Redcar and Cleveland Adult Learning Service

Local authority

Inspection dates		23-26 September 2014
Overall effectiveness	**This inspection:**	**Good-2**
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
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 benefit from a thorough and consistent process that records and recognises achievement on courses that do not lead to a qualification

- there is a strong focus on raising aspirations for residents from all age groups across the borough, supporting people into employment and improving physical and mental health

- good teaching and high expectations for achievement and standards of behaviour ensure learners are successful

- very good initial assessment, advice and guidance, and very caring and supportive staff ensure that learners gain confidence and valuable work skills very quickly, and make significant progress in developing their English and mathematics skills

- leaders have a clear, strategic and successful focus to reduce the numbers of young people not in education, training or employment and to get adults back into work

- effective performance management supports tutors to improve their teaching practice and help learners to make progress

- responsive curriculum planning meets national and local priorities; there is good engagement with the Local Enterprise Partnership

- the strong commitment to increasing opportunities for learners promotes respect and tolerance between learners in the classroom.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- a significant minority of learners do not complete their qualifications before they move on to other study or gain employment, because target setting and curriculum plans are inconsistent

- some learners do not make the progress they could because tutors do not consistently check for learning and understanding

- the analysis of outcomes for learners in the self-assessment report is too general, with the result that actions for improvement in the quality improvement plan lack detail

- the consolidation of the different branches of the service's delivery is too recent to have secured consistency across all systems and processes.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Review the structure of learning programmes so that more learners can take the qualifications they need to confirm the progress they have made.
- Improve stretch and challenge for learners on the study programme by improving target setting and progress checking in lesson planning.
- Ensure that analysis of areas for improvement in the self-assessment plan is specific enough to enable managers to develop and monitor detailed improvement actions.
- Ensure consistency of purpose and delivery during the process of bringing together the different branches of the service.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good

- Outcomes for learners are good and have improved in each of the last three years, largely because of advances in teaching and learning, and a more thorough and consistent process to record and recognise achievement on courses that do not lead to a qualification. Most of the provision consists of courses that have non-accredited outcomes, the majority of which are very short.
- As part of the Regeneration Directorate, the Redcar and Cleveland Adult Learning Service (the service) has played a significant role in up skilling local people so they are able to compete for work in the local area. A large majority of learners are unemployed, and many have few or no qualifications when they begin their learning. The service has increased enrolments from specific under-represented groups and communities, such as socially isolated men and residents from the most economically deprived wards. This, with a strong focus on raising aspirations for residents from all age groups across the borough, has supported people into employment and improved physical and mental health.
- For young people from very challenging backgrounds, a focus on work experience through the study programme, traineeships and apprenticeships has been successful in helping them to get a job. These young people gain confidence and valuable work skills very quickly, and make significant progress in developing their English and mathematics skills. This means, however, that they often move into employment or further training before they have completed their qualifications.
- Success rates are high for the many learners on courses that do not lead to a qualification, and are high on courses leading to qualifications in information and communication technology (ICT), health and social care and environmental services. For adult learners, success rates in English and mathematics have improved, especially on intensive, short courses. A significant minority of learners on long courses do not complete their qualifications because they move on to other study or gain employment. This means that on a small number of courses, achievement rates are low.
- Apprentices develop very good personal and job-related skills. They describe enthusiastically how their training and later employment have transformed their lives for the better. They are fulsome in their praise for the care and support they get from their trainers and their employers. Good teaching and high expectations for achievement and standards of behaviour have significantly improved their achievement. Their employers value the attitudes to, and readiness for, work that these learners bring. For example, in local authority environmental services, managers described how young employees deal with members of the public and show good-humoured flexibility in completing tasks. Learners often gain very useful additional industry-specific qualifications as part of their training.

- Service staff analyse success rate data carefully to determine that there are no significant achievement gaps between particular target groups of learners. Almost all learners who get additional learning support do well in their studies and achieve their learning goals.

- Learners know about progression routes and employment opportunities. Tutors encourage learners to think about their next steps right from their first class. They focus well on high expectations and future options. Thus, many learners develop the confidence and enthusiasm to study further. The service monitors data on internal progression from its own courses to those at the same level, or a higher level. A significant minority of learners progress to one or more further courses.

