

Nottinghamshire County Council

Local authority

Inspection dates		12-16 November 2012
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- The large majority of learners achieve their learning objectives in their chosen subject areas. Many, who have previously had poor learning experiences or limited opportunities to learn, join courses, enjoy learning and progress well.
- Most learners gain confidence, improve their self-esteem and raise aspirations for their lives. They gain new knowledge and skills that they use to help themselves, their families and communities.
- Much teaching, learning and assessment is good or better.
- Leadership and management are good. Managers provide good levels of staff training and resources for learning and manage tutors' performance well.
- The service, in partnership with other providers, delivers a very broad range of learning opportunities successfully. Learners from socially and economically disadvantaged communities attend classes well in many local venues, where they feel safe.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Outcomes for learners and the quality of provision in Foundation Learning require improvement.
- Not enough teaching, learning and assessment are outstanding. The pace of improvement in Foundation Learning has been slow.
- A small minority of learners do not complete their learning objectives successfully and the service is not fully effective at monitoring these learners' progress.
- Many tutors do not sufficiently promote equality and diversity in their lessons.
- A few tutors do not use all opportunities to develop learners' literacy and numeracy skills.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Rapidly improve learner outcomes on Foundation Learning by better preparing them for progression into employment, apprenticeship or further education. Set demanding targets for all learners to undertake work experience, improve their attendance, develop their skills and achieve qualifications.
- Improve the quality of provision in Foundation Learning to good or better by adopting a more thorough approach to the planning of all vocational activities to ensure that they meet individual learners' needs.
- Significantly improve the monitoring of learners' progress by using a single individual learning plan, ensuring that targets are specific and time-bound.
- Further improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to good or better levels by sharing good practice and by greater use of peer support from within the service. Target staff support and development on planning lessons to meet individual learner needs, making more imaginative use of Information Learning Technology (ILT) and in designing better quality learning resources. Encourage all tutors to routinely evaluate their lessons.
- Share best practice in completing the individual learning plans and the tutor feedback on the learners' progress. Ensure that all learners are enabled to record their learning objectives on their learning plans by using a range of multimedia and ILT, where appropriate.
- Develop the confidence and skills of all tutors to increase the promotion of equality and diversity in all lessons.
- Ensure tutors use all opportunities to develop learners' literacy and numeracy skills in all lessons.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Most learners achieve their personal learning objectives as well as the course objectives, often exceeding their expectations. They enjoy learning, develop new interests, meet new people and enrich their lives by gaining new knowledge and skills such as lip reading and arts and crafts. Learners gain good levels of confidence, self-respect and they raise their aspirations for themselves and their families.
- Attendance and retention rates on community learning courses are high but low for learners in Foundation learning. Having gained confidence, learners develop an appetite for learning as many progress to learn on accredited programmes at higher levels. Since the previous inspection, the service has maintained and improved good outcomes and progression for learners on programmes of independent living and leisure skills, which constitute around a quarter of the total provision.
- The service is very successful at providing programmes for some of the most excluded groups such as Gypsy Roma and traveller families, victims of domestic abuse, Polish migrants and recently arrived women from minority ethnic groups. The learners overcome their isolation and make good attempts to integrate more fully into society. The take up of the provision and success rates on courses by learners from minority ethnic groups are higher than the proportion in the county council area.
- Learners make good use of the short externally-accredited qualifications such as food hygiene and Information Communication Technology (ICT) through volunteering to help their communities. For example, older learners use these skills by volunteering to help their

communities through cooking funeral lunches. Some make highly valuable contribution to raising the attainment levels of the children in schools in deprived areas as literacy volunteers. A few learners gain employment.

