

Tees Achieve

Local authority

Inspection dates		2–6 June 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	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:

- Learners improve their personal, social and economic well-being significantly. Almost all who start on very short courses complete successfully and a good proportion find paid employment.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Skilled and enthusiastic tutors use information about learners' starting points well to plan and provide interesting and often stimulating lessons.
- Tutors are very sensitive to individual learners' additional support needs and offer extra support exceptionally well, helping learners to progress well.
- Since the last inspection, leaders and managers have maintained a strong focus on improving the provision and have ensured that staff development has led to good quality of teaching and learning.
- Tees Achieve (the service) works very closely with many partners to offer courses which meet the needs of learners well.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- In 2012/13, a small minority of learners on longer courses and apprenticeships did not complete their courses successfully.
- Not enough teaching and learning is outstanding.
- Overall, too few learners progress to other courses, including higher-level and accredited courses.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for learners on longer courses, including success rates for apprentices within the planned time by:
 - continuing to monitor the progress and achievement of individual learners
 - taking quick and effective actions when learners are at the risk of slow progress or leaving their courses too early without completing.
- Increase the proportion of lessons that are outstanding by ensuring:
 - all tutors use strategies that extend learners’ understanding and allow them sufficient time to think before offering an answer
 - tutors make better use of the available information and learning technology (ILT) resources to enhance further the quality of teaching, learning and assessment
 - all tutors are sufficiently confident to promote all aspects of diversity in teaching, learning and assessment.
- Implement effective action plans to recruit more learners from communities with higher levels of deprivation, and encourage them to progress to higher-level and accredited courses.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Success rates for most learners are high and improving. In 2012/13, the vast majority of learners on non-accredited courses, approximately two thirds of the total provision, stayed on their courses and completed successfully. The process for recognising and recording progress and achievement on the non-accredited programmes is robust and reliable. The success rates for most learners on very short classroom-based courses are outstanding and significantly above the national averages.
- In 2012/13, for the small number of learners on courses in engineering, visual arts, and training to provide learning support, the success rates declined and were low; the service no longer offers these courses. The success rates of a small number of learners on long courses, including the apprentices, declined sharply to below the national averages. The service has taken a number of good actions to improve these rates; based on the current in-year data, learners on these courses are progressing well to complete their qualifications.
- Current learners, including those on the recently subcontracted courses, progress well towards completing their learning objectives or qualifications. Learners on the study programme, many of whom have particularly low previous educational achievements, make good progress in developing vocational and employment related skills. The standard of most learners’ work is high; some learners produce work to an outstanding level. For example, learners produce high-quality oil paintings; one learner has developed carpentry skills to a high level and now produces wooden rocking horses, which he sells.
- Retention rates have improved and most learners complete their programmes. Learners on the English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses progress well from not being able to speak English to carrying out a good level of conversation. Learners on foundation learning courses improve significantly their personal, social and employability skills. Many establish friendships within their groups and for some this improves their confidence and reduces social isolation. They enhance substantially their capacity to improve their economic well-being; a noteworthy number have set up their own businesses.

