

North East Lincolnshire Council

Local authority

Inspection dates

6–9 December 2016

Overall effectiveness		Requires improvement	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement	16 to 19 study programmes	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement	Adult learning programmes	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement	Apprenticeships	Inadequate
Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Requires improvement	

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Leaders, managers and board members have not acted swiftly enough to improve the quality of provision and increase learners' and apprentices' achievements since the last inspection.
- The management of apprenticeships is weak, resulting in apprentices' slow progress.
- Tutors do not use the information they have on learners' starting points to plan lessons that challenge all learners, including the most able.
- Tutors do not recognise and record learners' progress and achievements on non-accredited programmes consistently well.
- Although improving, learners' attendance at lessons is too low.
- Learners and apprentices do not have a good enough understanding of how the risks of extremism and radicalisation apply to their lives.

The provider has the following strengths

- Strong partnership working with other agencies results in a well-designed range of courses that meet individual and local needs.
- Courses attract learners who have considerable disadvantages and barriers to learning and enable them to engage in learning and progress.
- Learners develop good personal, social and employability skills that they need to progress further in their lives.
- Very effective English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) provision for adult learners and apprentices results in high achievement of qualifications.
- Learners value and benefit from good support. Tutors create an atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance in lessons.
- Impartial information, advice and guidance ensure that learners are well-informed about their career options and next steps.

Full report

Information about the provider

- North East Lincolnshire Council Community Learning Services is part of the council's People Directorate. The service offers adult learning, apprenticeships and study programmes for learners aged 16 to 19. It also has provision for a small number of learners with high needs. Learning takes place in two main centres in Cleethorpes and Grimsby, and around 17 community venues in the locality. A new Head of Service was appointed in January 2016. The previous post-holder left the service shortly after the last inspection in October 2015.
- North East Lincolnshire Council is a unitary authority on the south bank of the Humber estuary with a population of approximately 160,000. North East Lincolnshire is ranked the 65th most deprived out of 326 local authorities in England.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of the recently established improvement board, comprising council members, service leaders and external stakeholders, by:
 - placing a greater focus at meetings on the impact of actions on learners' progress and achievements
 - providing training for board members to enable them to analyse data on programme performance more effectively
 - including staff performance as an agenda item at all meetings.
- Improve the apprenticeship programme, by:
 - ensuring that managers maintain and monitor an overview of apprentices' planned programmes, the contact they have with assessors and details of all on- and off-the-job learning delivered
 - involving employers more fully in supporting apprentices' progress and ensuring that they meet the requirements set out in the apprenticeship agreement.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, by:
 - implementing fully the new staff observation system and ensuring that observations result in challenging action plans to raise the standard of teaching and learning
 - providing training for staff to enable them to plan and deliver lessons that cater for the varying abilities of learners in their classes more effectively
 - sharing good practice more systematically so that all staff recognise and record learners' progress and achievements on non-accredited programmes to a consistently high standard.
- Improve attendance and punctuality, by:
 - ensuring that attendance and punctuality are recorded and reported upon accurately
 - increasing the confidence of teachers to challenge poor attendance and punctuality to maximise learners' progress.

- Reinforce with learners and apprentices how the dangers of radicalisation and extremism apply to them, so that they are more confident in how to protect themselves.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Senior leaders and board members have failed to bring about improvement in all areas of weakness identified at the previous inspection. Too much teaching still requires improvement and learners' achievements have not risen swiftly enough across all programmes. After the previous inspection, the head of service left the post. A new post-holder took up the role at the beginning of 2016.
- In the last nine months, under the leadership of the new head of service, managers have implemented a range of improvement activities but these have yet to have a full impact. Managers have identified underperforming staff and implemented the council's capability procedures, resulting in a number of tutors leaving the service. They have introduced a more rigorous staff observation system to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning more effectively. They have adopted a new system to recognise and record the progress and achievements of learners on courses that do not lead to a qualification.
- Management of the apprenticeship programme is weak. Managers do not have an accurate overview of the training programme planned for each apprentice, including details of on- and off-the-job training. Too many apprentices receive insufficient training and support, and make slow progress. Employers are not sufficiently involved in the apprenticeship programmes.
- Although the collection and analysis of information from registers to monitor learners' attendance and punctuality has improved, further improvement is needed to ensure that this information is accurate and that staff follow up absence and lateness swiftly.
- Senior leaders and managers are ambitious for the restructured service. The strategic vision for the service is aligned closely to the local authority's priorities of a 'stronger community and stronger economy'. Earlier and current restructuring is successfully moving the service to better meet the needs of hard-to-reach learners in very deprived local communities. In 2015/16 the proportion of adult learners achieving their intended qualifications increased.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have created a cross-service team of specialist English and mathematics tutors that work very effectively in most instances. Achievement rates in functional skills are high and well above those of similar providers.
- Leaders and managers have extensive and productive partnerships with a wide range of employers and local agencies, including Jobcentre Plus and further education networks. As a result, programme content is enriched by input from local agencies and national employers, and opportunities for employment and work experience for learners have improved. Board members play an active role in the local enterprise partnership and ensure that information on local and regional skills needs influences curriculum planning.
- Tutors and careers staff work very well together to ensure that learners receive good independent information, advice and guidance that enable them to progress to the next stage of their careers.
- Leaders and managers have carefully designed the range of programmes offered to provide well-structured learning and progression opportunities. These improve the life chances and employment opportunities for learners, many of whom have very low

