

Wakefield Council

Inspection report

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Name of lead inspector: Jan Smith HMI

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Type of provider: Local Authority

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Information about the provider

1. Wakefield district has a population of approximately 324,000 people and covers around 350 square kilometres of mixed urban and rural communities. Wakefield ranks 66th in terms of deprivation out of 345 local authorities in England and has particular problems of low household income and employment. The Wakefield district overall has relatively few minority ethnic residents at 3.3% of the population compared with 13% across England. However, in some areas a higher proportion is found, mainly around Wakefield city centre.
2. Located within the council's directorate for school and lifelong learning, Wakefield Adult and Community Education Service (ACES) supports key local authority initiatives and strategies. The service has recently undergone a management restructuring, the second since the previous inspection in 2008. Reporting to the lead officer for quality and curriculum, six programme managers, one yet to be appointed, are responsible for designated curriculum areas and cross-curricular aspects of the service. Ten senior tutors and 85 contracted tutors have direct responsibility for course delivery.
3. Wakefield ACES offers courses in 15 subject areas across 28 venues. It uses personal and community development, employer-responsive and learner-responsive funding to support learners back into learning, and to offer learning for enjoyment and learning to enhance job satisfaction, career progression and employability. Apprenticeship training is contracted separately and delivered by the local authority.
4. The subject areas inspected and separately graded were information and communication technology (ICT); sport, leisure and recreation; visual arts; classical and modern foreign languages and literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL).

Type of provision	Number of learners in 2009/2010
Provision for young learners: Further Education (16–18) Foundation learning	154 part-time learners 116 part-time learners
Provision for adult learners: Learning for qualifications Learning for social and personal development	2,165 part-time learners 4,576 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain Apprenticeships	334 learners 14 apprentices

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
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Capacity to improve	Grade 2
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	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	3

Learning for qualifications	Grade
Information and communication technology	3
Literacy, numeracy and ESOL	2
Learning for social and personal development	Grade
Sport, leisure and recreation	2
Visual arts	2
Classical and modern foreign languages	2

Overall effectiveness

5. The overall effectiveness of Wakefield ACES learning provision is good. Managers have provided good leadership to maintain and improve the service through a period of significant change since the previous inspection. Arrangements for safeguarding are good. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory but is not planned strategically across the whole service. The service listens and responds very well to the views of learners.
6. Outcomes for learners are good overall. Most learners on accredited courses stay on their courses and achieve their qualifications. Learners on non-accredited courses develop good skills and knowledge to meet their personal objectives. Many are able to make a positive contribution that benefits the wider community. Learners value highly the health, employability and social benefits they gain from their courses.

7. Teaching, learning and assessment have improved and are good. Tutors provide variety and successfully encourage learners to participate and progress in class. Individual learning plans are generally used well to monitor progress, but some inconsistency remains in the quality of this, across subjects. Tutors in some classes use learning technologies very effectively to enrich learning. Learners would benefit if these were used more widely. Learners feel safe and have a clear understanding of safe working in practical classes and studios.
8. Wakefield ACES offers a good range of provision across a wide variety of subjects at different levels in accessible and convenient venues. The service works very effectively with partners to improve employability across all areas of the district, particularly in parts of the community where participation has previously been low. Support for learners through the provision of helpful information, advice and guidance, and additional learning support is good overall.

Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Learners on non-accredited programmes, 65% of all provision, successfully achieve their personal learning objectives. Success rates on accredited courses have improved significantly over the last three years and are now around the national average. Many learners gain significant social and health benefits, gain in confidence and employability, and are able to make a positive contribution to the community.
- Teaching and learning are good overall with some outstanding features. Tutors make skilful use of a range of teaching methods to enliven lessons. The extension of the good use of learning technologies, seen in a minority of lessons, would benefit learners. The effective use of individual learning plans to assess the starting point of learners and measure their progress and achievement has improved but remains variable in quality.
- Provision reflects the strategic priorities of the service and meets the needs of learners very effectively through a wide range of courses at different levels and locations. The service has increasingly targeted provision towards the most deprived areas in the community. A very successful employment skills programme and a small-scale apprenticeship programme support the council's workforce development.
- The service collaborates very effectively with a wide range of partners to meet its objectives of tackling worklessness, improving employability skills and extending participation across the community. These partners include Jobcentre Plus, Wakefield and District Housing Association, voluntary and community partners and the local further education college. Learning centres are located in the most disadvantaged communities.
- Support for learners has improved and is very good. The service provides generally good information and guidance to help learners select suitable courses. Well-coordinated arrangements to meet learners' additional support needs are very effective.
- Strategic and curriculum management are good. Senior managers have worked hard with staff to maintain and improve the performance of the service through a period of considerable change since the previous inspection. The newly-

appointed team of programme managers works very effectively with tutors to raise standards and improve performance. Staff feel well supported.

