

The Wiltshire Council

Local authority

Inspection dates

18–21 October 2016

Overall effectiveness		Inadequate	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Inadequate	Adult learning programmes	Inadequate
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Inadequate	Apprenticeships	Inadequate
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement		
Outcomes for learners	Inadequate		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Good	

Summary of key findings

This is an inadequate provider

- Service managers have not managed the provision well enough to prevent the quality deteriorating since the previous inspection. Managers are not sufficiently aware of, or taking effective action to improve, the ineffective teaching and learning.
- Service managers do not have sufficient skills or knowledge of apprenticeships to plan high-quality apprenticeship programmes or set high standards for assessors. The apprenticeship programme has been implemented poorly.
- Managers do not plan teaching and learning on adult or apprenticeship programmes well enough to ensure that learners develop the right skills and knowledge or prepare for their next steps.
- Managers do not ensure that apprentices receive enough off-the-job training which helps them develop skills and knowledge relevant to their sector.
- Managers do not use the wealth of data and information that is available to fully and accurately evaluate learners' achievements.
- Staff do not monitor the progress of learners sufficiently well or set them targets which lead to them developing new skills or knowledge.
- The proportion of learners progressing to higher-level courses, apprenticeships or employment is low.
- Managers do not set their staff clear performance targets or hold them to account sufficiently for the quality of their work.

The provider has the following strengths

- Staff work effectively with schools and children's centres across Wiltshire to ensure that adult learners can take their first steps back into learning.
- Managers provide community and family learning in locations with the greatest proportion of disadvantaged or deprived learners.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Wiltshire is a single unitary authority formed in 2009. The county is predominantly rural and its population is around 486,000. Wiltshire industry is dominated by small and micro-businesses.
- Approximately two thirds of Wiltshire's population are of working age, which is slightly lower than the average for Great Britain. A slightly higher proportion of this group is economically active compared to the south-west region and nationally. Just under half of the population of Wiltshire live in rural settlements of fewer than 5,000 people.
- Learning in Wiltshire is the operating name of Wiltshire Council's adult learning service, although this also includes apprenticeships for learners aged over 16. It provides community and family learning in a range of children's centres, schools and community venues across the county and just across the border into Hampshire. The main aim of Learning in Wiltshire's family learning programmes is to encourage adults back into learning, or to help adults develop skills which help them gain employment. Learning in Wiltshire has increased the number of learners on apprenticeship programmes rapidly over the last three years in response to national and regional priorities.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the strategic planning of community and family learning programmes and design a curriculum which provides clear progression routes which build learners' skills and confidence.
- Provide effective and well-informed leadership which sets and maintains high standards in apprenticeships.
- Design and implement action plans which include clear targets and timescales that rapidly improve the quality of courses; hold managers and staff closely to account if improvement is not achieved.
- Ensure that assessors train apprentices in new skills and knowledge, and monitor the progress that apprentices make towards achieving their qualifications more rigorously.
- Ensure that learners, employers and other stakeholders all understand what skills and knowledge the learners will gain from their course or apprenticeship, and how these will enable them to progress to further training, education and employment, and will improve their own and their family's quality of life.
- Analyse the data available to service managers to produce accurate evaluations of the effectiveness of courses and the progress learners are making.
- Assess learners' starting points accurately and then set work that ensures that each learner achieves their goals and full potential.
- Set learners clear targets which ensure that they make rapid progress towards achieving their qualifications, long-term employment or study goals.
- Provide learners with impartial, constructive and informed advice and guidance about their future options for learning, training and employment.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Inadequate

