

Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council

Local authority

Inspection dates		19–22 May 2015
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:

- community learners, including those on English and mathematics courses, develop good, and sometimes better, skills helping them at home, at work and in their efforts to gain a job
- a high proportion of apprentices successfully gain their qualifications, obtain permanent jobs and develop skills their supervisors value highly
- teaching and assessor staff are highly motivating with good subject knowledge and experience that result in learners benefitting from good or better teaching, learning and assessment
- support for learners and apprentices is particularly good and effectively reduces barriers to learning and employment
- provision is well planned to meet learners', employers' and community priorities with excellent partnership working to improve learners' experiences
- subcontracting arrangements are competently managed and highly effective in ensuring the most vulnerable learners receive good provision.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- not all learners and apprentices, especially those who are most able, develop higher-level written communication skills, or knowledge, as they are not given learning activities that challenge them sufficiently
- equality and diversity are not sufficiently promoted with learners and apprentices to enable them to demonstrate a clear understanding of complex issues
- governance arrangements do not give enough support and challenge to improve all aspects of performance
- apprentices in administration, health and social care, and management are not progressing fast enough.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Develop tutors' skills to ensure that teaching takes sufficient account of learners and apprentices' starting points so that learners and apprentices make progress beyond the requirements of their qualifications and develop high levels of skills and knowledge. Tutors and assessors should use the results of initial assessment more diligently to plan learning that better meets individual needs. Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC) should develop more resources, including e-learning resources, to ensure all learners can access a wider range of materials and activities that are more challenging.
- Raise learners' and apprentices' understanding of equality and diversity so that they can demonstrate a clear understanding of complex issues by improving the use of existing resources, including online resources and e-learning. Develop tutors' confidence to promote equality actively and to explore the diversity of modern Britain with learners and apprentices. Managers and staff should use schemes of work more proactively to plan equality and diversity activities throughout the curricula.
- Ensure the governing body has membership that matches the revised strategic direction of the service. Provide governors with a wide range of performance data, including information on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, to enable robust challenge and appropriate support for continuous improvement of learners' and apprentices' experience.
- Increase the proportion of apprentices who successfully complete their programme within planned timescales through closer monitoring and timely intervention, and clearer lines of management responsibility so that all staff fully understand what is required of them. DMBC should develop more systems of rigorous oversight so that strategic leaders can identify quickly any emerging operational issues.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- DMBC provides a range of community learning programmes. The learners on these programmes represent around three quarters of all provision. Around half of this is delivered, through subcontracting arrangements, by a range of voluntary and community providers that specialise in working with vulnerable learners. The service also delivers apprenticeships at intermediate level in health, public services and care as well as in child development and well-being. A small number are on advanced-level management programmes. The largest numbers of apprentices are on business administration programmes at intermediate and advanced levels. A very small group of learners are on classroom-based courses in the community completing functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics. Three trainees are on the very new traineeship programme.
- Almost all community learners who start courses stay until the end of their programme. A particularly high proportion of them are successful in achieving their group and personal goals as measured by DMBC's internal monitoring system.
- All learners across the provision develop good skills and attitudes to enable them to complete tasks well and work as very effective team members. For example, learners in parenting classes in the local prison learn excellent parenting strategies to use with their children following their release from prison. For many, the experience is completely life changing, giving them real impetus to reform and become free from drugs.
- Learners on education and training courses are well able to deliver interesting and engaging teaching activities as part of their micro-teaching assignment. Learners with learning difficulties

and/or disabilities gain high levels of confidence that enable them to shop for cosmetics and personal-care products.

