

# Devon County Council

## Local authority

<b>Inspection dates</b>		22–26 April 2013
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good-2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
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:

- Most learners are achieving their learning goals.
- Learners develop very good personal and social skills.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good.
- Learners are very well supported.
- Lessons meet learners' individual needs well, especially those of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.
- Information, advice and guidance are very good, ensuring that learners are on the appropriate courses and are able to move on to further learning at Devon Adult and Community Learning (DAKL) and elsewhere.
- The management of subcontractors is very effective, with some excellent partnership work in the community.

### This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Not enough learners on longer courses successfully complete their qualifications.
- A small minority of the teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement and not enough is excellent.
- Individuals' learning goals are not always identified or recorded sufficiently well.
- The use of support workers and activities to support learners of differing abilities is not always sufficiently well planned.

## Full report

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

- Increase the proportion of learners who are successful on courses leading to qualifications by ceasing to offer courses which do not meet learners' needs because they are too long. Provide better course guidance at registration so that learners are fully aware of the time needed to complete longer courses. Identify when learners are at risk of leaving a course and provide them with suitable support.
- Improve the quality of the individual learning plans by ensuring that learning goals are well defined and recorded in detail. Identify incremental steps leading to these learning goals which are reviewed and recorded accurately.
- Record activities which are used to meet the needs of learners with different abilities in classes and plan and record the use of support workers in the lesson plans.
- Improve the quality of the curriculum self-assessment reports by training all staff in self-assessment and sharing good practice across curriculum areas and with partner providers.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Good
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- Outcomes for learners are good. Overall success rates on programmes designed to develop learners' personal and social skills have risen over the last three years and are now good. Overall success rates on programmes leading to accreditation have risen over the same period and are satisfactory. Current service data suggest that success rates continue to improve across all programmes.
- Discrepancies in achievement between different groups of learners are small and affect very few courses. A lower proportion of the small number of learners of Black and minority ethnic heritage complete programmes successfully when compared to White learners. Effective action reduced this disparity in 2011/12, and current data indicate that the gap has narrowed further.
- The development of learners' personal skills is very good. Many learners make substantial gains in their confidence and self-esteem. They express themselves and speak confidently in groups, and demonstrate an increased capacity to accept and value others. Learners experiencing major, unwelcome change in their personal lives find their experience of studying with DACL immensely therapeutic.
- The development of learners' English and mathematics is effective. Learners improve the aspects of their literacy and numeracy skills they need to complete their programmes with the planned support of their tutors. Learners following foundation English and mathematics courses improve their capacity to apply their learning to everyday life and work.
- The standards of learners' work are good. The quality of discussion and communication between parents and their children in family learning classes is often high. Learners following visual arts classes demonstrate the successful application of the techniques they have learned when producing imaginatively designed pottery. A collection of excellent writing by learners from a creative writing class is in the process of being published.
- An increasing proportion of learners progress to higher level qualifications at DACL and elsewhere. While data on learners' destinations are incomplete, they indicate around a third progress to further learning within DACL. Good examples exist of learners who move from the provision to further and higher education.

