

# NCC Adult Education Service

## Local authority

<b>Inspection dates</b>		<b>19 – 23 January 2015</b>
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Inadequate-4</b>
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Inadequate-4

## Summary of key findings for learners

### This provider is inadequate because:

- leaders and managers have failed to tackle the weaknesses or build on the strengths identified at the last inspection and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment has declined
- over the last three years outcomes for learners have declined in most areas of learning, particularly in English and mathematics functional skills and for learners aged 16-18
- senior managers and elected members do not effectively hold managers to account for the performance of the service
- advice and guidance for most learners to consider their next steps in learning require improvement and too few learners progress onto higher levels of study, employment or volunteering once they complete their course
- not enough young people take part in work experience placements, which hinders the development of their work-related skills and knowledge
- too many tutors take insufficient account of learners' existing knowledge and skills when planning learning activities and, as a result, learners' progress is not rapid enough
- not enough learners develop higher level knowledge or skills as they are not given work or tasks that challenge them sufficiently
- too often tutors do not provide specific enough written feedback to learners on their work or set suitable targets to help learners know what their next steps are
- tutors are not confident in enabling learners to consider different cultures and explore the values and beliefs of modern Britain.

### This provider has the following strengths:

- apprentices develop good vocational skills and the majority successfully complete their qualifications in good time.

## Full report

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

- Ensure that leaders and managers develop and implement a detailed action plan that identifies all of the weaknesses identified so that the rapid improvements needed are secured.
- Make sure that managers provide senior officers and elected members with timely and relevant performance information so that they can provide robust challenge to managers and ensure that weaknesses are tackled promptly and outcomes for learners improve, including in English and mathematics.
- Ensure managers bring greater rigour to the performance management of teaching, learning and assessment so that the quality of teaching is consistently good.
- Improve the quality of the study programme and secure high quality work experience placements for learners aged 16-18 so that they gain the vocational skills and experience they need to gain and sustain employment successfully.
- Ensure that teaching takes sufficient account of learners' starting points so that learners make rapid progress and develop high levels of skills and knowledge.
- Ensure that learners receive concise and detailed feedback in all of their work to accelerate their learning.
- Improve target setting and recording so that individual learning plans include suitable targets that enable learners, particularly those on non-accredited courses, to understand what steps they need to take to achieve their goals.
- Develop tutors' confidence to promote equality actively and explore the diversity of modern Britain with learners.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Requires improvement
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- NCC Adult Education Service (the service) provides classroom-based learning, community learning, the study programme at entry level and levels 1 and 2, and apprenticeship programmes at intermediate, advanced and higher levels. Classroom-based learning constitutes just over half of the provision. Nearly a third of the provision is community learning and the rest of the provision comprises learning programmes for a small number of learners aged 16-18 and a small but growing number of apprenticeships.
- Over the last three years, the number and proportion of learners aged 19 and over on classroom-based learning that complete their qualifications has declined. In 2013/14 the rates of achievement of qualifications dropped to just below national rates and those of similar providers.
- The proportion of learners aged 16-18 who achieve their qualifications has declined and is too low. While they develop good awareness of different job roles and employment sectors that they can work in during their programme, insufficient numbers benefit from work placements.
- Most learners stay on the programmes and retention rates are high on most programmes. The attendance of learners is good.
- Learners develop good personal and social skills. They gain confidence and learn and apply their skills in employment sectors such as information and communication technology (ICT), accounting and finance, and as classroom assistants. Learners from rural and isolated

communities meet other people, make friends and overcome isolation. Older learners realise their ambitions of taking up new hobbies and remaining active. In foreign languages and creative arts learners broaden their horizons and are rightly proud of the high standard of work they produce.

- Learners in sport, supporting teaching and learning in the classroom, accounting, finance and administration achieve well. Most learners on arts foundation programmes develop exceptional skills and secure places on degree courses at various universities.
- Apprentices develop good vocational skills and complete their qualifications in good time. Most apprentices aged over 24 years make excellent progress; however not enough advanced apprentices complete their framework in children and young people's workforce development.
- Learners in the subcontracted provision achieve their qualifications well in all subject areas except the construction trades.
- The achievement levels in English and mathematics functional skills have declined and although around the national rate at level 1, where there are substantially more learners, they are below at level 2. Success rates for GCSE English and mathematics at grades A\*-C are above the low national rates.
- Overall, too few learners progress onto higher levels of study, employment or volunteering once they have completed their course. Managers do not monitor the progression of learners and their destinations routinely.
- There is too much variation in the outcomes for different groups of learners. Those aged 16-18 and those with a declared learning disability perform less well than other groups.