- Outcomes are high for learners with learning disabilities and difficulties throughout the service. Male and female learners achieve equally well. Outcomes for a small group of learners on probation order remain low.
- The achievement of qualifications for learners on Foundation Learning programmes in functional skills of English, mathematics and ICT skills at foundation level has recently improved to an acceptable level, although the number achieving these qualifications at intermediate level remains low. The rates of achievement have been historically low at foundation and entry levels in previous years.
- Learners undertaking foundation employability skills courses are not prepared well for employment. Attendance levels are low. A small percentage of learners attend work experience. They do not develop sufficiently high levels of communication and interpersonal skills to secure and sustain employment.
- The rates of progression of learners on Foundation Learning into further education, apprenticeship or employment are too low and require improvement. The percentage of learners achieving positive progressions has been variable and has marginally improved since the previous inspection. Most learners develop appropriate levels of confidence, knowledge and competence in vocational skills such as care, catering, painting and decorating and horticulture.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and results in good outcomes for most learners in Community Development and Family Learning. Tutors develop excellent rapport with learners and create a supportive learning environment to raise aspirations and build learners' confidence. They have high expectations of learners and most make good use of their skills to support individuals.
- Teaching, learning and assessment in Foundation Learning is not yet good and is reflected in the outcomes for learners that require improvement. The pace of learning in many lessons is slow. Tutors accept mediocrity and fail to motivate and challenge all individuals sufficiently to achieve their potential.
- In the large majority of lessons, skilful and experienced tutors make good use of questioning techniques to explore and extend learners' knowledge and skills. They use a variety of techniques, resources and activities to make learning relevant and engage learners fully in learning. Learners build their confidence and develop the skills of independent learning and self-assessment of their own progress using a variety of strategies.
- Initial assessment is appropriate and is conducted sensitively to meet the needs of those whose earlier experiences of education may have been negative. Tutors are adept at helping learners to identify their wider objectives such as the development of literacy skills, confidence, ability to use internet and email, in addition to the course-specific skills offered.
- Learners receive good help in identifying their personal learning objectives and recording these in well-considered individual learning plans. While most learners and tutors are adept at completing these, a few do not complete them appropriately to measure their progress through an otherwise robust process of recognising and recording progress and achievement.
- Feedback on learners' performance in classes is good overall and encourages and motivates learners. In a few less well-developed sessions, tutors make general comments on learners' progress. Written feedback is often similar for most learners with very little comment on their individual progress. The feedback is not individual and does not help learners to extend their skills and knowledge sufficiently or to improve further.

- Most tutors including the community learning officers are well experienced and skilful in their specialist areas and hold appropriate teaching qualifications. The majority of staff are highly motivated and well supported by a good range of staff development programmes.
- Tutors and learners often appropriately identify the development of learners’ skills in English and mathematics as a main objective and as a target while enrolling on other courses such as art, IT, media and drama. Learners practise these skills in the activities and value the improvements they make. However, tutors do not routinely focus on improving these skills in lesson objectives, target setting and progress reviews.
- Learning resources are of good quality in a wide variety of venues including schools, community centres, Children’s Centres, care homes and in the learners’ own homes. The service provides a good range of resources to improve the quality of learning such as the provision of adult sized furniture, consumables, tablet computers and dongles for internet access. However, in Foundation Learning the accommodation is more variable in quality with some bright, airy classrooms and one of the main centres requires improvement and updating. These areas are being improved.
- Learners who lack confidence gain highly appropriate guidance about courses and advice on progression on an informal basis from the local Learning Champions, Children’s Centres and staff in community centres. However, advice for those whose confidence has improved is limited as the service does not make sufficient use of case studies to raise aspirations for progression to qualifications and employment through other providers.
- The promotion of equality and diversity in teaching and learning is too variable within lessons. However, good planning does ensure that individual needs are met in many lessons. Tutors are aware of the need to challenge stereotyping by learners and they work to develop a culture of respect for the different needs of individuals.

Community Development	
Learning programmes for 19+	Good

- The quality of teaching in Community Development is good, with examples of outstanding teaching that reflect the high outcomes for learners. In the best lessons learners are actively engaged in well planned and appropriately challenging activities. Most sessions have a lively pace and offer a variety of motivating and engaging learning activities, including individual and group work.
- The quality of learning resources and materials is generally good. However, some handouts are uninspiring, poorly presented or too complicated. Some tutors do not make full use of opportunities to develop learners’ English and mathematics skills.
- Tutors use their well-developed skills and expertise well in planning balanced programmes with a wide range of activities and are responsive to individual learner needs and interests. Staff skilfully question learners to check understanding, give frequent and clear feedback on how well they have done and what they need to do to improve and support the development of learners’ self-esteem and confidence.
- Initial advice and guidance is well structured and undertaken effectively to motivate learners to identify their existing skills and starting points. Tutors use a good range of well-established approaches including audio and pictorial resources to conduct assess learners’ needs especially for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Progression planning is timely, with clarity about how to get help or support needed to support the achievement of further learning goals, personal aspirations or career aims.

