

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Local authority

Inspection dates		4–7 December 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:

- Outcomes are good. The majority of learners who complete their courses make good progress and achieve their planned learning aims. Success rates for mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) are high.
- Learners make good progress and develop strong practical and employability skills. Many successfully move on to further learning or into work.
- Knowledgeable and enthusiastic tutors plan and deliver good lessons using a wide range of resources and activities to motivate learners and help them succeed.
- Tutors give learners constructive feedback that helps them understand what they need to do next to improve the standard of their work.
- Strong leadership and management have successfully raised standards so that more learners stay on their courses and succeed
- Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) listens to learners and uses their views well to influence improvements.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- In some lessons tutors rely too much on worksheets, do not provide activities that meet the full range of individual learners' needs, and make too little use of technology to add variety and enliven lessons.
- When reviewing work with learners, tutors do not always make clear enough the progress learners have made against their individual targets.
- Arrangements to check the quality of the learners' experience do not pay enough attention to induction, initial assessment and the impact of sessions on how much learners learn.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve retention by ensuring the curriculum meets the needs of local learners, by identifying at an early stage those at most risk of leaving the course early and by putting in place appropriate support to overcome barriers to progress.
- Improve success rates in weaker areas, particularly in English, by strengthening the development and integration within other subjects of functional skills and by sharing good practice between tutors.
- Increase the use of learner-centred activities and of interactive learning technology to engage all learners and enliven lessons.
- Make more-effective use of progress reviews to help learners reflect on and record goals for personal development.
- Strengthen quality assurance procedures by applying them to all aspects of the learners' experience, including induction and progress reviews.
- Improve the proportion of outstanding lessons by ensuring lesson observations provide clear evidence and judgements on the learning that has taken place, and that these lead to high quality action planning and training. Encourage tutors to be more reflective in evaluating the quality of their lessons so that they recognise what they need to do to improve practice.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Outcomes are good. The majority of learners who complete their courses make good progress and achieve their planned learning aims. Success rates for mathematics and ICT are high.
- The proportion of learners remaining on their courses has increased this year and is high. The number of learners leaving their courses before completion, largely due to circumstances beyond the provider's control, led to a decline in success rates in 2011/12, particularly in English and in independent living and leisure skills programmes.
- Attendance is good overall, although for some small groups in English and mathematics, and for business administration, it is weaker.
- The majority of learners progress to positive destinations, many to further learning within BMBC's provision, and, for a substantial minority in ICT, into employment.
- Learners on independent living and leisure skills courses develop valuable practical skills such as budgeting and cookery. They grow in confidence to operate within a group situation and recognise other people's needs as well as their own. Many are able, as a result of developing new skills, to move from residential accommodation to more independent living.
- Learners make good progress in mathematics and English, improving their ability to write clearly and accurately, and to apply mathematical concepts.

- Learners develop good employability skills. Learners on ICT and on teaching support courses demonstrate their ability to transfer learning from the classroom to the workplace particularly well.
- Learners produce work that demonstrates high levels of practical skills, for example, in digital photography and sugar craft.
- Learners enjoy their work and take a great deal of pride in the work they produce. The service celebrates learners' achievements very well, recognising this through a range of awards and through formal civic presentations.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good with some outstanding features. Lessons challenge and motivate learners. Lesson plans carefully identify the individual support needs of learners and include a variety of engaging group activities. ICT lessons take into account each individual's pace of learning and previous experience. Learners can access electronic versions of the programme workbook and exercises, and some use these in order to work independently.
- Learners value highly the good support tutors give them to help them make progress. ICT learners and teaching assistants can contact their tutors very easily by telephone or email. Tutors are flexible, arranging assessments in the workplace to suit learners' needs.
- Some lessons make exceptionally good use of resources and varied activities that encourage learners to practice new and demanding skills. In a course about history for learners with disabilities, learners confidently used archaeological tools and demonstrated an understanding of complex concepts. However, some lessons fall short of the highest standards, relying too much on the teacher's input or on the use of worksheets, restricting the variety of activities and engagement of learners.
- Enthusiastic tutors convey their good subject knowledge well to their learners. This encourages many learners to progress to higher levels of study. For example, a group of male learners with no previous experience or interest in cooking signed up to a cooking skills programme after a short introductory course.
- Learning resources are good and provide learners with a good quality experience of learning. The quality of most printed materials is good. Most classrooms have an interactive whiteboard but some tutors do not make full use of this technology. Learners on independent living and leisure skills programmes make good use of a range of specialist resources to assist their progress. Tutors plan the integration of English and mathematics into programmes carefully.
- Initial assessment is used well to identify learners' support needs and set targets. The procedures for recognising and recording progress and achievement are good and these are modified appropriately to fit the requirements of subject areas. In creative arts and crafts for example, learners use daily or weekly diaries very effectively to reflect on their learning and include examples of their work. However, in some instances, tutors carrying out ICT reviews for accredited qualifications do not ensure that learners' progress against their personal targets is sufficiently well captured and recorded.
- Tutors give learners constructive feedback on their work. This builds learners' confidence and helps them to understand during lessons how to improve and what they need to do next. Written assessment is also effective. For learners on teaching