- The service has good safeguarding arrangements. All staff receive an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check and key staff have received additional training to support them in carrying out their roles. Staff take a robust approach to the use of risk assessment. Managers liaise particularly well with police and social services to resolve quickly any safeguarding issues. Learners say that they feel safe and are very aware of safe working practice, including e-safety.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory and reinforced well in the classroom in some subjects. The service has an appropriate equalities action plan. However, the action plan does not include detailed references to performance differences between different groups at service-wide level. Wakefield ACES does not have a designated officer or a dedicated forum for the promotion of equality and diversity.
- The service has a well-established learner involvement strategy. Programme managers regularly chair focus groups with learners to gauge their opinion on all aspects of their learning. They take prompt action to resolve any concerns raised. Employers also regularly complete a survey. The service feeds back to users the results of improvement actions it has taken.
- Self-assessment and quality improvement planning are good. Managers make very effective use of data to support self-assessment judgements. Curriculum quality improvement plans are clear. The teaching and learning observation procedures are rigorous and accurate in grading lessons. The service has used this process effectively to identify poor performance and to raise standards. The self-assessment report is accurate and inspectors agreed with most of the service's judgements and grades.

What does Wakefield ACES need to do to improve further?

- Continue to set challenging targets in order to improve success rates further on accredited courses.
- Continue to extend good practice, particularly in the use of learning technologies, in order to improve further the quality of teaching and learning across the service.
- Develop consistency in the effective use of individual learning plans to monitor learners' progress.
- Implement an effective service-wide equalities strategy to ensure that the promotion of equality and diversity is integrated into all aspects of the provision.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the wide choice of courses and levels at convenient locations and times
- the chance to develop new skills and meet new friends
- high-quality teaching
- patient and supportive tutors who explain things clearly

- the health benefits from sports sessions
- the very helpful staff in the centres.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the length of lessons and courses to give more time to learn
- better refreshment facilities in some venues
- clearer information about the content and level of some courses.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

9. Wakefield ACES demonstrates good capacity to improve. Most inspection grades have improved since the previous inspection. Outcomes have improved significantly over the last three years. Success rates on accredited provision are generally satisfactory and are well above national rates on preparation for life and work programmes. The proportion of learners on non-accredited programmes who achieve their learning aims is high. Current learners make good progress and achieve well. ACES sets ambitious targets and has highly effective business planning and performance management arrangements to ensure they are met. The service has skilfully managed the several reorganisations that have taken place since the previous inspection without any adverse impact on learners.
10. Quality improvement arrangements have been effective in bringing about improvements. The service effectively uses a robust observation of the teaching and learning process to identify and tackle underperformance and to disseminate best practice in teaching. This provides a powerful driver for improving the quality of provision and outcomes for learners. Managers rigorously monitor quality improvement plans and ensure that staff, at all levels, contribute to improving the provision. They have a very good understanding of data and make good use of them to monitor performance and to set targets. The service has a good understanding of its key strengths and areas for improvement.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

11. Outcomes for learners have continued to improve over the last three years and are good. On the majority of non-accredited programmes, 65% of all provision, learners successfully achieve their personal learning objectives. The overall achievement rate was 89% in 2008/09 rising to 95% in 2009/10. Overall retention improved over the same period from 88% to 92% and is satisfactory or better in all subject areas. Success rates on accredited courses, 35% of provision, have also improved, rising from 68% in 2007/08 to 75% in 2009/10, slightly below the national average. Early indications are that there has been a further improvement in 2010/11. The service has strengthened procedures for recognising and recording progress and achievement and this has improved the rigour of assessment on non-accredited courses.
12. Learners enjoy their learning and are highly motivated. Many gain significant social and health benefits from their participation in classes. For some, an improvement in economic and employment opportunities is an additional and much valued gain. Many are able to make a positive contribution to the community as a result of their studies; for example, organising a school exchange, and setting up small businesses related to sport and leisure. Learner surveys report high levels of satisfaction with provision. Learners feel safe in the classroom and around centres.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

