Derbyshire County Council

Inspection report

Unique reference number:	50217
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Last day of inspection:	25 May 2012
Type of provider:	Local Authority
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Information about the provider

1.   The Skills Funding Agency funds Derbyshire County Council to provide learner responsive, employer responsive and adult and community learning. Derbyshire Adult and Community Education Service (the service), manages the provision, which is part of the council's children and younger adults directorate. The head of service reports to the assistant director, schools and learning. The service underwent a large scale restructuring in 2011. The head of service now receives support from a senior manager as lead for each strand. Area managers, programme managers and curriculum leads provide operational management.

2.   The service provides 2,600 classes with approximately 30,000 enrolments per year. The provision includes all 15 subject areas and family learning. The largest vocational enrolments are in information and communications technology and Skills for Life. Over two thirds of the provision is non-vocational. The service offers programmes in 23 main centres and 100 outreach venues throughout the county. It employs around 400, mainly sessional, tutors.

3.   Derbyshire has 17 areas within the 10% most deprived areas in England and a further 60 within the 20% most deprived. Across the county 5.3% of the population is from a minority ethnic background, however in some areas in the county these groups account for 25% of the local population.

4.   In 2011/12, up until the time of this inspection, the service had 280 learners working toward qualifications for employment, 5,299 learning for qualifications and 9,439 learning for personal and social development.

5.   The service does not deliver training on behalf of other providers nor does it sub-contract to other providers.

Type of provision	Number of learners in 2010/11
Provision for young learners: Further education (16-18) Foundation learning	 219 part-time learners 64 full-time learners
Provision for adult learners: Learning for qualifications Learning for social and personal development	 4,712 part-time learners 12,014 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain	 404 learners

Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2

Capacity to improve	Grade 2

	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	3

Learning for qualifications in employment	Grade
Apprenticeships and Train to Gain	2

Learning for qualifications	Grade
Information and communication technology for users	3
Foundations for learning and life	2

Learning for social and personal development	Grade
Sport, leisure and recreation	2
Crafts, creative arts and design	2
Family learning	2

Overall effectiveness

6. Most provision, including the provider's capacity to improve and in all three strands are good. Learners on courses leading to a qualification attain these awards at a rate comparable to the national average. Learners on the new apprentice programme are making good progress towards their qualifications. Those on non-accredited courses achieve their objectives well. Learners on all courses enjoy their programmes. They gain in confidence and improve their social and communication skills. Most benefit from making improved choices

about their health and lifestyles. Individual learners make good use of their new skills to contribute to their communities.

7. Teaching and learning are mostly good. High standard and in a minority of cases excellent resources support teaching and learning, although a few rooms are cramped. The service meets the needs of learners, community groups and partner organisations well through a varied range of courses at centres across the county at different times of the day. Learners receive good support in class and for their wider needs. Information and advice are good and ensure that the majority of learners enrol on the most appropriate course and level.

8. Management is good at all levels. The service is driving forward further improvements and efficiencies. It is committed to sustainability and helps lead this for the rest of the council.

Main findings

■ Success rates for learning for qualifications in employment are rising and are above national averages. Learners complete their qualifications within the expected time. Overall success rates for learning for qualifications are rising slowly but remain below the national average. Success rates for non-accredited provision are high and rising, but the service has too low a success rate threshold for assessing individual learner's achievement.

■ Learners enjoy their programmes. In addition to subject skills and knowledge, they gain in confidence, acquire better social skills and improve their self-esteem. Most learners progress within programmes and to other provision with the service or elsewhere or they move on to voluntary or paid employment. Provision in several programme areas also affects learners' physical and mental health positively.

■ Many past and current learners make good contributions to their communities. These include setting up community craft groups, acting as community learning champions, organising community events and celebrations or acting as volunteers using the skills they have gained to support local organisations. One group has received training as part of a project to interview and engage other hard-to-reach new learners.

■ Teaching and learning are good. Teachers plan lessons well ensuring they meet learners' needs. A wide variety of tasks maintains learners' interest and challenges them to make good progress. Assessment is thorough. Teachers monitor learners' progress well and most learners have clear targets to help them to move to the next stage. Training in work-based learning effectively links theory and practice.

■ The service meets the needs and interests of users well. The range of courses is broad and available in centres across the county, including areas of economic or social deprivation. A minority of the courses the service offers are unusual in adult and community learning. Flexible enrolment arrangements mean that most learners can start at any time of the year and work at their own pace.

■ Partnerships are good. Particularly good use of partnerships helps overcome barriers to learning or employment. Those learners that are hard-to-reach benefit from innovative partnerships with a range of local services such as the probation service and health service. Many other partnerships result in mutual referrals and in the creation of programmes and resources such as those at the service's eco centre.

■ Support for learners is good including the quality and availability of information, advice and guidance. Initial assessment of learners' needs is effective in identifying those learners who require additional support, which the service provides well in most subject areas. However, the extent to which the service measures the impact of its information, advice and guidance and support services is underdeveloped.

