

North Yorkshire County Council Adult Learning and Skills Service

Local authority

Inspection dates		20–24 May 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- Despite some improvements, learners' success rates on long courses require improvement and success rates on intermediate courses are particularly low.
- On courses that do not offer nationally recognised qualifications, the learners' starting points are not always identified and used to plan their individual learning; the learners' progress and achievements are not sufficiently and reliably recorded.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement; too few sessions are good or better.
- Equality and diversity are not always promoted effectively in teaching, learning and assessment activities.
- Since the last inspection, performance management and staff-development arrangements have not been effective to improve sufficiently the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- North Yorkshire County Council Adult Learning and Skills Service (the service) quality improvement arrangements have identified many of the weaknesses in the provision, but have not eradicated them quickly enough. The recently revised observation of teaching and learning process has not led to improvements in teaching and learning.

This provider has the following strengths:

- Learners develop good personal and employability skills and enhance their economic and social well-being.
- Learners on short courses achieve well.
- The service offers a wide range of courses and has been successful to widen participation and engage many learners.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for learners by further developing and using the management information system more effectively to monitor learners' progress; take prompt action to support learners who are at the risk of not completing their courses successfully or within the planned time.
- Develop and implement an effective process for recognising and recording progress and achievement (RARPA) of learners on non-accredited learning which provides an accurate view of their progress and achievements.
- Ensure that staff use the results of the initial assessment of learners on workplace courses consistently well to plan their individual training and assessment. Ensure the plans include clear and measurable learning targets which are reviewed and recorded routinely and accurately.
- Improve the proportion of good and outstanding teaching and learning sessions by ensuring that teachers use a varied range of teaching, training and learning methods to allow learners to take part effectively in their learning. Provide effective training for teachers and assessors to use information learning technology (ILT) innovatively, and be more ambitious about learners' achievements by ensuring that learning is individualised and challenging.
- Ensure all teachers and assessors receive effective training and development so that they are confident to promote, routinely, equality and diversity in teaching, learning and assessment, for example, by ensuring that discussions on equality and diversity are relevant to learners' work and life.
- Execute quality improvement plans effectively and increase the pace of improvements in the provision; ensure regular sharing of best practice.
- Further develop and implement the revised observation process of teaching, learning and assessment activities effectively to give an accurate view of learners' experiences.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outcomes for learners require improvement. In 2011/12, success rates at the entry, intermediate and advanced courses across the service's provision improved from a low level in 2010/11; however, they require further improvement. The overall figures mask low success rates on intermediate level courses that are longer than 10 hours. ▪ In 2011/12, success rates for learners on early years and playwork, mathematics and statistics, information and communication technology for users and the subcontracted hairdressing and beauty therapy course were high. Success rates for learners on visual arts courses require improvement. Too many learners on training to provide learning support, foundation English and mathematics, business and finance, and administration did not complete their qualifications successfully; their success rates were poor. ▪ The RARPA process is not sufficiently reliable to judge the level of learners' success rates on non-accredited courses. The large majority of current learners including apprentices and workplace learners make satisfactory progress towards completing their qualifications. Attendance rates are satisfactory and learners produce a satisfactory or better standard of work. ▪ Learners grow in self-confidence, self-reliance and enhance significantly their life chances skills. Workplace learners develop good employability skills. Some learners make a good contribution to their communities through voluntary work, for example, by volunteering as football coaches or support staff in schools, community centres, or Children Centres. 	