- Since the previous inspection, council leaders have reorganised the management of Learning in Wiltshire twice. While responsibilities for the delivery of community and family learning and apprenticeships are now clear, those in management positions have not sufficiently held teaching staff to account for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment or outcomes for learners.
- Learning in Wiltshire managers have not acted swiftly enough to identify the decline in the quality of the programmes offered or put prompt interventions in place to raise standards. They do not set clear expectations or standards for the quality of provision or monitor whether these are being achieved. As a result, too few learners improve their future prospects.
- Too many learners attend introductory taster courses but do not then move beyond these into more formal learning because the range of courses is too narrow and does not provide follow-on options. Staff have developed strong partnerships with schools, nurseries and community groups across Wiltshire to identify what learning would best help their adult and family learners, including parents of schoolchildren, but managers are not using this information to plan a range of appropriate courses.
- Managers implemented the programme of apprenticeships quickly, but did not have the right experience, knowledge or understanding to do this well. Apprenticeships are poorly planned and managed. Apprentices do not receive the off-the-job training they need to make good progress, and too many apprentices do not complete their apprenticeship within planned timescales. Employers are not fully involved in planning apprentices' training and, in a minority of cases, employers do not give their apprentices sufficient time to study for their qualifications.
- Service managers do not use the wealth of available information and data well enough to identify the progress learners are making, or why certain groups of learners achieve less well than others.
- Managers are unable to identify the benefits that learners gain from their courses because they do not know whether the large majority of learners have made progress onto further learning, training or employment. They do not use the information they do have about learners' progress well to modify or plan for courses for the future.
- Managers do not evaluate the quality of adult learning or apprenticeships well enough. They do not consider all evidence available to inform their views of relative strengths and weaknesses. Consequently, managers' plans to make improvements do not cover all the key areas that require immediate and rapid improvement to improve learners' experiences, outcomes and life chances.
- Managers have responded quickly to provide learning programmes to help Syrian refugees recently relocated to the county. They are working well in partnership with local providers to develop English language provision for refugees to support their integration into local communities.

The governance of the provider

- The provider has only recently established arrangements for external scrutiny of its provision. The council has assembled a new, experienced and committed governing panel to support Learning in Wiltshire managers to improve provision. This new team was appointed by the council on the basis that its members had a breadth of relevant knowledge and expertise to make the necessary improvements, but it is too early for them to have had sufficient influence or impact on the quality of provision.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding incidents, including bullying and harassment, are rare; such matters are appropriately investigated and recorded by the designated safeguarding officer.
- Managers and employers set high expectations for health and safety and welfare in the workplace, which learners understand and follow. Apprentices receive good guidance and understand how to protect themselves when working online. Staff have been trained appropriately in how to protect their learners from radicalisation and extremism, and they carry out their duties under the 'Prevent' duty well.
- Managers make appropriate checks on the suitability of staff when recruiting them. Long-serving members of staff have all had the necessary checks on their suitability to work with children and vulnerable adults.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Inadequate

- Managers, teachers and assessors do not plan lessons, courses or apprenticeships well enough to ensure that learners can achieve their full potential or develop their knowledge and skills beyond basic qualification requirements. Learners make slow progress from their starting points; very few adult learners are prepared well for further learning, nor do they develop the skills they need to find employment.
- Staff do not monitor the progress of learners well enough to ensure that they make progress at the right pace, or that apprentices receive sufficient teaching to achieve their qualifications in the time they are allocated. This contributes to the slow progress made by learners.
- Teachers and assessors do not set clear targets for learners to help them improve their skills, knowledge or understanding. They do not monitor learners' achievement of targets closely enough to ensure that learners are making the right level of progress, including improving their English and mathematics skills. Assessors' and teachers' written feedback to learners is not always detailed enough to help learners improve their work.
- Staff do not help learners understand the diversity of British society or promote fundamental British values well. As a result, learners' readiness for life in modern Britain is not enhanced significantly by their education or training.
- Teachers use resources well to enhance learning and make lessons interesting for adult learners. Learners who are parents use phonic programmes on laptops so that they work independently at home with their children and practise and develop their own skills. On the small number of courses where teachers do have high expectations and aspirations,

learners attend regularly, complete homework and work well together to contribute to discussions.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

