

## Sheffield Lifelong Learning Skills and Communities

Inspection dates		2-5 October 2012
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

## Local authority

### Summary of key findings for learners

#### This provider requires improvement because:

- The proportion of learners who achieve qualifications across the provision is broadly average, with learners on higher-level courses achieving well but on intermediate courses much less so, and in some subject areas current information is pointing to a dip in achievements. Too many learners leave their courses before achieving their qualifications.
- Managers do not keep enough information on learners' progression to destinations such as employment or further training to help them plan improvements.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment varies too much in many subject areas and not enough is consistently good.
- Performance management processes are very new and are not yet having enough impact on improving teaching and learning.
- The management information system is not giving enough accurate information to help managers identify areas for improvement and plan in sufficient depth to improve teaching, learning and assessment or to narrow the achievement gaps.

#### This provider has the following strengths:

- The service plays a major role in providing opportunities for local young people and adults with few or no qualifications to improve their lives and help them enter employment.
- Teachers and assessors are highly enthusiastic, provide good role models and are well qualified and experienced. Teaching and specialist resources and accommodation are at least good and some are excellent.
- Managers have been effective in maintaining an emphasis on curriculum development despite a period of restructuring, redundancy and freezes on staff recruitment.
- The service manages its subcontractors and resources well to benefit all learners.

## Full report

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality and consistency of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring the new improvement strategy is fully implemented across the service. Use the lesson observation process to measure the effectiveness of the actions within the strategy. Support tutors and assessors to become more reflective practitioners so that they know what they need to do to improve their practice.
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders and managers by fully embedding performance management measures already started and further strengthen the observation of teaching and learning practice so that it accurately informs performance monitoring and improvement strategies.
- Improve the quality of provision on intermediate programmes by identifying precisely why so many students fail their courses or leave early, and take urgent remedial action.
- Identify and establish a management information system that will produce accurate reports and help staff improve provision. Train staff to use this data effectively so that they can improve teaching, learning, assessment and outcomes for learners and inform actions to narrow any identified achievement gaps.
- Ensure all leaders and managers adopt a more critical approach to self-assessment across the provision that is informed by comprehensive feedback from all users. Implement practical strategies that are focused clearly on improving learners' outcomes as well as teaching and learning, through the achievement of shared objectives that are understood and subscribed to by all staff.
- Identify the precise characteristics of the excellent practice that exists in the provision and ensure that these are shared effectively, through, for example, a high-quality staff development programme. Target those areas where improvements are needed more urgently.

### Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Overall, apprentices, adults on workplace programmes and learners on certificated courses achieve their qualifications at an appropriate rate. The achievement of the smaller number of learners on higher-level courses is better than that of intermediate learners. Learners develop good skills they use well at work and in home life, for example, learners in business administration prepare staff rotas for their workplaces, childcare learners develop skills to observe the children in their care to report on their progress, and foundation learners are able to describe comprehensively how to maintain garden equipment such as lawn mowers. Generally, learners make reasonable progress in sessions with some being challenged to do more, although too many learners leave the provision before achieving their qualifications.</li> <li>▪ Learners across programmes develop good team-working skills, for example, business administration learners and learners on music programmes carry out tasks that demonstrate well their ability to work independently and take the initiative. Some learners gain additional qualifications and participate in further training with their employers, such as information communication technologies where they benefit from training in software packages relevant to the applications in which they specialise. Some learners progress to higher-level learning, move into employment or gain promotion at work, though managers do not keep enough data on such progressions to monitor accurately how many learners benefit.</li> <li>▪ The development of learners English and mathematics skills is generally effective although different programmes approach this in different ways with variable results. Learners on</li> </ul>	

foundation programmes develop good English and mathematics skills that they apply well to tasks such as working out the budget for charitable events. However, business administration apprentices' skills are insufficiently challenged by the activities in workbooks that are not always related to real life tasks.

- Managers scrutinise information to understand achievement gaps for learners and have taken some actions to address these, including introducing improvements for learners using the outcome of English for speakers of other languages course reviews. However, managers do not always use statistical information systematically to identify and close the achievement gap for all vulnerable groups and, as a consequence, some gaps are widening in comparison to similar groups with other providers.