- Overall, learners acquire sufficient levels of English and mathematics skills to complete their qualifications. They do not develop these skills beyond what is required by their qualifications that they aim to complete.
- There are no significant performance differences between male and female or for learners from different minority ethnic groups. In 2011/12, the success rates for most learners with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities were higher than those without. Male and female learners achieve equally. The service has developed satisfactory arrangements to improve the success rates of learners with a hearing implement, whose success rates have been poor since 2010/11.
- Learners have a satisfactory understanding of their rights and responsibilities. However, their understanding of relevant equality and diversity issues require improvement.
- Many learners gain confidence to move from low starting points on to higher level often non-accredited courses, or paid or voluntary employment. The service acknowledges that it needs to improve the arrangements to collect, record and monitor the destinations of all learners within and outside its own provision.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement. This reflects the need to improve the outcomes for learners on many courses. Too many learners do not benefit from good or better teaching and learning.
- In the better sessions, learners take part in an interesting and varied range of teaching and learning activities, which contribute to the good pace of learning. They have high levels of motivation and concentration. Teachers make good use of effective questioning to extend learners' knowledge and enhance their thinking and reasoning skills. They ensure learners' progress is recorded and monitored systematically and effectively. Learners enjoy the good sessions, make valuable contributions to the discussions and take responsibility for their learning.
- In the weaker sessions, teachers do not have high expectations of learners. They do not use a good range of teaching methods to ensure that all learners, including the more-able learners, learn well; they rely too much on worksheets and handouts. Teachers talking about topics dominate the sessions and do not support or plan for learners to become independent learners. Teachers and assessors do not use questioning techniques effectively to monitor or consolidate learning.
- A few teachers and assessors use ILT satisfactorily. However, the imaginative and creative use of ILT requires improvement, for example, to show relevant interesting video clips to bring alive the learning. Too many teaching venues do not have adequate access to ILT resources, and teachers and assessors do not always have access to portable ILT equipment. A virtual learning environment is being developed but it is not used widely across the provision.
- Teachers and assessors are appropriately qualified and experienced for the courses they teach. They use their specialist knowledge and expertise to good effect in sessions and provide clear illustrations of key learning points, for example, to explain the Pythagoras theorem in the mathematics lessons. Learners in information and communication technology sessions develop quickly their computing skills from having no experience to being able to use search engines confidently, for example, to find information on the Web and communicate very effectively with their grandchildren by email.
- Staff assess learners on accredited courses routinely to identify their levels of English and mathematical skills prior to the start of their courses. However, this information is not used effectively across all of the courses to plan individual learning or support. The service's arrangement for the assessment of learners' English and mathematical skills on non-accredited courses is under developed.
- Teachers and assessors do not always use the results of learners' initial assessment effectively to set them appropriately challenging learning targets. Too often, in accredited provision,

learning targets are insufficiently broken down into measurable steps in learning. Teachers and assessors review learners' progress regularly but they do not always record the results of the reviews adequately. Teachers do not use the RARPA process consistently and accurately.

- Learners receive good constructive oral feedback on assessment that informs them how they can improve. Not all teachers and assessors provide learners with clear written details about ways to improve their work. For example, they do not routinely correct errors of spelling and grammar.
- Teachers and assessors do not consistently use the opportunities which occur in their lessons to develop learners' functional skills. Many do not plan sufficiently to extend the learners' levels of English, mathematics and functional skills beyond what is required for them to complete their courses.
- Teachers and assessors provide a high level of individual support and routinely provide additional coaching outside of teaching or training sessions. Learners on accredited courses are provided with effective support during sessions from teaching assistants. The advice and guidance given to learners on choosing a suitable course at interview is effective. Information and signposting about progression onto other programmes or employment are satisfactory. The service's arrangement to monitor the impact of extra support and advice requires improvement.
- Promotion of equality and diversity requires improvement. Teachers and assessors do not routinely promote equality and diversity within lessons as opportunities naturally occur. They do not encourage discussions to develop sufficiently learners' understanding of the wider equality and diversity issues.

Visual Arts Community learning Learning programmes for 19+

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement, reflecting learners' outcomes, which require improvement. The majority of courses are non-accredited; on these courses teachers do not plan, assess and record the progress of individual learners sufficiently.
- Teachers in the better sessions ensure a brisk pace of learning and include well planned activities to develop learners and involve them in lively and stimulating learning. In one session, the tutor planned for a good range of activities such as broomstick crochet and upholstery. They coach learners well with clear verbal feedback that enable learners to improve quickly. Learners are eager to learn and they produce ambitious work, for example, one learner in a textiles class made a 19th century style waistcoat for historic re-enactments.
- In the weaker sessions, teachers do not plan for individual learning and often do not set clear and challenging targets for learners. In one session several learners, who have been attending arts classes for several years, completed the same tasks as beginners to the group. Teachers do not use ILT sufficiently to enhance learning; some teachers give learners poor quality information sheets. Teachers dominate the sessions with overlong introductions and insufficient questioning of learners to check understanding.
- Personal support is good, which often includes a high level of tutor and peer support that enables learners to overcome barriers to learning. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of learners and create a supportive, inclusive and safe learning environment. Due to this support, many learners, particularly those at the risk of social isolation, gain great benefit from attending sessions.
- Teachers are experienced practitioners with specialist skills and use their experience well to give plenty of hints and tips so that learners can improve quickly. For example, a tutor provided a recipe for polish for upholstery which both cleans and polishes wooden furniture. Teachers use their experience well by giving inspiring practical demonstrations which raise the aspirations of learners, for example, using watercolour to portray vividly the effect of moving water. Most

training venues have good car parking access; learners appreciate this, as some bring large or bulky items that they work on both in sessions and at home.