13. Teaching and learning are good. Aspects of good teaching were seen in each of the graded subject areas, with outstanding features in a few. Tutors plan thoroughly to meet individual learners' needs, making skilful use of a range of learning methods, including practical demonstrations, group tasks, role play and games, to enliven teaching sessions. Tutors encourage learners to interact and work collaboratively. Some use learning technologies, such as interactive white boards and the virtual learning environment, very successfully. However, this good practice is not sufficiently widespread. In a few lessons, tutors do not provide opportunities that meet the full range of needs within their group. The effective use of individual learning plans to assess the starting point of learners and measure their progress and achievement has improved but remains variable in quality.
14. Wakefield ACES provides programmes that are accessible to learners across Wakefield, at different times and levels. Consistent with its strategic priorities, it has increasingly targeted provision towards the most deprived areas. This includes a very successful programme to build employment skills. A small-scale apprenticeship programme supports the council's workforce development aims.
15. The service collaborates very effectively with a wide range of partners to meet its objectives of tackling worklessness and improving employability skills. Learning centres are located in the most disadvantaged communities. The service works together with Jobcentre Plus to provide a skills assessment service for unemployed people. The Job Centre refers a large number of its clients to the service's ICT and literacy and numeracy provision. Wakefield ACES has also worked in partnership with Wakefield and District Housing Association to provide opportunities for apprenticeship training, teaching in the lifelong learning sector, and literacy and numeracy. Managers work very well with a wide range of local voluntary and community partners to offer accessible programmes in local venues that meet learners' needs and provide a good range of opportunities for progression. It works well with a local further education college to avoid duplication of provision.
16. The service supports learners very well. Good and improved information and guidance are helping to ensure learners select suitable courses and complete their studies. An information and guidance session towards the end of each course supports learners to progress to further learning where appropriate. The service uses initial assessment very effectively to identify and meet learners' individual needs; for example, in the development of literacy and numeracy skills, support for learning difficulties, including dyslexia, and other disabilities such as hearing impairment. Well-coordinated arrangements are very successful in supporting learners to achieve their full potential on their courses. The variety of ways in which support is offered, including individual, in-class and group support, referral, and access to specialist equipment, makes efficient use of resources to meet successfully a wide range of individual needs.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

17. The service manager and the highly committed senior management team have worked hard with staff to maintain and improve the performance of the service through a period of considerable change since the previous inspection. The service meets its key priority of improving employability by developing skills for the most disadvantaged groups and tackling worklessness effectively. The newly appointed team of programme managers works very well with tutors to raise standards and improve performance. The new management structure has helped to support communications between staff at all levels. Staff feel fully supported and understand the service's aims and priorities.
18. The service has good safeguarding arrangements. It follows the rigorous safeguarding policy and procedures of Wakefield Council. All staff, including part-time and non-teaching staff, receive an enhanced CRB check. The service maintains an up-to-date central register of the CRB status of each member of staff. The two designated safeguarding officers have received additional training to help them perform their role effectively. The learning venues are welcoming. Learners say that they feel safe and that staff and other learners treat them with respect. They are very aware of safe working practice, including e-safety. Staff carry out risk assessments and implement appropriate control measures when necessary. They systematically record safeguarding concerns and ensure that actions taken are logged and appropriate colleagues informed when an issue is resolved. Managers liaise very well with police and social services to resolve swiftly safeguarding issues.
19. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Tutors in some subjects make good use of opportunities in the classroom to raise learners' awareness. Managers carry out appropriate equality and diversity impact assessments. The service's marketing materials carefully avoid stereotypical images. Staff receive regular training on many aspects of equality and diversity. Learners demonstrate a satisfactory understanding of their rights and responsibilities.
20. Curriculum level quality improvement plans contain appropriate actions to minimise differences in performance. The service has an appropriate equalities action plan which is closely allied to the council's corporate plan. However, the plan does not address equalities issues at a strategic level. The specified actions do not include detailed references to performance differences between different groups at service-wide level. The service deals with equalities issues during learner focus group meetings or in staff meetings, but does not have a dedicated forum for the promotion of equality and diversity or a designated officer.
21. Arrangements to collect the views of learners and employers are good. The service has a well-established learner involvement strategy. Programme managers regularly chair focus groups with learners to gauge their opinion on all aspects of their learning. They take prompt action to resolve any concerns raised. A learner representative sits on the service's advisory group. Observations of teaching and learning reports contain appropriate judgements about learners' views on the quality of teaching. Learners also complete an end-of-programme evaluation. Employers regularly complete a survey.

Managers make good use of the information from surveys to improve the provision. The service responds efficiently and effectively when a learner or employer raises a specific issue or when users make a complaint. The service feeds back to users the results of improvement actions it has taken.