**The quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, which is reflected in the high number of learners who achieve their learning goals and the increased number of learners who achieve qualifications. Teachers are well qualified, experienced and highly motivated. They have high expectations of their learners, which they share to encourage learners to achieve.
- Teaching in many lessons is imaginative and carefully planned to engage every learner in what is often a diverse group. Learners in English and mathematics make good progress in lessons and improve their opportunities for employment. Learners studying art show improvement within lessons from their often low starting points. This is reflected in the increasingly high standard of work presented in their portfolios.
- Teachers focus well on improving learners' confidence. Learners know the progress they are making. Teachers enable learners with learning difficulties and disabilities to develop good craft skills in art. They facilitate discussions to improve learners' listening and speaking skills through working collaboratively on team projects. In computing, teachers make lessons fun and interesting and motivate learners to improve. All learners are very positive about their learning and enjoy their lessons.
- Teachers have a sound understanding of their learners and plan a good range of relevant and interesting learning activities which interest and challenge learners across all subjects. Teachers of computing skills carefully tailor their lessons according to the learners' previous experience and current aspirations. In art, teachers introduce a challenging range of techniques into lessons and introduce learners to thinking about, and planning, their work in the style of known artists.
- The initial assessment of learners' abilities is good and learners are successfully guided on to courses at the appropriate level. However, diagnostic assessment in English and mathematics does not always lead to the setting of specific and measurable learning targets that learners fully understand and can work towards. On a small minority of courses, individual learning targets are too vague and not sufficiently well recorded. Steps which lead to the attainment of learning goals are not always recorded or celebrated.
- Teachers give good feedback to learners and monitor their progress carefully. Learners know what progress they have made and what they must do to complete their learning aims. The help and support teachers give to learners are good. They fully include learners with disabilities in the activities and give them the support they need to ensure they have a good learning experience. Teachers use learning assistants effectively in lessons, but their deployment is not always sufficiently well planned.
- Literacy and numeracy learning is integrated well into most lessons. Teachers plan well to identify opportunities to introduce English and mathematics, but learners are not always aware of their improvements in these areas. Learners enjoy developing speaking and listening skills through discussions within the subject areas.
- Advice, guidance and support are very good. All learners have access to information from the centres, either by telephone or by internet before they start the courses. Once enrolled, they receive more detailed information to ensure they are on the correct course. At the end of the course, staff ensure that learners are made aware of opportunities for progression, although this does not always include courses external to DACL.
- Equality and diversity are promoted well in lessons. Teachers create a safe, comfortable learning environment where each learner is valued and can contribute freely. Learning materials are all checked by DACL to ensure that they are appropriate and reflect the diverse nature of the population. Whilst all staff have been trained in equality and diversity, not all staff include sufficient relevant material in their lessons.

**ICT for users****Community learning**

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, which is reflected in the good outcomes for learners. Teachers are well qualified, all having an appropriate teaching qualification and either a relevant IT qualification or IT experience. They use this effectively in their teaching to relate the learning to the wider world.
- Enthusiastic teachers develop a particularly good rapport with their learners, making lessons fun and interesting and motivating their learners. Learners enjoy their lessons and are proud of the good progress that they make within lessons. However, a small minority of lessons does not enable learners to progress fast enough.
- Teachers very effectively match their teaching style to the needs of different groups of learners. For example, sessions with predominantly older learners have a different focus from those offering qualifications to improve employment prospects. Teachers are good at encouraging learners to develop their independent learning skills by experimenting and researching.
- The quality of individual help teachers give to learners is good. It is supportive, helpful and sensitive, often with very good use of humour, to ensure that learners are put at ease. Learners receive good feedback and understand clearly how well they are doing.
- Individual learning plans are satisfactory, although learners' personal learning goals are sometimes vague and neither specific nor measurable. Teachers do not always expand them into goals which are more specific, limiting the teacher's ability to address the learner's specific objectives.
- Lessons are well planned. Planning for individual learners in workshop sessions is particularly detailed, with a clear plan for every learner in each lesson. In class-based sessions teachers have a clear plan with well-defined learning objectives; but, although teachers address the different needs of individual learners in lessons very well, they do not always record this in the lesson plan.
- Assessment of learners' prior information and communication technology (ICT) skills and experience is appropriate for the short courses that are offered. Their responses to a brief questionnaire identify broadly the most appropriate course for each learner, and give the teacher adequate information to help plan learning.
- Teachers plan well to identify exactly where English and mathematics are used within lessons. Learners cover these aspects and, where necessary, teachers give help; but they do not always identify to learners their accomplishments in mathematics and English. Consequently, learners are not always aware of their improvements in mathematics or English.
- Learners all receive appropriate initial information about their course, which is freely available from the centres, over the telephone or on the internet. Once enrolled on the course they receive more detailed information prior to the start. At the end of the course, learners are given information about possible follow-on courses. However, this is often restricted to courses offered by DACL and does not give learners information about courses offered by other providers.
- Equality and diversity are promoted effectively through teaching and learning. All tutors have received training about equality and diversity and about how to embed them in lessons. Learning materials are checked by DACL to ensure that they reflect the diverse nature of the British population and do not reinforce stereotypes.