■ Elected members and senior officers provide clear strategic direction for the service, which reflects both local and national priorities well. The service is well placed as part of the children and younger adults' directorate, which covers all aspects of learning. This facilitates the council's efforts to engage with hard-to-reach groups and helps county residents to improve their economic prospects.

■ Staff development is good. The service supports staff well with their continuous personal development, encouraging them to gain appropriate teaching qualifications and to improve their teaching through mentoring. It makes good use of action plans following observations of teaching and learning and has recently established a team of 25 tutor development workers. Good communications ensures that staff are kept aware of changes.

■ Safeguarding is good. Staff have a good understanding, having completed mandatory training in 2010/11. Both safeguarding and health and safety policies and procedures are comprehensive. The service is currently conducting a programme of staff equality and diversity training. Actions to improve social inclusion have been very successful but the promotion of equality and diversity in teaching and learning sessions is insufficient.

■ Self-assessment is central to the service's quality improvement arrangements. Staff engagement is good. Service wide and curriculum self-assessment reports are largely accurate. However, the main report does not focus on the overall quality of provision and a minority of curriculum reports mask differences in performance between subject areas.

■ Most resources are good and a minority are excellent. Centres are well equipped. A purpose-built eco centre demonstrates the council's commitment to sustainability through its design and construction and use for teaching traditional crafts, and for training champions to promote sustainability throughout the service and the council.

What does Derbyshire County Council need to do to improve further?

■ Increase overall success rates for learning for qualifications by identifying the reasons for early leavers and taking effective actions to improve retention.

■ Improve the effectiveness of providing information, advice and guidance for all areas of provision, as well as that for providing additional learning support, by devising measures to analyse and evaluate the impact of these areas.

■ Raise the standard of the promotion of equality and diversity within teaching and learning sessions by providing training for staff to increase their abilities in this area and measuring the impact.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors
What learners like:

■ the fun, interesting and relaxed lessons

■ the friendly, supportive atmosphere in sessions

■ the way tutors listen to learners and value their opinions

■ being able to support children with homework

■ help in building self confidence

■ encouragement to talk about the next steps in learning

■ the good standard of teaching

■ the way in which learning improves their lives.

What learners would like to see improved:

■ a reduction in the time taken to fill enrolment and other forms

■ more time for literacy and numeracy classes

■ more career guidance to help getting a job

■ longer sessions

■ more certainty about whether classes will run in the future

■ the advertising and circulation of brochures for further classes.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors
What employers like:

■ the good communication with assessors on learners' progress

■ the effective techniques learners have acquired to calm dementia patients

■ the outstanding support for both students and employers' staff

■ constructive feedback given to learners

■ the very responsive courses

- learners' good progress
- the efficient way courses meet personal development objectives.

What employers would like to see improved:
- less paperwork
- more consistency in the standard of tutors
- better car parking at centres.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement   Grade 2

9.   The provider has a sound track record of sustained improvement. It has maintained the good provision from the last inspection. Success rates in all three strands of the provision show rising trends. Senior managers have a clear vision including the key aim of providing excellent provision for learners. Strategies to engage hard-to-reach groups are proving very effective and reflect both local and national priorities. Self-assessment is at the heart of quality improvement measures. The self-assessment report is largely accurate and the associated quality improvement plans aim to resolve appropriately identified areas for improvement. The provider has recently undergone a major restructure to ensure that management and other staff levels are sufficient to carry out its plans for further improvement. Elected members and senior officers in the council monitor the provision closely.

Outcomes for learners   Grade 2

10.   Success rates in all three strands of learning are rising. In the largest strand, learning for social and personal development, they are high at 95%. However, the threshold for achievement is low at 60% of each learner's objectives and the service currently has no mechanism to measure what the success rate would be if it set a higher threshold. For the other two strands, success rates are satisfactory. In learning for qualifications in employment, they are above the national average and learners are completing within the planned time. In learning for qualifications, success rates remain below the national average. Nearly all learners enjoy their studies and make good progress both within their programmes and in advancing to higher levels.

11.   In addition to the main skills and knowledge gained from their programmes learners also gain in confidence and social and communication skills. Many progress to voluntary work or paid employment as a result.

12.   Most learners, particularly those on programmes in sport and leisure, family learning, foundations for learning and life, and child care are able to make informed choices about their own health and well-being and adopt healthy lifestyles with appropriate choices of diet and physical activity. Learners who have a history of mental illness also report that attendance on adult education courses has helped them with their rehabilitation.

13.   Many learners use their new skills and confidence well to contribute to their communities through voluntary work with community groups and voluntary organisations. They organise events, set up craft groups or act as community learning champions to engage with more hard-to-reach groups and encourage them to enrol in adult education programmes.