- Care apprentices communicate confidently with hearing impaired clients, making skilful use of the sign language they learn in the classroom. Business administration apprentices very competently carry out reception and back-office work. Management apprentices apply their knowledge with their teams for improved team working. Trainees make good progress to apprenticeship programmes.
- Overall success rates over the last three years for all apprentices are considerably above those gained by similar apprentices around the country and are outstanding. Their success in gaining qualifications within planned timescales is good overall but with pockets of underachievement.
- Overall achievement of qualifications by apprentices on administration programmes is good. However, their achievements within planned timescales require improvement. Current apprentices on management and health, public services and care provision are making slow progress towards achieving their apprenticeship qualifications.
- A high percentage of learners, especially in community provision, progress from one course to another and develop more skills and confidence as a result. An appropriate number of apprentices in business administration programmes progress from intermediate to advanced level. A high proportion of apprentices gain sustainable employment.
- Strategic managers work extremely effectively with their Local Enterprise Partnership, jobcentres and employers to develop provision across the region. Case studies and exit interviews show a reasonable number of learners gain jobs or go on to further training. However, managers recognise that the processes to record destinations do not yet provide a fully accurate picture of all learners' progressions.
- Learners develop good English and mathematical skills that they apply appropriately to workplace problems and to helping their children to read, spell and complete mathematics homework.
- There are very few achievement gaps in the provision. Where there were, such as the low success rates in functional English and mathematics for community learners, actions have been very effective in narrowing them.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, reflecting the good and improving skills, achievement and success rates for learners and apprentices across the provision at DMBC.
- Tutors and assessors have high expectations of their learners and inspire them to succeed. Many learners are taking part in adult and family learning for the first time and have previously had bad experiences at school and a negative view of education for themselves and their children. Staff provide good role models with 'can do' attitudes that enthuse learners and apprentices. Many learners have low aspirations and very low self-confidence. Staff help them to believe in themselves and in their ability to do more than they thought possible.
- However, tutors and assessors do not always challenge the more able learners and apprentices to achieve at a higher level or to tackle more complex problems in lessons.
- Tutors and assessors provide good support for learners and apprentices. Learners, many with multiple barriers to learning, develop skills and knowledge, achieve their learning goals and qualifications, and progress into employment or further learning. Learners new to adult and family learning programmes develop the confidence to extend their learning and broaden their employment opportunities. Learners in offender institutions develop very good parenting skills and a good understanding of the importance of play-work and how to interact with their children and partners appropriately and, as a result, reduce re-offending rates and improve relationships with their partners and children.
- Tutors plan most adult and community learning sessions skilfully to meet the individual needs of learners. In lessons, learners quickly develop their knowledge and understanding. In one lesson,

learners quickly understood the nutritional content of popular dishes and were able to identify ways to make dishes healthier, for example by adding vegetables to boiled rice as an accompaniment to a curry dish.

- Programmes for a minority of advanced apprentices are not planned sufficiently to meet their individual needs or to enable them to achieve within the planned timescale. Too frequently apprentices do not take external tests until the end of their programme and this delays achievement.
- Reviews of learners' progress are thorough and regular. Learners complete a comprehensive and easy to use learner-journey booklet in which they record the results from initial assessment, together with personal goals and learning aims. Learners and tutors record in detail the progress learners make towards achieving these goals and aims, and frequent monitoring reviews motivate learners to continue in learning. Processes to recognise and record progress and achievement of learning goals are good. Assessment for external qualifications meets the requirements of awarding organisations.
- Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities complete extensive initial assessments, which clearly identify their barriers to learning and their starting points in English, mathematics, and personal and social skills. Learners and tutors build on these starting points and help learners develop coping strategies. For example, learners are encouraged to use deep-breathing techniques to help them overcome anxiety in stressful situations.
- Learners and apprentices receive very good oral feedback on their progress and what they need to do to improve. However, the written feedback learners and apprentices receive is not always sufficiently detailed or thorough to enable them to identify what they have done successfully and what they need to improve so they can reflect on the feedback when not in lessons or when an assessor is not present.
- Tutors plan English and mathematics lessons carefully to meet the individual needs of learners. For example, in one lesson learners developed a good understanding of different ways to check mathematical calculations through discussion and in an English lesson they quickly developed a good understanding of the use of punctuation. However, across programmes, tutors, assessors and trainers do not always correct learners' or apprentices' spelling, punctuation and grammatical errors.
- Information, advice and guidance are good. Learners and apprentices receive detailed information about learning programmes and use this to make informed decisions about learning programmes that best meet their needs. Learners take part in taster sessions to give them a clearer understanding of course content. For example, in one taster session learners developed knowledge, understanding and skills in making exfoliators and used these to carry out basic hand and upper arm massage. Learners are encouraged to progress onto the full course and other related courses such as nail art and aromatherapy.
- Learners have high levels of respect for each other, their tutors, assessors and trainers and they work well together in lessons. However, sessions do not fully explore learners and apprentices' understanding of equality and diversity. Tutors do not always place sufficient emphasis on aspects such as gender and disability to prepare learners to deal with all the social experiences they will encounter in their social and working lives. For example, in a health and safety lesson the tutor did not explore learners' understanding of how commercial premises could meet the needs of disabled customers.