- Service staff care deeply about the work and further study that their learners take up at the end of their courses. They communicate regularly with previous learners and apprentices and provide ongoing help so that they can build on their successful learning, get or maintain their employment, or move on to further and higher education.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good

- Learners make good progress because tutors teach them well in lessons that are interesting and challenging. Tutors plan lessons very thoroughly and have clear strategies to cater for individuals with varying abilities. They work well with those learners who need additional support and allocate clear extension tasks to the more able learners. Tutors promote progress for all learners who quickly understand what is required from them while on the programme. Planning for learning encourages and develops independent and group learning. Learners quickly gain confidence in their abilities.

- Learners benefit greatly because their tutors and support workers are very experienced and appropriately qualified. Through a well-designed and individually tailored staff development programme, tutors enhance their skills and focus on how they can further improve their teaching, learning and assessment practice.

- Learning takes place in well-resourced and well-organised premises throughout the borough and meets the needs of learners well. Learners feel safe getting to and from their learning centres, and enjoy good access to information and learning technology that supports their learning at home, as well as in class. Learners are proud of the good progress they make in their learning, and aspire to do better, because tutors display and celebrate excellent work on the walls in training rooms and public areas.

- Through well-designed assessments and good feedback, learners have a high awareness of their progress on the programme. They know about how well they are doing, and what they need to do to make further progress. All learners have individual learning plans that record their progress and set clear and time-constrained targets. In better lessons, tutors urge progress by monitoring learning and checking how well learners understand what they have taught them. However, in some sessions, tutors move on too quickly after asking questions before learners have been able to secure their understanding. Arrangements for quality-assuring learners' work and tutor performance are thorough and effective.

- The development of English and mathematics is good in most sessions, with frequent activities to carry out calculations and the use of complex and relevant technical terminology. For example, apprentices of customer service work out percentage discounts and refunds for faulty items, learners in cookery sessions work out proportions, and in art classes tutors challenge learners to think about scale and accuracy. Tutors in modern foreign language classes promote mathematics well. For example, good use is made of paired working to model financial transactions in foreign currencies. Nonetheless, a minority of tutors do not always give learners the opportunities they need to extend their mathematics skills in relevant contexts.

- Thorough initial assessment identifies learners' skills well. Information is used to ensure that learners are placed on the right course, and it helps tutors set and review individual targets for learners. For example, customer service apprentices were able to describe in good detail how initial testing, and discussions about the support they needed, helped to set targets for work

and achievement. However, for some learners on study programmes, tutors do not consistently ensure that agreed targets are included and monitored in lessons. This limits stretch and challenge for a small minority of learners.

- Initial advice and guidance are effective and help learners to select the most appropriate course to meet their needs, and to identify early what steps they will take to move on to further learning, or gain employment. Specialist staff give learners well-timed advice throughout their learning journey. Tutors reinforce this through effective ongoing support both inside and outside the classroom. This support is highly valued by learners, and consequently, attendance at most sessions is good.

- Planning for taught sessions in the promotion of fairness, equality of opportunity and tolerance of differences across society is good. Very effective group discussion during induction sessions raises learners' awareness of equality and diversity and safeguarding. Tutors and learners negotiate ground rules for each course, and encourage a culture of respect that they build upon in every session. For example, in customer service lessons learners benefited from challenging discussions on age and gender stereotyping, the perceived lack of computer literacy in older people, and the use of social media and its accessibility to all.

ICT for users **Community learning** **19+ Learning programmes** **Employability**	Good

- Good teaching, learning and assessment supports the high and sustained success rates in ICT. Learner numbers have increased steadily, in part due to new course development in response to local demand. Learners value their learning sessions, so attendance rates are very high. There are no discernible achievement gaps.

- Tutors quickly establish effective working relationships with learners who rapidly become very enthusiastic about the learning process. Skilled tutors engender pride in the learners' progress. A significant minority of learners produce work of an exceptionally high standard, rewarding their tutors' high expectations. For example, learners were highly motivated when staff displayed their professional-quality digitally edited photographs to an external audience.

- Tutors are highly adept at developing learners' skills and knowledge regardless of their backgrounds or abilities. Tutors know their learners well and pay close attention to the personal goals of each learner in their session planning. For example, a recent social media course was adapted to include the full range of social media sites that learners used. Consequently, learners feel respected and secure. Tutors plan learning sessions very effectively, to provide well-judged teaching, learning and assessment activities that match the needs of most learners. However, an over-reliance on whole-group discussion does not allow all learners to contribute fully.