starting points and chaotic lives. Learners recognise and benefit from opportunities for learning, ranging from non-accredited introductory courses through to level 3 qualifications.

- Teaching staff benefit from a range of well-chosen and focused opportunities for continuing professional development. Training is tailored to both the wider service requirements and to the specific learning needs of individual staff. This leads to improvements in some aspects of teaching, learning and assessment such as the promotion of British values, equality and diversity.

The governance of the provider

- The board has not acted swiftly enough to improve the provision since the previous inspection. They do not all have the necessary skills to scrutinise and interpret data on the operational performance of the programmes effectively.
- Leaders, managers and board members work well collaboratively in shaping the restructuring and determining the strategic direction of the service. Support and challenge from board members in relation to strategic direction are robust.
- Board members give strong political support and good financial oversight to the service. They held an open meeting with staff and learners to gain a deeper understanding of the service.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All staff have received effective training to equip them for their roles.
- Leaders and managers have extensive links with local agencies. They use these to refer learners appropriately using a very effective and prompt process for learners who may be at risk or who raise concerns.
- Staff apply their understanding of safeguarding well in principle and practice. As a result, learners feel safe and are safe in all learning venues.
- The majority of staff have been trained in the 'Prevent' duty. Managers and tutors provide learners with information and training regarding radicalisation and extremism, but too many learners are not able to relate their knowledge to their own workplace or everyday lives.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Despite a recent focus on improving the provision, too much teaching, learning and assessment is still not good or better. The full impact of recent actions to improve the provision is not yet evident.
- Too often, tutors do not use the information they have on learners' starting points to plan lessons that challenge all learners. Such lessons involve all learners doing the same work that is not tailored to their individual abilities. The most able learners are not stretched in their learning and make insufficient progress. Tutors occasionally set learners work that is

beyond their capabilities.

- Low attendance results in learners making slow progress. This is exacerbated by the lack of resources to support independent learning outside the classroom. Where tutors have planned group activities for a lesson, low attendance often has a negative impact on learning. However, in some instances, learners benefit from the very small group sizes as tutors are able to provide intensive individual support.
- On non-accredited programmes, not all tutors recognise and record learners' progress and achievement effectively. Assessment practice is not sufficiently rigorous to identify precisely whether or not learners have achieved their personal goals. Tutors do not routinely share the good practice that exists in assessing learners' progress.
- Learners' and apprentices' targets often focus purely on meeting the narrow and specific requirements of the qualification, such as completing a task or unit of the award, rather than the wider development of the individual to ensure that they are prepared well for employment or their next steps.
- While learners on study programme and apprenticeship provision attend separate lessons to develop their English and mathematics skills and are successful in achieving functional skills qualifications, the continued development of these skills within their overall learning programme is insufficient. Tutors and assessors do not set targets to encourage the continual development and application of these skills once learners have achieved their functional skills qualifications.
- Tutors and assessors use a very wide range of assessment strategies effectively to evaluate learners' progress. They question learners well to check their understanding and deepen their knowledge. However, a minority of tutors rely too heavily on posing questions to the whole group and allow more confident learners to dominate lessons to the exclusion of less vocal learners.
- Most tutors structure learning activities well and provide real life and relevant tasks to allow learners to experience, reflect on and develop essential skills. For example, in a mathematics lesson learners enjoyed and benefited from a task involving planning and budgeting for a new community centre and in doing so demonstrated a good consideration of diversity.
- Most tutors use their expertise well to build upon learners' existing knowledge and skills. Learning activities enable learners to move seamlessly from topics in which they are competent to new areas of learning. For example, in an English lesson, learners were first taught how to identify different styles of writing, such as persuasive text within advertisements, and then to use this knowledge to adapt their own writing style to suit the intended audience.
- Learners value and benefit from high levels of in-class support from tutors and support staff. In addition, tutors refer learners to external agencies, where appropriate, for specialist information or support. Staff are skilful at creating a purposeful and supportive learning environment in which learners are comfortable to participate and learn from their mistakes.
- Tutors provide learners with good, constructive oral and written feedback on their work that provides clear guidance on how to improve further.
- Tutors create a positive learning atmosphere and demonstrate British values well.