The quality of provision   Grade 2

14. Teaching and learning are good. Good lesson planning helps teachers meet a wide range of learners' individual needs within sessions. The better sessions provide a high level of challenge and learners respond well. Good monitoring and recording of achievements and progress enables most learners to gain a clear understanding of their targets to help them move on to the next stage. In the less successful lessons, a narrow range of activities can adversely affect learning. In a few areas, the recording of achievement and the setting of short-term targets is inconsistent. Assessment is thorough. Staff mark learners' work promptly and provide helpful feedback. Training in work-based learning is good, effectively linking theory and practice. The service has effective arrangements to improve teaching and learning. It accurately assesses the quality of teaching and learning and ensures that appropriate professional development occurs where it can have the greatest impact.

15. Partnerships are good overall. The service makes particularly good use of partnerships to help people overcome barriers to learning or employment. Highly effective multi-agency partnerships in family learning support families with significant needs. Similarly, effective partnerships with children's centres and Primary Care Trusts enable learners to acquire skills in literacy and numeracy. In a few subject areas, involvement with partners is less well developed than in others.

16. Support for learners is good. The quality and availability of information, advice and guidance is good. Learners receive helpful and timely advice and guidance. Management of information, advice and guidance changed last year and the service is aiming to ensure that a new approach will lead to a better evaluation of the impact of this area. Staff are appropriately qualified and good practice and ideas are shared across the county. Initial assessment of learners' needs is effective in identifying those requiring additional learning support, which is provided well in most subject areas. The service supports learners with particular learning difficulties and/or disabilities well. The service does not measure the impact of additional support on learners' chances of succeeding.

Leadership and management   Grade 2

17. The service has a clear strategic direction, which sets itself a target of excellence. Current development plans aim at further improvement of the service, which has undergone a recent restructure with the objective of being more efficient while retaining the same level of provision to users. All managers use data well to monitor performance and set targets. Senior managers, council officers and elected members monitor progress closely and to ensure that the service remains closely aligned with local and national targets. The council has positioned the service within a directorate responsible for all learning activities, where it is well placed to support the council's workforce development and

wider work-based learning through its relatively new but expanding apprenticeship programmes.

18. Staff development is very good. The service and individual staff training plans reflect the service and individual training needs well. Teaching staff receive good support in their continuous professional development. The particularly effective mix of area and programme managers and curriculum leads provide good operational management.

19. Safeguarding is particularly good. The service has a close relationship with both the child protection and vulnerable adult safeguarding boards. Policies and procedures are comprehensive, up to date and reviewed annually. All staff have recently undertaken mandatory relevant safeguarding training. Designated officers undergo effective training. Appropriate paperwork of criminal records bureau checks are kept and a reminder system ensures that these are renewed every three years. Staff awareness of safeguarding issues is good. Safeguarding is covered at learners' induction and their understanding and awareness is also good. Health and safety policies and procedures are thorough. Staff pay particular attention to health and safety in teaching and learning sessions. The service appropriately risk assesses all venues and activities.

20. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Social inclusion is good. The service targets provision at the most deprived areas and groups within the county. Strategies to engage new learners have been very successful. The provider monitors performance data to identify and resolve any achievement gaps between different groups of learners. However, tutors do not sufficiently promote equality and diversity during teaching and learning sessions. This is now being monitored during observations of teaching and learning. It is also part of the staff mandatory training programme on equality and diversity, which about a third of staff had attended before the inspection. Policies and procedures in this area are also comprehensive and well documented. Despite its efforts at recruitment, the ethnic make-up of the provider's staff does not reflect that of the county's population.

21. The service engages well with users. Learners' focus groups meet three times per year. Course reviews incorporate the views of learners as well as the tutors' reflections. The service seeks learners' and employers' views through regular satisfaction questionnaires. The extensive partnership network assists the provider to identify gaps in the provision and to engage with communities and hard to reach learners.

22. Staff involvement in self-assessment is good. Managers draw on performance data to judge progress. Quality improvement activities take place throughout the year and include robust observations of teaching and learning resulting in individual and service action plans to improve teaching and learning. The self-assessment report is largely accurate and matched most of the inspectors' findings. The associated quality improvement plan aims to resolve the identified areas for improvement and sets realistic targets for further improvement. In

order to assist teaching staff to improve the standard of teaching and learning the provider has recently established a team of tutor development workers.

23. The provider uses its resources efficiently and effectively to achieve good value for money. Success rates in the non-accredited provision representing some 70% of the provision are high and the service engages many new learners with little previous successful learning experiences. The recent restructuring has reduced costs without affecting the number of staff directly serving learners. The service has established a unique eco centre using advanced sustainability features in design and construction. It uses the centre to provide courses in traditional rural crafts and to train sustainability champions who seek to further encourage the sustainable management of resources throughout the service and the wider council.

Learning for qualifications in employment

Other learning for qualifications in employment provision considered as part of the main findings but not separately graded:

Apprenticeships and Train to Gain   Grade 2

Context

24. Currently 66 learners are studying an advanced childcare programme. A further 60 follow advanced programmes in supporting teaching and learning in schools. Some 47 apprentices and advanced apprentices are on business administration, childcare, customer service, teaching support or information technology programmes. Skills for Life programmes have 14 learners. Most learners are female and 3.8% are from minority ethnic groups. Assessment and training takes place in the workplace and at 23 training centres across the county.

