

Nacro

Not for profit organisation

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| Inspection dates | | 18–22 February 2013 |
| Overall effectiveness | This inspection: | Inadequate-4 |
| | Previous inspection: | Satisfactory-3 |
| Outcomes for learners | | Inadequate-4 |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | | Requires improvement-3 |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | | Inadequate-4 |

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is inadequate because:

- Too few learners achieve their planned learning objectives before they leave the programme, and success rates are low and declining.
- Too few learners move on to further learning or employment.
- The management of data is poor. The tracking of completion of objectives within the planned time is weak, and managers have not identified gaps in achievement between different groups.
- The curriculum has not been sufficiently focused on preparing learners for employment or further learning.
- The quality of teaching and learning requires improvement. Too little is good or better, and the quality varies significantly within centres and across the country.
- Although the trustees and managers know what needs to be done, they are in the very early stages of implementing an improvement plan, and it has not yet had time to rectify the decline in outcomes for learners.

This provider has the following strengths:

- Enthusiastic staff understand the barriers to participation and learning that many learners face, and provide good practical and emotional support.
- Good teaching of work-related subjects motivates and engages learners.
- Community partnerships are very effective in engaging learners from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Learners are safeguarded well, in an environment where staff and learners from a wide range of heritages get on well and respect each other.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Make better use of management information to track learners' progress so that learners achieve their objectives in the planned time, and any gaps in performance are identified and acted upon.
- Prepare learners more effectively for employment by strengthening the activities aimed at engaging employers and providing more work experience placements.
- Increase the links with other learning providers to establish more routes to further learning.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by sharing good practice and improving the rigour of the teaching observation scheme, so that it focuses on learning.
- Increase the opportunities for learners to develop English and mathematics skills in practical contexts that stimulate and engage them, with less emphasis on the completion of worksheets.
- Make better use of initial assessments in developing individual learning plans, and in planning lessons, so that the individual needs of learners are fully taken into account.
- Strengthen curriculum planning by providing further training for staff and ensuring that individual learners can realistically achieve the qualifications they are entered for by the end of their planned programme.
- Improve the accuracy and impact of the self-assessment process by analysing data and evidence from the education centres more effectively.
- Help staff to promote equality and diversity more effectively in teaching and learning, by providing up-to-date training on recent equalities legislation and strategies that staff can use to increase learners' understanding.

Inspection judgements

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| Outcomes for learners | Inadequate |
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- Outcomes for learners are inadequate. The proportion of learners who progress to positive destinations is very low and has declined since 2010/11.
- The achievement of objectives improved between 2010/11 and 2011/12, but declined in 2012/13 and is too low. Learners do not achieve all of the qualifications for which they are entered.
- Success rates are very low on long and short courses, and have declined since 2011.
- Success rates for learners with disabilities are broadly similar to those of their peers, but the gaps in success rates between male and female learners, and between White students and those of African and Caribbean heritage, widened between 2010/11 and 2011/12. This was not identified in the self-assessment report.
- Learners make reasonable progress to higher levels, or from awards to certificates whilst on their programmes. In a few cases, progress is good as learners have progressed successfully from entry level to intermediate level.
- Learners gain good practical and vocational skills in many centres. They are very positive about this aspect of their programme. In a motor vehicle session, a learner removed the rear suspension on a car, used photographic evidence to identify the fault, consulted the teacher and carried out the repair effectively.
- Learners in all centres improve their personal and social skills, and many say that they feel more confident. In a few centres, learners focus very effectively on parenting in order to develop their life skills in a realistic context.
- In one centre, learners develop good employability skills by focusing on preparation for work experience as soon as they start their programmes, and all of their lessons, including functional

