

Wakefield Metropolitan District Council

Local authority

Inspection dates

21–24 March 2017

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

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- The management of apprenticeships is weak; managers have insufficient oversight of the detail or quality of programmes.
- Apprentices make slow progress because they do not have challenging targets to work towards and reviews of their progress are ineffective.
- The actions that leaders and managers plan to improve the provision often do not have specific or time-bound measures of success to ensure that they happen quickly enough.
- In a minority of lessons, teaching does not challenge learners, including the most able, sufficiently.
- Too much feedback that tutors give to learners on their work is not specific enough to help them to improve.
- A minority of apprentices and learners do not have a clear enough understanding of the dangers of extremism and radicalisation.

The provider has the following strengths

- Elected members, senior leaders and managers have taken effective steps to re-shape the adult curriculum to support local and national priorities.
- In the year since its establishment, the governing body has provided good strategic oversight, including a comprehensive management and staffing restructure, which is improving the adult learning provision.
- Very effective action by managers to improve the quality of provision in English, mathematics and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) has resulted in high achievements for learners in the current year.
- Staff monitor the retention and progress of learners closely; most learners are making good progress.
- Learners develop useful and relevant personal and employability skills, which they use to improve their daily lives and become more effective members of their communities.
- Learners enjoy their studies and attend well.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Wakefield Adult and Community Education Service (ACES) is located within the council's Children and Young People Directorate. The service delivers adult learning programmes at three local authority education centres and 30 community partnership venues including schools, voluntary settings, care homes and the health service. The majority of adult learners are on courses that do not lead directly to a qualification. ACES has notified the funding body of its decision to stop delivering apprenticeship provision, once the current cohort of apprentices has completed their programmes.
- The Wakefield district covers a mix of urban and rural communities and has a resident population of approximately 334,000. Around 14% of the population live in neighbourhoods that are among the top 10% most deprived in England. The proportion of residents claiming out-of-work benefits is around 12%, higher than the regional and national averages.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve the management of the apprenticeship programme and speed up apprentices' achievements by:
 - maintaining comprehensive and accurate records of all apprentices and their programmes, including information on planned and delivered guided learning hours for each qualification, details of assessment visits and progress reviews and apprentices' progress against expectations
 - taking swift and decisive action to support apprentices who are falling behind in their studies
 - monitoring the quality of all programme elements systematically, including those delivered by subcontractors
 - improving communication with employers so that they are more fully involved in planning and delivering the programmes
 - gathering and analysing information on apprentices' progression once they have completed their qualifications.
- Improve action planning and quality improvement processes by setting specific and time-bound success measures against which the effectiveness of actions can be measured.
- Ensure that all tutors attend the professional development sessions on how to meet the needs of individual learners in lessons.
- Ensure that tutors apply the recently developed marking policy consistently to improve the quality of their feedback to learners so that it gives clear guidance on how learners can improve their work.
- Reinforce the risks of extremism and radicalisation with learners and apprentices so that they know how to keep themselves and others safe.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Elected members, senior leaders and managers of the service are highly ambitious for ACES to become a good learning provider. They have taken effective steps to re-shape the adult education curriculum to ensure it meets Wakefield Council's well-defined priorities for communities which aim to enable residents to become more economically active, more engaged as citizens and as a result, to contribute to improving the lives and chances for children and young people.
- Governors, leaders and managers of ACES have overseen a comprehensive management and staffing restructure starting in March 2016, with the aim of improving the provision. A significant number of managers and staff have left the service, in many cases due to more robust performance management arrangements. This action has improved many aspects of the adult learning provision. However, the quality of apprenticeship programmes has declined and is now inadequate.
- Management of the apprenticeship provision is weak. Senior leaders and governors have recognised that apprenticeship provision does not fit with the strategic priorities for the service and have decided not to continue with the programmes once the current cohort of apprentices has completed. Managers do not oversee the quality of programmes and the progress made by apprentices sufficiently well, including those that have some elements of their programmes delivered by subcontractors. They have failed to ensure that programmes meet apprenticeship requirements for guided learning hours.
- A new and comprehensive calendar of quality improvement activities introduced since September 2016, focuses clearly on improving adult learning programmes. Managers use the outcomes of their increasingly accurate observations of teaching, learning and assessment to plan support and training for tutors. Many tutors and assessors have improved their practice. However, staff absence and turnover is high. Recently appointed staff and those providing sickness cover have not yet received the same range of staff training, or the performance management activities, as established tutors and assessors. As a result, the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently high.
- Governors and leaders work with a good range of partners from local communities, education and training providers, and employers. Through these, they effectively target adult learning provision to those communities whose residents require help to improve their English, mathematics, language, employability and basic vocational skills. Working effectively with a wide range of partners including local enterprise partnerships and local authority regeneration teams, managers have put clear progression pathways in place. These now provide opportunities for adults, after engaging in these first steps in learning, to progress to further education or employment that meets local priorities.
- Leaders and managers have improved the rigour of self-assessment arrangements since the previous inspection. Staff at all levels, governors and senior leaders in Wakefield Council contribute to the development of a self-assessment report that is critical and accurately identifies many of the strengths and areas for improvement. However, the self-assessment fails to identify some key weaknesses in the quality of the apprenticeship provision. The self-assessment update produced at inspection overestimates the progress that the service has made since the previous inspection.