- Learners who are unemployed or not economically active benefit in many ways, including a better sense of well-being, greater fitness levels and an opportunity to build on their creative skills. Learners develop their skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) successfully. Those on ICT programmes make good progress in using computers to improve their employment prospects.
- There are no significant gaps in achievement between different groups of learners. Learners with learning and/or physical disability, due to good and sensitive support, achieve better than learners without.
- Tutors focus well on developing learners' employability skills. The service's incentive-payment scheme which learners use to gain specific qualifications, keeps learners motivated to attend and progress. Based on the service's survey of a large sample of learners, a good proportion of learners have progressed to paid employment. The systems to monitor the proportion of learners who progress to higher-level and accredited courses requires further development, as does the number of learners who progress to these courses.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good with some outstanding features, which contribute to the high outcomes and the good standard of work produced by learners. Tutors inspire and challenge learners to achieve and progress well often from their low starting points. Learners apply their learning well, for example, a group of learners on a gardening course improved their skills with their allotment gardens.
- Most teaching and learning sessions, including those delivered by subcontractors, are good or better. Tutors use learners' starting points very effectively to plan stimulating learning activities during the sessions. Learners have clear individual learning objectives which relate to both course aims and their own personal targets, including developing skills in English, mathematics and ICT.
- In a small minority of sessions tutors do not sufficiently assess learners' progress, so learners do not know how well they are doing. They do not always check individual learners' understanding well or extend or challenge the depth of their knowledge. In some instances they do not give sufficient time so that learners can think and formulate their answers. In the weaker sessions tutors do not plan to allow learners to learn in a way that suits their identified needs.
- Tutors provide exceptionally good extra support for learners. They identify promptly learners with additional learning needs and provide personal support workers to support them during the sessions. Managers and tutors record and monitor well the progress of learners who receive this support and make suitable adjustments to ensure support remains effective.
- Learners and apprentices benefit from effective working relationships with knowledgeable and occupationally experienced tutors and assessors. The majority of tutors use skilfully a range of resources, including ILT, to extend learners' understanding. In a sewing class learners watched a short video demonstration of each step of a sewing technique that would take much longer for the tutor to demonstrate. This enabled learners to gain an overview of the process before starting their own practise. However, not all tutors use ILT well to make learning better or quicker.
- Tutors use assessment well to ensure that all learners make good progress. They use a very effective range of assessment techniques that encourages learners to take responsibility for their own progress. Learners self-assess effectively their competency in a range of skills linked to their learning objectives at the beginning and end of their learning and tutors comment on their overall progress. However, in a minority of cases tutors comment only on learners' completed work and therefore the progress made by learners cannot be monitored.
- Tutors give helpful written feedback to learners that is clear about how they can improve their skills further, while encouraging them to reflect on their own work. For example, they comment

on learners’ skill development on construction courses while requiring them to self-assess and reflect on their learning against a clear set of criteria.

- Learners develop their English, mathematics and ICT skills well. Tutors skilfully plan to develop further learners’ skills in these areas, for instance, through the use of naturally occurring opportunities to build their confidence in writing, spelling and using numbers. Learners in an art class wrote a 50 word autobiography for use in a display of their work, developing their use of grammar. Learners were encouraged to use fast calculation tips in a sewing class so they were able to convert inches to centimetres quickly.
- Learners receive good information and advice about courses so they can make informed choices about their next step. The good strategy to monitor learners’ attendance and contact the ones who do not attend regularly has been very successful in improving attendance rates. Tutors prepare learners on employability courses exceptionally well having developed their confidence, motivation, and understanding of how to access further employment or training opportunities. However, the proportion of learners who progress to longer courses, including accredited courses, requires improvement.
- The promotion of equality and diversity in a large majority of sessions is good. Tutors have a strong commitment to inclusion and inclusive practice and promote mutual respect between learners. The service has introduced a programme of monthly ‘hot topics’, which tutors are encouraged to embed into their teaching and learning. In the better sessions, tutors do this seamlessly, although in some sessions they are divorced from the subject content. There are examples of good promotion of diversity matters; however, not all tutors promote all aspects of diversity sufficiently well.

ICT for users	Good
19+ Learning programmes	
Community learning	

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, which is reflected in the high success rates on very short courses that are now above the very high national averages. Learners who have little experience of using computers make good progress and produce work of a high standard.
- Motivated tutors know their learners well and use this knowledge to plan the good development of learners’ confidence and ICT skills. One learner achieved her goal of producing a church magazine by using her newly learnt word processing skills. Tutors are passionate about providing learners with a positive experience of learning and encourage them to develop independent learning skills, for instance, by working together, using high-quality learning materials and computer packages’ help-menus.
- In a small minority of lessons learners occasionally have to wait too long for help so they do not make the progress expected of them. In these sessions, too often tutors run out of time so that learning is not checked, reviewed or consolidated sufficiently.
- Learners with additional learning, social or physical needs are assessed early and support arrangements are put in place swiftly. This ensures that they are fully involved in lessons and make good progress. Most tutors carry out regular reviews of learners’ progress towards achieving their qualifications or learning objectives; they record the reviews well.
- In a minority of sessions, tutors use ILT well to develop learners’ in-depth understanding. For instance, they use a video-clip to show the impact of cyber bullying, and utilise online football, basketball and hangman games to encourage learners to answer questions on health and safety when using computers. However, in too many sessions where interactive whiteboards are available tutors do not use them effectively to extend learners’ experience and check their learning. Walls displays are attractive and include examples of learners’ high-quality work.
- Tutors use the results of initial assessment effectively to inform the development of learners’ individual learning plans and agree clear learning goals with them. As part of the initial

