

Birmingham Adult Education Service

Local authority

Inspection dates		24–28 February 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- A good proportion of learners achieve the qualification they want or successfully complete the aims of their course.
- Learners gain more than qualifications; they improve their employability prospects, self-esteem and many, including those with mental health problems, benefit from achieving other outcomes.
- A very large majority of teaching and learning is good or better; tutors develop high but realistic expectations in most learners who then make good progress.
- Many learners take additional courses to enrich their learning or improve their chances of employment. Managers and staff plan progression opportunities well with just over 50% of learners moving on to more advanced courses.
- Committed leaders, managers and staff have together improved the quality and the breadth of provision at Birmingham Adult Education Service (BAES).
- Particularly effective use of observations of learning, good staff development and quality review systems have raised standards over the past three years at BAES.
- Managers and staff are good at designing and providing programmes, including very strong work with partners, which meet the priorities of the city, its residents and support government priorities.
- Managers and staff have successfully closed, in most instances, the achievement gap between different groups of learners and promoted equality of opportunity very well.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Aspects of teaching and learning require further improvement, including elements of the delivery in the classroom, the effective use of individual learning plans, the promotion of mathematics and stretching the more able learners.
- Achievement of high grades in GCSE mathematics and science examinations, and success in courses at level 1 require improvement.
- Tracking of learners' progression to other courses or employment is not detailed enough to allow managers and staff to tailor provision even more accurately to meet learners' needs.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve GCSE mathematics and science examination high grades by ensuring that relevant programmes are on offer at more locations and times and tutors increase their efforts to help and motivate learners with the potential to do well.
- Ensure managers rigorously and routinely examine the gaps in performance between males and females on accredited courses and the slightly poorer performance of those from disadvantaged areas and take appropriate action to resolve any issues identified.
- Make data, including attendance rates and learners' feedback, more readily available to all staff so that they can promptly deal with any potential problems.
- Improve the tracking of learners' destinations and progression so that managers and staff can more effectively align provision to match individual needs, but in doing this ensure no duplication occurs with government initiatives.
- Improve the physical state of a minority of learning centres to ensure that learners do not study in poor conditions that could impact on their learning.
- Use the current system of observations of teaching and learning and staff development more effectively to deal with minor weaknesses in teaching and learning including:
 - using the systems for monitoring and improving punctuality and attendance more consistently to deal with potential problems promptly
 - ensuring, where questions are used in lessons, tutors use them to enhance or test better the understanding of all learners
 - using the current systems for planning and implementing individual learning more effectively
 - where it is available and is part of a lesson, fully exploiting the potential of learning technology
 - planning additional activities to stimulate and stretch the more able learners
 - ensuring all tutors make better use of opportunities to develop learners' broader mathematical skills.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- BAES has achieved a good balance in making learning enjoyable, accessible, relevant but also effective. A good proportion of the many thousands of learners who attend courses leading to a formal qualification are successful in gaining their desired qualification. On programmes with no externally recognised qualification, a very good proportion of learners achieve the aims of their programme.
- In six of the seven main subject areas where BAES offers courses leading to qualifications the results are higher than those found in similar providers. Results have shown a steady improvement over the last three years.
- Learners are particularly successful in level 2 courses, but do not achieve as well at level 1. Most learners on GCSE courses pass the relevant exam. However, in terms of high grades, which are important to these adult learners seeking employment or further education, not enough learners get high grades in mathematics or science subjects, although the achievement of such grades is very good in modern foreign languages.
- These mostly good results are even more impressive given the high proportion of learners who start courses with limited previous education, or do not have English as their first language. The

provision for English for speakers of other languages, which was inadequate three years ago, has substantially increased success rates overall. Many of the individual courses have good rates with the Service rightly focusing on improving the few areas of under-performance.