- Actions in the quality improvement plan too often contain insufficiently specific or time-bound measures of success. Against many of the actions, managers record completion as a success, rather than by evaluating the impact of the action. Managers recognise this as an area for improvement in the self-assessment report.
- Arrangements for managing the performance of staff have been strengthened since the previous inspection and are now good. For the majority of staff, performance management objectives link well to staff training and challenge staff to improve their performance and in so doing, contribute to the service meeting its objectives. Responsibility for the achievement of overall service performance targets and improvement priorities are disaggregated clearly from the head of service to managers and, in turn, to tutors. As a result, the majority of staff have a good understanding about how their performance contributes to the service meeting its objectives. While managers accurately evaluate tutors' performance through observations of lessons, the resulting action plans are sometimes perfunctory or lack precision.
- Governors, leaders and managers make good use of accurate management information about the adult learning provision to monitor how well the service is targeting programmes at, and recruiting learners from, the most disadvantaged areas. Leaders and managers use data about adult learners' progress and achievements well to identify groups and individual learners who are not making the progress of which they are capable given their starting points. They have closed the gap in the achievement of learners from a non-white British background compared to their peers by improving the quality of the ESOL provision.
- Managers and tutors promote the values of tolerance and respect well. They reinforce with adult learners why it is important to respect differences in society. Learners and apprentices behave professionally and respectfully in learning centres and workplaces.

The governance of the provider

- Governance of the service, judged inadequate at the previous inspection, is now good. Governors have a broad range of skills in finance, education, business, human resources and community partnerships. They use their skills well to fulfil their collective responsibilities and to accelerate the pace of improvement.
- In the year since its establishment, the governing body has taken a highly proactive role in overseeing and guiding the strategic direction of the provision. Governors are highly conscientious and take their responsibilities very seriously. They set and communicate their expectations clearly to the service manager, senior leaders and elected members in Wakefield Council.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Managers have good relationships with the local police and 'Prevent' agencies. They provide training for staff and learners, raising their awareness of the risks of radicalisation and extremism. However, a minority of learners and apprentices are not confident that they know the signs of radicalisation and extremism and the action they should take if they are concerned.