Key findings

■   Outcomes for learners are good. Since the last inspection, overall success rates have increased. In 2010/11, the rate was around the national average. The proportion of learners completing by their planned end date has similarly improved and was approximately six percentage points above the national rate. The standard of learners' portfolio work is good. Current learners are achieving well. Progress to higher-level programmes is good.

■   Learners acquire a good range of professional skills that enable them to take on a wider range of workplace roles and responsibilities. They make good gains in self-esteem and confidence. Many learners significantly improve their understanding of future career opportunities and acquire skills to support home life activities. They enjoy their learning and participate enthusiastically in sessions. Learners feel very safe.

■   Teaching and learning are good. Coaching for individual learners is very effective. Off-the-job training sessions are good. Tutors use a wide range of strategies to develop learners' independent and team working skills, most of whom have not participated in formal learning for a significant period. Tutors very effectively link theory to work practice. They develop learners' understanding and use of key terms and concepts well.

■   Thorough initial assessment effectively informs the provision of appropriate learning support. Course assessment is frequent, regular and provided at a time to meet learners' work and personal needs. Learners receive detailed feedback on their performance that helps them achieve. They are aware of the progress they make and the actions needed to improve. Progress reviews are satisfactory and usually include feedback from a workplace supervisor.

■   Tutors plan learning suitably and include a range of long and short-term targets. However, the effectiveness of setting short-term targets is inconsistent to aid the monitoring of learners' progress. Not all tutors establish relevant

milestone targets. Targets are not always sufficiently detailed or time constrained. In a minority of cases, whole group rather than individual targets are set.

■ The range of provision is good and includes programmes at levels that focus on learners' professional development and career aspirations. In addition, programmes are relevant to the business needs of sponsoring workplaces. However, the service recognises that links to wider provision is under-developed. Training sessions are available at local venues and times to suit learners' work and family commitments.

■ Good partnership working within the council makes a valued contribution to professional development of staff. The service links with an extensive range of voluntary organisations and charities to provide updating of skills and training. Through apprenticeships, the council works with a number of employers. However, these links are currently very limited.

■ Care, guidance and support for learners are good. Tutors very effectively identify barriers to achievement and support learners to achieve their full potential. Learners receive detailed programme information prior to choosing a preferred course or optional units. Information, advice and guidance are good and particularly effective for those considering a career in early years or as a teaching assistant.

■ Leadership and management are good. The service has a clear and well-communicated strategy for the implementation and development of its workforce development plan. The operational and performance management of programmes is good. Strategies to increase learners' success rates have been very successful. However, the setting of targets in a minority of programme areas is not fully established or monitored effectively.

■ Tutors are well qualified and experienced. They receive effective support from managers who set high standards for staff performance. Staff benefit from participation in a comprehensive programme of training that they use to improve their professional practice for the benefit of learners.

■ Safeguarding is good. Learners have effective protection and know how to raise a concern. They have a sound understanding of equality and diversity and demonstrate effective application of their understanding to the workplace and wider community.

■ Self-assessment is inclusive and thorough. However, the associated report does not have a full evaluation of work-based learning. Curriculum development plans effectively improve provision. Quality improvement is mostly good and includes robust internal verification. Arrangements for obtaining and using learners' feedback are satisfactory. New employer feedback processes are effective. However, the service has not implemented fully arrangements for the evaluation of work-based learning.

What does Derbyshire County Council need to do to improve further?

■ Increase success rates by setting all learners appropriately detailed targets and ensuring the service establishes and effectively monitors challenging targets for all programmes.

■ Improve feedback processes for all users through a more detailed evaluation of work-based learning quality during self-assessment.

Learning for qualifications

Other learning for qualifications provision considered as part of the main findings but not separately graded: *Childcare and personal development, Arts and crafts, Health and wellbeing, Languages, humanities and science, Foundation learning*

Information and communication technology for users   Grade 3

Context

25.   Currently 1,602 learners are on information and communication technology (ICT) for user courses. Of these 33% are at entry level 3, 38% are at foundation level and 29% at intermediate level. Classes are mainly self-paced learning workshops run in the daytime and evening from 23 main centres and three outreach centres. Around 66% of the learners are female, 4% are from minority ethnic groups, 20% have a disclosed disability and 7% have a learning difficulty. Of these, 45 learners receive additional learning support.

Key findings

■   Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Success rates have increased in the last year and are close to the national average. Learners complete course work to a high standard. They enjoy their programmes and make good progress, often with little or no prior attainment. They gain confidence and develop a good range of useful ICT skills. Most progress rapidly to higher level qualifications and use their new skills to improve their employment opportunities.

■   Learners feel safe. They have a good understanding of health and safety and adopt safe working practices. Learners are confident that the service will deal with their concerns effectively and they speak positively about the welcoming and respectful environment. Induction covers internet and personal safety well. A minority of learners use their new ICT skills to produce useful leaflets and posters for their communities.