- Most groups of learners, for example those from different ethnic backgrounds or with disabilities, succeed as well as any other group. However, a gap is growing slowly between the performance of male and female learners in courses leading to qualifications. In addition, although managers and staff have encouraged more learners from particularly deprived areas to undertake learning, their results are not yet as good as those for learners from other areas.
- As well as qualifications, learners gain other benefits from their courses. For those with mental health conditions the courses help them move to other social or even employment opportunities. For those from backgrounds of long-term unemployment the courses provide the necessary qualifications to be more employable; even courses that are sometimes regarded as recreational, such as floristry or cake decorating, have a strong focus on skills for employment and self-employment. Other learners feel more fulfilled and a better part of their community because of successful community learning courses.
- The numbers of those progressing to some type of employment has steadily improved over the past three years, and a satisfactory proportion progress to other, higher-level courses. Managers recognise they need better methods to track the destination of learners that move on, so they can tailor the courses BAES offers even more effectively.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, which is reflected in the high and improving outcomes for learners. The Service is nurturing a very motivated and enthusiastic team of tutors who engender high but realistic expectations amongst learners. Tutors ensure that the vast majority of learners make good progress and develop useful skills. Managers have introduced better ways of monitoring learners' attendance and punctuality, which is improving, however the potentially good systems are not always used consistently and effectively across the Service.
- Planning of learning is good. Staff are skilled and knowledgeable and use their expertise well to provide varied and interesting lessons which learners enjoy. Learning in this provision is good where tutors encourage collaborative learning and engage learners in thought provoking and challenging activities. Where tutors use questions to stimulate and test learners' understanding, they mostly do this well and are able to involve better the less confident learners. However, in a minority of lessons questions are too general and miss the chance to enhance or fully test learning.
- Most assessment of learners' needs at the start of their course is effective. Learners are on appropriate courses at the right level. Significant investment in staff and careful planning ensure that the Service caters well for those requiring additional learning support.
- Tutors monitor most learning well and the majority give good written feedback. Tutors are effective at correcting spelling and grammar. During better lessons, verbal feedback is particularly good which strongly encourages learning. Learners know how they are progressing, and what they need to do to progress further and achieve their goals. However, tutors often do not complete effectively the documentation to plan individual learning, which detracts from the identification of further opportunities for learning.
- The majority of learning resources, excluding accommodation, are satisfactory and most tutors are imaginative and innovative in developing good, relevant and current learning materials. The Service is developing its virtual learning environment well and tutors use it increasingly to encourage independent learning, which is important to these adult part-time learners. The Service is developing tutors' knowledge and skills in the use of information and learning

technology and in the best lessons, for example in modern and foreign languages, these are used well to develop and encourage learning. But in too many instances, technology is not used to its full potential.

- The provision meets the needs of the vast majority of learners. Tutors and support staff successfully encourage many learners to take additional courses to enrich their learning. Additional courses include, for example, healthy eating or specialist safeguarding courses for childcare learners and, for many learners, English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) programmes to help them to progress to employment.
- In the best lessons, tutors challenge and extend learners with activities, which they design well, to meet individual needs. However, in too many lessons, the more able learners are completing tasks early without additional planned activity to encourage or stimulate further learning.
- The Service, at all levels, has developed a strong focus on trying to ensure that English, mathematics and functional skills are an integral part of all teaching. In the majority of lessons, tutors check these well and those learners who need help in these areas receive effective support. However, managers recognise that, especially with mathematics, tutors often miss opportunities to support learners’ further development.
- Information, advice and guidance are good. The presentation of course information is good, gives learners a thorough understanding of the requirements of their programmes and offers clear information on progression. Managers and tutors plan progression opportunities well. Managers have recently strengthened the provision of advice and guidance, developing good resources and building significant staff expertise which learners can access easily.
- Tutors promote equality and diversity well in learning. The Service fosters a very supportive and caring learning environment which develops strong mutual respect, enjoyed by an extremely diverse learner population. Tutors use a wide range of appropriate and current learning materials which reflect the range of learners’ backgrounds and they promote well cultural and linguistic diversity.