Foundation English and mathematics

19+ learning programmes Community learning

Good

Teaching, learning and assessment in foundation English and mathematics are good because:

- they lead to learners making good progress in English and mathematics and in gaining personal and employability skills that they can apply to home life, to work and in their efforts to get a job
- learners receive very good support from their tutors, creating a really positive learning environment in which learners can overcome previous negative experiences of learning English and mathematics; for example, in a revision lesson in mathematics the tutor gently encouraged learners through using humour and cajoling them to tackle successfully the more difficult questions they had previously avoided
- tutors carefully choose challenging activities that meet learners' everyday interests and effectively clarify and reinforce their understanding; for example, in an English class of young mothers the tutor explained the use of open and closed questions through funny examples of conversations with children
- learners benefit from good individual target-setting which tutors use very effectively to monitor learners' progress and support achievement; tutors make good use of the results of initial assessment to place learners at the correct level and learners agree clear and helpful individual targets which are regularly reviewed to guide their study, enhance their progress and challenge them to achieve their potential
- tutors give learners good, informative oral feedback that helps them to understand the key topics and consolidates their learning; for example, in a revision lesson the tutor questioned the learners about where and why the apostrophe should be used in a piece of their own text, helping them to provide their own answers rather than expecting the tutor to give an explanation
- learners on accredited courses benefit from good preparation for both English and mathematics examinations; tutors skilfully embed into lesson activities what learners need to know to succeed in their examinations and systematically give learners detailed guidance on how to improve their performance.

Teaching, learning and assessment in foundation English and mathematics are not yet outstanding because:

- tutors' written feedback on a minority of learners' work, including the correction of spelling, punctuation and grammar, is not rigorous or detailed enough to drive improvements
- tutors do not consistently use opportunities to support learners' understanding of diversity in order to prepare them for life in modern Britain; for example, in English lessons where tutors and learners are free to choose any topic for debate, the tutors do not take the opportunity to explore topical diversity issues.

Administration**Traineeships
Apprenticeships****Good****Teaching, learning and assessment in administration are good because:**

- they lead to overall success rates for apprentices that are good, improving and considerably above the national rate
- assessors encourage and inspire apprentices and trainees to develop and apply good work-related, personal, communication and social skills; apprentices gain confidence, enjoy their learning and produce a good standard of work
- apprentices show good motivation to learn; they make good contributions and participate in planning their programmes and in identifying the most suitable optional modules to match their job roles and requirements
- assessors and apprentices' line managers create a respectful and professional environment and are good role models; they use their high-quality skills and expertise to tailor training and additional support to meet the needs of apprentices and to help them fulfil their job roles to a good professional standard
- apprentices value their high-quality workplace settings; they demonstrate good information technology skills and benefit greatly from the use of e-portfolios, e-learning packages, peer support and coaching in the contact centre
- assessment is thorough, regular and timely; assessors and apprentices' line managers provide good feedback that helps apprentices to improve their skills and standard of work
- apprentices and trainees improve their mathematical skills in daily tasks and activities; for example, trainees calculate and analyse their working hours and identify financial costs through collating information from lunch and travel receipts and apprentices regularly demonstrate mathematical accuracy and competence when completing spreadsheets and producing accounts
- assessors and apprentices' line managers provide outstanding care, advice, guidance and support which motivate apprentices to succeed and make good progress; a new traineeship initiative is working appropriately and has enabled trainees to make successful transitions to apprenticeship programmes
- apprentices demonstrate good practice in dealing with confidential data and have a good understanding of safeguarding and cyber-security; they apply this knowledge and understanding successfully when dealing with health and social services clients and when responding to requests made through social media sites.