■   Teaching, training and assessment are good. Tutors are experienced and adopt appropriate teaching and learning methods that allow learners to build confidence, develop skills and extend their understanding. Learners speak positively about the effectiveness of the teaching resources that prepare them well for unit tests. Assessment practice is good. Feedback on assignments is timely, constructive and informative.

■   Initial assessment is satisfactory. Staff use it appropriately to identify the correct level of learning programme and additional learning support needs. Learners use individual learning plans well to record completed work. However, their use by tutors to set targets, review progress and to plan learning is inconsistent.

■   Programmes meet the needs and interests of learners well. Learners have a clear understanding of the courses and levels and they progress to higher-level

courses well. An intensive programme provides learners with an increased range of additional learning opportunities. The ability to in-fill on courses provides learners with an effective way to complete units to suit individual needs. However, not all learners are aware of these options.

■ Support for learners is very good. Its effectiveness ensures learners make good progress. Tutors build positive and productive relationships with learners and provide additional pastoral support. Tutors respond very quickly to learners requiring help. They record and monitor learners' retention effectively. Information, advice and guidance effectively provide learners with appropriate and relevant help during their studies.

■ Safeguarding is good. All learners undertake comprehensive safeguarding and equality and diversity training during induction. Safety and safe working practices have a high priority. All staff have undertaken recent, relevant safeguarding training and they are knowledgeable about health and safety practices. However, equality and diversity themes are not always part of lesson plans and staff do not reinforce the topic after induction.

■ Operational management is good. Managers support tutors well. Continuous professional development to update practice is effective. Observations of teaching are systematic and lead to improvement actions, which managers monitor well. Managers work hard to raise standards and improve outcomes for learners. Regular meetings are used to monitor effectively learners at risk. Tutors are highly motivated.

■ Methods to engage users to promote improvements are appropriate. The service regularly seeks feedback from learners and tutors, which it uses well to improve provision and inform the quality improvement plan. Tutors are experienced and knowledgeable and the majority of centres provide learners with good quality learning.

■ Self-assessment is well established and suitably inclusive. However, the self-assessment report does not provide a specific evaluation of the quality of the ICT user programmes. For example, the report and the quality assurance system failed to identify the inconsistent use of individual learning plans to monitor learners' progress.

What does Derbyshire County Council need to do to improve further?

■ Provide learners with a clearer understanding of their individual progress by having clearer processes to set targets and the conducting of reviews by tutors.

■ Improve learners' understanding of equality and diversity throughout their programmes by using relevant every day experiences of this area.

■ Ensure every learner has the same opportunity to meet their individual needs by making all of them aware of the programme options available.

Foundations for learning and life   Grade 2

Context

26. In the current year, literacy and numeracy programmes have 2608 enrolments. Around two thirds of learners are female and 10% are from minority ethnic groups. Some 22% of learners have declared a learning difficulty and/or disability. Learners undertake a variety of nationally recognised qualifications from entry to level 2. Some 65 tutors provide classes at 23 centres throughout the county.

Key findings

■ Outcomes for learners are satisfactory overall. At foundation and intermediate level, success rates are at or slightly above the national average. However, success rates for entry level programmes are below the national average and too many learners leave their programme early. Learners' attendance is satisfactory.

■ Learners make good progress in achieving their learning goals. In addition to developing their literacy and numeracy skills well, learners improve their social skills and confidence. They apply their improved skills very effectively in their everyday lives. Most parents report greater confidence and ability in helping their children with schoolwork.

■ Learners improve their economic and social well-being very effectively. Most progress to higher level literacy and numeracy programmes or to other courses provided by the service and its partners. Tutors place a strong focus on developing employability skills for all learners, particularly those who are job seekers, and ensuring that learning activities are relevant to work. Tutors are increasing the teaching of financial literacy to meet learners' needs.

■ Teaching and learning are good. Tutors prepare lessons well and provide a variety of activities to meet the needs of the wide range of learners' abilities. They provide well-paced lessons mostly with the right level of challenge. Tutors use good questioning to make learners think for themselves and solve problems. Tutors monitor learners' progress in lessons well. Attendance during the inspection was low, which had a negative impact on group activities.

■ Assessment is timely and fair. Tutors mark work promptly and give learners constructive feedback with areas for development. On occasions, tutors place too much stress on the use of practice test papers and worksheets, with an over emphasis on assessment.

■ The provision is very effective in meeting the needs and interests of learners through the wide range and flexibility of programmes. Learners can begin programmes at any time during the year, and complete them at their own pace. Intensive summer schools are available at a minority of centres for learners who need to achieve a qualification quickly to enable them to access other further education opportunities or employment.

- The service uses partnerships with other agencies well to develop the provision and to engage hard-to-reach learners. For example, the service works closely with the probation service to provide programmes for young offenders. It also uses its links with children's centres and Primary Care Trusts to develop provision to meet the needs of specific groups of learners.