- Teachers do not routinely use the RARPA process effectively and often the record of learners' progress is unreliable. Target-setting is insufficiently thorough; learning targets are often vague.
- Some teachers improve learners' levels of English and mathematics skills well. In one session, the tutor used complex measuring of a piece of fabric for fitted furniture covers and garments to extend learners mathematical skills. Teachers often encourage learners well to use the correct technical terms for specialist crafts and learn to articulate their ideas clearly.
- Advice and guidance are satisfactory at enrolment. However, learners are not always clear about how to progress to higher-level courses.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is insufficient. Teachers do not fully exploit all opportunities to explore other cultures and celebrate diversity, although learning is very inclusive and learners treat each other respectfully. Learners have an appropriate knowledge of safe working practices and understand the potential dangers of specialist equipment.

Training to provide learning support Learning programmes for 19+ Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement reflecting learners' low success rates in 2011/12. The service has introduced a number of measures to improve the quality of the provision. A number of these measures have been effective, which has led to the satisfactory progress of current learners. These measures include a more systematic monitoring of learners' progress and regular meetings between assessors and managers to identify learners at the risk of slow progress.
- In the better sessions, teachers plan well to develop the learners' ability to evaluate effective teaching methods and different strategies to improve writing skills with children. They use a good range of learning resources to stimulate the use of different vocabulary linked to differing levels of the development of children. Teachers encourage learners to use confidently ILT innovatively to engage children in classroom activities.
- In the less effective sessions, teachers do not plan for varied activities and learners are passive for long periods. They do not ensure learners develop effective strategies about evaluating their learning. For example, teachers do not encourage learners to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of different teaching methods and practices. They make insufficient use of ILT. In one session, the tutor promoted the use of ILT to learners to use with children, but failed to use it to enhance learning.
- Learners take an appropriate initial assessment prior to starting courses to ensure sufficiency of skills levels in English and mathematics. However, staff give insufficient attention to the assessment results to ensure that all learners are placed on the most appropriate courses. Often assessors do not use the results of the initial assessment to negotiate and set learners clear learning targets. Assessors do not record learners' progress routinely and in sufficient detail.
- Assessors use an appropriate range of assessment methods. The records of observations of learners' activities are detailed; they reflect accurately the level of competence of learners' skills. However, not all assessors provide clear feedback for learners to develop further their skills. They do not use assessment methods to promote learners to gain a sufficiently deep understanding of supporting teaching practices. For example, how to use higher order questions to help children to explore ideas and make connections.
- The development of learners' English and mathematics skills is good. Most learners can apply their skills in mathematics and English well to their employment goals. For example, one learner used her knowledge of English to explain the development of children's skills in using phonics and word blending.

- Learning and Skills advisers and assessors provide learners with effective advice to progress. Assessors are flexible in meeting the needs of learners, for example, by providing additional visits to learners in cases when learners are unable to attend meetings. They receive good pastoral support from assessors throughout the programme. For example, assessors provide support to learners between visits by email.
- Learners develop improved knowledge and awareness of equality and diversity and inclusion as part of the course. The promotion of the wider cultural aspects of equality and diversity requires improvement; some assessors do not have sufficient insight into how to promote equality and diversity.

Accounting and finance Learning programmes for 19+ Apprenticeships

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement, which is reflected in learners' outcomes, which require improvement. Learners enjoy their learning and are motivated and keen to succeed. They develop good levels of self-confidence and improve their workplace skills in a wide range of administrative tasks that enable them to be much more proficient administrators. For example, as a result of their improved communication skills they are more able to ascertain customer service requirements precisely.
- In the better sessions, teachers plan a wide range of activities to ensure that learners are not passive and maintain a non-threatening climate for learners to take a risk in answering questions. Learners are encouraged to work independently. Teachers use good questioning techniques to determine learners' understanding; often based on learners' responses, they adjust their teaching methods. For example, by providing additional tasks for learners to enable them to progress more quickly.
- In the less successful sessions, learners are too passive due to the over reliance on a tutor-led approach, which does not allow learners to develop independent learning skills. The pace of learning is too slow and teachers do not effectively question learners to determine their level of understanding. They have little expectation of learners and do not extend their problem-solving abilities in work-settings; they offer answers too quickly. The use of ILT requires improvement.
- Teachers support learners well and have productive working relationships, for example, they encourage them to give the details of any barriers to their progression. Teachers are appropriately qualified with relevant occupational experience, which they use very effectively in sessions, for example, by reference to real examples in business and commerce.
- Staff assess learners' levels of English and mathematical skills to ensure that they are enrolled for the correct level of functional skills. However, the results of the assessments are not always made available to assessors to plan correctly learners' individual learning. Often learners' individual learning plans are incomplete and do not give them a complete and clear picture of what they have to do to achieve their apprenticeship or how well they progress. Assessors set learners appropriate targets and action during progress review or assessment visits; however, they do not record this information on learning plans for learners to gain a clear understanding of their progress.
- Assessments are well planned and flexible to suit learners' and employers' needs. Assessors provide good written and oral feedback for learners which include helpful advice on how to improve and further tasks that they need to complete to meet qualification requirements. Learners are assessed using a range of appropriate methods including; completed work, personal statements, observations and, where available, online assessments.
- The development of learners' levels of English and mathematical skills requires improvement. Assessors do not routinely check spelling, punctuation and grammar in written work. For accountancy learners, skills in mathematics are improved in all sessions. For example, learners create accounts and produce balance sheets.