**Visual arts****Community learning**

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and lead directly to good outcomes for learners. Teachers introduce challenging techniques into their lessons that extend each learner's skills, their understanding of materials and knowledge of other artists' work. Teachers make good use of both working from life and printed images, and arrange for some sessions to take place away from the classroom.
- Teachers are well qualified and experienced. They encourage learners to develop high, but realistic, expectations and motivate them to achieve their aspirations. Learners discuss their work confidently and assess its quality with their teachers. In these forthright and stimulating discussions learners further develop their confidence.
- Initial assessment is accurate for most learners. New learners work with teachers at the start of the course to determine their abilities and starting points. Teachers assess learners during the first few lessons and make more accurate assessments of learners' potential. In a few cases learners decide they are unable to meet the required standards and leave the course in the early stages.
- Target setting for learners on accredited courses is clear. Good examples recorded on individual learning plans include securing a place at college or university, exhibiting or selling work and making a living from art. However, some personal goals for learners on non-accredited learning plans are not measurable and are often aimed at unspecified improvement.
- Teachers provide a high level of support. They send tuition notes and tasks carried out during missed lessons to absent learners. Learners achieve their qualifications successfully, despite some low attendance which is usually justified to their tutor. Learners with disabilities are given appropriate support to ensure their inclusion and their diversity is valued by teachers and other learners.
- Teachers monitor learners' progress particularly thoroughly. Good use of electronic learning resources is made in photographing learners' work at various stages. Learners receive well-constructed feedback from their teachers. Individual discussions with teachers help learners understand the progress they are making and how they can improve. Schemes of work plan for the introduction of group critiques to develop learners' speaking and listening skills further.
- Teachers' promotion and development of independent learning is good. Teachers demonstrate internet research techniques on their tablet computers during group discussions. Research sessions are planned into some schemes of work to give learners without internet access at home the opportunity to broaden their study skills.
- All learners are provided with good information, advice and guidance. Learners are informed of progression routes, both within DACL and also external courses. Courses can be attended sequentially from level 1 through to level 3. Learners work through different courses at the same level, for example in painting with acrylics and oils. The range of courses is good.
- Teachers promote equality and diversity well in lessons. They treat learners with respect and dignity. They plan sessions carefully to engage fully those learners with learning difficulties and other barriers to learning. Cultural differences relating to artwork are discussed in lessons.

**Community learning****Community learning**

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good and this is reflected in recent improvements in the achievement of learning targets and qualifications. Teachers are skilled, knowledgeable and motivate learners well. They stretch and challenge learners using a broad variety of interesting learning activities. Learners' work is of a good standard and learners enjoy their learning.
- In the best lessons, teachers use discussion well to support the development of speaking and listening skills, giving learners the opportunity to explore and exchange ideas confidently. In English for speakers of other languages, good emphasis is given to clear pronunciation, for example when using the telephone. In English classes, learners significantly improve their confidence in punctuation, spelling and using dictionaries.
- Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities develop very good skills in craftwork and significantly improve their teamwork skills, for example by working collaboratively on a collage about the sea. Learners studying mathematics clearly show their understanding of the use of ratios in everyday life. In weaker lessons, learning is too passive and learners are not always clear on the purpose of activities.
- All teachers make very good use of questioning to check learning and learners' understanding of lesson objectives. Teachers' verbal feedback to learners and written comments on marked work are evaluative and clearly show learners what they need to do to improve.
- Accommodation is good in the majority of centres, as are learning resources. Information and learning technology is used effectively by teachers in lessons to augment and illuminate what is being taught, illustrating points and reinforcing learning. Learners use a range of learning technologies confidently and can access additional learning materials through the virtual learning environment.
- Initial and diagnostic assessment is good. However, the setting of learning targets on a small minority of individual learning plans is inconsistent, while targets are not always clear and measurable. Lesson plans do not always sufficiently identify how an individual's learning needs will be met in lessons.
- Support for learners is good. Teachers and teaching assistants collaborate well to support learners effectively in lessons. However, this support is not always clearly described in lesson plans.
- Literacy and numeracy are incorporated well into all lessons for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. A good emphasis is given to developing communication and speaking and listening skills. Learners enjoy interacting successfully with their peers during, for example, discussions on a collaborative project on their local town.
- The quality of advice and guidance is good and an increasing number of learners progress to employment and higher-level courses at foundation and intermediate level. Teachers are ambitious for their learners and learners are actively supported, for example to gain the skills they need for employment, volunteering or promotion, or to gain the next level of a qualification in English or mathematics.
- Equality and diversity are promoted well within the curriculum, but this is not always included by all staff in all lessons. Learners and staff have sound professional working relationships and teachers create a safe and comfortable learning environment where all contributions are valued.

