

# Southampton City Council

## Local authority

<b>Inspection dates</b>		7–10 May 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		Requires improvement-3

## Summary of key findings for learners

### This provider is good because:

- Learners gain good personal and employability skills, which significantly improve their opportunities for further study and employment.
- The proportion of learners who complete their courses successfully and achieve their personal goals is high.
- Good teaching and learning and very effective support significantly enhance learners' personal, social and economic well-being.
- The service has a strong focus on successfully raising the aspirations of local residents, particularly those who come from challenging backgrounds and disadvantaged areas of the city.
- Productive partnerships with local organisations ensure that the council's informal adult and community learning service (the service) is flexible and responsive in meeting the needs of a wide range of learners.

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

- Target setting for many learners is insufficiently specific to ensure that tutors meet their individual needs in lessons. Tutors do not provide enough opportunities for learners to develop their independent learning skills.
- Managers within the service use data well to monitor the enrolment of priority groups of learners, but are less effective in ensuring they review key performance and quality indicators to bring about improvements in partners' provision.
- Reports which monitor the quality of lessons are too descriptive and do not focus sufficiently on learning. Targets set in action plans for tutors to improve their teaching are too vague and are not monitored closely enough.
- Whilst the service's overall self-assessment is evaluative and broadly accurate, the overly long self-assessment report is not helpful in ensuring managers identify precisely what actions are necessary to rectify the areas for improvement. Partners' self-assessments are too descriptive.

## Full report

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

- Review learners' individual learning plans to identify how many set challenging targets which extend their knowledge and skills. Use this analysis, combined with a more evaluative observation of teaching and learning and better action planning with tutors, to improve their ability to meet the needs of individual learners and to develop learners' independent learning skills.
- Ensure that discussions at both corporate levels within the council and with commissioned providers during contract review meetings focus sufficiently on key performance indicators relating to learners' outcomes and to teaching and learning, and on how these aspects of the service's provision can improve further.
- Revise the self-assessment process to ensure that the service's quality improvement plan contains specific and measurable actions to bring about improvement. Provide further training for partner providers in how to be more evaluative in assessing the quality of their provision.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Good
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- Outcomes for learners are good and have improved significantly since the last inspection, largely because of the more thorough and reliable systems used by the service for recording and recognising achievement on courses that do not lead to a qualification. Approximately 85% of the provision consists of courses that have non-accredited outcomes and almost 75% is made up of programmes of less than nine hours duration.
- The service has been particularly successful in increasing enrolments from specific targeted groups and communities in Southampton. It has a strong focus on raising aspirations for residents from all age groups across the city, alleviating poverty and supporting people into employment. The service has played a significant role in upskilling local people so they are able to compete for jobs in Southampton, and particularly in helping them to gain employment in key sectors which are driving the regeneration of the city. A quarter of the learners from very challenging backgrounds who enrolled on pre-employment training courses in partnership with leading national companies have progressed into jobs with employers.
- The proportion of people in the city who are currently not in education, employment or training is low and declining. Over one third of the learners on the service's courses in 2011/12 did not have an intermediate level qualification, or above, prior to enrolment. The proportion of unemployed people on courses has more than doubled over the last four years. A significant number of learners are new to learning and almost half of the total enrolments reside in priority neighbourhoods.
- Success rates are high within the service for the many learners on courses that do not lead to a qualification. Success rates on non-accredited family learning and employability training courses are high, at over 90%. Both achievement and retention rates are high. The success rate on the remainder of the non-accredited provision has declined from 90% in 2011/12 to 84% in 2012/13 to date, largely due to a decline in achievement rates.
- Success rates are high on the small proportion of courses leading to a qualification. Over three quarters of learners on accredited programmes in 2011/12 gained a qualification at entry or intermediate level. Success rates are satisfactory on accredited family learning courses, but low for the small number of learners studying for language, literacy and numeracy qualifications. Success rates on accredited employability training courses have improved from 80% in 2011/12 to 88% in the current year and are now high.