Learners show respect for others and embrace those from different cultures and backgrounds. The service is increasingly multicultural and learners thrive within this environment.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

- Learners' attendance and punctuality are too low. Absence from lessons and late arrival limit the progress of too many learners. Managers' actions to monitor and improve attendance and punctuality have had some success, including for study programme learners, but further improvement is needed.
- Tutors have explained to learners the risks of extremism and radicalisation and most know what these terms mean in relation to information reported in the national news. However, a minority of learners do not have a sufficiently good understanding of how these risks apply to their own lives.
- The vast majority of learners have a good understanding of British values and behave respectfully in lessons. They show good consideration for their tutors and peers and collaborate sensitively during group activities. Apprentices display a high level of professional behaviour, as expected in the workplace. However, tutors do not effectively challenge study programme learners' very occasional use of inappropriate language in classes to promote respect for others and prepare them for employers' expectations.
- Learners who attend frequently develop good personal and social skills that they need to progress in life and at work. Community learners develop their communication skills and confidence resulting in their greater participation in their local communities and improved employment prospects. Learners on study programmes benefit from a good range of external speakers that develop their understanding of the lives of others and the behaviours expected at work. For example, through a talk on anger management, learners feel more able to control their emotions when faced with conflict.
- Tutors and careers staff provide impartial and comprehensive information and guidance for learners throughout their programmes. The service works with a range of agencies and employers to provide guidance to support learners' transition onto high-level study or appropriate work. For example, one learner progressed from the study programme to a level 3 science course at college and now intends to study at university.
- Tutors provide a secure and comfortable learning environment in which learners, including the most vulnerable, are able to contribute and flourish. Learners willingly and openly disclose their personal experiences, which helps them and their peers to develop. For example, in one lesson a learner shared his experiences to help others appreciate the potential impact of drug misuse on lives.
- Learners are safe in the learning venues and value the strict security arrangements for accessing the buildings. They have a good understanding of how to alert tutors to concerns about their safety should they arise.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- Despite a significant increase, the proportion of adult learners who achieve their intended qualifications requires further improvement. The achievement rate was low in 2014/15. The provider's data shows that in 2015/16 achievement increased considerably to just below the rate for similar providers. Achievements across subjects and courses vary. For example, all learners on the textiles course achieved their intended qualification last year, but only two thirds of learners on some English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses did so.
- The proportion of apprentices who complete their apprenticeship programme has remained static for the last two years and requires improvement. The completion of qualifications within planned timescales was low in 2014/15 and the provider's data for 2015/16 shows a small further decline. In 2014/15, achievement rates for advanced level apprentices were very low but in 2015/16 this increased to around the same rate as apprentices studying at intermediate level.
- In 2015/16, too many young people on study programmes failed to achieve their main learning goal which, for the vast majority, is to attend a work placement. Around a quarter of study programme learners left their programme early without achieving their intended learning goals. However, in some instances this was due to circumstances outside the control of the service such as pregnancy and other factors in learners' personal lives.
- In 2015/16, only half of apprentices who completed their qualifications continued in employment or progressed to higher-level studies. Only two thirds of study programme leavers progressed into further education or employment.
- Adult learners' achievement of functional skills qualifications is high and large numbers of learners across all levels of qualifications in English, mathematics and ICT were successful in achieving their qualifications in 2015/16.
- Adult learners develop their personal and social skills very effectively. They also develop work-related skills and become more independent and involved in their communities. Parents report how they are better able to support their children with their school work. However, tutors' tracking and recording of the progress and achievements of those who are not working towards a qualification are not consistently good.
- On adult learning programmes that lead to qualifications, the majority of current learners who attend well are making good progress and are enjoying their studies. However, tutors do not challenge the most able learners sufficiently, resulting in them making slower progress than that of which they are capable. The progress of those on study programmes and apprenticeships is slow.
- A high proportion of adult learners, including those on community learning courses, progress onto further learning on completion of their programmes. Those achieving qualifications often progress to higher-level programmes or to employment. The service's good progression routes enable learners to move seamlessly and progressively onto more challenging courses.
- Managers monitor the retention and achievements of different groups of learners and each type of programme closely and discuss data at weekly meetings. There are no

significant differences between different groups of learners.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Requires improvement

