

# North East Lincolnshire Council

## Focused monitoring visit report

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**Name of lead inspector:** June Cramman HMI

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## **FOCUSED MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS**

### **Context and focus of visit**

North East Lincolnshire Council Community Learning Services (CLS) is part of the council's Directorate of Environment, Economy and Housing. The previous adult and community learning service and the employment development service merged in 2006 to create one service delivering adult, community, and work-based learning. During 2010 the service completed this re-structure, fully integrating both parts of the service.

The service contracts with the Skills Funding Agency and Young People's Learning Agency to provide programmes in further education, personal and community development, and work-based learning. It is based on the south bank of the river Humber.

The service is managed by a head of service, supported by three senior managers and a curriculum team which includes 68 full- and part-time tutors.

The provider was last inspected in November 2008 when overall effectiveness, capacity to improve, achievement and standards, quality of provision, and leadership and management were all graded good. The four subject areas inspected were: arts, media and publishing; classical and modern foreign languages; preparation for life and work; and business, administration and law. All of these were graded as good. This report focuses on the themes explored during the monitoring visit.

### **Themes**

#### **Self-assessment and improvement planning**

**What progress is CLS making in using self-assessment processes to make and sustain improvements?**

**Reasonable progress**

CLS has made good use of its post-inspection action planning to drive improvement and address issues identified by the 2008 inspection. The quality improvement plan accompanying the annual self-assessment report is a working document which is constantly referred to and updated. Actions are broken down into achievable, time-bound tasks with responsibility clearly allocated. The self-assessment process is inclusive and makes good use of learners', staff and employers' feedback. The self-assessment process is comprehensive and evaluative. However, not all subject area reports contain sufficient evidence to support the grades awarded. For example, warehousing and distribution provision is graded outstanding but no data are incorporated to support the grade, and the observation of teaching and learning profile supports a good, not an outstanding, grade.

A new course review process has recently been introduced but it is not yet sufficiently robust. Course reviews are not completed consistently. For example, some do not have grades and many do not contain appropriate evidence to support

the grades and judgements. As CLS has identified, there is insufficient follow up to ensure identified issues are addressed.

### Outcomes for learners

**What progress has CLS made in improving outcomes for learners?**

**Reasonable progress**

At the last inspection achievement and standards were good. Learners' success rates on further education courses had significantly improved, with success rates for some courses well above national rates. Headline success rates have continued to show a steady upward trend in the years following the inspection and they remain above national averages.

CLS has maintained high success rates on adult safeguarded learning programmes with a slight decline in 2010/11.

Overall apprenticeship success rates at the last inspection were high. Since the inspection CLS has, until 2010/11, maintained a steady upward trend in overall success rates and also in the rate at which apprentices complete in the planned time. However, CLS 2010/11 data show a decline in both of these rates to satisfactory levels. Success rates for apprentices aged 16 to 18 fared worse. This reflects the change to apprenticeship programmes whereby all apprentices have to be in full employment to stay on the course. Many learners could not find work or lost employment in this year.

Train to Gain overall rates generally kept pace with the national averages until 2010/11. The rate for completion within the planned timescale was high in 2009/10, 9% points above the national average. However, provider data for 2010/11 show a dip in both rates.

Learners enjoy their provision and gain good skills and knowledge. Learners with particular barriers to learning, such as those with disabilities, improve their confidence and self-esteem very effectively and widen both their social and professional contacts.

### Quality of provision

**What progress have managers and staff made in improving teaching and learning so that more teaching is good?**

**Reasonable progress**

In the last inspection teaching and learning were judged as satisfactory overall as too much of the teaching was satisfactory. CLS observation of teaching and learning grade profile is now showing a steady upward trend with fewer satisfactory grades.

CLS has increased the number of learning support assistants who attend lessons and learners receive this individual support very speedily. However, the quality of this support is not systematically measured.

CLS has prioritised the use of information technology and this has provided more variety in the teaching. It has re-distributed computers, moving them from large computer workshops into classrooms so that all tutors and learners have direct access to internet-enabled computers. All classrooms have interactive whiteboards and staff have received appropriate training in their use. Work-based learners benefit from wider use of digital recorders and cameras to support assessments. Learners enjoy this more interactive approach.

Staff development to improve teaching and learning is satisfactory. All appropriate staff either have, or are working towards, teaching qualifications. A good number of staff have information, advice and guidance qualifications.

**What progress has the provider made to improve the narrow range of choices on some programmes?** **Significant progress**

Since the last inspection the service has continued its highly effective re-structure to integrate work-based learning with adult and community learning and has successfully increased the programme range. Managers have re-written the priorities of the service to focus on reaching learners with barriers to learning and work. They have developed more cost effective work for learners who have been in the provision for a number of years and for whom current programmes are no longer suitable. This retains valuable funding for the most vulnerable in the area. Staff work hard to attract funding successfully to enable the service to meet the needs of a wide range of learners with multiple barriers to learning and employment.

Many programmes now in place were not present at the last inspection. In work-based learning, the programme offer has increased considerably, both in the levels of courses on offer and in the range of vocational areas offered. These are planned jointly with key partners like Jobcentre Plus and make good use of labour market information. Staff work very effectively with employers coming into the area to design programmes that give learners the skills and confidence to get to interviews and gain jobs.

**What progress have managers made to improve the use of feedback from learners on the quality of the information, advice and guidance they receive?** **Significant progress**

In response to learners' feedback, CLS has increased the amount of information, advice and guidance provided and has also increased the number of sites where information, advice and guidance are offered. At the 2008 inspection information, advice and guidance were provided by one member of staff at two locations. Now six staff provide the service at 15 locations in direct response to learners' requests. Last year over 1,200 sessions were provided. Learners interviewed during the monitoring visit reported that they have had good access to advice and guidance which they find useful.

A new learner service's officer post has been created to support young learners. The officer provides support to learners suffering from issues such as homelessness, substance misuse and poor time-keeping. A breakfast club has successfully improved punctuality. In response to learners' concerns and requests for help, staff have been trained to carry out pregnancy tests and Chlamydia screening and good links have been made with the local walk-in NHS surgery. Attendance has improved.

The range of provision and progression routes have been extended in response to learners' requests. For example, additional units are now delivered on the advanced level diversity qualification, and a cookery programme in which numeracy is embedded is now offered.

**Leadership and management**

**What progress has been made to improve the quality monitoring arrangements in some aspects of the provision**

**Reasonable progress**

Since the 2008 inspection the provider has made good progress in standardising quality monitoring systems. The same system is now used consistently for all aspects of CLS work including adult and community learning, work-based learning and short-term project work. Quality assurance processes and observations for work-based learning now cover induction, initial assessment, teaching and learning, and the learner review process.

Appropriate and timely action is now taken to improve teaching and learning sessions identified as satisfactory. A range of interventions, including one-to-one support and peer observation, have helped these tutors develop and improve. The judgements contained in the written records of the observations support the grades awarded and these are subject to a rigorous moderation process. However, observations do not take into account fully the impact on learning made by learning support assistants.

The use of management information has improved and targets for recruitment, retention and achievement are monitored. The impact of the progress made in meeting these targets is discussed at course meetings.

Processes for the recognition and recording of progress and achievement were judged as satisfactory at the last inspection, but with some inconsistencies in their application. All staff now apply these processes appropriately. However, too much reliance is placed on learners' self-evaluation of their initial and final attainments.

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