- Learners on courses targeted at securing work with specific employers develop good personal and job-related skills. They talk effusively about how the training they have received and their subsequent employment have transformed their lives for the better. Employers value these learners' good work readiness. For example, an employer involved in building new university accommodation for students described how a long-term unemployed learner they have recruited from one of the service's pre-employability training courses is able to use his own initiative at work, is always punctual and demonstrates flexibility and adaptability in completing tasks. Learners often gain useful additional industry-specific qualifications as part of their training.
- Parents and carers on family learning courses feel more confident in using English and mathematics in a range of personal and work situations, particularly those for whom English is their second language. Many courses focus on the good development of practical life skills such as food hygiene and fire safety. Learners take a more active role in their local communities and feel less isolated at home. They have a greater involvement in their children's lives at school, supporting and praising them more effectively to achieve their full potential.
- The high-grade success rates for the relatively small number of learners studying GCSE English are good and well above the national average. However, the success rate for learners achieving GCSE mathematics at grades A\* to C is low and requires improvement.
- The service analyses success rate data carefully to determine that there are not any significant achievement gaps between particular target groups of learners and the average for the provision overall.
- Learners have a satisfactory understanding of progression routes and employment opportunities. Many develop the confidence and enthusiasm to study further, often using their own initiative to progress to courses at the local general further education college and other education providers. The service monitors data on internal progression from its own courses to those at the same, or a higher, level; these data show that a significant minority of learners progress to one or more further programmes. However, the service does not yet systematically gather data on learners' destinations once the learners leave its provision.
- Learners feel safe when attending lessons in the community. They respect the diversity created by the varied, and often challenging, backgrounds of their peers. Learners work well together and learn from each other. They are well motivated and proud of their achievements.

<b>The quality of teaching, learning and assessment</b>	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. They are effective in enabling learners to improve their skills and knowledge and to complete their courses successfully. Tutors make good use of their experience and knowledge to bring learning to life skilfully in lessons. They are similarly adept at seizing naturally occurring opportunities to use learners' prior experiences and backgrounds to stimulate interesting debate, extend learning and make lessons relevant. For example, during a one-day course on local history, the tutor made good use of her excellent local knowledge of the area to answer learners' disparate questions and to extend their understanding of how Southampton developed as a city. Learners participated enthusiastically in the lesson as their knowledge of their home city and their confidence in the tutor's ability to respond grew.
- Tutors provide very good care and support to enable learners to participate in lessons and to succeed in their studies. They adapt lessons well to meet the needs of the group and give particularly good support to learners with disabilities to minimise the physical barriers which prevent them carrying out tasks and developing their expertise. For example, a learner with learning difficulties was making good progress in her writing, using a specially adapted computer keyboard. In the best lessons, learning support assistants give learners well-structured, targeted support to help them make progress and to succeed. However, some commissioned providers do not always make this support available to those less experienced tutors who might benefit from the additional assistance.