22. The self-assessment process engages all staff and is thorough, critical and accurate. Managers make good use of data to support self-assessment judgements. Quality improvement plans for each curriculum area contain clear actions to tackle identified weaknesses and senior managers monitor these plans closely. Wakefield ACES considerably strengthened its observation of the teaching and learning process following the last inspection. The process is now rigorous and accurate in grading lessons. Teachers receive clear and constructive feedback to help them improve. The service has used this process effectively to identify poor performance and to raise standards. The self-assessment report accurately identified most of the judgements and grades were in line with those given by inspectors.
23. Wakefield ACES manages and uses its resources well. It provides good value for money. The service provides learning from 28 centres in accessible venues across the Wakefield district, which are suitably equipped and serve local communities well. Staff are well-qualified and experienced. The newly-introduced management structure has supported a very responsive and flexible adult learning service.

Learning for qualifications

Other learning for qualifications provision considered as part of the main findings but not separately graded: science and mathematics; agriculture, horticulture and animal care; construction, planning and the built environment; retail and commercial enterprise; arts, media and publishing; education and training; family learning; and business, administration and law.

Information and communication technology

Grade 3

Context

24. An acting programme manager, a senior tutor and one full-time and nine part-time teachers support 412 current learners who are enrolled on 41 courses in 15 venues across Wakefield. They range from beginners to advanced level. Seventy per cent of learners are working towards qualifications. Subjects offered include using general information technology programs, the internet, and digital imaging. Sixty-six per cent of learners are women, 94% are White British and 50% are aged 50 or over.

Key findings

- Overall, outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Success rates at intermediate and advanced levels are good. These are balanced by lower success rates at foundation level. The success rates on one foundation level course fell to 45% in 2010/11 which is very low. Learners on courses for beginners succeed at rates close to national averages, although their success rates have failed to keep pace with increases in these averages. Attendance is satisfactory at about 85%, and progression to further study and employment is also satisfactory.
- Learners gain significantly in confidence as they develop practical ICT skills. For example, learners develop good practical skills in digital imaging. Others become adept at using the internet and develop skills potentially valuable to employers. Some go on to make a positive contribution to the community, becoming teaching support workers, for example, or helping in the learning centres.
- Learners feel safe and can make informed choices about health and well-being. They understand and use good working practices at computers. They are very aware of e-safety. They understand their rights and responsibilities and know who to complain to if necessary.
- Most teaching is good. Classrooms are well equipped and welcoming with up-to-date software. Teachers make good use of screen projectors and a virtual learning environment which makes resources accessible over the internet. They are particularly adept at encouraging learners who are apprehensive about returning to learning or using computers. They offer friendly, patient support and are sensitive to learners' ages and maturity.
- Learners find their lessons highly enjoyable. They value the relaxed atmosphere in classes and the extra facilities often available, such as work clubs. Tutors set interesting work, such as learning internet search skills by trying to find song

lyrics. In a few lessons tasks are particularly relevant to learners' own aims. For instance, one group developed a presentation on how to get a job.

- In other sessions the pace of learning is too slow. Teaching does not take enough account of differences between learners, so that the more able wait for long periods while the less able catch up. In others, learners who have different software at home need more support to relate what they are learning to their own computers.
- The service successfully meets the needs and interests of users. The council, Jobcentre Plus and local employers refer learners, and value the service's professionalism and flexibility. To meet the council's priority to widen participation, courses from beginners to advanced level are held in community centres located in areas of significant deprivation. These centres provide tangible further benefits to learners, such as health clubs.
- Support for learners is good. Many tutors provide extra support, helping learners with their home laptops and using email to support them remotely. Information and guidance provided to learners are managed very effectively. Course information includes course details, pre-requisite skill requirements and expectations of learners. Initial assessment accurately identifies skills and all learners spoken to believe they are on the correct level of course. Support for learners with additional needs is appropriate.
- Safeguarding is good. Active promotion makes learners very aware of the issue. Online safeguarding is particularly thorough and learners have a very good awareness of how to protect themselves. They also have a good awareness of safe ICT working practices and of how to keep their computers and personal data secure.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers have a clear strategy for developing the curriculum and make good use of local information to implement this. The service sets appropriate targets for improving standards, but not all staff are fully aware of these. Data are used successfully to identify areas of concern. Recent initiatives have been introduced to improve provision and current learners are on course to succeed.
- Quality improvement procedures are broadly satisfactory. Lesson observations are used effectively to identify and share good practice. They generate useful action plans and most development needs identified in the plans are met. Managers implement appropriate staff development initiatives to identify and redress poor performance. However, the self-assessment report failed to give sufficient weight to the poorer results at foundation level and the lack of improvement in beginners' courses.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Managers thoroughly analyse participation and outcomes. They are particularly effective at engaging difficult-to-reach learners, such as those from disadvantaged areas. Staff receive appropriate training. Learners understand how to complain if necessary and managers respond quickly to complaints and suggestions from learners.

