

The Mary Ward Centre

Specialist designated institution

Inspection dates		19–23 January 2015
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
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:

- the large majority of learners achieve very well on their courses, both within their local communities and at the main centres
- much good teaching, learning and assessment help learners to gain new skills and develop the confidence to progress to further study, voluntary work and employment
- learners, many of whom have complex lives and face significant barriers to learning, receive good support to take their first steps in learning and achieve successfully
- community outreach work is outstanding; the Mary Ward Centre (MWC) and its partners provide innovative and engaging learning for the most vulnerable members of the community through a wide range of outreach centres
- MWC is a very welcoming and inclusive place to study; tolerance and mutual respect ensure that learners work harmoniously with each other and the vast majority are enabled to make good progress with their studies
- managers work well with employers to develop a good range of personalised courses, providing excellent routes to employment and promotion at work
- trustees and managers have been successful in leading MWC through a period of significant change.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- teachers do not always use the findings from initial assessments well enough to plan individual learning programmes for all their learners
- not all teachers are confident or sufficiently skilled in integrating mathematics and information and learning technology (ILT) into learners' courses.
- managers do not always use their observations of teaching, learning and assessment effectively, to improve teaching and learning or successfully share best practice
- trustees do not always have sufficient knowledge of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to enable them to challenge managers effectively to improve the provision.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Provide training for all teachers so that they have the confidence and knowledge to integrate mathematics and ILT effectively into their lessons to develop and enhance learners' skills. Ensure that all teachers use the results from initial and on-going assessment consistently well to help match teaching to individual learning needs.
- Strengthen the priority to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to outstanding by using the findings from the observation of teaching, learning and assessment to deliver relevant staff development.
- Improve the rigour of trustees' monitoring of the quality of provision, and of their challenge to managers' to improve performance, by providing them with better management information on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- The Mary Ward Centre (MWC) is a specialist-designated institution providing accredited and non-accredited courses to learners aged 19 and over. Most learners study short, part time, non-accredited courses. The largest areas of provision are in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), and arts, media and publishing. A very small amount of provision is subcontracted to a single partner.
- MWC has continued to maintain the high performance found at the previous inspection. Teachers have high expectations and challenge learners well to ensure that they produce work of a good standard. Learners attend well and are punctual.
- Learners develop new skills on many courses. For example, on psychology courses, learners develop their debating skills well through focused discussions on the cultural perceptions of personal space. On coaching and instructing courses, learners understand how to plan learning to ensure safe handling of firearms.
- Learners' achievement on most accredited course is good although on a small minority, mostly ESOL at levels 1 and 2, it is low. Those learners who study with the subcontractor have done significantly less well than learners who study at the MWC, but their performance is now improving.
- Most learners make good progress in improving the standard of their spoken and written English. Learners on accredited provision in English achieve well. The small number of learners working towards a functional mathematics qualification do extremely well. However, on the majority of courses, many learners do not develop their skills in mathematics very well.
- Very few differences in achievement exist between various ethnic and other groups of learners. Learners of a Bangladeshi background do particularly well and those learners receiving additional support do slightly better than their peers. However, the small numbers of learners with a hearing impairment and those with fragile mental health achieve less well.
- MWC meets the local and national study needs of learners well. A high proportion of learners' complete short, non-accredited courses successfully; this is particularly helpful to vulnerable learners on the margins of society with no previous qualifications or a poor experience of learning.
- Learners speak passionately and enthusiastically about how their learning has improved their lives. Many describe their learning experience at MWC as 'life changing' for their families and for themselves, and remain in learning for significant periods.