- Most learners value the use of individual learning plans to record their learning achievements. Good use is made of booklets with pictorial and photographic records of learning outcomes and activities by learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, in a few cases individual learning plans with specific and measurable targets are not completed.
- Learning meets the needs of the learners well and is delivered flexibly in many local venues, with good resources. Cookery facilities are well used and service users have good facilities in specialist centres. Learners use many opportunities to use technology in sessions, with use of tablet computers in Art History and digital photography for record keeping in the Designing with Mosaics class.
- Tutors make good use of the diverse cultures within the classes to raise awareness of diversity in society and the world at large. For example, a tutor used the colours of the Ghanaian flag very imaginatively in a flower arranging class. Learners have a respect for other cultures and tutors challenge any stereotypes.

Foundation Learning

Learning programmes for 16-18

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement which reflects the proportion of learners who progress to further education, apprenticeships or employment. This is further reflected in the too low level of achievement of progression awards, employability awards and functional skills.
- Tutors plan learning well in English, mathematics and personal and social skills to personalise learning outcomes and provide a range of additional work and activities that develop learners' confidence and skills. Lessons have a lively pace and offer a range of activities to engage learners. Questioning techniques to check learning and extend learners' knowledge and understanding work well.
- Programmes of work and supporting session plans are not detailed in most vocational and employability lessons and are not meeting the individual needs of learners sufficiently. Teaching methods are appropriate with plenty of individual support given to learners to help them progress. In most cases tutors do not evaluate the session to identify and record individual and additional support needs for the next lesson.
- Learners are not set targets to prepare for work experience and they do not feel the urgency to learn valuable employability skills. The numbers of learners on work experience are very low, although the provider does have a large number of existing employers that they can use.
- Staff are qualified appropriately to carry out their roles and interact well with learners in a sensitive and responsive way to meet learners' needs. Information learning technology resources, which were poor at the previous inspection, are still inadequate and are only used effectively in a minority of sessions. Too little use is made of media such as video clips to improve learning. Learning environments are good at most centres but workshops in one of the larger centres lack the level of required facilities, although the premises are undergoing refurbishment.
- Learners have good access to confidential advice and practical support on drugs, alcohol and housing. Care, guidance and support are good. Staff know and understand their learners very well and act promptly when problems occur by providing relevant support or through referral to a broad range of local agencies and youth support services.
- Initial assessment of learners' English, mathematics and social skills is appropriate. Learners understand the results of their initial assessment. Information from initial assessment is not effectively used to set challenging targets to drive achievement and success.

- Learners have individual learning plans for different aspects of their training. These plans are not linked together or provide an overview of progress of the learners. The quality of target setting in individual learning plans and progress reviews is variable. Targets are vague, and are not specific or time-bound. However, target-setting in personal and social development is good.
- Written and verbal feedback on assessed work is adequate and identifies what learners need to do to improve. However, insufficient attention is paid to the use of self- and peer assessment to involve learners better in assessment activities.
- Staff are appropriately trained in equality and diversity issues. They promote the subject well with learners throughout the course. Learners are protected well from bullying and harassment including cyber bullying.