assessment, learners are encouraged to self-assess their existing mathematics, English and ICT skills along with their skill level in relation to their individual learning objectives. Tutors use this information well to plan and tailor activities to meet individual needs. For example, they coach learners on how to shop online safely or to extend their word processing skills to improve job prospects.

- Tutors monitor learners' learning and progress effectively and often make good use of questions and quizzes to check learning. Learners record their progress at the end of sessions and most tutors provide supportive and developmental comments to support the learners' progress. However, in a minority of cases, tutors' written feedback does not focus sufficiently on learning, so learners are not clear about what they need to do next to improve their work.
- Tutors provide good support for learners to develop their skills in using English and mathematics. Learners benefit from good individual coaching, for example, to learn how to use capital letters and apostrophes accurately. They are encouraged to spell-check and proof read their work before printing. Tutors plan good activities to make mathematics relevant, for instance, by comparing the number of bytes on different memory sticks.
- Learners receive useful information about different courses. The information is available in a variety of languages and formats, for example, Urdu and Braille. Induction gives learners clear information that they need about their course. However, learners are not enthused and engaged by the induction process. Towards the end of the course, tutors explain the progression routes and options available. However, progression to higher-level and accredited courses is low.
- Tutors promote equality and diversity well by incorporating the monthly 'hot topic' themes into their teaching. Learners used their new ICT skills to research a range of topics, including how to deal with stress and the impact of crime. Tutors challenge misguided learners' views well, in a session, a statement about women's football ability led to a discussion about stereotyping. Tutors are sensitive to their learners' diverse and wide ranging needs, for instance, ESOL learners attend an ICT course specially designed for them.

Employability training and community learning

19+ Learning programmes Community learning

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, which is reflected in the very high success rates on very short courses. Tutors are enthusiastic and set high expectations for learners.
- In the best sessions, tutors plan enjoyable and lively activities that encourage good levels of participation even for the most reluctant learners. Often the activities extend and challenge learners' knowledge and understanding. Tutors plan sessions well to develop learners' personal skills by encouraging them to help each other, for example, in pronouncing words such as 'prescription'.
- During the very small number of weaker sessions, learning is not sufficiently matched to the needs of individual learners. Learners do not always understand why they are doing tasks. A good range of resources is available, but tutors do not use ILT well and some paper-based resources are not stimulating enough to support learning. In some sessions tutors use dull paper-based resources.
- Tutors use their experience well to plan and deliver interesting activities to develop learners' skills for both enterprise and employability. Their classroom management skills are particularly effective in gaining learners' commitment to create and agree rules of behaviour and conduct. They use their contacts well to broaden learners' experience of job roles in different sectors as part of the study programme. Many learners have gained a better insight about job roles in retail, health and social care, manufacturing and administration.