support programmes it is particularly thorough and detailed, helping them to transfer their learning from the classroom to the workplace.

- Tutors give good information and advice about appropriate progression routes and support learners well in applying for jobs.
- Staff foster a culture of trust and respect and learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity. Tutors carefully plan to meet individual needs in teaching sessions. However, tutors sometimes miss opportunities to promote equality and diversity in teaching and learning activities.

Foundation English and mathematics

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good although success rates in 2011/12 do not fully reflect this. Tutors' good lesson planning for individual learners takes account of their ability and levels of confidence and helps to ensure that learners remain motivated and engaged.
- Lessons include a wide range of active learning tasks, which increase interest and enjoyment and extend learners' understanding of topics such as the relationship between fractions, ratios and percentages and the use of adjectives. Activities build progressively on previous learning and knowledge.
- Assessment is good. Tutors check learning frequently throughout sessions, often using careful questioning to probe learners' knowledge and understanding. However, tutors sometimes miss opportunities to develop independent learning through activities such as peer assessment and self-reflection.
- In a minority of lessons, learning activities fail to sustain learners' concentration and interest. A small number of lessons rely too much on worksheets or tutors' exposition and not enough on encouraging reflection or challenging learners' understanding.
- Teachers generally use learning resources very effectively to enhance the learners' experience. However, although most classrooms are equipped with interactive whiteboards, few tutors make imaginative use of technology to add interest to the sessions through, for example, video clips and interactive online activities.
- Learners speak enthusiastically about their progress and the confidence gained by improving their reading and writing, and mastering mathematical concepts through activities such as measuring and handling money. These newly acquired skills enhance their personal lives and employability prospects, enabling them to read with their children, manage family budgets, or run a car boot sale profitably
- Tutors are enthusiastic, well-qualified and have good subject knowledge. They use their expertise to good effect when planning sessions and providing individual support. They routinely provide learners with strategies to support their mathematical and language skills, such as mnemonics to recall spellings, and ways of calculating three-digit numbers. The service provides good support for learners with complex needs such as dyslexia and dyspraxia.
- Tutors carry out a thorough initial assessment to identify learners' current levels of skills and understanding, and use this effectively to plan learning. However, the quality of individual target-setting and monitoring requires improvement in a minority of cases.

- Learners receive good constructive feedback that highlights how they can improve their written work. Learners generally know what they have done well and what they need to improve. However, some records do not contain enough detail on the learning that has taken place.
- Learners receive good information, advice and guidance, including on personal matters such as financial support. Many learners are benefitting from good support received from the curriculum support officer.
- Learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity, which is effectively covered during induction, and treat each other fairly and with respect.

Independent living and leisure skills

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good; this is reflected in the good progress learners make and the very high retention in the current year. The good teaching and learning uses a wide range of activities to motivate learners to achieve. In the majority of sessions, teachers plan carefully to ensure that they are meeting the individual needs of all learners. In a minority of sessions however, group teaching does not provide a sufficient range of extension or alternative activities to cater for the full range of specific needs.
- The range of provision meets learners' needs very effectively. The curriculum offers an appropriate balance of functional skills, vocational activities and personal and social development. Flexible delivery in a variety of accessible community venues ensures that learners can benefit from accredited and non-accredited courses as well as from enrichment opportunities.
- The service has recently extended the range of adaptive technology and sensory teaching and learning resources to better support learners, although not all learners have access to this technology. In some sessions, teachers use information learning technology and other resources very effectively to develop independent and group learning.
- Learners enjoy their courses, are well behaved and highly motivated. Teachers support learners well in sessions, which has clearly led to a growth in both independence and self-confidence. An education support worker provides effective support. However, care support workers would benefit from a better understanding of how they can support learning.
- Staff have appropriate levels of skills and qualifications. Additional specialised training has allowed the provider to accept previously excluded learners, including those with challenging behaviour and those with mental illness. Since the last inspection, staff have undertaken additional training to respond appropriately to learners with profound and multiple disabilities.
- Initial assessment is effective and supports learners well in their progress, establishing clear short- and long-term learning goals. At the end of the best lessons, learners and tutors evaluate progress together and set additional goals where appropriate. All learners have good support for functional English and mathematics and these are effectively embedded into all independent living sessions.