### The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Tutors and assessors are enthusiastic, well qualified and have good occupational knowledge that they use well to engage learners in sessions. In the better sessions, they use a good variety of teaching and learning activities to motivate learners, who respond positively. However, not all teaching and learning sessions are good enough. Some provide too little stimulation for learners or pay insufficient attention to the specific needs of individuals; some rely too much on paper-based activities. This reflects learners' outcomes that require improvement.
- Staff provide good role models for learners, for example in the music production studio where professional musicians and technicians give good advice to learners on 'breaking into' the profession. In other sessions, vocational tutors have high credibility with learners, particularly those in foundation learning, and set good examples in workplace health and safety.
- Resources are good overall and provide learners with a high quality experience of learning. The health care facilities at the Sheaf training centre are excellent and give learners a vivid experience of working in care, from domiciliary care to a hospital environment. The music studio is also outstanding offering facilities and production values that attract a wide range of high quality professional musicians.
- Traditional classroom resources are good with most having interactive whiteboards and other information learning technologies that most tutors appropriately use to support learning. Assessors have access to a range of recording devices and computer 'tablets' to vary assessment activities. While learners have access to these facilities, not all tutors are confident in using them to provide stimulating teaching and learning activities.
- Staff use initial assessment appropriately. Individual learning plans are based on this information and reflect the needs of individuals well, but it does not sufficiently inform plans for group sessions. Assessment in workplace provision is thorough and well planned providing learners with good verbal feedback that they value and understand. In qualification based learning, learners' assessments are generally satisfactory although lesson plans do not always show clearly what assessments are planned and with which learners.
- Learners benefit well from the detailed verbal feedback they receive from tutors and assessors; they have a good understanding of what they have to do to improve, and use this information well with their employers to devise further training at work and at home that extends their skills and knowledge. Foundation learners' objectives are well recorded for units of their qualification but targets to challenge their barriers to employment or personal development such as time-keeping and personal presentation are not always recorded adequately.
- Learners requiring literacy or numeracy tuition or other support needs such as dyslexia, are identified satisfactorily through the recruitment and initial assessment processes and generally receive appropriate help. However, the support provided is not always systematically recorded centrally, and managers are not always able to measure accurately how many learners receive support and when.
- Trainers and assessors give good information, advice and guidance to learners within the bounds of their occupational knowledge that enable them to understand their choices within the

vocational area and sometimes the wider available opportunities. Learners on foundation programmes receive good advice that helps them gain access to suitable work placements. Trainers and assessors are very accessible and are seen as 'critical friends' by learners who trust them and respond well to the advice and guidance they offer, however, too few learners have access to the service's qualified advisers and do not benefit from their wider knowledge and guidance.

- Tutors and assessors promote equality and diversity well through teaching and learning. Staff encourage learners to think about issues through thought provoking games, activities and materials. In painting and decorating, for example, the tutors have developed innovative training packs based on learners' interest in colour and design that relate to different cultures and religions. Learners are very effectively engaged in the subject and learn a great deal about related equality and diversity issues.
- Learners participating in music programmes develop a good understanding of equality and diversity with materials and activities related to their industry, including the origins of different types of music, such as 'blues' music and its links to the slave trading business in the nineteenth century. However, assessors in work-based learning do not use the review process to test fully learners' understanding of equality and diversity.

## Health and social care Early years and playwork

### Learning programmes for 16-18 Learning programmes for 19+ Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- Teaching and learning for both work-based learners and those on other certificated courses in health and childcare require improvement and correlate with the outcomes. In the better sessions, trainers use a variety of stimulating activities to enthuse and motivate learners but in poorer sessions, learners are less challenged or engaged. In the better sessions, staff use information learning technologies well to engage learners and help them understand difficult concepts. However, not all trainers use a good enough range of these technologies regularly or well enough to have a sufficient impact on the quality of learning.
- All learners, either through their apprenticeships, or by well-matched work placements, learn at least a reasonable range of workplace skills. Learners demonstrate a good understanding of theory linked to practice when in the workplace, for example relating learning activities for children to their age and stage of development. All learners make good progress throughout their learning programmes.
- Learners' progress is monitored appropriately through regular meetings and reviews with their assessors. Learners have a good understanding of the progress they are making during their care qualifications and benefit from prompt and detailed feedback from assessors. However, some assessors use a very complicated way of recording assessment plans that are not always helpful or easily understood by learners.
- Suitably qualified staff use their knowledge well to support learners, giving relevant advice about career progression at appropriate points during learners' training which helps them to make informed choices about their future careers. Staff appropriately refer learners to other services for advice where more specialist knowledge is required, although the service does not thoroughly monitor the effectiveness of these interventions.
- Staff on care and childcare courses have created good equality and diversity materials that help learners understand how to understand and apply aspects of equality and diversity in the workplace. For example, hand outs and worksheets help childcare learners to integrate examples from different cultures into the play activities they organise for children. Learners have