- Robust arrangements for initial assessment identify learners' preferred learning styles, their mathematics and English skills, and their prior learning in ICT. This immediately influences how tutors plan their courses. For example, tutors refer learners to additional learning support, or provide teaching materials that have simplified descriptions and instructions, while achieving the same learning outcomes.

- Tutors and learners regularly update their individual learning plans to record short- and long-term targets. In the most effective sessions, tutors use well-crafted questions that allow learners time to think and extend learning. Whole-group discussions celebrate and praise individual progress, set targets for further development and reinforce key terminology. However, in many sessions, tutors answer their own questions, and move on, before learners have been able to answer for themselves.

- The development of learners' English skills is good. For example, tutors highlight the need for correct spelling, punctuation and grammar when applying for jobs, or use laminated cards of commonly misspelt words to promote discussion.

- In sessions on internet and email, learners used file size and compression data to calculate how many emails they would need to send 300 attached images. However, tutors do not routinely give learners the opportunities they need to extend their mathematics skills.

- Teaching promotes the development of independent learning skills using high-quality resources, both paper-based and on the virtual learning environment. Tutors encourage learners to choose individual projects that are meaningful to them, motivating them further to work independently.

- Tutors clearly communicate their high expectations of learners. They continually provide informal information, advice and guidance about further courses. This encourages learners to raise their own aspirations and progress to the next level of learning. For example, on the first day of a three-week course, learners were already planning their progression to a higher-level ICT course. Learners grow in confidence through progressing in their studies. They can see how their learning can benefit their lives. Learners are positive about the opportunities for advancement at work, due to the courses they have completed.

- Tutors model respect for diversity, for example, by outlining the adjustments required to accommodate differences in physical ability, and by carefully planning sessions to accommodate a range of learning styles. Tutors ensure that learners know their responsibilities regarding bullying and harassment, including e-safety. Tutors develop ground rules with each group of learners, and pay close attention to the need to be respectful of each other's values, identities and beliefs. They respectfully challenge learners when the language they use does not reflect diversity and inclusivity.

Foundation English and mathematics **Community learning** **19+ Learning programmes** **Employability**	Good

- The good teaching, learning and assessment is reflected in the rapid progress that the large majority of learners on English and mathematics courses make into apprenticeships, jobs and further education. Tutors actively support 16- to 18-year-old learners to retake their GCSE examinations in English and mathematics in order to enhance their future opportunities.

- Tutors are good role models and have high aspirations for their learners, many of whom have low starting points. They use their good subject knowledge and experience well to develop learners' understanding and skills in English and mathematics. Consequently, all learners make good progress in each lesson, and over time. Learners work at or above the standard expected for their stage and level of programme.

- Learners benefit from high levels of care and support from staff during both individual and group activities in lessons. This creates a positive learning environment that enables learners to enjoy learning and further develop their confidence and ability to work effectively both independently and as part of a team.

- Tutors carefully plan activities that meet learners' needs and interests well. Learners are enthused by the carefully chosen topics. For example, a discussion on the results of the Scottish independence referendum provided the data to explore large numbers in a relevant and interesting context. Other learners very much enjoyed discussions about cinema screens that helped them to estimate size as part of a lesson on scale.

- In the majority of lessons, tutors use information and learning technology very effectively to enhance the learning experience for learners and to reinforce understanding of key learning

topics. For example, learners gained much from using tablet computers to search for live data to use in a mathematics session, and from tutors' photographic displays of important buildings from around the world to extend work on dimensions.

- Tutors use questioning techniques to check learners' understanding and to support learners to explore further, understand and develop their functional English and mathematics skills. Tutors' written feedback on learners' work indicates in detail the specific areas that need to improve, and highlights what they need to do to raise the standard of their work.

- Initial assessment is of good quality. It is comprehensive and appropriately identifies learners' starting points. This enables tutors to develop specific individual targets for learners that they regularly discuss and review with learners. However, tutors do not consistently embed these targets into lesson plans. This means that tutors do not always refer to targets in lessons, and for a small minority of learners this limits the opportunity to maximise individual stretch and challenge.

- Initial advice and guidance successfully helps learners to select the most appropriate course to meet their needs and to gain employment or further study. A specialist officer is available to give learners timely advice throughout their learning. Ongoing support from tutors both inside and outside the classroom reinforces this advice and ensures that learners know exactly how their progress on the course affects their future direction.