- Progression rates within the centre's provision are good. Learners in community outreach provision gain the confidence to progress to non-accredited courses, and then on to accredited courses. Learners on accredited provision successfully move through many levels of qualifications and progress into work, self-employment, volunteering, and a few to university.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Inspectors observed activities in nine subject areas across all types of courses in the two main centres, the subcontractor's premises and within the community. The two subject areas reported on represent a sample of MWC's most significant provision and reflect well the ethos and priorities of trustees and senior managers.
- Good teaching, learning and assessment are reflected in the good achievements of learners and the positive development of their confidence, employment prospects and social skills. While much teaching and learning are good, too little is outstanding.
- Teachers develop learners' spoken English well. They skilfully prompt learners to extend their vocabulary and are highly effective in supporting the development of learners' debating skills. One learner with Asperger's Syndrome, who attends a history course, has found new confidence in her ability to present a constructive debate and now plans to write a book about Richard III.
- Teachers ensure that most learners rapidly acquire new skills and knowledge and are able to improve their own lives and those of their families and communities. Community interpreting courses are especially life changing, allowing learners who have progressed from ESOL learning to act as advocates for their own community. Many learners move into paid employment on completing their studies.
- Teachers enable most learners to make good progress. Learners are highly motivated by their teachers. They are well-qualified, often expert practitioners, who have an exceptional command of their subject. Learners quickly develop confidence in their ability to learn and to discuss openly how they feel. For example, in an art anthropology course, learners confidently and articulately discussed their emotional response to seeing the 'blood swept lands and seas of red' imagery symbolised in the November 2014 poppy display at the Tower of London.
- Teachers often plan lessons thoroughly and ensure that learners of different levels, ability and experience learn well together. In a complementary therapy lesson, learners of different ability practised their massage techniques on each other. A number of learners developed their knowledge of muscles and relaxation techniques, whilst others had progressed onto best practice in head and neck massage.
- Too few teachers successfully integrate mathematics or ILT within learners' subjects. They are not all confident and skilled to do this and insufficiently understand the importance of developing learners' skills and confidence in using everyday mathematics.
- Teachers' use of ILT in lessons, to enhance learning, is insufficient. Learners are keen to learn independently and practise their skills in between lessons; however, too many subject areas have too few learning materials on the MWC's virtual learning environment.
- Initial assessment of learners is comprehensive. However, a minority of teachers use this information insufficiently to inform individual learning in lessons, even though they use the results of the assessment well to identify learners' ability levels and barriers to learning. Well-directed learning support is effective in making sure that less-able learners contribute fully and progress quickly in their learning, and personal support plans are comprehensive.
- Initial advice and guidance are good. Learners appreciate the clear guidance and information they receive before starting their course.
- Career guidance provided for learners is good. MWC staff are skilful in exploring and directing learners to a wide range of employment, volunteering and study options. Leaders often develop new courses in response to learners' life and study ambitions, as with, for example, a community outreach course on making herbal remedies and toiletries designed for homeless women living in a hostel.

- Teachers and staff treat all learners and visitors to the MWC with dignity and respect. Learners feel safe in the welcoming, inclusive centres. Many describe their experience at MWC as 'like coming home to my family'. Learners on all courses and in all subject areas work harmoniously together and value the different contributions they each make. Learners gain an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe. Teachers ensure that learners broaden their understanding of equality and celebrate diversity.

Visual arts	Good
Community learning	

Teaching, learning and assessment in visual arts are good because:

- the proportion of learners who complete their course and achieve well is high; many learners produce work of a professional standard and progress into employment, community arts projects, volunteering and self-employment
- teachers are highly effective in using their own skills to develop the professional practice and good practical skills of their learners; learners greatly value the well-qualified teachers, many of whom are expert practitioners in their field
- learners are prepared for employment well and are actively encouraged by teachers to display, sell and exhibit their work; additional courses on exhibition event planning and budgeting prepare learners effectively for work and self-employment
- learners acquire a good range of practical skills; for example, in textile sculpture, learners embellish their sculptures through learning to hand stitch, apply collage skillfully, and further develop their drawing technique
- most learners develop the skills to work independently and manage their own learning well; teacher, peer and self-critical analysis are very successfully used to develop learners' self-reflection and evaluation skills
- learners develop good skills in English and apply them well to their studies; they use specialist language and terminology expertly in their oral and written work
- many teachers make excellent use of the opportunities London provides to enliven and enhance learning; learners on life drawing courses attend dance rehearsals at the Royal Ballet School to sketch dancers, and those on experimental print studies make good use of the Victoria and Albert Museum's textile collection to develop their ideas and work
- initial assessment is thorough and those learners who need individual care are supported well; visually impaired learners take an active part in visual arts courses, completing work of a comparable standard to their peers.

Teaching, learning and assessment in visual arts are not yet outstanding because:

- not enough teachers accurately measure the learning and progress learners make over time; the small number of learners who are repeating their course are not always clear about what they have learnt and what skills they need to perfect
- a small minority of teachers do not set sufficiently high professional standards in the work they expect from learners or reinforce good working practices; a small number of studios are cluttered, disorganised, and not conducive to learning.

English for speakers of other languages

Good

Community learning**Teaching, learning and assessment in ESOL are good because:**

- the proportion of learners who successfully complete their qualifications and develop good listening, language and spelling skills is high; the large majority of learners become more effective communicators and are now able to have productive discussions with school teachers, doctors and social care workers, for example
- learners take pride in their work, produce good pieces of writing, and are aspirational; they develop confidence to progress in their studies and become active citizens through volunteering in the community and at MWC
- learners work hard and successfully to improve their speaking and listening skills through effective job-seeking activities and intensive practice of accurate pronunciation; learners use their new confidence and improved speaking skills to good effect to improve their work conditions and job prospects
- learners make good progress in their learning, make good use of their time and work very collaboratively; they enjoy correcting each other's spelling errors and discussing their growing understanding of English language structures
- learners receive timely and constructive verbal and written feedback from teachers to guide them through tasks, ensuring that they complete work successfully, on time and are well prepared to take external examinations
- the support to enable learners to take an active part in life in Britain and in their communities is good; access to a broad range of extra-curricular activities ensures a very good knowledge of the world outside of their communities.