a high awareness of equality and diversity and talk with confidence of how they ensure the environment in which they work is inclusive for adults and children.

- Resources at the Sheaf Centre are excellent with a replica hospital setting, including an accident and emergency unit, acute admissions and a general area, personal care facilities and a laboratory. Learners gain valuable experience in developing good quality skills within realistic settings before going into the workplace where they effectively apply their sound understanding of the links between theory and practice. Employers and schools also access these facilities for some practical sessions, although these excellent facilities are not always fully used.
- All learners undergo initial diagnostic assessment to assess their vocational competences, learning styles and skills in English and mathematics, but staff do not always use these results well to plan teaching and learning sessions. Despite compiling useful group profiles that clearly show how best to work with individual learners, trainers' session planning does not consider this information enough to create lessons that stimulate all learners. For example, lesson plans do not highlight how mathematics and English integrate into the lesson or how learners' preferred learning styles would be accommodated.

## **Independent living and leisure skills Foundation learning**

### **Learning programmes for 16-18 Learning programmes for 19+**

Requires improvement

- The wide range of vocational and employability programmes available to learners is good, well-resourced and taught by enthusiastic trainers with a wide range of occupational expertise who work well to match learners to their work placements. However, while many sessions are well taught, not all trainers deal effectively enough with learners with challenging behaviours and some sessions are over-reliant on worksheets. Learners develop appropriate skills for employment and achieve vocational and employability qualifications to a reasonable level which reflects the teaching and learning session quality in foundation learning and that received by learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.
- Functional skills teaching and learning are good, with learners enjoying the engaging activities such as competitive team games and quizzes as well as project work linked to their preferred vocational area. Trainers work well with learners to develop their interview skills and improve their English so that curriculum vitae and covering letters are well presented. However, the provider does not share the good practice in functional skills with subcontractors.
- Staff support learners well in sessions and make good use of additional tutors. Learners improve their level of concentration, grow in personal confidence helped by frequent individual and positive feedback and develop independent learning and research skills well. Trainers give appropriate advice and guidance regarding local opportunities and apprenticeships but the use of wider advice and guidance sessions on future careers are not as well developed.
- Trainers continuously assess learners' work well in sessions in a variety of ways including careful questioning and asking learners to make explicit their thought processes. Staff mark work frequently and give regular feedback. Initial assessments of English skills are effective in identifying starting points for learners; however, trainers do not fully use the full range of initial assessments, including those that identify previous work skills or behavioural issues, to plan learning.
- Trainers are well qualified and experienced and show high commitment to their learners' progress and development. Staff use their background experience well to widen opportunities for learners through external contacts and involvement in associated projects. Vocational and functional skills tutors work well together to design activities in each vocational area that promote learners' development in English and mathematics, for instance, in carpentry and

joinery, tutors plan activities that help learners better understand measurement in the construction industry.

- Trainers promote equality and diversity well using good resources and activities in sessions, and setting ground rules for good behaviour which they display in the teaching rooms. Tutors give good individual support for the different needs of learners and continuously revise, review and seek out different ways to engage learners and meet their needs. Staff identify and appropriately support learners with specific learning difficulties.
- Learners’ progress is reviewed satisfactorily and they are set clear, measurable targets for their vocational and personal aims that lead to qualifications. Personal targets to improve shortfalls in performance, such as poor punctuality are not always challenging enough and do not help learners overcome barriers to employment.
- Technology is used effectively in the classroom but staff have not received adequate training and development to make best use of it. However, trainers are starting to use new electronic-based assessments and computer ‘tablets’ with learners with learning difficulties who enjoy using them and are finding that they meet their needs well.