Teaching, learning and assessment in administration are not yet outstanding because:

- too often assessors do not encourage apprentices to exceed targets or to achieve their potential and become fully independent learners
- assessors do not correct apprentices' written English consistently or comprehensively; standards are not set high enough to enable apprentices to develop their written English skills to a higher standard.

The effectiveness of leadership and management**Good**

- Leaders and managers have a highly ambitious vision and strategy to develop the service. Following consultation, the apprenticeship and adult-learning provisions were combined into the Regeneration and Environment Directorate to provide a stronger and integrated focus on the skills and enterprise agenda. Effective management of the restructuring has ensured there has been no adverse impact on learners. Although at an early stage, the new structure is already showing positive gains in sharing of practice and resources.
- Subcontractor management is particularly strong. The commissioning process is very thorough. Performance monitoring is rigorous with subcontractors frequently measured against a wide range of key performance indicators. Subcontractors receive very good support at monthly meetings where they share good practice across the service.
- Management of the community curriculum is strong, with a team of committed and knowledgeable staff who have an excellent understanding of the provision. Despite good teaching, learning and assessment, and high success rates on the apprenticeship programme, management of this provision requires further improvement. Staff are not sufficiently clear about roles and responsibilities and there is not enough management oversight to ensure that all apprentices complete their programme by the planned end date.
- Governance arrangements do not provide sufficient challenge to the service on its performance. Managers recognise this, and a revised approach has been designed, although it has not yet been implemented. The performance reports focus too much on participation of different groups and do not sufficiently cover learners' progress and outcomes or the quality of the teaching, learning and assessment.
- Good use is made of data to measure frequently the performance of provision against challenging targets, to risk assess the rate of progress being made, and to identify and implement improvements where necessary. However, managers do not yet systematically collect or analyse the progression and destination data of learners across all of the provision.
- The observation of teaching, learning and assessment in adult and community learning is good, leading to improvements with learners benefitting from predominantly good or better lessons. Managers use annual unannounced observations for all full-time, fractional and subcontracted tutors, supplemented by other activities such as peer observation. Tutors graded inadequate or requiring improvement receive swift, targeted support and close monitoring of improvement. The observation process for the apprenticeship provision is less developed, with plans to standardise to the adult and community model in the next academic year.
- Observation reports are detailed and accurately identify the need for tutors to better develop learners' understanding of equality and diversity as well as English and mathematics during lessons. All observations lead to personal development plans. Although previously many observation records focused too heavily on teaching, the more recent observations now focus appropriately on learning.
- Staff are very well qualified with most holding degree- or other comparable-level qualifications. Staff participate in a wide range of additional continuing professional development activities related to their particular job roles. DMBC and subcontractor tutors have frequent opportunities to reflect on their practice and to share good practice to aid their personal and professional development.
- The self-assessment process is good, being very inclusive, led by curriculum teams and fully informed by learner views. The self-assessment report is accurate in its judgements about the quality of provision. However, it does not clearly state the strengths and areas for improvement. Detailed quality improvement plans focus sharply on five key objectives for continued quality improvement. Staff frequently update the plans with progress against risk-rated objectives. Good use of learners' views informs quality improvement activities and supports self-assessment.