- Currently, 25 young people aged 16 to 18 are on a study programme. Their main learning aim is to undertake a period of work experience. In addition, learners work towards English, mathematics, ICT and employability qualifications. Learners have a range of personal difficulties and barriers to learning, including mental health problems, homelessness, learning difficulties and social needs. Most have very low prior educational attainment.
- In 2015/16, too few learners completed their intended work experience. This year, managers have introduced short work-experience tasters to provide a stepping-stone onto more substantial work experience. However, it is too early to measure the impact of this initiative.
- Learners' attendance at classes is low and below the target set by the service. Tutors do not follow up or challenge absence sufficiently, nor do they emphasise enough to learners the importance of good attendance on making progress towards their qualifications and preparing for future employment. Similarly, tutors do not challenge lateness well enough.
- Tutors do not always challenge learners sufficiently to develop their English and mathematics skills. In some mathematics lessons, tutors' expectations of learners' progress are too low and the most able learners do not have the opportunity to make rapid progress. Tutors' feedback on learners' work overlooks errors in their writing and learners therefore continue to make the same mistakes.
- Staff plan study programmes well so that they provide progression and challenge. Tutors undertake a thorough initial assessment of learners' starting points to identify their precise learning and support needs. Learners undertaking functional skills English and mathematics qualifications complete diagnostic assessments and are placed on the most appropriate level of programme. Where appropriate, learners are able to take GCSE qualifications in English or mathematics to improve their previous grades.
- Learning support in lessons is good. Staff work closely with external agencies, including the Young People's Support Services, to identify and provide additional support for learners at the start of their programme. For example, ESOL learners who have recently arrived in the country receive language support during mathematics classes to develop their understanding of mathematical terms. Learners who have specific learning difficulties have additional one-to-one support in lessons.
- In ICT lessons, imaginative activities captivate and motivate learners. For example, one activity involved researching and preparing presentations on personal health issues to promote World Aids Day. Learners make good progress towards achieving their ICT qualifications. Tutors plan sessions well so that learners can work on their individual targets at their own pace.
- Learners feel safe and secure. Tutors create a supportive and inclusive atmosphere where even the most vulnerable learners can contribute and share their views. However,

tutors do not always challenge learners' use of inappropriate language in lessons.

- Tutors ensure that parents and carers are kept well informed regarding learners' progress and are invited to progress review meetings. When they attend they often contribute well. In one instance, a parent was able to explain why a learner was reluctant to ask for help. Tutors used this information to improve support in lessons.
- Careers advice and guidance before, during and upon completion of the programme are very effective. Careers topics are included in employability lessons. External speakers provide learners with information on employment-related issues and career options. Despite considerable disadvantages in their lives, almost two thirds of leavers in 2015/16 progressed into further training or employment.

Adult learning programmes

Requires improvement

- Adult learners study on part-time courses in subjects such as creative arts, English, mathematics, employability skills, ICT and ESOL in 17 venues throughout North East Lincolnshire. Currently, 80 learners are on courses leading to accredited qualifications and around 200 learners are on non-accredited courses.
- Too often, tutors do not take into account learners' starting points when planning learning. They do not plan learning activities that closely match the wide range of needs and abilities within the class so that all learners are stretched and make good progress. Instead, all learners work on the same activities, irrespective of their starting points. Too often, the most able learners are not challenged sufficiently. On occasions, learners are presented with work that is at too high a level.
- A minority of tutors do not set effective targets for learners. Review discussions with learners are often superficial and do not result in meaningful targets that reflect the specific needs of learners and their individual strengths and weaknesses. In particular, tutors do not set detailed and demanding targets to challenge the most able learners.
- On non-accredited programmes, too many tutors do not effectively recognise and record learners' progress and achievement. Assessment practice is not sufficiently rigorous to establish whether or not learners have achieved their personal goals. The service has recently introduced a new system for recognising and recording the progress and achievement of learners but this is not fully established throughout the service.
- Tutors carry out a detailed assessment of most learners' starting points before starting a new course. Tutors review and mark these assessments promptly, ensuring that learners can begin their course without delay. Tutors share the results of these assessments readily with learners so that they are clear about their learning goals. However, for ESOL learners who leave their course early and return at a later date, this information is not always shared with their new tutor. Consequently, their progress is often delayed.
- Courses are held in a wide range of community venues in some very disadvantaged local areas, ensuring that the provision is accessible to those most in need. Courses held in children's centres with crèche facilities enable parents of young children to attend classes. Learners who have significant barriers to learning and employment can take their first steps into learning provision easily and gain the confidence to progress. For example, one learner who suffers with low self-esteem as a result of being made redundant several times is successfully improving her mathematics skills to progress into