<b>Administration</b>	
<b>Learning programmes for 16-18</b>	Good
<b>Learning programmes for 19+</b>	
<b>Apprenticeships</b>	

- Coaching and assessment are good and ensure that a high proportion of learners’ achieve their qualifications. Assessors use questioning well to check understanding and learners respond confidently on such issues as sustainability in office supplies and decision making procedures to secure emergency cover in the care sector. Learners work well independently and are well motivated to take responsibility for their own learning and development.
- Employers and supervisors provide good workplace training and mentoring that ensure learners acquire business knowledge and develop occupational skills well. Many learners quickly increase their contribution to the organisation, for example, one learner has successfully developed a database to monitor pupils’ progress which has been adopted by two local schools.
- Assessors are well qualified and experienced in their sector. They draw on their good subject knowledge and awareness of the qualification standards to make accurate assessment of learning. Their expertise ensures that learners develop their knowledge and skills so that they can provide very good evidence and make good progress.
- Assessors meet regularly and use well the weekly team meetings to review learners’ progress and to plan their assessments. The internal verification process is thorough and the regular standardisation activities support good assessment practices. The standard of learners’ work is good with few grammatical or spelling errors.
- Staff use technology effectively in assessment, for example, voice recording and more recently video clips; in addition, e-portfolios have now been introduced which are well received by learners and employers. Assessors and learners use the system very effectively to gain access to learning records, and store learners’ work and evidence for the qualification. Tutors have developed some good online materials for learners to use remotely, for example for minute taking, report writing and curriculum vitae preparation.
- Learners receive good constructive feedback from assessment that highlights how they can improve their evidence to demonstrate competence. Assessors set clear targets in the action plans which learners find very useful in ensuring they make progress between monthly workplace assessor visits.
- Learners make appropriate progress in developing their English, mathematics, and functional skills. Attendance at the well-resourced training centres for off-the-job sessions is generally

good. However, teaching of functional skills requires improvement as trainers use too narrow a range of methods and learning activities to stimulate and challenge individual learners.

- Assessors measure and review progress with learners regularly so that they know how well they have done and what they need to do to improve. They track learners' workplace development effectively. However, the individual learning plans focus on the qualification or the apprenticeship framework to set dates for completion of units and components and assessors do not always incorporate enough workplace training and personal development targets.
- Learners' progression is mostly good. Learners are well prepared to take on additional responsibility at work and to improve their employability prospects. However, staff do not gather and use enough information on progressions to jobs, workplace promotion or to higher-level programmes.
- Learners demonstrate a good understanding of equality and diversity as well as health and safety. Assessors check carefully for any gaps in learners' understanding. However, reinforcement and discussion in reviews are generally insufficiently recorded and learners' understanding of equality and diversity in relation to their work roles is not always routinely checked.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

### **Requires improvement**

- Leaders and managers have successfully managed a period of significant change to ensure the financial sustainability of the service. During a period of restructuring and adjustment, the focus on maintaining the quality of the learners' experience has been paramount. Leaders and managers have been successful in maintaining staff morale and motivation during this difficult period of consolidation.
- The elected council member with the portfolio for education has a very strong understanding of the provision and aspires to provide a high quality experience for all learners. Senior managers frequently monitor the effectiveness of the provision using outcome data well, although reports have not sufficiently focused on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders and managers recognise that while performance management has operated through an established individual performance appraisal process, this has not been sufficiently rigorous. A newly introduced system more clearly defines and measures progress towards achieving key performance indicators for staff. However, it is too early in its implementation to judge fully its impact.
- Staff are highly motivated and committed to providing a high quality experience for learners. They are well qualified for their roles. Many staff have significant and highly relevant vocational experience that they use very well to motivate learners. Learners benefit from good accommodation and teaching resources and in some cases, excellent specialist facilities. However, tutors do not always use well some of the resources, such as the information learning technologies equipment, to promote learners' achievement.
- In recognition that the observation of teaching and learning process was insufficiently focused on learning, managers have introduced revised arrangements. However, the inspectors found too great a variation in the quality of lessons and the proportion of those judged less than good by inspectors indicated over grading of some observations carried out by the provider.
- Managers have recently introduced an appropriate quality improvement plan specifically designed to improve teaching, learning and assessment. Some lead tutors, with the role of spearheading this initiative, are in position while others are being identified. These roles are beginning to have a positive impact although it is too early to judge what impact the overall initiative will have on improving the quality of learners' experience.
- Managers use a good range of activities, including learner focus groups and learner surveys to gain learners' feedback and bring about improvements but processes for gaining employers' or other stakeholders' feedback are less well developed. Learners have insufficient opportunities to