- Actions to improve the retention on functional skills courses during 2013/14 have been effective. The curriculum structure has been skilfully redesigned to include an initial six-week non-accredited course which is appropriately used to raise expectations, clarify starting points and embed the development of personal, social and employability skills. Where appropriate, this leads on to an accredited course. Retention during the current year is much improved. A strategy for the broader development of functional skills across all provision is in place, although a detailed action plan for its implementation is still work in progress.
- DMBC is outstanding at meeting local skills needs. It has very strong representation on a wide variety of local, regional and national boards and the Local Enterprise Partnership skills group. These links, together with very good local demographic, economic and business data, are used particularly successfully to inform the adult, family and community learning development strategy. Partnership working is a particular strength in deprived communities' provision where specialist subcontractors are used very effectively to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged residents in Doncaster. Very good use is made of local community venues mostly within deprived communities to provide a cost-efficient service.
- Managers act very effectively to widen participation and target those residents with the greatest need. Staff training in equality and diversity is good as are the resources available for use by tutors. Despite this, not all tutors and assessors promote diversity well enough in lessons to ensure that learners and apprentices have a sufficiently good understanding of diversity and tolerance across different groups in society. This remains a frequent issue arising from the observations of teaching and learning. Zero tolerance for any form of harassment or bullying is a feature of the expectations agreed between learners and staff during course induction. Staff investigate any incidents thoroughly and they are resolved competently.
- The service's safeguarding of learners is good. Managers and tutors pay close attention to providing safe and healthy learning environments. Learners know how to keep themselves safe and how to report any concerns. Managers ensure that all tutors and support staff, including those in subcontractors, have appropriate clearances to work with children and vulnerable adults and are well trained and supported. Mandatory safeguarding training is supplemented by additional training relevant to each person's job role. Learners receive good relevant information to support their understanding of keeping safe when using the internet and social media. Staff team meetings are used very effectively to inform and explore issues around radicalisation and the 'Prevent agenda' with further training planned for the summer. The management of health and safety is good.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)


Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council

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	N/A	2	2	2	N/A	2
Outcomes for learners	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	2	2	N/A	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	2	2	N/A	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	N/A	N/A	N/A	2	2	3	N/A	2

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

Provider details

Type of provider	Local authority							
Age range of learners	16+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	2,459							
Principal/CEO	Mrs Ruth Brook							
Date of previous inspection	October 2012							
Website address	www.Doncaster.gov.uk							
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+
	N/A	1,475	N/A	89	N/A	7	N/A	N/A
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	41	44	6	57	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	3		N/A		3			
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Full-time	N/A							
Part-time	N/A							
Number of community learners	1,444							
Number of employability learners	22							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Changing Lives ■ DARTS Doncaster Community Arts ■ Dial Doncaster ■ Doncaster Culture and Leisure Trust ■ Doncaster CVS ■ Doncaster Ethnic Minority Regeneration Partnership ■ Doncaster Mind ■ Doncaster West Development Trust ■ Edlington Community Organisation ■ Higher Rhythm Ltd ■ International Women's Association Doncaster ■ North Doncaster Development Trust 							

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- Proper Job Theatre Company and CAST
 - Swinton Lock Activity Centre
 - The Cascade Foundation
 - The Prince's Trust
 - Thornemoor Working Group
 - Wayne Sables Project
 - Workers' Educational Association

Contextual information

Doncaster is the largest metropolitan district in the country by geographical area. It ranks as the 41st most deprived district in the 2007 indices of deprivation. The population of Doncaster is currently 290,400 and increasing. The number of pupils attaining five GCSEs at A* to C, including English and mathematics, is slightly below the national average. The life expectancy for both men and women is below the national average. The qualification levels of working-age people in Doncaster are also below the national and regional averages. More people are out of work and claiming Job-Seekers Allowance in Doncaster compared to the national average.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

June Cramman HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the Head of Adult, Family and Community Learning Manager as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all 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

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