

# Wakefield Metropolitan District Council

Re-inspection monitoring visit report

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**Unique reference number:** 55247

**Name of lead inspector:** Paul Cocker HMI

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**Type of provider:** Local authority

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## Monitoring visit: main findings

### Context and focus of visit

This is the third re-inspection monitoring visit to Wakefield Metropolitan District Council following publication of the inspection report on 23 December 2015, which found the provider to be inadequate overall.

At the inspection in November 2015, the effectiveness of leadership and management was judged inadequate. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment, personal development, behaviour and welfare and outcomes for learners were judged to require improvement. Adult learning programmes and apprenticeships were both judged to require improvement.

Since the previous inspection, the Adult Community Education Service (ACES) has undergone a period of significant change due to a strategic and operational restructure. Leaders restructured the provision in June 2016. All new teams and processes were implemented from 1 August 2016.

### Themes

#### **Improvement in teaching, learning and assessment including English, mathematics and English for speakers of other languages courses**

#### **Significant progress**

The last monitoring visit recognised that leaders and managers were working hard to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

Since the previous visit, the service has appointed a highly experienced quality coordinator who works closely with the business development manager for English, mathematics and English for speakers of other languages. The service has implemented further improvements in initial assessment for these programmes to ensure that this year they place learners on the right course at the right level. So far, in the current year, the centre has already received very positive feedback from an awarding organisation because of the improvement in standards of learners' work following the 100% achievement of the 33 learners in speaking and listening assessments.

Learning walks with service staff carried out during this visit confirmed that learners were fully engaged in their learning, particularly in skills for life sessions. They were learning new skills and developing their knowledge and understanding effectively in their lessons. For example, learners in English lessons were developing skills in how to construct sentences in both formal and informal scenarios. Where support staff were present, tutors made good use of them to support individual learners' requirements and this resulted in all learners in the class making good progress in their work. The rigorous performance management actions reported at the last visit continue to have a positive impact on promoting high standards of teaching, learning

and assessment for all staff, such as the improved setting of precise targets following observation aligned with effective mentoring from managers to support tutors to improve.

**Improvement in the effectiveness of governance, leadership and improvement planning arrangements**      **Reasonable progress**

Since the previous monitoring visit, governors have continued to support and challenge senior managers to make improvement at the service, through regular governing body and committee meetings. The chair of the governing body has been successful in recruiting additional governors to enhance further the governing body's skills and experience. Notwithstanding the challenge that senior managers receive at these meetings, governors do not consistently set challenging actions for managers to complete, to allow improvement at the service to be more swift.

Leaders and governors have been instrumental in not only restructuring the service to meet the requirements of the communities that it serves, but also creating and instilling a positive culture of freedom within boundaries of responsibility. Consequently, this has resulted in staff at all levels in the service challenging each other to improve further the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and ultimately improve outcomes. For example, the data team now regularly challenge senior managers and curriculum managers to make improvements following perceptive data analysis of learner progress.

Leaders and governors have been successful in the creation and validation of the 2015/16 self-assessment report. The report is self-critical, evaluative and provides an accurate representation of the provider's strengths and areas for improvement in 2015/16. Leaders and managers use the self-assessment report to set clear priorities for improvement for 2016/17, which they share with staff at appropriate intervals throughout the year.

The improvement plan is much improved and now contains all of the priorities needed to improve the quality of teaching and learning at the service. However, too many of the actions set by leaders and governors are insufficiently precise or time-bound to allow the effective monitoring of progress. Consequently, too many of the progress comments within the document are ambiguous and do not clearly identify what has been achieved or what needs to happen next.

**Improvement in performance management and professional development arrangements**      **Significant progress**

Leaders and managers have provided further evidence to support the significant progress judgement made at the last visit. Leaders and managers continue to place a strong focus on supporting all teaching staff. They make increasing use of learning walks as well as formal observations to identify service-wide training and development needs. They are starting to develop systems to support and enable good tutors to share their practice with peers.