- Personal care and support are very good. A clear assessment of educational and care needs takes place at induction and appropriate support is put in place, alongside individual and group risk assessments. Effective links with other providers ensure that further specialist advice on topics such as health, housing and debt management is provided.
- Teachers and managers promote equality and diversity very well, creating a culture of respect and setting effective ground rules for good behaviour. Intensive work with tutors has ensured that all staff understand the importance of celebrating diversity and promoting inclusion. The creation of a community garden by learners in a residential care home allows residents to experience the pleasures of the garden through sensory perceptions with wind chimes, water features and fragrant herbs and plants creating a calm and restful oasis.

The effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
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- Leaders and managers have high expectations and ambition, which are expressed clearly and understood by all staff. Reporting mechanisms are clear and performance is closely scrutinised at all levels. BMBC works extremely well with key partners to provide a broad curriculum for learners. The council has invested heavily in a local schools development programme which includes the creation of improved learning environments for adult learners.
- The provider has taken decisive and effective action to improve success rates by reviewing the curriculum to better match the needs of partner organisations and learners, particularly those now referred through the job centre. These changes have begun to improve success rates for ICT and raise the proportion of learners referred by the job centre who stay until the end of their course. Adjustments to curriculum planning have also led to improved success rates in sign language.
- The adult service senior managers monitor, improve and support teaching effectively. Managers have a good understanding of the reasons behind changes in performance over time. Staff use data well to identify any cause for concern in subject areas. As a result outcomes for learners have improved.
- Quality assurance systems are rigorous. The service uses the observation of teaching and learning system well to drive improvement, to inform performance management and to plan professional development. However, observation records do not include learner induction or initial assessment, and do not always reflect in sufficient detail the learning that has taken place, focusing too much on teaching and assessment. Managers have identified this shortcoming and have recently provided additional training for observers but this has yet to have an impact on the quality of written records.
- The self-assessment process is consultative, involving all staff, learners and partners. The self-assessment report is largely accurate. Planned actions to deal with weaknesses based on reliable data and accurate self-assessment have been effective. External peer review complements and enhances quality assurance procedures well. BMBC makes good use of learners' views to bring about improvements.

- The curriculum and learning programmes are well planned and flexible, providing good opportunities for learners of all abilities and backgrounds as well as contributing to local council and national priorities.
- The provider's arrangements for safeguarding learners meet statutory requirements. BMBC manages risk appropriately. All staff and volunteers are subjected to criminal record bureau checks. All staff complete suitable online training to raise their awareness of the protection of vulnerable adults. Some tutors, including teaching assistants and those teaching learners with learning difficulties or disabilities, complete further training in safeguarding.
- Managers foster a learning environment which promotes tolerance and where bullying and discrimination are not accepted. They make excellent use of data to analyse gaps in recruitment and achievement and take action to address these. Links with local agencies have helped to increase male participation in cookery; however, attempts to recruit more male learners into family learning classes have been less successful. The service successfully targets disadvantaged learners and recruits a more diverse ethnic mix than is reflected in the local population as a whole.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:	Overall	Community learning
1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate		
Overall effectiveness	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Foundation English and mathematics	2
Independent living and leisure skills	2

Provider details

Provider name	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council
Type of provider	Local authority
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 0
	Part-time: 4,948
Principal/CEO	Tom Smith, Head of Extended Services and Support
Date of previous inspection	October 2010
Website address	http://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/education-learning-and-childcare/adult-learning-in-barnsley/adult-and-family-learning-service

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	
Total number of part-time learners	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	4	692	0	402	0	125	0	0
Number of community learners	888							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency							

Additional socio-economic information

Barnsley has a population of 231,900. Compared with Great Britain as a whole, a higher proportion of Barnsley's residents, 15% of the population, compared with 11%, have no qualifications and only 20% have qualifications at advanced level (level 4) or above, compared with 33% of adults in England. Unemployment is slightly above the rate for Great Britain. A higher proportion of the population than for Great Britain as a whole is in receipt of incapacity benefit. The percentage of the adult population with low literacy and numeracy skills is well above the national and regional averages. Barnsley has a 97% White British population.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Jan Smith HMI
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Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the Head of Extended Services and Support 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 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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