- In the better lessons, tutors make very good use of a wide range of assessment strategies to check learners' knowledge and understanding and to challenge and extend their learning. In a very good lesson on motor vehicle studies, the tutor's questions checked and probed learners' understanding of battery maintenance very thoroughly and challenged their perceptions of the benefits and disadvantages of different types of car batteries. Tutors provide detailed and useful feedback to learners when assessing their written assignments and give helpful suggestions on how they might improve their work.
- In most lessons, tutors pay good attention to developing learners' English and mathematics. In a very effective computing class for learners with disabilities and/or learning difficulties, the tutor encouraged and challenged learners to develop their speaking and listening skills through stimulating and interesting discussions with each other and the learning support staff. In another example, a motor vehicle tutor made good use of naturally occurring opportunities to develop learners' mental arithmetic. Learners understand the importance of these skills and value their development.
- The service provides appropriate learning resources and classroom accommodation for learners. Tutors use learning resources well in many lessons. For example, a history tutor made imaginative use of well-chosen visual and audio aids to bring the topic to life. On a fishing course, the tutor used a tablet computer very effectively as a learning and assessment resource, for example, to photograph learners' work. Learners on employability training courses are able to use industry standard computers in lessons or in their own time. However, in the less successful lessons, tutors do not always make sufficient use of information and learning technology (ILT) to enhance learning and make it more interesting.
- In a few lessons, the tutors encourage learners to continue their studies away from the classroom. Learners on a family learning course access their children's school's virtual learning environment to support them with their homework. However, the majority of learners do not receive sufficient encouragement or support to develop their independent learning skills, for example through carrying out simple research at home to prepare for their next lesson.
- Tutors' attention to health and safety in lessons is good. Tutors promote it particularly well on courses where learners' knowledge of health and safety is a key learning outcome, such as in cookery and motor vehicle maintenance lessons. In a very good cookery lesson, the tutor set exacting standards for learners regarding their personal hygiene, use of protective clothing and cleanliness of cooking utensils. The promotion of healthy eating and nutritionally balanced menus was excellent.
- The service works particularly well with employers to provide training for learners that is designed to meet the specific needs of both. This training is successful in preparing local people for the employment opportunities that emerge as companies open businesses in Southampton. As part of a particularly successful recent initiative, the service worked with a national 'cash and carry' company that had built a new outlet in the city to develop a programme of bespoke training and work experience for unemployed people, which prepared them successfully for employment with the company.
- Tutors use initial assessment well on family learning courses to identify learners' additional support needs. However, on wider family learning and employability training programmes, this assessment is not always sufficiently detailed and the outcomes are not recorded in enough detail in learners' group profiles. This inhibits planning for individual learning and the effective monitoring of learners' progress. It also limits the identification of possible progression routes for learners.
- In family language, literacy and numeracy provision, tutors use individual learning plans systematically to record learners' personal learning goals. They record clearly why learners want to enrol on the course and what they hope to achieve from their studies. However, tutors do not always agree, or monitor, clear and achievable individual targets with learners, nor ensure that the targets will extend learners' knowledge and understanding.
- Tutors plan their teaching, learning and assessment well to prepare learners for progression to courses at a higher level. They make frequent references in lessons to other provision that

learners might find more challenging once they have completed their studies, and to further courses that lead to qualifications. Learners who take advantage of these opportunities often make great strides in the development of their knowledge and skills. However, tutors do not always record learners' interest in further learning nor make arrangements for all learners to receive formal information, advice and guidance on progression routes.

- In many lessons, learners have multiple barriers to learning and come from very challenging backgrounds. Tutors are unfailingly courteous and sensitive and treat learners with respect. This sets a good example for learners who treat each other similarly. However, tutors do not always plan sufficiently well to promote a better understanding of equality and diversity for learners. Schemes of work and lesson plans do not make enough reference to the promotion of equality and diversity. In a few lessons, tutors miss naturally occurring opportunities to celebrate diversity or different cultures.

### The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leadership and management of the service require improvement. The commissioned partners ensure good outcomes and provide very effective teaching and training at local level. They receive good support from the service to meet the council's specified aims for the regeneration of the city, but the arrangements to monitor and improve the provision across all of the partners and types of courses are not yet sufficiently well established or consistent.
- Leaders and managers have a clear strategy to target and encourage participation from priority groups in the city and sections of the community that do not traditionally take part in learning. Managers align the service's strategy and priorities closely with the wider objectives of the council. They keep senior officers and elected members well informed of progress towards engagement targets. Partner providers have a good understanding of the service's priorities, which is reinforced through a rigorous formal bidding process and regular review meetings.
- Managers make good use of the service's commissioning framework to be responsive and flexible in meeting learners' emerging needs and interests, the requirements of employers who are opening new businesses in the area and national priorities. Partners make effective use of learners' feedback to determine their curriculum offer. For example, the service has developed a course for vendors of the Big Issue magazine following their feedback from an initial introductory lesson on cooking.
- Managers do not use performance management indicators systematically to bring about improvements. They monitor progress against enrolment targets for priority groups very effectively, but do not focus sufficiently on targets to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment for all providers. The variable quality of the outcomes and actions arising from contract review meetings inhibits the effectiveness of the reviews as a performance management and development tool.
- An appropriate programme of staff development is starting to address initial teacher training needs for those staff in provider partners who have little formal teaching experience. It is also meeting the needs of tutors who assess themselves as requiring training in, for example, monitoring learners' progress effectively throughout a course. Most staff development sessions are well attended. Partner providers value the training opportunities and comment that they are beginning to have a positive effect on tutors' confidence and skill in planning and delivering good teaching, learning and assessment.
- Managers make effective use of meetings with partner providers once a term to share good practice. For example, at a recent meeting, a partner talked about the benefits of using a 'Star' outcomes framework to improve initial assessment and to support the development of detailed and meaningful individual learning plans for learners.
- Observations of teaching and learning require improvement. The quality of observation reports is too variable. Most are too descriptive and do not focus sufficiently on learning. Where action plans for tutors following lesson observations are in place, the targets are not meaningful