ICT for users	
19+ Learning programmes	Good
Community learning	

- Teaching, learning and assessment in ICT are good, resulting in good outcomes for learners. Success rates are high and learners, many of whom have little or no previous experience of ICT, develop good, useful ICT skills. They develop confidence in using ICT with many also improving their self-esteem through working with others. A high proportion of learners progress from courses at level 1 to courses at level 2.
- In lessons, teaching and learning are mostly good with elements that are outstanding. Tutors inspire and motivate learners. Tutors are well qualified, knowledgeable and use humour to good effect to make lessons enjoyable for learners.
- Learning challenges learners appropriately and its pace is good. As a result, learners make good progress. For example, in a lesson introducing learners to the use of spreadsheets learners were successfully inserting formulae after just one session.
- Tutors very effectively check how well their learners understand the work and are able to use their new skills. They work successfully with less confident learners on an individual basis helping them in a caring and supportive manner, putting them at ease and often prompting them to identify their own solutions. Feedback that learners receive is clear and helps them to improve. Tutors use homework successfully to encourage learners to develop their skills outside the classroom.

- Not all tutors use BAES’s individual learning plans effectively. Course aims are too often just a list of topics from the qualification specification. In a few instances, tutors do not complete the learner log or it is a list of tasks completed rather than a record of the skills or knowledge learnt. This reduces the effectiveness of the plan as a guide to further learning.
- Although most classrooms have an interactive whiteboard, tutors seldom use the full potential of these to enhance lessons. In a few instances, the top of the board is too high for a tutor to reach it easily.
- Tutors design assessments effectively to reflect learners’ needs. For example, learners, seeking employment use tables in word-processing packages to create curriculum vitae.
- Tutors appropriately assess all learners’ prior ICT skills and experience to ensure they are on the right course. Those with no prior skills or knowledge, tutors place on an entry-level course, while other learners they test more thoroughly to assess the most suitable course for them.
- Initial assessment of learners’ mathematics and English skills is effective and those who need support receive additional help to achieve their ICT qualification. In addition, they are encouraged to take additional mathematics and English courses to improve their understanding of these areas. Conversely, many learners taking mathematics and English courses now also take ICT courses to broaden their knowledge of the essential skills for employment.
- All learners receive a good range of information before they start the course covering its content, possible progression routes and employment opportunities. During the course, the tutor rightly reminds learners of options available at the end of the course. All learners can have a guidance interview with appropriately qualified staff; a reasonable proportion take up this opportunity.
- The effective tutor training helps them appropriately promote equality and diversity during lessons. Lessons, often containing a range of culturally diverse learners, have an atmosphere of mutual respect. The Service deploys a good range of adaptive technology for those with physical difficulties.

<p>Visual arts</p> <p>19+ Learning programmes</p> <p>Community learning</p>	<p>Good</p>
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- Good teaching, learning and assessment in visual arts lead to learners’ acquisition and development of strong technical and creative skills. Learners engage with ambitious projects such as upholstering a winged armchair. In art classes learners are able to experiment with a range of media to extend their learning. A number of learners from upholstery, floristry, sugar craft, photography, and textiles courses have developed transferable skills for employment, with increasing numbers setting up their own businesses.
- Carefully chosen projects promote the development of independent learning in most classes, which is important to this cohort of learners. Learners enthusiastically bring in examples of additional work they have created at home to show to fellow learners and the tutor. Learners recognise their skills are improving and see the value of participating fully in their classes.
- Learners benefit well from classes where tutors make good use of their skills and experience to motivate and inspire. Individual additional support in classes is good. Tutors have mostly high expectations for learners and provide them with challenging activities through which learners improve their skills well. In a few cases, tutors miss the opportunity to ensure all learners receive appropriate additional support to enable them to participate fully in classes. Extension activities are not readily available for faster or more proficient learners to enable them to develop their skills even further.