- Learners receive good information, advice and guidance at induction and during progress reviews to enable them to make informed choices about further study and career progression. They are clear about the occupational opportunities that are available to them and use the information well.
- Staff discuss equality and diversity at induction and in subsequent reviews satisfactorily. However, assessors do not actively promote equality and diversity in learning or progress review sessions and learners' knowledge and understanding are not sufficiently developed. For example, assessors do not use naturally occurring examples to acknowledge the contributions of people of all backgrounds, ages, cultures and religions in business and commerce or in learners' work settings.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The Service has ambitious targets, which have contributed to good partnerships with other council services, employers, the voluntary sector and Jobcentre Plus, for example, to develop provision for the unemployed. The service promotes collaboration between a large number of providers including voluntary and community sector providers across York, West Yorkshire and North Yorkshire particularly well.
- Governance arrangements are satisfactory. The head of service meets regularly with executive members and presents verbal and written reports on the performance of the service. The written performance reports focus primarily on finance and the range of courses offered; they do not provide sufficient details on learners' success rates or performance. The recording of the monitoring of the service's performance, particularly where learners' success rates are low or when the service's performance is challenged, is not sufficient.
- The service has clear procedures for the performance management of staff. Full time teachers and managers receive an appropriate annual appraisal that links to the council's training and development programme. An appraisal process for part time teachers has recently been implemented. However, overall, the arrangements have not been effective to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Too few sessions are good or better.
- Quality improvement arrangements have identified the weaknesses in the provision but have not resolved them, and require improvement. The service has recently revised the observation of teaching and learning process in recognition that the process was focused insufficiently on learning and the quality of the sessions was over estimated. The service offers some sessions which are good or better, however, the arrangement to share practice is not systematic and requires improvement. The service is at the advanced stages to formalise the management and monitoring of its subcontractor's provision.
- Quality arrangements, including internal verification, have not been effective sufficiently to identify issues with the planning of individual learning and the RARPA process. Since the last inspection, arrangements to collect and use learner feedback to evaluate the provision have much improved. Learner views are now centrally coordinated whilst maintaining a view on area priorities for action. The service recognises that it needs to do more to gather and use the views of employers.
- Overall, the self-assessment process is satisfactory. Programme coordinators produce detailed self-assessment reports for their area which are then compiled into an aggregated self-assessment report for the service. However, the aggregated report loses essential detail on good practice and areas for improvement. The report does not take into account sufficiently the decline in learner outcomes. Overall, the pace of improvements have not been sufficient; compared to the last inspection the grades have declined.
- Since the last inspection, the arrangements to collect, analyse and monitor learners' outcomes and the quality of provision have improved. However, the service acknowledges that it needs to improve further the collection and use of data to monitor the performance of learners, courses, teachers and the subcontracted provision.

- The provision is effective in meeting learners' and stakeholders' needs, interests and aspirations. The service has done much work to encourage hard-to-reach learners back into learning. The service promotes effective collaboration to ensure provision is available for all communities, including learners in the rural and target areas. The service acknowledges that there are insufficient work placements available for learners and the referral arrangements between different providers require further development.
- Since the last inspection, the service has maintained its focus well to promote inclusion. However, the policies and procedures for the active promotion of equality and diversity among learners have not been fully effective and the promotion of equality and diversity in curriculum areas requires improvement. The extent to which managers regularly and routinely use data to analyse performance differences between groups of learners is effective. They have been successful in narrowing the performance gap between different groups of learners.
- The service meets the safeguarding statutory requirements and it acts appropriately to manage risk.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Visual Arts	3
Training to provide learning support	3
Accounting and finance	3

Additional socio-economic information

North Yorkshire is England's largest county, much of it lies within two national parks and over half the population lives in areas classed as 'sparse' or 'super sparse'. Parts of the county are areas of deprivation, such as areas in Scarborough which are among the most deprived in England. Around 5.6% of the population of the county is from Black and minority ethnic groups compared to 14.3% across England. The armed forces have a significant presence across the county; the 2011 census recorded almost 2% of residents employed in the armed forces. The proportion of the population claiming out of work benefits is around 8%, 5% lower than the regional average.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Shahram Safavi HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the head of service 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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