- Learners are not consistently developing relevant work- or life-appropriate skills. Too many courses for adult learners are not designed to develop the skills that they need to progress onto further courses or to improve their confidence to secure employment. Apprentices aged 24 and over are not developing new skills which will enhance their careers. A majority of apprentices in all sectors of employment do not meet deadlines for completing work.
- Information, advice and guidance require improvement. Most apprentices are given the guidance they need to fully understand the benefits of their apprenticeship, but a small group of apprentices working in early years educational settings have not been told about the requirements to complete English and mathematics qualifications. Adult learners do not receive enough information about how their course prepares them for further education or employment.
- Adult learners' attendance requires improvement. Their attendance at lessons is low in the southern part of Wiltshire, although slightly higher on courses in the centre and north of the county. The vast majority of apprentices routinely attend their frequent meetings with assessors; very few cancel.
- Learners mostly take part enthusiastically in lessons; they enjoy the activities and resources that teachers and assessors provide for them. The provider has created a peer support group which a small but growing number of apprentices benefit from. Adult learners make good use of information and learning technologies in lessons.
- Newly employed apprentices at Wiltshire County Hall quickly develop the confidence and knowledge required to do their job. They have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities at work and take advantage of the opportunities the council provides for extra training to gain additional knowledge and skills.
- Learners feel safe and are safe. They have confidence in the provider's arrangements for keeping them safe. Apprentices work safely in the workplace and adult learners attending lessons in schools and children's centres respect the safety requirements of these settings. Learners know how to report concerns about safety, and those on apprenticeships receive a useful induction on safeguarding, including how to stay safe online.
- Learners are highly respectful of each other. Adults from a wide range of backgrounds work well together and apprentices develop the respect and tolerance that they need to fulfil customer service roles.

Outcomes for learners

Inadequate

- Most adult learners and apprentices are making slow progress towards their qualifications or learning aims. Learners on community and family courses do not develop the skills they need to progress to further education or employment and too many apprentices who are able are not supported to develop their skills above the minimum required to pass their qualifications.

- Too many learners do not complete their qualifications or apprenticeships in the time they are allocated or go on to gain qualifications after completing introductory courses. A low proportion of adult learners on vocational certificates and diplomas who completed in 2014/15 achieved well.
- Although a high proportion of apprentices ultimately completed their qualifications in 2014/15, too many took too long to do so. Data produced by the provider for 2015/16 shows that the proportion of apprentices completing their apprenticeships successfully has declined and is low. The proportion of apprentices who completed in the planned timescale has improved but is still low. A small number of apprentices are developing their English and mathematics skills well by working towards functional skills qualifications which are above the minimum level required by their apprenticeship.
- Tutors and managers do not measure the achievement of learners on short community and family courses well enough. They do not evaluate effectively what skills and knowledge learners have gained which could help them develop further and progress to higher-level courses or into employment.
- The proportion of learners progressing to higher-level courses, employment or higher-level apprenticeships is low.
- Male learners and learners with difficulties or disabilities achieve their qualifications at a lower rate than female learners or learners without difficulties and disabilities. This gap in achievement has not been identified by managers and they have not taken effective actions to reduce it.
- Too few adult learners progress from introductory English, mathematics and language courses to ones in which they can gain qualifications in these subjects. The proportion of community and family learners passing their level 1 and 2 English functional skills improved in 2015/16, but the number following these courses has significantly decreased.

Types of provision

Adult learning programmes

Inadequate

- Learning in Wiltshire offers community and family learning in locations across the county. At the time of inspection, 104 learners were enrolled, and the provider expects this to rise to approximately 1,200 over the duration of the year in line with previous years. The large majority of learners are on short, non-accredited courses, with a very small number on level 2 English courses or vocational level 3 courses.
- Too many community and family learners make slow progress in developing new skills. In lessons, learners frequently work at a too relaxed or easy pace and not enough new learning takes place. Teachers plan activities which keep learners busy but do not develop learners' individual skills and knowledge. For example, on a keeping up with the children course, learners who are parents did not practise in class any of the ideas the teacher gave them or share learning and experiences with each other to develop their understanding further.
- Teachers do not always set clear enough objectives or plan in sufficient detail so that all learners are challenged to make their best possible progress. They do not identify

learners' abilities and potential at the beginning of a course and then plan learning to develop learners' skills individually. Learners evaluate their own confidence and skills in English and mathematics well.