What does Wakefield ACES need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that lesson content and activities take full account of learners' existing skills, interests and home software, as identified through initial assessment.
- Provide more challenging work both for the more able and those with poor keyboarding skills, and ensure the pace of learning on beginners' courses creates appropriate expectations for those progressing to foundation level.
- Improve quality improvement by attaching greater weight to outcomes for learners at course level in course reviews, self-assessment, and the observations of teaching and learning, and by monitoring the impact of actions to rectify underachievement.

Literacy, numeracy and ESOL

Grade 2

Context

25. Provision covers literacy, numeracy and ESOL from entry level to intermediate level. Most provision is accredited. At the time of inspection, there were 568 learners on the courses of which 63% were women. Twenty-two different venues are used including schools, community centres, hospitals, children's centres and business centres. The subject area is managed by a programme manager supported by three senior course tutors and 15 contracted tutors.

Key findings

- Success rates have improved and outcomes are good. All current learners are making good progress and are meeting their agreed targets. Success rates have improved from 63% in 2008/09 to 69% in 2009/10 and are now high at 80%. Retention is also good with year-on-year improvements.
- Learners enjoy their learning, make good progress and improve their literacy and numeracy skills. They work well together and support each other on a range of work tasks. Learners feel safe and tutors ensure safe working practices. Learners display good improvements in their personal and social development and these improvements enhance their independent living skills, their effectiveness in their job or in helping them to look for employment.
- Initial assessment of learners' skills is good. Findings from the numeracy and literacy diagnostic screening identify preferred styles of learning and are used effectively by all tutors to ensure that learners work at an appropriate level and pace. Tutors make satisfactory use of individual learning plans. In all sessions learners are encouraged to complete personal diaries which form part of their development plan.
- Teaching and learning are good. Good use is made of a variety of learning materials including effective use of interactive whiteboards and PowerPoint to stimulate learning further. Lessons are thoroughly planned and there is good management of the learning environment. Learners are keen to contribute to discussions and to work collaboratively.
- The monitoring and recording of learners' progress are good. Good resources are available and are used appropriately to support learning. These include the use of information and learning technology with large keyboards for visually impaired learners. In ESOL classes, learning documents are very well produced and creatively designed.
- Programmes fully meet the needs and interests of learners. Staff have a very good understanding of learners' needs and challenge them to continue to develop their numeracy and literacy skills to higher levels.
- Good partnership arrangements with an extensive range of statutory and voluntary agencies are used effectively to promote social cohesion as well as assisting in the recruitment of learners. Partnership arrangements with the local college, schools and other organisations, including employers, are particularly good, offering suitable progression routes for learners and helping them to improve further their employability skills.

- Support for learners is good. Additional support is available to learners wishing to develop their job-seeking and ICT skills. Good access to information, advice and guidance services allows learners to make informed choices about their progression routes. Learners benefit from free courses of study and crèche facilities. Dyslexic learners benefit from specialist classes that provide very effective support.
- Leadership and management are good. Senior managers have successfully implemented well-focused actions for improvement. Managers support the staff very well in carrying out their work. Communication is good and staff feel fully informed about developments in the programme area. However, the service lacks a clear Skills for Life strategy to identify how the programme area is to further develop its work.
- The performance of staff is carefully monitored. The comprehensive and regular observation of teaching and learning offers very effective support for tutors to develop their practice. Several tutors have improved their observation grades over the last year as a result of this well-planned and coordinated activity. However, good practice is not always shared between staff.
- Safeguarding is good. Centre managers give learners good information on safeguarding at induction. All staff have a good awareness of safeguarding and how to respond to issues of concern. Safeguarding information is fully integrated into lessons. Learners feel safe in their centres, understand the need to treat others with respect and know who to contact should they feel bullied, treated unfairly or harassed.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Good use is made of wall displays. Very effective strategies are used by tutors to explain cultural diversity and improve the vocabulary of learners with English as an additional language. Tutors encourage learners to voice their views on equality and diversity and to discuss the impact these have on their day-to-day lives. Tutors actively target specific issues of concern to help close the achievement gap.
- Learners are encouraged to express their views and good use is made of feedback from learners to improve the quality of their experience. The strong emphasis on celebrating success contributes to learners' motivation to progress further.