- Assessment of learners’ needs at the start of their course is good overall. Staff use the results of the assessment as part of the individual learning plan. The assessment is detailed and demanding and tests existing English and mathematic skills. However, tutors do not always use results well enough to help plan individual tasks for learners. Information, advice and guidance are good, with individual interviews prior to most accredited programmes.
- Tutors keep learners well informed about their progress. They regularly provide written guidance, which they back up with supportive verbal feedback. Feedback includes clear advice on future tasks to help learners improve. The feedback also rightly identifies the need, for a few learners, to have additional time with a tutor.
- Learners practise, develop and apply good written and verbal English skills in most classes. Tutors use innovative approaches to include English grammar, punctuation and spelling checks within the routine of a lesson. However, they often miss the opportunities to develop mathematical skills in lessons, for example with links to measurements or weights.
- Courses successfully meet learners’ needs. Most learners understand how they are developing and benefitting from their courses and this helps add to their self-esteem. Managers and staff are responsive to local demand. They hold external events, some in conjunction with Family Learning programmes, to register prospective learners’ views on new courses, and the Service aims to be responsiveness to this demand. The breadth of provision is good, with an extensive range of accredited and community learning programmes that offers internal and external progression routes.
- Although attendance throughout the year appears to be good, it was low in a minority of classes during the inspection. While a coherent attendance monitoring process is in place, managers do not make effective use of in-year data to monitor retention and take timely measures to resolve any issues.
- Most tutors promote equality and diversity well in the classroom. Learners work in an atmosphere of support and mutual respect, with peer support and collaborative working a good feature of the learning.

<p>Modern foreign languages</p> <p>19+ Learning programmes</p> <p>Community learning</p>	<p>Good</p>
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- Learners make good progress on language courses, including British Sign Language. Learners build on previous knowledge, increase fluency in new aspects of a language and enjoy their learning. Alongside improved language skills, learners enhance their employment prospects and increase interpersonal skills. All this is reflected in generally good achievement of qualifications, though results vary between high for British Sign Languages and good in common courses such as German and French to low in smaller courses such as Arabic.
- Tutors use their high-level language skills and experience well to motivate and encourage learners, relating the language to a country’s culture which enlivens learning. Tutors improve learning by such things as the use of gestures and breaking down vocabulary into small parts. Other lively and engaging strategies include speed-dating style pairing for fluency practice in Spanish and audio ring tones to develop use of comparative adjectives in German.
- Learners develop independent research skills well and show confidence with the use of language dictionaries. Weaker learners receive good support from tutors. Attendance and punctuality are good on the vast majority of language courses.
- A few minor aspects of classroom organisation and management require improvement. Examples include tutors confusingly leaving language phrases from a previous session on display

in a different language to their lesson, or a disorganised end of a class resulting in learner confusion about what they should do next.

- Tutors use learning technology well to support learning including interactive word searches for hotel bookings in Spanish and a video clip for a British Sign Language conversation on the pros and cons of buying a house.
- Assessment of learners’ needs at the start of their course is effective. It includes an assessed piece of language work to ensure learners are on the correct language level or if they need transferring to a more appropriate course. Individual learning plans are meeting the needs of learners. Learning logs track weekly progress well with tutors setting appropriate targets for development, although the quality and effectiveness of these targets is inconsistent.
- Learners are able to access sufficient levels of additional support, with most learners' individual needs being well met with, for instance, lesson materials in braille. However, strategies to ensure that all aspects of learning difficulties are identified and then supported are not yet embedded across all of the provision.
- Tutors mark learners’ work well with clear annotation; this is often bi-lingual, with positive comments in the foreign language and improvement points for spelling and grammar made in English. Tutors regularly set homework, which they mark and return promptly.
- Support for the development of learners’ skills in English is inconsistent. This is of particular importance for the many learners where English is not their first language who have a need to develop English. Specific examples include incorrect use of upper and lower case letters and tutors amending their notes on whiteboards to the point where they are confusing.
- Advice and guidance at the start, during and at the end of a course are comprehensive. The provision includes a good range of courses at advanced level including international language qualifications available through links with European examination boards. A number of learners on advanced-level courses travel from outside Birmingham due to the variety and quality of languages on offer from BAES.
- Tutors develop and foster an inclusive learning environment with a high level of respect between learners from the city’s diverse local community. Learning resources appropriately reflect the backgrounds and cultures of the foreign languages. For example, in a Spanish lesson the tutor used a classical cartoon as a non-threatening way to discuss descriptions of personal character and physical characteristics.