### The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The subject areas of sport, foundation English and independent living and leisure skills were selected for inspection because they represent a good cross-section of the provision. Inspectors also sampled teaching, learning and assessment across a wide range of other subject areas. Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement because a significant minority of learners do not make rapid enough progress in lessons or achieve good outcomes. Tutors take insufficient account of learners' existing knowledge when planning learning activities and as a result, too many learners do not achieve as well as they could.
- Most tutors provide good personal support to learners and offer praise and encouragement regularly to them. Tutors encourage those learners well who have not been in education for a long time and learners enjoy coming to lessons.
- Written work is marked regularly and praised, but not enough tutors identify and correct spelling and grammatical errors. Comments on marked work are often perfunctory and do not inform learners of how they are able to improve the standard of their work. Where feedback on learners' work is timely, detailed and accurate, such as in sport, this results in learners making more progress. In foundation art and media tutors review learners' work frequently, and provide and set specific targets so that the work they produce is of a professional standard.
- Tutors do not set further targets or set homework consistently well so that learners can build on what they have learnt. As a consequence learners are not always aware of the progress that they are making. For example, on non-accredited courses, the progress of learners and their developing skills are not recorded in sufficient detail. Learners' targets often simply describe the content of the lesson.
- A small minority of tutors do not give learners work or tasks that are sufficiently difficult, or challenge them to do better and develop higher-level knowledge and skills beyond the qualification they are studying.

- Information, advice and guidance to learners require improvement. Learners do not always receive sufficiently good advice and guidance for them to consider their next steps in learning. In a minority of courses staff provide timely and accurate information to learners to enable them to make positive progression choices. Learners who embark on supporting teaching and learning in the classroom courses are kept up-to-date with job vacancies and consequently many succeed in gaining employment.
- Learners' English, for example using industry-related language and correct spelling, is not being successfully developed in all lessons. In a minority of lessons where mathematics is not part of the qualification tutors do not include or broaden learners' mathematical skills.
- Tutors do not use ICT consistently well to support learning. In a minority of lessons this results in learners losing interest in the subject. For example, learners in language lessons were not given sufficient opportunity to explore their target language through the use of a wide range of visual and audio media.
- Tutors do not promote equality or raise awareness of diversity sufficiently effectively. Tutors do not routinely use resources in lessons that enable learners to consider other cultures and explore the values and beliefs of modern Britain.

<b>Sport</b>  <b>19+ learning programmes</b> <b>Community learning</b>	Good
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**Teaching, learning and assessment in sport are good because:**

- learners make good progress and a high proportion complete their qualification, course learning outcomes and individual learning goals; many learners on accredited programmes progress to higher level qualifications and progress into employment locally, nationally and internationally
- tutors enable learners on accredited courses to develop important employability skills that are valuable within the sports, fitness and health industry; tutors support learners well to develop useful techniques and awareness of professional standards that enhance their readiness for the industry; for example, learners on sport coaching qualifications develop good preparation and contingency skills that are important when delivering coaching sessions to a diverse range of participants
- staff support learners well to maintain and develop good health through, for example, their improved mobility, flexibility, dexterity and confidence on non-accredited fitness, Pilates and yoga courses; many learners on these courses gain significant physiological and psychological advantages that help them in their day-to-day lives; these health related benefits support both the national and county council's agenda associated with improved healthy lifestyles
- tutors plan and deliver good lessons which enable learners to develop good practical skills and increase their understanding of, for example, routines and sequences used during keep fit sessions; learners typically take responsibility for their own learning and independent study
- well-qualified and experienced tutors provide good support for learners and set high expectations that challenge them and motivate them to learn
- most tutors provide good and detailed feedback to learners following assessment of their written work or practical performance; learners find this particularly helpful in identifying where they can improve and what they have done correctly
- tutors enable learners to develop good English skills on courses that lead to qualifications; for example, learners on personal training courses develop their use of industry-related terminology to a high standard.

### **Teaching, learning and assessment in sport are not yet outstanding because:**

- managers have not supported tutors sufficiently to develop meaningful ways of monitoring and recording learners' progress on non-accredited courses within the council's own provision; learners complete too much documentation that wastes their time in class and does not help them to recognise the progress that they are making
- staff do not always provide timely, accurate and updated information, advice and guidance at the start of courses so that all learners can be fully aware of the commitments of the course such as the costs involved and the demands on learners' time; learners are provided with useful progression information, advice and guidance towards the end of their course.