skills, focus on employment-related skills. However, the preparation and opportunities for work experience elsewhere are insufficient. Success rates for functional skills declined in 2012/13, having been satisfactory in 2011/12.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The low achievement and progression rates reflect much of the teaching, learning and assessment. Despite examples of good practice in many centres, not enough is good or better, or improving rapidly enough, to overcome the weaknesses in provision and promote better outcomes.
- Where teaching and learning are good, mainly in vocational and practical sessions, enthusiastic staff plan well for relevant and realistic activities that engage and stretch all learners. A feature of these sessions is the focus on developing independent learning skills. Teaching strategies include a mix of group and individual activities. Much learning takes place and learners value these sessions highly.
- In the majority of less effective sessions, often based in a classroom, staff rely too heavily on the completion of worksheets as evidence of learning, and do not pay sufficient attention to individual learners' needs.
- Staff have high expectations of learners, particularly with regard to their behaviour and respect for their peers and staff. Ground rules for appropriate behaviour are consistently followed, and staff are skilful in managing learners' behaviour. They work well with individual learners to help them address the many personal barriers they face in participating on the course.
- Pastoral support for learners is consistently strong. Learners speak positively about the trust they have in centre staff, the practical support they receive and the way in which it enables them to remain on the programme. Staff may act as advocates with external bodies such as the police and social services, and work with pregnancy, drug and housing agencies. In many centres they provide breakfast or lunch.
- Initial interviews and assessments are thorough. In the better provision, staff use the findings well to plan learning. Learners in these centres agree appropriately challenging targets which staff regularly and frequently review and amend as a result of discussions with learners. However, in less effective provision, staff do not make sufficient use of the findings from the initial assessments in the individual learning plans and rarely include a profile of individual learners in their lesson plans.
- Staff have suitable work-related experience, are knowledgeable in their subjects, and can relate theory to practice with good examples. They use their expertise to good effect in lessons. They have at least a minimum teaching qualification, but too few have teaching qualifications in English and mathematics.
- Learners receive constructive oral feedback in learning sessions that highlights how they can improve. However, in written feedback, staff do not focus on how learners can improve.
- The development of English and mathematics is variable. In the less effective sessions, staff do not use naturally occurring opportunities so that learners can practise or consolidate their skills. They do not identify common spelling and grammatical errors in marked work. However, in one centre, staff planned and taught functional skills well with an effective focus on the skills needed for the workplace.
- The provision of advice and guidance is satisfactory. Induction covers the essential areas which learners need to know. In many centres, learners have access to staff with specific information, advice and guidance (IAG) qualifications. However, not all learners use this resource when leaving their programmes.
- Staff review learners' progress on the course regularly, but insufficiently frequently in some cases. They sometimes set too many objectives and learners leave before completing them. Staff do not always agree precise or challenging targets, for example in relation to attendance and punctuality.

- Equality and diversity are not sufficiently promoted in lessons in all centres. Where staff do raise equality and diversity themes in lessons, learners do not discuss the issues enough to deepen their understanding in this area. In one of the better lessons, however, learners animatedly discussed quotations which identified inequalities towards women in the workplace.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Leadership and management are inadequate. Over the past two years Nacro has radically revised its strategies and operational functions in line with its mission and vision. The action taken has resulted in a significant reduction in the number of centres and staff, balanced against a thorough review of roles, responsibilities and the quality of provision. However, as yet, not enough progress has been made to have had the desired impact on raising outcomes.
- Nacro's trustees, chief executive officer and newly appointed senior managers have a very clear understanding of the way forward. The trustees have challenged and supported the chief executive well, and they bring extensive relevant experience to the organisation. Staff in the centres understand the reasons for rationalising the educational provision, but at the time of the inspection the proposed changes had not yet improved learners' performance.
- Arrangements to improve teaching and learning are not sufficiently rigorous. In the observations recently completed, observers did not take sufficient account of the level of learning taking place, and action plans to improve were not sufficiently detailed or thorough. Joint observations with inspectors showed a few examples of overgenerous grading.
- Quality assurance arrangements are weak. The quality of provision varies too much between centres, with too little good or better practice. Nacro has recognised this, and has introduced specialist project teams to develop detailed and thorough policies and procedures across a broad range of key areas for improvement. However, at the time of the inspection, required actions from the previous inspection were still not resolved, and the arrangements had not yet improved learner outcomes.
- Nacro recognises that the self-assessment process has not been sufficiently robust in presenting the quality of provision accurately, and has been optimistic in its judgements. Managers have recently received training and expectations are now clearer about the requirements.
- The use, analysis and understanding of achievement data to improve performance and standards have been poor. This process has recently been centralised, with more management information being provided and required from centres. Centre managers are much clearer about the need to monitor the performance with greater rigour, and have started to do so. However, it is too soon to judge the effectiveness of the arrangements.
- Many Nacro centres have very constructive partnerships with local authorities and other referral agencies, and are particularly effective in recruiting learners who have been unsuccessful elsewhere. Managers have worked successfully in their regions to introduce provision for young people who have not previously been catered for, such as young parents.
- Nacro's central planning of the curriculum has not successfully managed the transition from the previous entry to employment (E2E) scheme. Staff have entered learners for an unrealistic number of qualifications which they have not been able to achieve whilst on the programme. Links with other local providers to aid progression to further learning are in their infancy.
- A senior curriculum manager, appointed in September 2012, has made a start on engaging more employers and developing work experience placements, as well as rationalising qualifications. Nacro has recognised that learners need to spend a greater proportion of their time learning in practical contexts. Despite successful initiatives in a few centres, the centralised approach to curriculum management is in the early stages and has not yet improved outcomes for learners.
- Nacro has a good focus on protecting learners from bullying, harassment and discrimination, and all centres foster a culture of mutual respect. Inspectors found examples of centres where swift action was taken to address bullying and retain students. Equality and diversity policies