<p>Foundation mathematics</p> <p>19+ Learning programmes</p> <p>Community learning</p>	<p>Good</p>
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- Good teaching, learning and assessment help learners gain confidence in using mathematics in everyday life and they value this chance to improve their skills, with a good proportion gaining a relevant qualification. Enthusiastic learners use their new skills and qualifications to help with entry into employment, progression to further education or in helping family members with their mathematics work.
- Tutors provide good and sometimes excellent support for learners and develop in them an ambition to succeed. Managers and staff are aware of the need to improve attendance and learners’ inductions now helpfully emphasise the importance of attendance to learners. Staff provide appropriate support for learners with additional needs. For example, one learner with visual impairment received the same information as others in a large print format and had a bigger calculator display.

- Most teaching and learning is good. In the best lessons, tutors improve learning by good use of techniques that require learners to support each other, help each other understand new concepts and explain calculations and check each other’s work under the tutors’ supportive supervision. Tutors make use of good resources, sometimes ones they have made themselves and these are successful in stimulating learning which is relevant and fun. In the few weaker lessons, tutors often attempt cooperation between individual learners and group work, but they do not plan this sufficiently well or deliver it to make learning effective enough.
- The best lessons make use of contexts which not only develop mathematics skills, but also link these skills with relevant employment practice or everyday life which is important for these learners. However, in weaker lessons, tutors teach mathematics without relating it to activities and tasks that are part of learners’ lives or potential employment.
- Staff have appropriate skills to sensitively support learners in appreciating and learning new concepts. Most tutors have worked in other areas of employment and have practical mathematics examples to use with learners in lessons. Not all have sufficient formal mathematics qualifications which reduces their ability to offer alternative ways of explaining concepts.
- Learners undertake a helpful assessment of their needs at the start of their course. Staff use this information to allocate learners to the appropriate programme of learning. The design of the curriculum now enables learners to start at two points during the year which helps meet their needs. Induction is thorough, although staff do not always incorporate mathematics from the beginning of learners’ programmes to establish an immediate feel for the subject. BAES has few higher-level GCSE mathematics classes available to allow all potential learners the chance to work towards achieving a high grade.
- Learners’ self-evaluation of their work during lessons is good. Tutors view, comment and clarify on this work and provide future priorities for learning. However, tutors often do not identify or review personal learning targets within individual learning plans. A good proportion of new learners have a specific progression aim in mind, including outcomes related to work. The induction and guidance process does not always help them understand how their course might realistically help those aims.
- Verbal feedback for learners in lessons is often good. In better examples of marked written work, tutors provide useful comments that include praise and help to develop further learners’ skills.
- Teaching and learning foster mutual respect and support between tutors and learners, and between learners. The best sessions also incorporate a developing understanding of equality and diversity. For example, one session was linking ‘pancake day’ with calculating food quantities while also increasing understanding of this occasion within the Christian calendar.

The effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
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- Leaders, managers and staff are fully committed to and provide good provision that meets the needs of the City of Birmingham and of learners, particularly the most disadvantaged. Through this work, they are developing stronger communities with more self-confident and active citizens. The Service’s work with a pilot community learning trust has led to a more coherent service from the several learning providers in the area.
- Support and challenge from elected councillors and senior council officers has greatly improved over the past three years. They have developed a good understanding of the performance and potential of BAES. Leaders and managers have improved the service they provide in the city’s wards through better integration of BAES’s work with other council initiatives. This joint working is impressive, given that the Service is funded from central government, not local sources.