<b>Foundation English</b>  <b>19+ learning programmes</b> <b>Community learning</b>	Requires improvement
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### **Teaching, learning and assessment in Foundation English require improvement because:**

- the proportion of learners aged 16-18 that successfully complete their qualifications is low and success rates are low for the smaller proportion of learners studying at level 2
- too few tutors use information on learners' existing abilities to plan tasks and activities that meet the needs of all learners; as a result more able learners do not make sufficient progress and those with lower ability levels struggle to understand what to do to complete writing or listening tasks and make slow progress
- learning support assistants do not always support individual learners effectively; consequently learners do not always make rapid progress in improving their spelling and punctuation; the details of the additional support learners receive are not routinely recorded on lesson plans or used to identify specifically what learners need to do next to improve their English skills
- tutors do not routinely set personal, social or employment related targets with learners and so learners do not always have a clear idea as to their next steps; many tutors do not set short-term targets that challenge learners or are sufficiently clear; as a result learners do not always understand what they have got to do at the next lesson to progress more quickly
- a few tutors do not always correct errors on learners' work and in learning plans; they do not correct the use of verb tenses, spelling or grammar to help learners improve their written English; this means that learners do not always receive detailed feedback on how to improve their writing or the use of spelling patterns; tutors write positive comments on learners' work but do not tell learners how to improve their grammar, spelling or use of nouns
- the majority of tutors do not use technology to contribute to learning in the classroom; therefore learners do not benefit from other ways to learn; they do not use the internet to research topics of interest and write creatively on their findings
- in a minority of sessions tutors use a wide range of resources and presentations that interest and motivate learners
- most tutors do not explore equality and diversity effectively in lessons; consequently, learners do not have the opportunity to develop a broader understanding of people from different backgrounds through, for example, researching poetry or writing from different cultures.

### **In Foundation English the provider has the following strengths:**

- where learning is most effective, tutors use a good range of strategies to check what learners know and understand and help them acquire the knowledge and skills needed to prepare them for their examinations; in these sessions learners enjoy taking part in lively and engaging discussions
- tutors use a good range of resources that motivate and interest learners; as a result learners enjoy taking part in lively and engaging discussions that improve their speaking skills.

### **Independent living and leisure skills**

**19+ learning programmes**  
**Community learning**

Requires improvement

### **Teaching learning and assessment in independent living and leisure skills require improvement because:**

- the proportion of learners who successfully complete individual learning programmes has declined marginally over a three-year period; the progression of learners between courses and onto higher level courses is too low; not enough learners benefit from securing supported employment
- tutors on a minority of independent living courses limit learning to classroom activities; as a result learners are not gaining the skills that they need to become more independent members of their community; the majority of learners develop the confidence and competence to travel independently
- tutors' initial and ongoing assessment of learners' needs requires improvement to help learners to identify their next steps in learning; in a minority of courses information from the initial assessment of learners' skills is not shared between different tutors; as a result targets for a few learners are not consistent; learners repeat assessments and duplicate work
- in a minority of sessions tutors use information from assessments to help learners to concentrate effectively on targets specific to them; this helps learners acquire new skills and confidence
- individual learning plans require improvement because they vary too much in quality and detail; on too few plans on the independent living programme tutors do not identify the wide range of skills needed for learners to improve their domestic skills such as ironing, cleaning and the use of washing machines in sufficient detail
- too many tutors do not check what skills learners need to practise in future sessions; consequently learners make slower progress than expected; in a minority of sessions tutors use a good range of learning activities that reinforce learning and develop learners' team-work skills effectively
- tutors' written feedback is not sufficiently clear so that learners can learn from their mistakes; learning support assistants do not identify and record the actual help they give to learners; this makes it difficult to measure the actual progress learners make independently without support
- learners have limited opportunities to develop and reinforce their emerging reading and writing skills in real life situations which limits their understanding as to how to use these skills in practical settings
- tutors do not plan routinely to develop mathematical skills within sessions, to develop fully learners' practical skills in, for example, the preparation of food.

### **In independent living and leisure skills the provider has the following strengths:**

- the majority of learners develop the skills and confidence that support them well in work experience placements; learners benefit from work placements that provide them with good experience of work in busy food retail stores
- most tutors use their expertise well to plan meaningful learning; learners generally gain confidence and social and team-work skills that are useful for their future employment prospects
- tutors use good resources that help learners understand their rights and responsibilities and how to safeguard themselves; the development of pictorial prompt sheets enables learners to understand better how to recognise abuse and report concerns to those in authority should they have any.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