enough to bring about timely and focused quality improvement. The service acknowledges this as an area for improvement and has plans in place to resolve the issues. Moderation reports on lesson observations are thorough and identify areas for improvement accurately. However, they are not sufficiently clear about what actions the service will take to bring about the improvements.

- Partner providers are effective at individually guiding learners to enrol on appropriate courses, but do not work together systematically to plan and provide progression routes for learners.
- The self-assessment process is broadly accurate and evaluative. However, the resulting self-assessment report is long and unwieldy and does not help managers to identify clearly what actions are necessary to make improvements. Actions arising from self-assessment are insufficiently specific, measurable and time bound to ensure rapid improvement. Some weaknesses in the service's management of the provision have remained in place for too long.
- Partner providers value the self-assessment process as an opportunity to reflect on their own quality improvement arrangements. However, the service acknowledges that the standard of individual partners' self-assessment reports is too variable. A high proportion are too descriptive and do not contain enough clear judgements on the quality of the provision or how it might improve.
- The service is successful in enrolling learners from minority ethnic backgrounds and those with a wide range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The careful selection of appropriate specialist partner providers meets the needs of these groups of learners well. Partners manage any inappropriate behaviour by learners effectively. Where necessary, they revisit and rework rules on conduct with learners to gain their shared agreement about what is acceptable behaviour. However, the promotion of equality and diversity in the curriculum is too irregular and spasmodic and requires improvement.
- Learners feel safe and most partner providers have a designated person responsible for safeguarding who is confident in managing any issues relating to learners' safety. However, records of contact details for parents and carers of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are not sufficiently accessible to managers in the service in case of an emergency. The service meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. It monitors partners' compliance with recruitment checks on relevant staff during contract review meetings; however, as a matter of routine in these meetings with partner providers, managers do not always assess whether there are any safeguarding issues that need consideration and response.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

### Southampton City 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>3</b>	3

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Community learning	2

## Provider details

Southampton City 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: 4,568
Principal/CEO	Dawn Baxendale
Date of previous inspection	June 2009
Website address	<a href="http://www.southampton.gov.uk/learning/learningskills">www.southampton.gov.uk/learning/learningskills</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+
Full-time	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Part-time	-	153	-	188	-	15	-	-
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Number of community learners	1,384							
Number of employability learners	923							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Bitterne Park School</li> <li>■ Brighter Prospects Limited</li> <li>■ Cantell Maths &amp; Computing College</li> <li>■ Chamberlayne College for the Arts</li> <li>■ City College Southampton</li> <li>■ City Life Church Southampton – CLEAR</li> <li>■ For Life Experiences UK Ltd</li> <li>■ Itchen Sixth Form College</li> </ul>							



- Oasis Academy, Lordshill
- Orange Apples Ltd
- Solent Mind
- Solent Skill Quest Ltd
- Southampton Arts & Heritage
- Southampton Libraries
- Sure Start
- The Prince's Trust, Fairbridge
- Totton College
- Training for Work in Communities (TWICs)
- Warren Centre
- Women's Wisdom Ltd
- Woodlands Community College

## Additional socio-economic information

Southampton City Council provides community learning and employability programmes through its informal adult and community learning service. In 2011/12, the service provided education and training for 4,780 learners through its commissioning framework with 21 partners, one third of whom are internal within the council. The main employment in the area is in professional and technical occupations and sales and customer service. The unemployment rate in the local area is close to that for England as a whole, but higher than the average for the south east. Wage levels are significantly below the average for the region. The number of pupils in schools in Southampton attaining five GCSEs at grades A\* to C including English and mathematics has improved significantly in the last five years but is still well below the national average.

## Information about this inspection

### Lead inspector

Richard Moore HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's skills 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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