- Pastoral care and support are very good and contribute well to the high retention rates. Many learners have multiple and complex barriers to learning and they have access to good support, advice and guidance from tutors. Where behavioural issues occur, tutors manage a 'time out' period well to calm learners with challenging behaviour. For those quieter learners lacking in confidence, tutors plan opportunities to encourage them to express their concerns to peers and tutors, who listen carefully.
- Initial assessment is effective in matching learners to courses that meet their needs and abilities. Tutors use the results of initial assessment mostly well to set challenging learning targets for individuals. They use different questioning techniques to check on learning during and at the end of sessions to support learners' further development. Most tutors monitor and record progress and achievement of learners reliably.
- English, mathematics and ICT skills are seamlessly included in teaching, learning and assessment activities; tutors provide good opportunities for learners to extend their skills in these areas. In sessions for ESOL learners, they use vocationally relevant language and mathematics, for example, they use percentages when presenting information on environmental issues.
- Inclusion of minority ethnic learners and learners with multiple barriers to learning in sessions is good. Learners with diverse backgrounds and life experiences have a harmonious working relationship. Promotion of equality is often good. However, in a minority of sessions tutors lack the confidence to promote diversity when opportunities arise.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Strong strategic leadership and highly effective operational management have resulted in a significant improvement in learner outcomes and the quality of provision since the last inspection. Leaders, managers and tutors have high expectations of what learners can achieve, especially those with low previous educational attainments or aspirations. The service contributes well to the strategic objectives of the council, including to its economic regeneration drive. The council's elected member is very knowledgeable about the work and contribution that the service makes, and provides a good level of support and challenge for managers.
- Good change management, which includes a consultative management style and good communication, has resulted in staff and tutors who are very committed to developing and improving the service. Since the last inspection, many improved or new systems have been implemented, for instance, the introduction of a computer programme for monitoring the progress of apprentices. The management and monitoring of new subcontractors is effective in ensuring good standards.
- Since the last inspection senior managers have worked relentlessly to put in place effective strategies to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The system of observing teaching and learning has been overhauled so that under-performing tutors are quickly identified and supported to improve. There is good linkage between the actions identified through observations and the individual performance management of tutors at regular reviews and appraisals. The observation programme also drives a well-thought-out and comprehensive staff development programme, which has brought about demonstrable improvements.
- Senior managers have effectively designed the self-assessment process to make it more evaluative and inclusive of the views of tutors, learners and external stakeholders. The service's analysis of its strengths and areas of improvement is accurate. The detailed and comprehensive quality improvement plan has led to the implementation of precise actions to address its main areas of improvement, such as the timeliness of apprenticeship completions. Learners' views are collected effectively at observations and through large scale surveys, with findings being fed back to individual tutors to help them respond better to learners' needs.
- The service uses its extensive knowledge of Stockton-On-Tees and the disadvantaged individuals in the borough to develop courses. It has developed successfully the provision to

engage a significant number of new learners to its programmes. It responds particularly well to the needs of its partners, for example, in the voluntary sector and Job Centre Plus. The service has reviewed the range of its provision well and has clear strategies to deliver other courses to support further learners' economic well-being through offering courses to develop entrepreneurial skills. The proportion of learners from the deprived communities is not sufficiently high.

- The promotion of equality and diversity has improved significantly since the last inspection. Senior managers take a lead role in driving these improvements, with clear target-setting and monitoring of participation and performance for different groups of learners, which are communicated well to staff. Groups of learners from diverse backgrounds work well together in classrooms, showing respect and tolerance towards each other. The service is developing some good practice in promoting diversity, for example on sexual orientation, but this practice is not spread across the whole of its provision.
- The service meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Incidents are reported promptly and acted on appropriately. Wider safeguarding is being actively promoted, for example, through a new programme for taxi drivers in the borough. The promotion of health and safety is strong across all areas of the service's activity, with examples of good practice in the teaching of online safety and cyber bullying.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Tees Achieve

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
	Overall effectiveness	2	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	2	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	2	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	N/A	2	2	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
ICT for users	2
Employability training	2
Community learning	2

Provider details

Type of provider	Local authority							
Age range of learners	16+, 19+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	4,414							
Assistant principal	Ms Hazel MacGregor							
Date of previous inspection	April 2012							
Website address	www.stockton.gov.uk/teesachieve							
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+
	41	641	N/A	104	N/A	17	N/A	N/A
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	26	9	25	16	N/A	N/A		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Full-time	N/A							
Part-time	N/A							
Number of community learners	787							
Number of employability learners	181							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Group Horizon ▪ Xiscad 							

Contextual information

Tees Achieve is part of Stockton-On-Tees Borough Council's Regeneration and Economic Development department. An Acting Principal leads the service and reports to the head of Regeneration and Economic Development. The senior management team comprises three managers who are supported by two team leaders with responsibility for curriculum development. The service provides courses at a range of venues across the area; a significant proportion is offered in three adult learning centres. Around 27% of the population of Stockton is living in the top 20% of the most deprived communities in England. In the borough, 4.2% of population are from minority ethnic groups and unemployment is in line with the national level.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Shahram Safavi HMI
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Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the Acting Principal 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 relevant 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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