What does Wakefield ACES need to do to improve further?

- Develop a clear Skills for Life strategy to focus and prioritise future curriculum developments and further develop working arrangements with partnership organisations.
- Review arrangements for sharing good practice among staff to ensure that all tutors are fully aware of and use successful learning strategies within the programme area.

Learning for social and personal development

Other learning for qualifications provision considered as part of the main findings but not separately graded: agriculture, horticulture and animal care; history, philosophy and theology; education and training; and family learning.

Sport, leisure and recreation

Grade 2

Context

26. The service offers mostly non-accredited courses to 588 current learners in 28 venues across Wakefield. Some 89% of learners are women, 13% are from minority ethnic groups and 4% have declared a disability. Non-accredited courses include yoga, fitness and tai chi. The small but growing amount of accredited provision is made up of advanced sports massage, an intermediate gym instructors' certificate and an apprenticeship in sport and leisure. The curriculum is delivered by ten tutors who are supported by a senior tutor and programme manager.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. All learners enjoy their learning and course completion is high. Learners display good levels of skill and knowledge. Attendance is good and all learners make good progress in class relative to their ability. Success rates for the small number of learners on an accredited programme are outstanding.
- Learners make good progress, attributing many physical benefits to the learning sessions they receive. They are able to give examples of improvements in general health and well-being, mobility and the relief from specific health conditions. Learners clearly value the additional social activities linked to some classes.
- Learners feel safe. Tutors complete health screening and use it effectively to plan lessons. They consider the medical conditions and injuries of the learners and adapt class activities to provide a safe learning experience. Tutors conduct appropriate risk assessments of learning activities.
- The promotion of issues relating to health and well-being is good. Tutors are knowledgeable and inform learners of the wider benefits of the activity they are doing. Some sessions have been adapted to incorporate these wider aspects of health, such as weight loss and healthy eating. Health benefits from learning allow them to have more active lifestyles.
- Learners make an outstanding contribution to the community. Some have gained employment as a result of referral procedures connected to keep fit classes. Many sports massage learners have gained a new related job role or have started their own businesses as a result of gaining their qualification. Improvements in the confidence of some learners have helped them engage more effectively with other public services.

- Teaching and learning are good. In the best lessons learners show high levels of enthusiasm and sessions provide sufficient challenge to stretch all participants. Tutors are highly knowledgeable and help learners correct poor technique. Many sessions display effective levels of differentiation. For example, in tai chi and yoga very experienced learners are effectively taught side by side with relatively new learners. However, they do not always use a sufficient variety of activities or make full use of information and learning technology.
- The service has taken highly effective steps to provide access to sport and leisure sessions in the most deprived areas in order to combat health inequalities. In addition, the service has actively sought to provide sessions for organisations that cater for people with severe mental and physical disabilities. Sessions are available throughout the day and in the evenings. Learners with limited mobility and/or learning difficulties display good levels of attainment and outstanding levels of enjoyment.
- Wakefield ACES sport and recreation programmes are well managed and coordinated and make excellent use of partnerships to secure good quality premises across the region and to develop its curriculum. These links have enabled the service to offer specialist sports provision and deliver an apprenticeship framework. Learners on sports massage and gym instructor courses have access to professional quality resources. Highly effective links with schools have assisted vulnerable learners to secure further benefits in health and well-being by accessing wider public services.
- Support for learners is good. Learners receive effective guidance prior to enrolment and are encouraged throughout their programmes to achieve their objectives. The service carefully monitors and follows up regular poor attendance. Learners in larger classes benefit from additional staff who provide further advice, guidance and support. In some circumstances a crèche facility is provided.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Achievement rates are high for all categories of learner. Provision has been very successfully targeted towards some groups. The keep-fit sessions for Asian women have shown year-on-year improvements in achievement. The service has also organised specific provision for Asian men, learners with severe physical disabilities and learners with serious mental health conditions. However, the efforts to recruit male learners have been less successful.
- The provider makes very effective use of learners' views, feeding these into quality improvement meetings. Tutors are aware of the main issues raised by learners and have taken effective actions to address their needs, making improvements, for example, to resources in outreach centres.
- Quality improvement systems are good. Thorough monitoring by managers has led to improvements in the service. However, the destinations of learners are not systematically monitored. Tutors share good practice in teaching and learning for the benefit of learners. However, more consideration needs to be given as to how further improvements in teaching and learning will be achieved. Tutors contribute to the self-assessment process and value it as a mechanism for raising quality.