Teaching, learning and assessment in ESOL are not yet outstanding because:

- teachers do not provide sufficient opportunities for learners to develop good skills in using ILT to develop as independent learners and modern citizens
- not all teachers are expert in setting individual learning goals and they do not always make the best use of learners' initial assessments to plan well for individual learning; a small number of more-able learners do not make sufficiently rapid progress in their learning as they wait for slower learners to complete in class activities.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Trustees of MWC have maintained the good provision found at the time of the previous inspection. They have successfully led MWC through a recent period of significant upheaval and change to the senior leadership team. During this time, the proportion of learners who achieve and complete their course successfully has remained very high. Trustees and managers have visionary governance; leaders and staff at all levels understand well the values of MWC.
- The community outreach and widening participation programme is outstanding and works successfully with substantial numbers of the most vulnerable groups of learners. A significant feature is the innovative use of community art projects to bring together community groups. For example, the 'Vikings: journey of 1,000 boats' project exhibited in the main court of the British Museum brought together learners from homeless shelters, lone parents and learners with other complex needs to create an art piece complementing the national exhibition 'Vikings life and legend'. The project culminated in a community preview of the exhibition.
- Through highly effective partnership working with community groups across London, MWC provides an extensive range of unique courses personalised to the needs of learners. Managers use partner and learner feedback well to review and improve the quality of learning continually

and to flexibly schedule courses. Financial support for course fees is generous. Managers and learners actively fundraise to supplement the learner support fund.

- Managers successfully attract and retain high-calibre teachers, the vast majority of whom are current practitioners in their subjects. The breadth of expertise across a wide range of subject disciplines enriches the already extensive curriculum. Managers' and teachers' ambition for learners to succeed and attain high standards ensures that most learners do very well in their studies.
- Managers work well with employers to offer learners a good range of accredited courses, work experience, and a number of excellent progression routes that lead to meaningful employment, volunteering and community work. For example, learners on community interpreting courses work with translation organisations and legal aid centres to enable them to gain the essential skills they need to progress.
- While trustees play an active part in self-assessment and setting strategic direction, they do not have sufficient knowledge of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment at MWC. Management reporting on their quality is insufficiently comprehensive and detailed and does not always enable trustees to fully challenge managers and promote improvement.
- Performance management of the subcontractor is now much improved. Managers have reversed the previous poor performance and current learners are now making good progress in their studies.
- Managers make insufficient use of the outcomes of the MWC scheme to observe lessons, to secure maximum improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. A good range of professional development opportunities are taken by staff, but these are not always sufficiently influenced by the findings from observations. Development does not provide enough opportunities to share existing good practice, or help teachers improve their understanding of how best to integrate mathematics and ILT within their subject teaching.
- Self-assessment is robust and links closely to the MWC development plan. Trustees and managers use a range of indicators well to monitor performance. While the resulting self-assessment report is broadly accurate and identifies most of the key strengths and areas for improvement identified at inspection, it does not focus sharply enough on the detail and quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Trustees, managers and staff at all levels remain positive champions of social inclusion and learning opportunities for all. MWC enrolls learners from a wide range of backgrounds and experience, with very many facing the most severe barriers to learning. Highly trained staff ensure that learners' understanding of social inclusion is good. However, while trustees and managers review plans, policies, and the work of the equality and diversity team on an annual basis, the small minority of learners who are hearing impaired or who have fragile mental health continue to underachieve. The number of male learners who participate in learning, a weakness from the previous inspection, remains low.
- The safeguarding of all learners is good. Trustees and managers review safeguarding arrangements frequently. Staff work effectively to ensure vulnerable learners are well supported, cared for, feel and are safe. Staff assess all learners at the start of their course to determine any safeguarding risks and provide appropriate individual support.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

The Mary Ward Centre

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	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	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Outcomes for learners	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Visual arts	2
English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)	2

Provider details

Type of provider	Specialist designated institution							
Age range of learners	19+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	4901							
Principal/CEO	Suzanne Jackson							
Date of previous inspection	27 February 2009							
Website address	www.marywardcentre.ac.uk							
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+
	-	1630	-	165	-	59	-	51
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 14-16	-							
Full-time	-							
Part-time	-							
Number of community learners	329							
Number of employability learners	-							
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"> ▪ Blackfriars Settlement 							

Contextual information

The Mary Ward Centre (MWC) is a specialist-designated institution and a trust situated in the London Borough of Camden. With the Mary Ward Legal Centre, it is part of the Mary Ward Settlement established in 1892 by the Victorian philanthropist Mary Ward. A management committee and board govern MWC. The Warden, the senior post holder, has overall responsibility for MWC, supported by a Head of Adult Community Education. The provider has two main sites in central London and offers provision in many local community venues. The majority of learners are from London boroughs other than Camden. Most provision is non-accredited; all provision is part-time short courses. The large majority of learners are female and a quarter identifies themselves as from a Black or minority ethnic group. Almost half of all learners are eligible for nil or concessionary fees.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Julie Steele HMI

Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the Head of Adult and Community Education 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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