take appropriate account of current legislation, and all staff and learners receive a satisfactory introduction to the subject.

- However, some aspects of equality and diversity need further promotion. Staff have not yet had sufficient training on recent equalities legislation to follow up their introduction, and managers have not used the observation scheme to improve the promotion of equality and diversity through the curriculum. Managers analyse participation data by different groups, but have not analysed data on learners' outcomes sufficiently rigorously.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good. They meet statutory requirements and serve learners well. Staff clearly understand their role in safeguarding learners and manage disclosures well. Links with local agencies are good and learners are supported in a professional and effective manner.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Nacro

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

| Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Grade |
|---|----------|
| Foundation Learning | 4 |

Provider details

| Nacro | |
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| Type of provider | Not for profit organisation |
| Age range of learners | 16–18, 19+ |
| Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year | Full-time: 1,457 |
| | Part-time: 2,714 |
| CEO | Paul McDowell |
| Date of previous inspection | January 2010 |
| Website address | www.nacro.org.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 | |
| Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships) | 16-18 | 19+ | 16-18 | 19+ | 16-18 | 19+ | 16-18 | 19+ |
| Full-time | 366 | 15 | | | | | | |
| Part-time | 618 | 195 | | | | | | |
| Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age | | | | | | | | |
| | Intermediate | | Advanced | | Higher | | | |
| | 16-18 | 19+ | 16-18 | 19+ | 16-18 | 19+ | 16-18 | 19+ |
| | 23 | 3 | | | | | | |
| Number of learners aged 14-16 | N/A | | | | | | | |
| Number of community learners | N/A | | | | | | | |
| Number of employability learners | N/A | | | | | | | |
| Funding received from | Education Funding Agency (EFA); Skills Funding Agency (SFA) | | | | | | | |
| At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors: | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ DV8 ▪ YMCA ▪ NXG Project ▪ New Training Heights Ltd ▪ Mirador Training ▪ Timken Vocational Training ▪ BTCV ▪ Nova ▪ Juniper | | | | | | | |

Additional socio-economic information

Nacro is a national charity and company limited by guarantee. Its headquarters are in London. It was founded over 40 years ago, and its stated objectives are to reduce the number of people who commit crime; ensure the criminal justice system works fairly and effectively to reduce crime; and work towards all prisoners being offered resettlement help relevant to their circumstances, in prison and on release. Nacro provides foundation learning in five regions of the country with around 40 centres, the largest being in the Midlands and the North. It also offers apprenticeship programmes, but this aspect of the provision is very small and was not inspected. The numbers of learners in subcontracted provision are very small.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Joyce Deere HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the Head of Operations for Learning and Education 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 foundation learning provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject area listed in the report above.

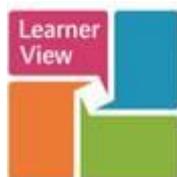
What inspection judgements mean

| 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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