- A strong system of observing teaching, learning and assessment, and good staff training and mentoring have improved the quality of provision. The observation process is thorough and effective in giving tutors clear guidance on how to improve learning. Managers use learners' views well and tutors particularly value the more frequent and less informal system of peer observations and managers' informal visits to the classroom. The recording of all observations is thorough and it is an integral part of the management of staff performance and professional development.
- BAES's management structure has changed since the previous inspection and this arrangement now provides better accountability and clearer lines of responsibility. Management of staff performance is good. Managers use a very detailed Birmingham City Council appraisal system for support staff, but sensibly this is not used for tutors who benefit from close support from managers and reviews that are more focused on their routine teaching. Senior staff use data effectively to monitor performance and to make changes to provision, but the data systems are not fully accessible and well used by all levels of staff.
- Despite the difficulties of operating within a reducing budget, leaders have invested well in improving such things as technology to support learning and systems for monitoring the attendance and performance of learners. Efforts have been partly successful in improving the accommodation at learning centres, but a number are in a sad state of repair with increasing potential to impact on the quality of the provision.
- The formal systems for quality improvement are good. The good use of observations is supported by an effective and comprehensive formal system of review and improvement planning. Managers and staff use the views of learners extensively in reviewing the work of BAES. The monitoring and improvement of sub-contractor provision is good.
- BAES makes excellent use of a wide range of intelligence, views and data to ensure its programmes meet the local priorities. This includes the effective encouragement of learners to take mathematics, English and ICT qualifications to improve their prospects of employment. Along with careful use of council data the Service considers useful predictions by the local enterprise partnership and detailed information from Jobcentre Plus and its own learning centres. The result is a good range of provision, although a few learners still have frustrations about the availability of courses, in terms of location and timing, or the opportunity to progress to higher-level courses in their neighbourhood.
- Working with partners is a very strong and helpful feature of the provision. The Service is increasingly working with employers, partly to help them in their social responsibility programmes as they try to recruit staff with low levels of skills or who were previously unemployed. Family Learning programmes are not only helping parents understand their children's schooling better, but are also helping participants start to learn, leading in instances to employment. BAES provides extensive and well-regarded training to other council departments, usually on a fee basis which means that BAES's resources are well utilised but their funds are still available for other, needy, learners. Innovative work with other learning providers means effective use of resources, such as using under-utilised classrooms in the evening.
- Managers and staff are successful in providing courses in areas of deprivation to raise the level of qualifications and attainment in these areas. Work also includes specific initiatives to improve the participation of males in learning, or raise ambitions amongst groups of citizens that might not normally have an ambition to undertake learning. The policies, procedures and plans for equality of opportunity are good and they are part of the reason why there is an all-pervading air of respect and tolerance throughout the work of BAES. A wide range of general and specialised training on such things as autism, dyslexia or transgender awareness helps staff understanding of the challenges facing some learners. BAES meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners and has appropriate arrangements when concerns arise.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Birmingham City Council – Adult Education Service

<p>Inspection grades are based on a provider’s performance:</p> <p>1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate</p>	Overall	19+ learning programmes	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
ICT for Users	2
Visual Arts	2
Modern foreign languages	2
Foundation mathematics	2

Provider details

Type of provider	Local authority							
Age range of learners	19+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 42							
	Part-time: 16,746							
Head of Adult Learning	Sue Knottenbelt							
Date of previous inspection	March 2011							
Website address	http://www.services.bgfl.org/myportal/57.cfm							
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+
Full-time	17	0	2	0	0	0	N/A	N/A
Part-time	33	5,675	40	1,855	3	155	N/A	N/A
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
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 learners aged 14-16	6,400							
Full-time	19							
Part-time	6,381							
Number of community learners	6,029							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Birmingham Employment Skills and Training Network Limited ■ Birmingham Ethnic Education and Advisory Service. 							

Contextual information

BAES aims its provision predominately at the post-19 population of the city of Birmingham which accounts for about 70% of the one million residents. BAES provides courses in nine main centres and a variety of smaller of community locations across the city. It offers several thousand courses in eleven subject areas, with seven having significant numbers of learners. Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities now account for around 47% of the population of the city. Birmingham's unemployment rate, at around 11%, is well above the national rate. Unemployment rates across Birmingham vary considerably between wards, with the highest rates reaching 20-30%. The city has a larger number of residents with no qualifications and low levels of basic skills than the national average. Birmingham City Council continues with a programme of savings including around 10% of its budget in 2013/14.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Andy Harris HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by BAES's head of adult learning as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of BAES'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 BAES. 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:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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