and informal discussions; they undertake some very effective collaborative work. For example, they hold joint staff training sessions on functional skills. The lead contractor provides support for subcontractors with some aspects of ILT and has shared training materials on equality and diversity. However, more collaborative working and sharing of good practice is required.
- The management of subcontractors requires improvement. Having identified accurately the variances in performance between itself and the two subcontractors, and the overall decline in learners' success rates over the last three years, the lead contractor has not set and monitored challenging and realistic improvement targets. Each subcontractor has its own quality assurance arrangements but the lead contractor does not oversee the outcomes of these sufficiently closely.
- Managers plan and organise learning programmes very effectively in each of three learning centres. They market courses well and monitor recruitment closely to ensure that courses are viable. They ensure that appropriate resources are in place to support learning, including ILT. Managers allocate well-qualified and skilful staff to deliver classes, ensuring good teaching, learning and assessment. They gather feedback from learners and use the information well to improve the provision. For example, the lead contractor's learning centre has 'you said, we did' wall displays to inform learners how their feedback has resulted in improvements. Managers and tutors track learners' progress accurately.
- Managers use annual observations of teaching, learning and assessment well to monitor the overall quality of sessions. However, most staff are awarded high grades and the observations generate little information to help them improve their practice further. Where development needs are identified, they are not always promptly addressed.
- Self-assessment requires improvement. The lead contractor produced a self-assessment report for its own provision in 2013/14 that does not take account of the provision delivered by the subcontractors or clearly identify judgements and evidence to support all the self-assessment grades. Subcontractors have only very recently supplied the lead contractor with their own self-

assessment reports to draw upon; however, it is difficult to identify within these reports the work that is associated specifically with the contracts that are subject to this inspection.

- The range of courses meets the needs and interests of learners and the local communities very well, targeting some particularly disadvantaged learners including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who have mental health problems. Managers schedule classes at times convenient for learners and the two subcontractors provide crèche facilities for learners' children. Learning centres are welcoming and accessible. Courses enable learners to develop their confidence, progress to higher levels of study and make a positive difference to their everyday lives. For example, one learner who has had difficult life experiences has progressed from doing English, mathematics and ICT awards onto a teaching assistants' course that involves attending a weekly work placement at a community primary school.
- Courses are tailored less well to meet the needs of employers. Efforts by the lead contractor to develop links with local businesses with a view to providing training to meet their needs directly have had little success. The subcontractor in Leeds enjoys close links with its Local Enterprise Partnership, but such links are less well developed in Sheffield. However, the programmes develop learners' English and mathematical skills, which are fundamental to the employment prospects of those seeking work. Some employed learners attend courses to assist them with their work roles. For example, several firefighters attend a British sign language course during working hours.
- ODALC provides a very inclusive service where learners from a wide range of backgrounds and circumstances can participate. Learners with disabilities are provided with adaptive technology where appropriate. For example, a learner with a neurological impairment was provided with a shielded keyboard with large keys and a large tracker-ball mouse; learners with dyslexia are provided with support such as coloured filters attached to their visual display units. A prayer room has been provided at one of the subcontractors to meet the specific needs of some learners. Staff have a good understanding of equality and diversity and are very effective in ensuring that learners are protected from bullying and harassment. Staff promote and demonstrate a culture of mutual respect.
- Safeguarding arrangements for learners require improvement. Each subcontractor implements its own safeguarding policies and procedures for reporting concerns. However, information reported to the lead contractor by subcontractors on safeguarding concerns is not always sufficiently timely. The lead contractor and subcontractors are yet to update their safeguarding policies and procedures to address the extremism and radicalisation agenda. However, learners feel safe and are well aware of how to raise a concern should the need arise.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Open Door Adult Learning Centre

<p>Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:</p> <p>1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate</p>	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	N/A
Outcomes for learners	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	N/A
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	N/A
The effectiveness of leadership and management	3	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3	N/A	N/A	N/A

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
ICT for users	2
Foundation English and mathematics	2

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent learning provider							
Age range of learners	19+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	964							
Principal/CEO	Mr Terry McHale							
Date of previous inspection	January 2008							
Website address	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 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	N/A	451	N/A	176	N/A	7	0	19
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Full-time	N/A							
Part-time	N/A							
Number of community learners	26							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Manor Training and Resource Centre ■ Swarthmore Education Centre 							

Contextual information

Until 2011, ODALC was a small provider with strong roots in its local community. At that time, the funding body was only willing to fund providers with a minimum contract value of £500,000. The combined contract value of contracts held by ODALC, MaTREC and Swarthmore Education Centre exceeded the minimum value and the three organisations agreed that ODALC should become the lead contractor and subcontract to the other two in order to meet the funding body requirements. The three organisations serve very different communities. ODALC itself is located in a well-established traditional community of mixed private and social housing stock on the outskirts of Sheffield. MaTREC, 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 that city. Many of its learners have a history of mental illness or have learning disabilities or difficulties.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Cliff Rose HMI

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the Centre Coordinator as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012

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