**The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Good

- Strategic management is good. Senior managers have a clear vision to develop the service to meet community needs. They have successfully established high expectations for economic growth within the community and for learners to reach their full potential.
- Management of the curriculum is very effective. Significant changes to the service's management structure over the last 12 months have enabled managers to increase responsiveness to learners' needs, cutting across previous subject area boundaries.
- DACL has made substantial improvements and remedied many of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Managers make very good use of comprehensive, and readily accessible, numerical data. Their analysis has contributed effectively to strategies which have led to improved success rates and reduced class cancellations.
- Measures to improve teaching and learning are well established and effective. A revised lesson observation scheme makes good use of risk assessment to prioritise support for teachers who most need it. Effective professional development and the sharing of good practice across the service have raised standards significantly.
- Managers have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the service, and have used this effectively to produce a comprehensive and well-conceived quality improvement plan. Staff and learners contribute suitably to the self-assessment process. While the summary self-assessment report covering the service as a whole is broadly suitable, those for curriculum areas are not sufficiently evaluative or incisive.
- Curriculum planning is effective. Managers make good use of local intelligence, feedback from learners and the outcomes of data analysis. This ensures that provision effectively meets local needs and those of the learners.
- Management of subcontracting is very good. The service awards contracts following a rigorous selection procedure and audits performance very thoroughly. Much of the work of their 26 subcontractors is innovative and of high quality.
- Partnership working is good. In Newton Abbot, DACL has worked successfully with a primary school, children's centre and nursery sharing a site to provide popular family learning classes. DACL works well with subcontractors and is developing partnership projects to promote pride in the community and economic growth.
- DACL has been successful in recruiting learners from groups traditionally under represented in learning. Effective action is taken to promote inclusion, underpinned by targets for recruiting 'hard to reach' learners, such as Travellers and women taking refuge. Numeric targets to recruit, for example, learners from a Black or minority ethnic background have been exceeded.
- Art sessions routinely and effectively engage learners facing barriers such as mental ill health. Family learning sessions are welcoming and inclusive to learners from different backgrounds. Service data identified an achievement deficit for learners from Black and minority ethnic heritage and effective action has been taken to reduce this.
- The provider meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Teachers and others in contact with adult learners and children routinely have Criminal Records Bureau checks and receive appropriate age-specific training.
- The safeguarding leaflet for staff provides appropriate guidance and staff know how to deal with any safeguarding issues. Information for learners is readily available but is insufficiently clear in the learner handbook. The service reacts appropriately in the rare instances of matters reported. All venues are risk assessed and checked for compliance with health and safety regulations and are appropriately insured.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Devon County Council		
<p><b>Inspection grades are based on a provider’s performance:</b></p> <p>1: Outstanding                      2: Good                      3: Requires improvement                      4: Inadequate</p>	<b>Overall</b>	Community learning
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>	2
Outcomes for learners	<b>2</b>	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>2</b>	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>2</b>	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
<b>ICT for users</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Visual Arts</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Community learning</b>	<b>2</b>

## Provider details

Devon County Council	
Type of provider	Local authority
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 0
	Part-time: 11,368
Principal/CEO	Mr Paul Thomas
Date of previous inspection	May 2011
Website address	<a href="http://www.devon.gov.uk/adultlearning">www.devon.gov.uk/adultlearning</a>

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)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
<b>Full-time</b>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Part-time</b>	23	720	16	183	2	57	0	11
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		
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Number of community learners	191							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	SFA and EFA							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ PLUSS</li> <li>■ Community Council of Devon</li> <li>■ Lynher Training</li> <li>■ Devon Carousel</li> <li>■ Exeter CVS</li> <li>■ Hele Hub</li> <li>■ Westward Pathfinder</li> <li>■ Cosmic</li> <li>■ Ambios Ltd</li> </ul>							

## Additional socio-economic information

The service offers community learning programmes throughout the county through a range of subcontractors and direct delivery. It operates within the Services for Communities department of Devon County Council. Learning programmes are offered from seven main sites as well as other community venues.

Devon is a large county with a predominantly White British population. The proportion of the population that is unemployed and the percentage of the population that does not have any qualifications are around the national rates.

## Information about this inspection

### Lead inspector

Charles Clark HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the senior learning and community 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 report above.

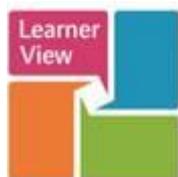
## What inspection judgements mean

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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