- Care, guidance and support for learners are good. The deployment of learning support assistants is very effective in classes. They provide good quality individual learning support. Staff use the background information on individuals' learning needs and personal circumstances well to plan and provide learning. Learners receive very effective information, advice and guidance for their next stage of their learning.

- Operational management is good. Clear direction is available on curriculum development, including the introduction of functional skills. Regular staff meetings are very effective in sharing information and providing updates. Managers support tutors well and they benefit from a suitable programme of continuing professional development that is linked to the quality improvement plan.

- The promotion of equality, diversity and inclusion is good. The service is successful in engaging learners who have not previously participated in formal education or training. Tutors develop learners' understanding of equality and diversity effectively during learning sessions, such as in speaking and listening activities. However, equality and diversity is not sufficiently included in a minority of lesson plans. The service has slightly increased the proportion of male learners in the current year.

- Self-assessment and quality improvement planning are good. It involves all staff. Judgements in the self-assessment report broadly match those of inspectors. The quality improvement plan is effective. For example, management action has successfully increased the retention of entry level learners in 2010/11. Observation of teaching and learning is very effective in helping tutors improve and resolve areas of underperformance.

What does Derbyshire County Council need to do to improve further?

- Improve the proportion of learners retained on their courses, particularly at entry level, by closer monitoring and follow-up of those not attending classes.

- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning by reducing tutors' reliance on handouts and the use of practice test papers. Share good practice in the use of innovative teaching methods and resources throughout the service.

- Better promote equality and diversity during classes by more focused planning and use of appropriate learning activities.

Learning for social and personal development

Other social and personal development learning provision considered as part of the main findings but not separately graded: *Childcare and personal development, ICT, Modern foreign languages, Humanities, Science, Business administration and law*

Sport leisure and recreation   Grade 2

Context

27. The service offers mostly part-time non-accredited courses in sport and fitness at 37 venues across Derbyshire. Classes include yoga, Pilates, Tai Chi, keep fit, dancing and aerobics. Currently 88% of the 2,350 learners are female. Learners from a minority ethnic groups account for 4% of learners. Sessions generally last between one and two hours and courses for up to ten weeks. Currently 65 tutors provide courses supported by a team of three curriculum programme managers and support staff.

Key findings

■ Outcomes for learners are good and improving. They all enjoy their classes and a significant majority complete the course. Learners have good practical skills and make good progress relative to their starting points in achieving challenging personal targets. Attendance is satisfactory. Learners enjoy many physical benefits in the learning sessions, including improvements in cardiovascular and muscular fitness, and general health and well-being.

■ Learners feel safe. Tutors complete health screening for learners and use it well to plan lessons. They adapt sessions to take account of learners' medical conditions enabling them to participate effectively and safely. They give a high priority to health and safety. All tutors have achieved the local authority safeguarding standard.

■ Learners are encouraged to make healthy choices alongside their chosen courses. They develop a good understanding of health and well-being issues. Tutors regularly promote the benefits of exercise in sessions and actively promote further learning. Learners aged over 50 and learners with chronic injuries particularly value the positive impact on their health and well-being, in helping them to stay fit and active.

■ Teaching and learning are good. Learners show high levels of enthusiasm in sessions that are well planned, appropriately paced and sufficiently challenging for each individual. Tutors are highly skilled in differentiating activities, offering clear instructions and providing good demonstrations that help learners' correct performance. Assessment is good.

■ The provision effectively meets the needs and interests of learners. A broad range of activities takes place in a variety of locations and different times of the day, enabling easy access for learners. The service plans courses to meet the needs and interests of vulnerable groups.

- Partnerships are good. The service works closely with a wide range of partners to secure additional premises across the region to extend its curriculum. It makes good use of other partnerships including local schools, community groups and mental health services, to recruit hard-to- reach learners.

- Care guidance and support for learners are good. The service provides learners with detailed information, guidance and advice on courses. Staff make good use of initial assessment to plan learning activities which take into account learners' abilities. The use of informal support for learners during sessions is particularly good.

- Curriculum management, including support and training for tutors, is particularly effective. Individual tutor's support and development has had a significant impact in raising the standard of teaching and learning. Tutors are highly motivated. Managers successfully promote and implement local and national priorities to the benefit of learners.

- Safeguarding arrangements are good. All learners are well protected. All staff have undertaken appropriate training. Vetting procedures are effective. All staff displayed a good knowledge and understanding of related issues.

- Equality and diversity are satisfactory. Marketing materials are appropriate. The number of female learners is high. The few male learners are fully included in sessions. The service takes good actions to support all learners, especially those with a declared disability. However, equality and diversity does not feature sufficiently in lesson planning and the majority of teaching staff have not attended appropriate up-date training.

- Engagement with users is good. All learners contribute to providing feedback to tutors following individual sessions, and to inform the end of course review. Formal feedback arrangements are effective and the learner voice arrangements are good. Area managers make good use of informal discussions with groups of learners. Managers are able to demonstrate how this affects strategic decisions about provision.