Family Learning

Learning programmes for 19+

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good with a significant proportion of outstanding lessons, which is reflected in the very good skills that the learners develop particularly in managing their children's behaviour. Teachers have high expectations of learners and help them identify their ambitions and aspirations for their children. Staff support and encourage learners very well.
- Teachers plan lessons carefully to meet learners' needs with many opportunities to discuss childcare issues and share experiences and behaviour management strategies. Learners learn from the wide range of well-designed practical learning activities, games and creative experiences that model good practice and use these exceedingly well at home by spending time enjoyably with their children. Most teachers use questions well to reinforce learning and develop thinking skills.
- Assessment of learners' starting points and monitoring of their progress is good. On non-accredited courses, learners develop independent learning skills well by assessing their own starting points against the course outcomes, identifying what they want to learn additionally, recording what they achieve weekly and evaluating how the lesson has helped them. However, on accredited courses, teachers do not always use the results of initial assessment to plan learning individually at the right level for each learner.
- Learners receive very encouraging, positive verbal feedback in classes and weekly written comments in their individual learning plans. Learners' homework and other written work has detailed comments and an overall encouraging contribution from teachers, while digital recording by video, photograph and textspeak is increasingly used with learners who prefer graphic and spoken feedback. Through carefully-guided discussions in useful topics, such as the strategies to encourage children to eat a variety of foods, teachers develop group skills of listening and speaking constructively.
- All teaching and learning aims to develop learners' spoken communications significantly, with particular emphasis on the effective discussion and negotiation essential in living with children, while some teachers use opportunities to develop learners' understanding of numeracy in everyday life. A few skilled IT practitioners use computers very effectively and the range of digital equipment is increasing. However, not all staff have the skills or access to equipment to ensure that learners experience IT as a learning tool.
- Staff are skilled at helping learners to develop their very individual pathways through family learning, non-accredited or accredited, and onwards to other providers or into voluntary or paid work. Where learners are ready and interested, teachers actively promote the idea of taking English and mathematics qualifications and, less often, qualifications in IT in order to increase

learners' range of future choices. Through strong relationships with the Careers service, learners receive sensitive advice on potential next steps.

- Tutors promote equality and diversity well in most lessons by using resources such as toys and books in nurseries and in storytelling, music and art provision and healthy eating courses from different cultures. All learners feel safe and respected. Where an equalities issue arises, such as avoiding racial discrimination, for example, as a ground rule in *Playing with your Child*, teachers encourage learners to expand on their previous experiences and discuss the matter with respect.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders, managers and governors have worked together very effectively to establish a clear mission and expect high standards from the two discrete teams of the county council: Adult and Community Learning Service (ACLS) and Skills for Employment (SfE). Both teams contribute extensively to support the county council's wider objectives to improve skill levels, reduce poverty and enhance health and wellbeing. The recent management restructure was managed well.
- Governance arrangements at the strategic level are good and provide effective challenge to service managers to maintain effectiveness, within the context of declining resources. Governance focusing on operational effectiveness is adequate. The service directors recognise that they have not fully implemented clearly defined key indicators to scrutinise the provision's quality and learner outcome rates.
- Performance management within the ACLS is particularly rigorous. Managers make highly effective use of broad range of data to hold subcontractors who deliver the entire community development provision, to account and seek improvements. The service supports subcontractors well, provides them with a wide range of staff development opportunities, and effectively facilitates the sharing of best practice to maintain high professional standards.
- ACLS managers collect, analyse and use data thoroughly to monitor the performance of tutors, centres and subcontractors and to improve the service. They also use this information to identify and narrow the performance between different groups of learners; however, SfE managers do not use data effectively for comparative purposes within Foundation Learning provision. Different groups of learners achieve at a similar rate.
- Managers regularly assess the quality of teaching sessions through direct observation and use improvement planning to raise standards. Managers provide valuable support to the subcontractors including joint observations. Tutors value the supportive feedback after observations as well as the subsequent professional development programme.
- Leaders and managers have a good understanding of the provision's quality and rightly prioritise improvement actions that have the greatest impact on learning. The self-assessment process in both teams is well established, highly inclusive and evaluative. The self-assessment reports for both teams are accurate and are focussed on improvement informed by an honest, self-critical and participative culture.
- The associated development plans for the self-assessment reports are well structured. The improvements within the ACLS service have been rapid and standards maintained or improved; however, the SfE managers have placed insufficient emphasis on actions to raise the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Curriculum management is generally good and contributes significantly to raising aspirations and ambition amongst staff and learners. However, not all provision is of a consistently high quality, as managers in SfE do not make sufficient use of progression targets and data to aid effective performance management. Since the previous inspection, Foundation Learning has not improved sufficiently, although deployment of greater levels of resources and closer monitoring

and management have resulted in improvements in data management and teaching and learning in functional skills.