a career in nursing.

- Tutors use their considerable skills and expertise well to create a welcoming and supportive learning environment in which learners feel comfortable to contribute and learn. Support for individual learners is very effective and helps them to develop the confidence to participate more fully in class. Vulnerable learners such as those who have experienced domestic violence or have mental health issues improve their communication, social and work-related skills and become more independent in their everyday lives.
- The majority of tutors monitor and review learners' progress very frequently and effectively to ensure that learners are on track. At the end of each lesson, learners and tutors effectively evaluate what new learning has taken place. Learners on ICT courses complete their progress record electronically, reinforcing the development of their new skills. Tutors' feedback on progress records and learners' written work is very encouraging and motivates them to continue working hard.
- Learners on courses to improve their employability skills develop good job-search skills including technical skills in writing letters and completing job applications. Tutors set very clear short-term targets for these learners and provide very specific feedback on their written work. As a result, learners make good progress in improving the standard of their written work over time. This prepares them well to apply for jobs and stand a good chance of their applications being given good consideration.

Apprenticeships

Inadequate

- Currently, 51 apprentices are on programmes at intermediate and advanced levels. The majority are on business administration programmes and others are on programmes in health and social care, childcare, and supporting teaching and learning in schools. The proportion of apprentices who complete their apprenticeships in the planned time is low.
- Management of the apprenticeship programme is weak. Managers do not monitor the programmes effectively to ensure that they meet the apprenticeship requirements for guided learning hours. Too many employers do not release apprentices to attend training, nor do they provide sufficient learning opportunities in the workplace. For example, one apprentice attends a functional skills class in the evening after working all day, as she is not given time off work to attend classes during working hours. Assessors do not record or monitor learning hours accurately.
- Managers do not monitor the frequency of progress reviews, which are scheduled to take place every 12 weeks. On occasions, progress reviews are much less frequent, although this is sometimes due to apprentices' work or personal circumstances. The quality of review records is poor and the targets that tutors set for learners are not specific enough, mostly focusing on the completion of parts of the qualification, rather on what is to be learned. The recording and monitoring of the contact that apprentices have with their assessors between reviews is also haphazard.
- As a result of insufficient learning and support, apprentices' progress is often slow. A delay between starting the programme and beginning vocational learning limits the amount of time available to develop and apply new skills. Apprentices receive too little guidance from their assessors and become frustrated with their lack of progress.

- Around half of apprentices progress onto higher-level programmes or remain in employment upon completion of their programmes. Those who do value the qualifications they have achieved and the impact that their apprenticeship has had on their career plans. Apprentices who are employed by the council may apply for suitable job vacancies within three months of their end dates and are considered as a priority for these roles.
- The majority of apprentices achieve their functional skills qualifications and develop useful and relevant skills in English and mathematics that they use at work and in their everyday lives. Apprentices begin their English and mathematics studies at the start of the programme to provide good opportunities for learning, consolidation and application.
- Employers value their apprentices and the benefit they bring to their businesses. In the best cases, employers provide good vocational experience and work in partnership with assessors to help their apprentices to achieve by, for example, adjusting shift patterns to accommodate assessor visits and providing help with written assignments.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53575
Type of provider	Local authority
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	548
Principal/CEO	Karen Linton
Telephone number	01472 323569
Website	www.nelincs.gov.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	28	210	14	84	1	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	10	16	5	20	-	-		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	15							
Funding received from:	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	-							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the pathway to employment manager, 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, telephone calls and online questionnaires 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

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