Inadequate

- Leaders and managers at all levels have failed to maintain the strengths or tackle all of the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has deteriorated and now requires improvement. Classroom-based success rates have declined to below the national rates in too many subject areas and the outstanding care, guidance and support identified at the last inspection now require improvement.
- Elected members and senior officers have insufficient oversight of the performance of the service. At the last inspection governance arrangements did not provide sufficient challenge to the service on its performance; this remains the case. The effectiveness of new governance arrangements is untested. Managers do not provide senior officers or elected members with timely or sufficiently detailed information on the performance of the service so that they can support the improvements needed.
- Managers fail to maintain or improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. The observation programme of teaching, learning and assessment requires improvement. Observers are over-generous in the grades they award tutors. Records of observations focus too much on teaching rather than the progress of learners and their learning. The follow-up of actions to improve tutors' performance is not prompt or rigorous.
- Managers are too slow in tackling other weaknesses. Arrangements to identify the destination of learners are not widespread enough and too few learners move on to positive destinations. Managers report high levels of success for learners on non-accredited learning programmes; however, the recording of progress and achievement is insufficiently reliable to verify the data.
- Managers do not yet have in place rigorous monitoring arrangements for subcontracted providers. Quality monitoring visits by managers have been too infrequent and these fail to review all areas of the performance of subcontractors. New, well-considered arrangements to monitor the quality of subcontracted provision are at the early stages of implementation but it is too early to judge how effective they are.
- Managers are not successful in implementing the study programme. Outcomes for 16-18 year olds are low. While the retention of learners is good, too few progress to employment or further learning. Too much teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. A lack of rigour in initial assessment results in a few learners starting courses at the wrong level. The availability of work experience opportunities is not widespread enough.
- Managers are over-generous in their self-assessment of how well the service is performing. The self-assessment report (SAR) is inaccurate. Managers are over-optimistic in their judgements on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and leadership and management. The SAR

does not account sufficiently for the decline in the performance of the service. Senior managers do not scrutinise the SAR sufficiently.

- Managers do not promote equality and diversity well enough. They have not succeeded in ensuring that tutors are sufficiently equipped and confident to promote equality and diversity in the classroom. Achievement gaps between different groups of learners, while identified, have not been closed. However, close working with children's centres, subcontractors, the youth offending service and other partners has resulted in the service engaging over twice as many learners from disadvantaged communities in learning. Those from rural communities engage well.
- Managers consider local and national needs well when planning provision, including the priorities of funding bodies, the local enterprise partnership and the county council. They coordinate provision well with other providers to ensure that duplication and competition are avoided. The extension of the study programme is based on good use of data and local intelligence. Managers have extended the curriculum well in close liaison with employers. For example, they deliver apprenticeships in business administration, finance and information technology with the National Health Service. Links with employers have not brought about enough work experience for learners on study programmes.
- Many operational managers are new in post and are highly committed to achieving the improvements needed. They articulate the priorities of the service well. Most have grasped quickly what needs to be done to improve performance in their area of responsibility.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good. All staff are trained using local safeguarding board approved courses. Recruitment and selection arrangements have been reviewed and are robust. Staff demonstrate good awareness of safeguarding policy and procedure and inspectors saw good examples of policies leading to sound practice to protect learners. Where tutors have serious concerns about learners' welfare these are escalated appropriately. Learning takes place in safe environments.



## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

### NCC Adult Education Services

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
<b>Sport</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Foundation English</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Independent living and leisure skills</b>	<b>3</b>

## Provider details

<b>Type of provider</b>	Local authority							
<b>Age range of learners</b>	16+							
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	13,266							
<b>Principal</b>	Ms Jennifer Holland							
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	November 2011							
<b>Website address</b>	www.adulteducation.norfolk.gov.uk							
<b>Provider information at the time of the inspection</b>								
<b>Main course or learning programme level</b>	<b>Level 1 or below</b>		<b>Level 2</b>		<b>Level 3</b>		<b>Level 4 and above</b>	
<b>Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)</b>	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	38	858	36	641	33	461	0	33
<b>Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>		<b>Advanced</b>		<b>Higher</b>			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	23	21	9	20	0	8		
<b>Number of traineeships</b>	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
<b>Number of learners aged 14-16</b>	N/A							
<b>Full-time</b>	N/A							
<b>Part-time</b>	N/A							
<b>Number of community learners</b>	3,925							
<b>Number of employability learners</b>	N/A							
<b>Funding received from</b>	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
<b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All Trades Training</li> <li>▪ Construction Training Specialists Limited</li> <li>▪ Great Yarmouth Schools and Business Partnership (Nexus) Limited</li> <li>▪ Norfolk County Football Association</li> <li>▪ Norfolk Training Services Limited</li> <li>▪ Norwich City Football Club Community Sports Foundation</li> <li>▪ St Edmund’s Society.</li> </ul>							

## Contextual information

Norfolk County Council Adult Education Service is part of the council's community and environmental services. The service directly provides learning at over 300 locations across the county and through seven subcontracted providers. Norfolk is a large county with a population of approximately 865,300. It is a county of contrasts that includes market towns, a large rural and seasonal economy, seaside towns such as Great Yarmouth, and the city of Norwich. Around 5.5% of residents live in areas that are classified as within the 10% most deprived areas of the country. The average weekly pay in the county of £467.30 is well below the regional average of £531.00 per week. A higher proportion of those of working age in Norfolk have no qualifications compared to the east of England average.

## Information about this inspection

**Lead inspector**

Jon Bowman HMI

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

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012)

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