- ACLS managers make excellent use of partnerships to deliver a flexible and responsive curriculum that learners enjoy. They have set and achieved challenging targets to engage hard-to-reach and marginalised learners from almost all of the economically deprived areas and isolated rural communities. So far the service has reached 71% of the learners from these areas and communities. The service has given careful consideration to the timing, location and duration of programmes to maximise participation and made particularly effective use of some 48 subcontractors to extend the learning offer.
- The ACLS plans and delivers provision from a very wide range of sites that are suitable and offer good quality learning environments. The training centre accommodation for most Foundation Learning is appropriate and often of a high standard. Service managers are very responsive in meeting requests for learning support resources, though tutors do not always use them effectively.
- The strategic and operational objectives of both services are informed clearly by an appropriate range of policies and procedures that protect learners and promote their understanding of equality and diversity. Managers and tutors ensure all learners are very effectively protected and respond quickly and effectively to incidents and complaints such as bullying and harassment.
- The county council places a strong emphasis on protecting all learners whilst effectively enhancing their understanding of how to raise a concern. The provider meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Arrangements include the maintenance of central records of appropriate Criminal Record Bureau vetting of staff. Managers effectively monitor and evaluate the impact of safeguarding procedures and continually strive to improve the safety of all the learning environments.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

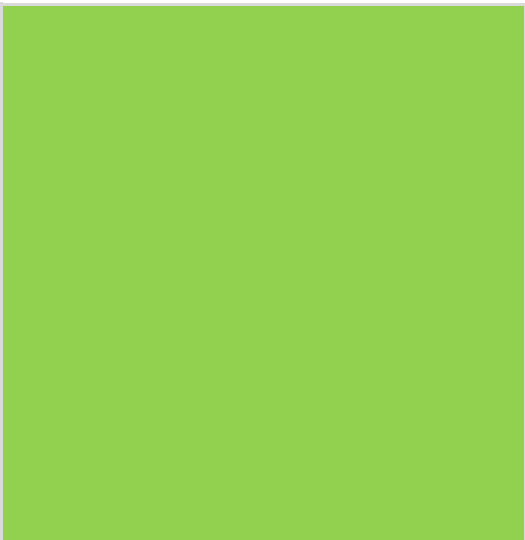
Nottinghamshire County Council									
Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 Learning programmes	16-18 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Other work-based learning	Employability	Foundation Learning	Community learning
	Overall effectiveness	2			2				3
Outcomes for learners	2			2				3	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2			2				3	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2			2				3	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Foundation learning	3
Family Learning	2
Community Development	2

Provider details

Nottinghamshire County Council	
Type of provider	Local authority
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 262
	Part-time: 8,795
Principal/CEO	Mrs Sue Green
Date of previous inspection	May 2009
Website address	www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)								
Full-time	125	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Part-time	0	0	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Number of community learners	2,482							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Advocacy 2 Engagement ■ Bassetlaw Hospital ■ DC Education ■ Dukeries Community College ■ Food Hygiene Training Services ■ Life Education Centre Nottingham ■ Literacy Volunteers ■ Mansfield Mediation Service ■ New College Nottingham 							

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- North Nottinghamshire College
 - Nottingham Mencap
 - Personal Learning Consultancy
 - South Nottinghamshire College
 - Southwell Care Project
 - Survivors Helping Each Other
 - Sutton Centre Community College
 - Tales From The Heartwood
 - Valley Training
 - Vision West Nottinghamshire
 - WEA.

Additional socio-economic information

Nottinghamshire has a population of 785,800 and covers an area of 806 square miles. A fifth of the population lives in small towns and villages with a population under 10,000. The provision operates throughout the county with 91% of the learners with low skills and qualifications from areas of the highest deprivation in Nottinghamshire. Some 20% of the working age population have a long-term illness and 35,000 people are in receipt of incapacity benefits. Some 25% of the population has no access to a car and 14% of the working age population have no qualifications. The number of learners aged 14-16 who are not in education, employment or training is 3.7%. The unemployment rate for the county as a whole is 3.3%.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Harmesh Manghra HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the Team Manager, Library and Community Learning as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment reports 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 with nine subcontractors. 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 report above.

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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