- Teachers provide a wide range of introductory taster sessions which are successful in encouraging learners to take their first steps back into learning. However, they do not provide subsequent, relevant courses which would help learners to progress easily from one course to another, develop their interest or help them gain a qualification. As a result, too many learners do not enrol on further courses to continue their learning.
- Teachers use good learning resources, including online resources, for a range of well-planned activities. For example, learners used the Money Advice Service website to calculate the best tariffs for mobile phone, gas and electricity, and learners on an English for speakers of other languages course used a fun electronic tablet application to translate key phrases. However, too often such activities are not designed to meet the key aims of the sessions or to develop learners' individual skills, including their English and mathematics.
- Managers locate community and family learning provision deliberately in areas with the greatest proportion of disadvantaged learners. Strategies to reach and recruit these learners are effective and large numbers of learners enrol on introductory courses. Staff work well in partnership with community centres and schools to identify potential learners and courses, but these partners are not always sufficiently clear about the main aims of courses and how they will benefit learners.

Apprenticeships

Inadequate

- Learning in Wiltshire offers apprenticeships in eight subject areas; those with the largest number of learners are in business administration, health and social care, residential childcare and specialist support for teaching and learning in schools. There are currently 129 apprentices, 16 of whom are following level 2 programmes and 95 at level 3. A further 18 learners are enrolled on level 5 programmes in health and social care and children and young people's services. The number of learners on apprenticeships increased significantly in 2016.
- Too many apprentices do not make rapid enough progress in completing the work required for their qualifications. Approximately two thirds of current apprentices, mostly those in health and social care and on apprenticeships for nursery workers, are behind where they should be and therefore not making the progress expected of them.
- Assessors do not plan learning sufficiently well to ensure that all apprentices make progress quickly enough. They do not provide sufficient off-the job training or secure the support of all employers to provide their apprentices with enough relevant on- and off-the-job training. Assessors place too much emphasis on apprentices meeting minimum assessment criteria and not enough on ensuring that all apprentices develop the skills and knowledge they need for their job roles, or develop a deeper understanding of the industry they have entered.
- Assessors do not set apprentices clear, time-bound targets to improve their skills or knowledge, or monitor closely whether these targets have been achieved to ensure that apprentices learn new skills and make good progress towards completing their qualifications. Assessors do not measure the progress that apprentices have made from

their starting points effectively, and do not always know which apprentices are behind with their work and need support to catch up.

- Assessors are suitably qualified and experienced in their vocational area and they ensure that their assessment practice meets the awarding bodies' requirements. Assessors use a variety of suitable assessment methods to assess learning, including written assignments, taped conversations and witness testimonies.
- Assessors use regular and frequent review meetings well to provide verbal feedback to learners and to support and encourage their learning. Apprentices appreciate the support from their assessors and find them responsive and easy to contact. However, assessors' written feedback to apprentices is not always sufficiently clear or detailed enough to help apprentices improve their work.
- Apprentices are able to apply their knowledge and skills well in the workplace and share them with others. For example, business administration apprentices use their experience from work to explore good use of communication when negotiating with customers, and consider the impact of non-verbal communication on people from different cultures. Most employers are positive about the skills their apprentices are gaining and how these support their business.

Provider details

Unique reference number	50245
Type of provider	Local authority
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1,455
Principal/CEO	Corporate Director, Dr Carlton Brand
Telephone number	01225 713000
Website	www.learninginwiltshire.org.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 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	0	87	0	3	0	14	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	6	12	14	80	0	18		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		0		0			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	0							
Funding received from:	Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	None							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the learning partnership and organisational development lead as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and telephone calls to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Helen Flint, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Steven Tucker	Her Majesty's Inspector
Martin Bennett	Ofsted Inspector
Philip Pullen	Ofsted Inspector
Margaret Garai	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
M1 2WD

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