- Judgements in the self-assessment report are broadly accurate. The service makes good use of quality improvement plans to monitor progress. Tutors feel valued and included in self assessment. They receive clear feedback on actions for improvement and sharing of best practice. However, the self-assessment report covered more than one subject area, which made it difficult to identify judgements relating to sport and leisure.

- Value for money is good. The provider has effective processes for monitoring progress and evaluating performance. Outcomes are good and improving. Action planning is clear and focuses on issues identified during inspection. The service provides equipment for most lessons for those learners who cannot afford to purchase their own. A few rooms are too small for the number of learners, leading to overcrowding and insufficient interest in learning.

What does Derbyshire County Council need to do to improve further?

■ Improve the promotion of equality and diversity within sessions by ensuring all tutors attend and apply appropriate up-date equality and diversity training.

■ Improve the quality of resources by ensuring that all accommodation used for the provision of courses is reviewed and alternative resources are found or class sizes are adjusted to ensure that rooms are fit for purpose.

Crafts, creative arts and design   Grade 2

Context

28.   Currently, of the 761 learners on 81 part-time non-accredited courses, 654 were female. Some 150 of these learners are new to the service. The provision is available at community sites and outreach venues. Most courses run initially for 10 weeks, mainly two-hour sessions. Some 38 teachers provide courses. A curriculum group leader and a team of curriculum programme managers are responsible for provision.

Key findings

■   Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates overall on the arts and craft courses are high, with very high retention. The tracking and monitoring of progress is robust, with clearly set group objectives. However not all teachers adequately record individual targets, or incorporate learning points into individual project work. The individual achievement threshold lacks challenge at 60%, and is lower than the equivalent minimum levels of performance on vocational courses.

■   Learners attain good health and social benefits from engagement in class activities. Learners greatly value their classes, making great personal effort to attend, in some cases facing debilitating illness, because the courses give them a sense of self-worth.

■   The standard of learners' art and craft work is good. Learners pay close attention to detail on both large and small scale pieces, with those in the better classes clearly acquiring and developing their technical and creative skills well. In the minority of classes, learners' progress is slow and tutors do little to challenge or extend the learning.

■   Learners feel safe, and adopt safe working practices within their classes. Learners are clear on their responsibilities to work safely, and provide their own personal protective equipment where required. However, safeguarding is not reinforced during sessions although teachers do cover this during class inductions.

■   Teaching and learning are good. In the better sessions teachers use challenging activities to extend learning. Learners confidently participate and explain their understanding of key concepts, and implement learned and developing skills independently. In the less successful sessions, teachers do not sufficiently stretch and challenge learners, which is reflected in some poor lesson planning.

■   Assessment is satisfactory overall. In most cases staff record learners' progress comprehensively. A thorough commitment to a robust, moderated and reviewed process for recognising and recording achievement for non-accredited learning ensures achievement data is broadly reliable on these non-vocational programmes. However, the implementation of this process across the service is inconsistent.

■   The breadth of the provision is good. The range of courses on offer meets the needs and interests of the local communities well. Courses exceed the normal expectation for similar providers and include a diverse offer such as wrought

ironwork, lace making and pottery as well as courses that provide education for sustainable development. A minority of sessions, for some specialist areas, are too short to maximise the learning and opportunities for progression are limited.

■ In-class support is good overall, with a few areas for improvement. In the better sessions, teachers provide valuable, focused guidance to learners and inform them of local exhibitions and points of interest. Learners adequately access pre-course information, but too much time with enrolments in the first session of courses, results in teachers having insufficient information to plan specific support for those with additional learning needs effectively.

■ Curriculum management is good. Managers support teachers effectively. Communication is good, although attendance at tutor meetings is low. Managers have involved staff in curriculum development to support planning for the next year, and in how to continue to provide good value for money. However, tutors do not regularly receive sufficient information about learners with specific individual needs. A few teachers do not have sufficient access to their managers.

■ Equality and diversity are satisfactory. Most staff have undertaken relevant training. No recruitment targets have been set for under-represented groups and their engagement is low. At inspection, male enrolments were low at 14%, with enrolment of learners from minority ethnic groups also low at 3%. Managers have taken action for 2012/13, but it is too early to judge impact.

■ Quality improvement is good. A robust, well-moderated observation of teaching and learning scheme is in place. Staff undertake a range of internal development opportunities throughout the year, although the link to action points from classroom observations is not strong. Self-assessment is broadly accurate, and is mostly an inclusive process. However, target setting for recruitment, retention and success is underdeveloped, making improvement measures difficult to evaluate.

What does Derbyshire County Council need to do to improve further?

■ Ensure that the definition of achievement used by the service is based upon a level of challenge to learners that is comparable to vocational courses.

■ Evaluate the impact of quality improvement and equality and diversity actions by setting and monitoring challenging targets for retention, success rates and the recruitment of learners from under-represented groups.