Professional development and training for all staff in January focused on meeting the specific requirements of learners in lessons and the effective use of individual learning plans to record progress. Subsequent learning walks carried out by managers identified significant improvements of both of these aspects in the majority of classes. Regular management meetings and reports to governors both challenge and support staff to ensure that all improvement activities undertaken have the intended impact on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Managers make extensive use of a colour-coding system to measure and evaluate performance.

The service makes good use of frequent, monthly management meetings to monitor and review progress against improvement plans, as well as to challenge and support managers in achieving their targets. Curriculum managers also share their performance plans with each other to enable each to be aware of how other managers are setting about driving improvements.

### **Improvement in the achievement and progress monitoring of all learners**      **Significant progress**

Leaders and managers have been successful in implementing a system to monitor the progress of all learners and apprentices. Data suggests that the vast majority of current learners are making at least the expected progress on their courses and qualifications.

The data team provides a range of highly analytical and insightful reports that managers use on a regular basis to manage the performance of tutors and identify learners who are making slow progress. Consequently, managers are able to intervene much more swiftly when slow progress is highlighted. They put in place highly effective strategies, such as providing additional support in lesson-planning or target-setting in learning plans, to engage and challenge learners to achieve higher levels of skill development. This has resulted in more learners staying on their course compared to the same period last year.

Managers are planning additional enhancements to the reports to further measure the progress that the most able learners are making and to what extent teachers challenge them to develop additional skills as well as their main qualification. For example, in beauty classes, learners are able to complete an additional unit in reflexology which enhances their chances of employment in the sector, which they appreciate greatly.

### **Improvement in the curriculum to meet local employment and skills priorities**      **Significant progress**

As recognised at the last monitoring visit, leaders and managers are now able to identify and articulate much more clearly how the provision offered by ACES meets the local needs and priorities of the communities in and around Wakefield. The range and type of provision the service offers this year is significantly different from the provision in recent years and pointedly aligned with council priorities and local skill requirements.

Since the last visit, managers have allocated business development officers (BDOs) to specific roles in engaging with local schools or with employability partners. In the year so far, officers are on track to exceed their targets, particularly in the engagement with schools, with high numbers of children receiving free school meals. A well-publicised 'Learning Festival' in January successfully attracted over 170 families from these target areas. As well as identifying opportunities for new courses with new partners, including 42 family learning courses in priority target areas, good use was also made of a 'health pod' at the festival to measure individuals' body mass index and blood pressure, with effective links made to the importance of healthy eating and regular exercise, which is a key council priority. Local police are now expressing an interest in contributing to future events as they also see them as an opportunity to benefit community cohesion.

The employer engagement BDO is now targeting small employers with a view to the planned move from apprenticeships to traineeships so that trainees will have access to relevant placements for work experience when they are ready for these. The officer continues to maintain good links with a range of local networks, the apprenticeship hub and the local enterprise partnership. The number of partner delivery sites such as local care homes has also increased significantly. Both officers are also planning future 'themed' festivals, particularly so that the service can increase the number of male participants on its programmes.

### **Improvement in data management systems**

### **Significant progress**

Leaders and managers have continued to improve systems within the service to ensure that governors and staff at all levels receive accurate information to improve the quality of teaching and learning and plan curriculum delivery to meet the requirements of the community that they serve. For example, governors and managers now receive data on learner progress and engagement across the district. Managers use this information very effectively to ensure that communities with the greatest social and economic deprivation in and around Wakefield are targeted to develop their skills and improve their future prospects.

Senior managers' unremitting use of data at monthly briefing meetings ensures that every aspect of the curriculum is measured, monitored and evaluated. Where leaders identify improvements, managers are challenged to make rapid improvements. This has resulted, for example, in additional learning support being provided for learners much earlier on in their course, which results in the vast majority of learners who receive this additional support making at least the progress expected of them.

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