What does Wakefield ACES need to do to improve further?

- Continue to raise the standards of teaching and learning by increasing the variety of learning activities tutors use, including the use of information and learning technology.
- Strengthen further the response of the service to community needs by developing and implementing a strategy for the recruitment of male learners.
- Implement plans to analyse the destination of learners when they complete their programmes to help the service evaluate and improve the impact of provision on its learners and on the local community.

Visual Arts

Grade 2

Context

27. Currently 681 adult learners account for 849 enrolments on 60 non-accredited programmes ranging from beginners drawing and painting, flower arranging, textiles, creative glass and pottery through to advanced life drawing. Programmes are available across the district in over 20 community centres and venues. Some 77% of learners are women, 5% are from minority ethnic backgrounds and 17% have declared a learning difficulty and/or disability.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Retention and achievement against learners' personal targets are high. Learners enjoy the challenge and make good progress. The standard of work is good and, for some learners, very good. Learners demonstrate good research and skills development in sketchbooks and finished work. They are able to discuss their work with confidence using appropriate visual language. Some have progressed to art foundation courses.
- Learners feel safe and use safe working practices in practical sessions. They enjoy working in a comfortable environment where course requirements and tutors' high expectations challenge them to achieve highly.
- Excellent links with partners and strong tutor contacts have created good enrichment opportunities. Learners have displayed their work and gained placements as volunteers in a local gallery. Learners on fused-glass jewellery and card-making courses produce gifts suitable for sale or giving to family and friends. Others have won prizes for flower arranging at national level and first prize for two consecutive years for mosaic skills.
- Teaching and learning are good. Tutors provide good practical demonstrations of techniques and processes to be explored. Learners who are unable to attend sessions appreciate being able to access the virtual learning environment to continue their learning. The use of individual learning plans is satisfactory but inconsistent in quality. A robust monitoring system is beginning to have some impact in reducing this inconsistency.
- The range of provision successfully meets the needs of most learners. The provider works with centres to identify local need although the range of accredited provision is limited. The service has introduced advanced-level courses in art and life drawing and, at two centres, arts and crafts and textiles provision in order to attract Asian learners and learners with learning difficulties.
- Tutors make very effective use of cultural and historical references in many courses, particularly in art and creative textiles where they have been incorporated into every lesson. Good examples are provided by tutors in a wide range of media, including hyper-links in the virtual learning environment classrooms to sites of interest.
- Very good partnership arrangements with a national gallery have led to a unique opportunity for adult learners to display their work alongside that of renowned artists and to have their creative writing published.

- Inclusion and support for learners are effective. Good information is available for learners prior to enrolment and at the start of courses. Good one-to-one support and guidance are provided throughout. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities participate fully in activities. In most cases, additional learning support is provided. For instance, a signer supports two deaf learners to help them complete their studies.
- Curriculum management is good. Managers provide good leadership and support to subject tutors. New staff receive a thorough induction. Flexible working relationships between programme managers and centre managers ensures effective targeting of under-represented groups in some of the more deprived wards. The observation of teaching and learning is mostly accurate and other quality assurance procedures for monitoring teachers' feedback to learners are effective.
- Accommodation is largely fit for purpose and accessible to wheelchair users. All centres have suitable storage and display facilities. Fume extraction is inadequate in one centre where the pottery kiln is inappropriately placed inside the learning area. The provider is aware of this and has put measures in place to remedy the matter.
- The self-assessment report is self-critical and broadly accurate. It identifies clear strengths and areas for improvement. Much progress has been made to address key priorities of the quality improvement plan.

What does Wakefield ACES need to do to improve further?

- Develop, through the sharing of good practice, procedures and mechanisms for planning individual learning and monitoring progress that are more appropriately suited to the craft activities being undertaken.
- Continue to review the extent and range of accredited provision to maximise recognition, achievement and progression opportunities for adult learners.
- Extend the use of the virtual learning environment, particularly to increase the availability of course materials to learners who may be absent due to health or personal reasons. Encourage practitioners experienced in this to share best practice and to promote the benefits of uploading examples of work.
- Review the location of the pottery kiln at one centre to provide adequate ventilation.