■ Provide pre-course information on learners to teaching staff where there are particular needs to ensure teachers manage and can plan more effectively to support all learners.

Family learning   Grade 2

Context

29.   Currently 274 parents and carers attend 24 wider family learning (WFL) and 12 family literacy, language and numeracy (FLLN) courses. The programmes vary from short 12-hour taster programmes to intensive FLLN provision. Most learners live in areas of high deprivation. Some 12% are male and 7% from minority ethnic groups. In 2010/11, 363 learners took part in FLLN courses and 1312 attended WFL courses. Approximately 20% of courses offer external accreditation.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates are high for learners on FLLN and WFL programmes and most achieve their personal and learning goals. A significant minority of learners on FLLN courses gain confidence and skills to undertake and achieve national literacy or numeracy qualifications at foundation or intermediate level. Attendance rates are satisfactory.

- Learners enjoy learning and significantly develop their confidence, self-esteem and personal motivation. They increase their understanding of how children learn and enjoy working alongside them in a range of differing activities such as crafts, cookery and developing story sacks for reading. Learners apply their newly acquired skills well to improve family relationships and support more confidently their children's learning.

- Many learners are inspired by their experience to continue their studies, often with a view to entering employment. Approximately 25% of learners in 2010/11 are now attending other courses run by the service. One project in an area of deprivation is training local parent volunteers in interview techniques to work with local families to identify via questionnaires the best ways of re-engaging other disaffected families into literacy learning.

- Enthusiastic, experienced tutors plan learning sessions well. Learners work successfully in pairs and groups to explore ideas and practise new skills. In less effective sessions, tutors do not always meet individual learning needs sufficiently or provide adequate challenge for learners that are more able. They rely on a narrow range of group learning activities and range of resources. In a minority of sessions, the cramped accommodation hinders practical activities.

- The monitoring of learners' progress and achievement is good. Learners are fully involved in negotiating personal and group targets. They learn to evaluate and record their own progress and achievements effectively and work well with their children in intergenerational courses to reflect on their shared learning.

- Targeting of the provision is highly effective and meets the needs and interests of disadvantaged communities well. Learners benefit from very well designed, customised first step learning opportunities in response to partners' requests in non-threatening welcoming local venues. The provision effectively promotes community cohesion.

■ Partnership working is outstanding in identifying and responding to families' needs. The service works closely with health, social, and educational services to target engage and support families with the greatest needs. Tutor development workers (TDWs) use a highly effective multi-agency approach to attract additional funding for innovative projects and share agency expertise to enhance the learning environment.

■ Guidance and support are good. Tutors quickly develop good relationships with learners and build their confidence through praise and constructive feedback. Tutors are flexible, supportive and resolve sensitive personal issues effectively. Close liaison and referrals between other agencies provide good additional support for learners. Specialist information and guidance advisers give good group and individual counselling on progression opportunities.

■ The service has a clear positive strategy to meet local and national targets and uses a wide range of funding streams to target those with the greatest needs. TDWs work very effectively with other agencies to involve new learners, develop the curriculum and design collaborative projects to respond to specific, identified needs learner groups. Tutors and TDWs meet regularly to share good practice.

■ Social inclusion and the promotion of equality and diversity are good. The targeting of at risk families and under-represented groups is very successful. Family learning provision significantly narrows the achievement gap of disengaged learners. Some 60% of new learners have joined the provision in the current year. However, tutors do not pay sufficient attention to promoting learners' understanding and awareness of equality and diversity in lessons.

■ Quality improvement is thorough, developmental and supportive. Staff review and improve courses making good use of learners' and partners' feedback. Self-assessment is broadly accurate. Observation of teaching and learning is satisfactory. However, observers do not focus sufficiently on learning. The service does not use data sufficiently well to identify trends and set challenging targets for learners' outcomes, attendance and progression.

What does Derbyshire County Council need to do to improve further?

■ More fully meet the individual skills needs of all learners through use of a wider range of learning and feedback strategies.

■ Further improve the quality of the learning experience through more effective use of learning resources and appropriate accommodation for all sessions.

■ Improve learners' attendance and progression rates by setting and monitoring challenging targets.

Information about the inspection

30. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the one of the provider's adult community education officers 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 body, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's monitoring visit and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.

31. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gather the views of learners. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had completed on behalf of the provider. They also visited learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subjects the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
Derbyshire County Council
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	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive	Social and personal development
Approximate number of enrolled learners				
Full-time learners	280	0	280	0
Part-time learners	13,650	5,100	0	8,550
Overall effectiveness	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**
Capacity to improve	**2**			
Outcomes for learners	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2			
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3			
How well do learners progress?	2			
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2			
Do learners feel safe?	2			
*Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?**	2			
*How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?**	2			
Quality of provision	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2			
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2			
How well do partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2			
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2			
Leadership and management	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2			
*How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?**	2			
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2			
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3			
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2			
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2			
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2			

*where applicable to the type of provision