- The promotion of equality and diversity and safeguarding is good. Effective classroom discussion during induction raises learners' awareness of key equality, diversity and safeguarding issues. It establishes robust ground rules and fosters a culture of mutual respect that runs throughout the programmes. There is good team-working between diverse groups of learners in lessons. Tutors and learners are well aware of how to report any safeguarding concerns that may affect themselves and others.

The effectiveness of leadership and management	Good

- Senior managers and local councillors have a clear vision about how the service contributes to the council's key corporate priorities to reduce the number of young people not in education, training and work and to give adults the skills they need to make them employable. The recent move from the Education to the Regeneration Directorate enables the service to engage more productively with the Local Enterprise Partnership.

- The recent reorganisation of the service and the consolidation of all provision under a single line management structure are having an impact on a more consistent approach to programme planning and quality improvement.

- The service has an effective performance management system that improves the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Observation of teaching and learning has a clear focus on whether learners make progress, and what tutors need to do to improve their teaching skills. Managers feed specific and well-monitored actions for improvement directly into annual appraisals. This enables teachers to reflect on and improve their teaching practice. Support for tutors requiring improvement is strong, and staff development is effectively targeted on the priority areas for improvement.

- Managers and tutors evaluate effectively the quality of individual courses and tutors through a well-designed and comprehensive quality review process. The use of data by all staff is particularly successful in enabling managers to take swift action to improve provision. Learners' feedback has a positive impact on the type and availability of programmes.

- However, the formal self-assessment process is less effective. Although it engages a wide range of stakeholders in all stages of the process, the identification of areas for improvement, particularly in those for outcomes for learners, are not sharp enough. The formal quality improvement plans are also too general to be useful. Senior managers have already identified this as an area for further development.

- Managers are effectively changing the curriculum they offer to meet new national and local priorities to increase the employability of local residents. At the same time, managers are working with a range of partners to adapt their community-learning programme to focus on the health and well-being of the most disadvantaged residents of the borough.

- The well-managed introduction of study programmes has ensured that high-quality work-experience placements are available with employers in both the private and public sectors. In order to meet council's priorities for regeneration, the service is expanding the apprenticeship programme into a wider range of vocational areas. The well-developed programmes for unemployed learners have grown rapidly in the past two years and equip learners well with sustainable employability skills.

- Managers and staff at all levels of the service are strongly committed to increasing opportunities for their learners. The service targets more of the provision at residents in the most disadvantaged areas of the borough, or from the most vulnerable members of the community, such as the successful English and mathematics courses for ex-offenders.

- Managers identify any achievement gaps between learner groups, and close them effectively. Tutors encourage respect and tolerance among learners at induction sessions, and challenge skilfully any discriminatory language and behaviour in classes. Some tutors are adept at weaving diversity themes into their teaching, such as getting learners to research menus in a healthy eating course.

- Safeguarding is good. The service meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding its learners. Effective systems are in place to check the safeguarding arrangements of employers taking the increasing numbers of young people who are on study programmes. Safe recruitment procedures for all staff are rigorous, and every member of staff undertakes mandatory training on safeguarding at induction and at regular update sessions. Learners report that they feel safe.

- All staff are clear about how to report safeguarding concerns, and in the few instances when reports are made, action has been swift and effective. Tutors emphasise safeguarding issues in their teaching, and promote protection against cyber-bullying and general e-safety particularly well.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Provider name

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	2	2	N/A	2
Outcomes for learners	2	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	2	2	N/A	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	2	2	N/A	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	N/A	N/A	2	N/A	2	2	N/A	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
ICT for users	**2**
Foundation English and mathematics	**2**

Provider details

Type of provider	Local authority
Age range of learners	14+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	2898
Principal/CEO	Mrs Denise Bollands
Date of previous inspection	November 2008
Website address	www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk/adultlearning

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+
	12	123	N/A	161	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	**Intermediate**		**Advanced**		**Higher**			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	N/A	N/A	2	44	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	495							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:								

Contextual information

Redcar and Cleveland, with a population of 134,900, is the largest borough in the Tees Valley. Unemployment is above the national rate, and a quarter of residents are economically inactive. Almost 30% of the adult population are obese, and the life expectancy gap between residents in the poorest and most affluent areas is large. The percentage of children achieving five or more A* to C GCSEs including English and mathematics fell in 2014 to 51%, below the rate in England. Redcar and Cleveland had a youth unemployment rate (excluding full-time students) of 25.5% at the time of the census in 2011. In 2013, over 500 young people were not in employment, education or training.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Christopher Jones HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three 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 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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To find out more go to www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk