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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mr Jim Austin  
Interim Head of Adult Learning  
Croydon Adult Learning and Training  
London Borough of Croydon  
Bernard Weatherill House  
8 Mint Walk  
Croydon  
CR0 1EA

Dear Mr Austin

### **Short inspection of London Borough of Croydon, Croydon Adult Learning and Training, (CALAT)**

Following the short inspection on 12 and 13 October 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since CALAT was judged to be good in June 2010.

#### **This provider continues to be good.**

Your learners continue to receive good-quality education and training. Learners make good progress on their courses and achieve very well. CALAT's work is highly valued, both by the borough's councillors and senior managers, and by Croydon's residents. Managers work particularly closely and effectively with managers throughout the council to promote a clear vision and mission for community learning.

Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have continued to place improving the quality of provision for learners at the heart of their work. During the last two years, a successful and substantial structural review of the service has taken place, largely as a result of the significant reduction in funding for adult learning. Leaders and managers have taken the opportunity to better understand the educational and training needs of their local communities and employers, to help them prioritise the curriculum. Provision with poorer outcomes has been closed. Learning takes place in good-quality venues that are appropriately resourced.

Leaders and managers are strengthening the capacity to maintain and further improve the quality of provision. They now systematically use good-quality performance information as presented in your 'data dashboard' to inform their management actions, and there is good-quality overview and challenge by lead

councillors and the advisory governance board. Leaders and managers have a good understanding of what CALAT needs to do to further improve. However, this is not fully identified in the detail of quality improvement plans, to best help curriculum managers and tutors play their full part in improvement. You also understand that, although your lesson observation scheme identifies well the positive and weaker characteristics of teaching and learning, your current assessment of teaching and learning, especially for the significant proportion identified as outstanding, is too generous.

All of the areas for improvement noted at the previous inspection have been effectively actioned and are reflected in your own priorities for improvement, together with maintaining, and improving, standards of teaching, learning and assessment. You have been particularly successful in improving learners' achievements. Their overall achievement is now high, reflecting learners' good attendance and hard work, and the large amount of good teaching and learning.

Achievements for learners on a small minority of programmes, often those with small numbers, are too low. The service correctly identifies the need to improve these areas, and particularly so for foundation and GCSE mathematics, although achievement rates are well above the low national rates.

Tutors establish supportive learning environments and manage learning well. Learners with specific identified needs benefit from effective additional support; tutors implement appropriate strategies which ensure that learners are not disadvantaged or excluded from working with their peers.

Learners work well together and many make good progress. They enjoy their learning and develop good attitudes to their studies. Tutors plan for, and use, a good range of interesting tasks and activities that learners find interesting. These relate well to their interests and planned employment, and promote learning, understanding and skills development.

The majority of tutors make skilful use of questioning to check learners' understanding, encourage peer support effectively and enable learners to reflect on their learning. However, too many tutors of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and English are insufficiently skilled at checking learning in lessons, sometimes failing to provide sufficient challenge for more-able learners and on other occasions paying insufficient attention to the needs of less-able learners.

The effective use of information and learning technology (ILT) in lessons, an area for improvement at the previous inspection, has improved significantly. The majority of tutors use ILT well to promote more independent learning, although in English and ESOL lessons its use by tutors and learners is less well developed.

Learners' English and mathematical skills are well developed by tutors and in the better lessons they enthuse learners with appropriately paced teaching and learning

activities. Learners' speaking and listening skills in ESOL, English and vocational learning are also developed well.

You recognise that managers have more work to do to ensure that personal learning plans are of a consistently high quality and are always used well by tutors and learners. In the growing proportion of effective plans, learners identify their own clear and challenging targets and record their learning and progress effectively. However, too many plans have insufficiently challenging targets and do not always include learners' personal and social development or their development in English and mathematics.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and action is taken to safeguard CALAT's learners. Since the previous inspection, you have kept pace effectively with the various changes to safeguarding legislation, including implementing management obligations under the 'Prevent' duty.

CALAT's specific safeguarding arrangements are thorough and comprehensive and are well integrated with those of the local authority, usefully providing another level of monitoring and review. Safeguarding training for staff and learners is sound. Learners are successfully introduced to the risks of radicalisation and extremism.

Safer recruitment arrangements are in place and well used. Pre-employment checks are carried out on the basis of the thorough assessment of risk and the different roles of staff. Risk assessment is also well used to ensure that the safeguarding of identified vulnerable adult learners, and of children, is secure.

### **Inspection findings**

- The leadership and management of CALAT continue to be good, and ensure that learners' needs and priorities continue to be at the centre of your work, irrespective of the significant management changes and financial challenges over the last few years.
- CALAT is highly valued and regarded within the wider work of the council and by the local communities it serves. The curriculum is increasingly directed towards meeting better the priorities set by learners, the borough and employers.
- Outcomes are now much improved, with high achievement for learners, both for accredited and non-accredited provision. Achievements are too low in a very small proportion of courses.
- Leaders and managers have ensured that the quality of provision for learners remains good. Learners often benefit from good teaching and learning, which promotes the good progress that many make. In a small minority of lessons, tutors pay insufficient attention to meeting the individual needs of all learners. Overall, the quality of learners' personal learning plans are not yet good.

- CALAT's programme for judging the quality of teaching, learning and assessment successfully identifies aspects which require improvement, and managers take action to help tutors improve. However, as you have recognised, managers over-grade the quality of teaching and learning.
- CALAT continues to have good capacity to make and sustain improvements. The recent structural review has secured the place of the service within the borough's work and the competent and ambitious management team have a clear direction for quality improvement and development. They have a very good understanding of what needs to be done to further improve, although quality improvement plans do not make best use of this detailed understanding to help secure improvement.
- Councillors and senior council officers carefully review the work of the service, maintain good contact with its managers, staff and learners, and have a good understanding of CALAT's work.

### **Next steps for the provider**

In pursuit of CALAT's aim to become an outstanding provider, leaders and managers should ensure that:

- teaching, learning and assessment are consistently good or better, particularly tutors' planning and implementation of lessons, systematic checking of learning and meeting the individual needs of all learners
- building on the existing good practice, all personal learning plans are used comprehensively and well by tutors and learners to maximise learners' progress
- their very good understanding of the quality of provision and of areas which require improvement is fully used to write more focused quality improvement plans, to help maximise improvement
- learners' achievement improves further in the very small proportion of poorer-performing courses, and especially for foundation and GCSE mathematics.

Yours sincerely

David Martin  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, inspectors were assisted by the strategic service manager, curriculum, funding and performance, as nominee. We met with you and your management team, senior council officers, tutors, learners and councillors. Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment, and reviewed learners' written work. We reviewed key policies and documents, including those relating to self-assessment, performance and safeguarding. We also considered the views of learners and employers.