Classical and modern foreign languages

Grade 2

Context

28. The service offers courses in four European languages, English and British Sign Language. French, German, Italian and Spanish are offered at beginners, intermediate and advanced levels. British Sign Language is offered at foundation level. At the time of the inspection, a total of 347 learners were enrolled across 11 venues on 32 programmes; 174 learners were on accredited courses. Some 88% of learners are women, and 17% have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Wakefield ACES employs 16 qualified part-time tutors.

Key findings

- Achievement and progress are good. Learners participate enthusiastically in sessions, are well motivated and develop their language skills very effectively. Learners' attendance and punctuality are good. Learners develop their social skills successfully through participating in group and paired activities. Classes benefit the professional development of some learners. For example, teachers from local primary schools attend courses to enable them to teach languages to their pupils.
- Learners are able to make well-informed choices about their health and well-being. Learning programmes include a focus on healthy eating when dealing with local foods and on staying safe on holiday, featuring scenarios such as the loss of a passport. Some learners make good use of their new skills, knowledge and understanding to benefit the community. For example, a group of learners has helped to organise and run a school exchange visit to France.
- Teaching, training and assessment are good. Tutors make good use of initial assessment to plan and adapt activities to meet individual needs and give learners constructive feedback on their progress. They draw on a wide range of teaching methods very effectively. In the best sessions, tutors make particularly good use of the foreign language to develop learners' skills. Learners value the expertise, support, encouragement and good humour of their tutors.
- Tutors make good use of a range of high-quality materials and resources, making effective use of the internet and the interactive whiteboard. Materials used include music to explore cultural topics and stories and games to support and enhance learning.
- The range of languages and levels is satisfactory. Language classes are offered during the day and in the evening at venues across the district, including outreach centres and partners' premises. Coordinated progression routes are available and learners are directed to other sources of language learning where needed.
- The curriculum is responsive to users' needs. Tutors and learners negotiate the content of non-accredited courses. For example, an advanced class asked to study a work of fiction, and a group of older learners studied the theme of lifestyle among the elderly in other countries.

- Wakefield ACES uses partnerships very effectively to promote courses in innovative ways. For example, courses at one centre are advertised on the local bus service, in school newsletters and parish council bulletins. ACES use the local housing association and outreach centres to publicise its courses to vulnerable and hard-to-reach learners. The service makes effective use of partnerships to secure high-quality accommodation.
- Learners receive good quality advice and guidance. Learners value the access to tutors by telephone and by email. However, some pre-course information is confusing and unclear. Learners with difficulties and/or disabilities receive good support. For example, a tutor relocated a class and rearranged the room layout to meet the needs of learners with hearing impairments.
- Curriculum management is very effective. Managers provide good leadership to promote improvement in the curriculum. Retention and achievement are monitored very carefully. Observations of teaching and learning are used effectively to drive improvement. However, observations are not carried out by subject specialists so some comments lack detail on the quality of language learning and teaching.
- Very effective measures are in place to safeguard learners. For instance, learners receive good guidelines on the misuse of camera phones in lessons, and on being aware of their own and one another's safety when leaving sessions when it is dark. Learners feel safe and are aware of sources of help in the event of danger. For instance, in one centre tutors are issued with portable two-way radio receivers, torches and keys for use in case of emergencies.

What does Wakefield ACES need to do to improve further?

- Develop the observation of teaching and learning to provide tutors with specific feedback on teaching strategies appropriate to language teaching and learning.
- Improve pre-course information to clarify and define the range of levels available.

Information about the inspection

29. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the lead officer for quality and curriculum of Wakefield ACES, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the funding bodies, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's previous survey visit and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
30. Inspectors used group and individual interviews to collect the views of learners. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had completed on behalf of Wakefield ACES. They also visited learning sessions. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Wakefield Adult and Community Education Service

Learning types: 14-16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships. **Social and personal development:** all adult safeguarded provision

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive	Social and personal development
Approximate number of enrolled learners					
Part-time learners	3,957	48	1,240	125	2,544
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2	2
Capacity to improve	2				
A. Outcomes for learners	2	2	2	2	2
A1. How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2				
A1.a) How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2				
A1.b) How well do learners progress?	2				
A2. How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2				
A3. Do learners feel safe?	2				
A4. <i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	2				
A5. <i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	2				
B. Quality of provision	2	2	2	2	2
B1. How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2				
B2. How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2				
B3. How well do partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2				
B4. How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2				
C. Leadership and management	2	2	2	2	2
C1. How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2				
C2. <i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	n/a				
C3. How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2				
C4. How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3				
C5. How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2				
C6. How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2				
C7. How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2				

*where applicable to the type of provision

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