be involved in decision-making groups, such as the equality and diversity and safeguarding forums, or in the self-assessment process.

- Staff have good involvement and ownership of the self-assessment process. However, leaders and managers have not ensured that the grades and judgements in the subsequent self-assessment reports are always based on compelling evidence and a revised self-assessment process is being implemented. The monitoring of subcontracted provision is very strong.
- Leaders use a number of different proprietary and in-house systems to provide management data and monitor performance appropriately. The provider has recognised that this is not effective and is currently implementing a new management information system. Inspectors had difficulty in obtaining some data, such as rates of learners' progression, or in reconciling other data such as foundation learning outcomes.
- The service is strongly responsive to the communities which it serves and managers plan the provision well to contribute significantly to the strategic objectives of the council. Much of the provision is appropriately aimed at including learners with low prior attainment and those facing significant disadvantage or difficulty. Partnership working to develop and deliver the provision is very strong.
- Promoting and celebrating the equality and diversity of all learners is a well-established ethos across the service. Managers have been successful in training and developing staff to integrate the promotion of equality and diversity throughout the curriculum.
- Although managers are committed to reducing any achievement gaps between different groups of learners, the analysis of data has not been sufficiently detailed to identify the issues with sufficient precision. Although some gaps have been narrowed, others remain or have widened. The provider has begun the more rigorous and detailed analysis of data to inform decision-making and action-planning.
- Providing a healthy and safe environment is a high priority and the service meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners.



## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

### Sheffield Lifelong Learning Skills and Communities

<b>Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:</b>  1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Foundation Learning
	Overall effectiveness	3	3	3	3
Outcomes for learners	3	3	3	3	3
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3	3	3	3	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management	3	3	3	3	3

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Health and social care	3
Early years and playwork	3
Independent living and leisure skills	3
Foundation learning	3
Administration	2

## Provider details

### Sheffield Lifelong Learning Skills and Communities

Type of provider	Local authority
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 742
	Part-time: 8,703
Principal/CEO	Dee Desgranges
Date of previous inspection	April 2009

<b>Website address</b>	www.sheffield.gov.uk
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### Provider information at the time of the inspection

<b>Main course or learning programme level</b>	<b>Level 1 or below</b>		<b>Level 2</b>		<b>Level 3</b>		<b>Level 4 and above</b>	
<b>Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)</b>	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
<b>Full-time</b>	157	81	52	76	21	34	0	0
<b>Part-time</b>	215	531	80	450	23	201	3	27
<b>Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>		<b>Advanced</b>		<b>Higher</b>			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	100	51	38	86	0	0		
<b>Number of learners aged 14-16</b>	1908							
<b>Number of community learners</b>	8232							
<b>Number of employability learners</b>	79							
<b>Funding received from</b>	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
<b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Sheffield Future</li> <li>■ Heeley City Farm</li> <li>■ Sprint Training</li> <li>■ The Source Academy</li> <li>■ Youth Association, South Yorkshire</li> </ul>							

## Additional socio-economic information

The provider is situated in Sheffield, a city with a population of 555,500. The proportion of pupils attaining five GCSEs at grades A\* to C in the city is below the national average. Unemployment is just above the national average. The proportions of the local population that have no qualifications or hold qualifications at advanced level or above are around the national averages. The main employment in the region is in service industries including hotel /restaurant work followed by the finance/information technology/administrative areas. A reasonable proportion of employment is in industries related to the provision offered by Sheffield Lifelong Learning Skills and Communities.

## Information about this inspection

**Lead inspector**

June Cramman HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the quality and curriculum development manager as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the inspection report.

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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