- Managers and staff with designated responsibility for safeguarding are suitably qualified. Up-to-date records are held of mandatory training completed and checks on staff.
- Designated safeguarding staff respond swiftly and appropriately to safeguarding concerns, including concerns about learners who may be at risk of exposure to radicalisation. They keep detailed records of actions taken and maintain effective links with other agencies and the local police, referring concerns to these appropriately.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment for apprentices are weak. As a result, too many apprentices make slow progress and do not complete their qualifications on time. Reviews of apprentices' progress are too superficial. Assessors do not set apprentices challenging and specific targets to promote their rapid progress.
- Although initial assessment for adult learners is thorough, a minority of tutors do not use this information to plan teaching effectively. As a result, in a few lessons learners, including the most able, do not focus sufficiently on their individual areas of weakness and do not make sufficient progress.
- Leaders and managers have improved teaching, learning and assessment in adult learning considerably. Most current learners are making good progress and the proportion who have achieved their intended qualifications and personal targets this year is high.
- Tutors are well qualified and use their expertise very effectively to interest and challenge learners. Learners gain increased personal and practical skills that prepare them well for progressing to the next stage in their lives.
- The vast majority of tutors plan learning sessions thoroughly so that they challenge learners well. For example, hairdressing tutors prepare motivating and demanding activities that stretch learners' understanding and develop their practical skills.
- The process for recognising and recording learners' progress and achievement on courses that do not lead to a qualification is thorough. Tutors create individual programmes for learners based upon relevant, appropriate and challenging targets. Tutors monitor and record learners' progress and achievement of targets accurately.
- Tutors assess learners' work, including homework, frequently and fairly. However, in a small minority of lessons, tutors do not give learners sufficiently helpful feedback on their work to guide their improvement.
- Staff monitor and analyse records of adult learners' achievement of personal skills very thoroughly. Learners achieve well in areas such as developing confidence, enhancing their communication skills and improving their health and well-being.
- Tutors use information and learning technology effectively during lessons and to provide support materials for independent learning. Learners extend their mathematics learning through accessing materials on a website that their tutor has developed.
- Tutors develop learners' English, mathematics and language skills very well. They reinforce the correct use of grammar, spelling and technical language throughout learning sessions. In an ESOL session, the tutor used an interactive white board to display key words and phrases that learners used while working in pairs to persuade each

other about the benefits of saving energy.

- Learners benefit from and value the support they receive from tutors and support staff, including volunteers. ACES has good links to local community services; volunteers provide in-class support for learners who use British sign language.
- Tutors promote learners' understanding of values, respect, difference and democracy effectively. Centres are welcoming, behaviour is good and relationships between tutors and learners are respectful.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

- Assessors pay insufficient attention to developing apprentices' work-related skills, including their independent learning and study skills. Apprenticeship programmes and individual targets focus too narrowly on the completion of tasks to meet qualification requirements.
- Assessors do not support apprentices well enough to develop their English and mathematics skills in their vocational learning. For example, they do not promote the importance of accuracy in writing tasks completed by business administration apprentices such as composing emails and taking telephone messages. Delays in a minority of apprentices starting their functional skills qualifications have occurred as a result of staff absence.
- A minority of apprentices do not have a good understanding of safeguarding, including the risks posed by extremism and radicalisation. While apprentices are provided with comprehensive information on safeguarding in the initial stages of their training, assessors do not reinforce this information throughout the programme. Apprentices' recall of the initial information they are given is weak.
- Learners feel safe in learning venues and are aware of how to report a safeguarding concern. The majority of learners show good awareness of how to keep themselves safe online. A small minority of adult learners do not have a good enough understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.
- Learners have access to impartial careers guidance to help them make choices about their next steps in learning. However, too few take advantage of this support and therefore have limited information of progression opportunities beyond the ACES provision.
- Learners develop a range of useful skills that they use in their daily lives. For example, learners in a British sign language class are now able to communicate more effectively with deaf people at work. Very disadvantaged learners on employability programmes develop a good range of personal and social skills. Experience of working in a simulated hairdressing and beauty therapy salon develops learners' customer service skills and provides valuable work tasters.
- Learners demonstrate a strong commitment to learning and attend well. They show pride in their achievements. For example, a learner in an ESOL class explained proudly that for the first time she was able to speak in English to her doctor to describe a medical problem enabling a swift and accurate diagnosis.
- Adult learners from different cultural backgrounds work well together in lessons and show mutual respect. Apprentices are courteous and cooperative and grow in confidence.

They value and respect staff, peers work colleagues and service users in their various work settings.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- Too many apprentices make slow progress; just under a half did not complete their qualifications on time in 2015/16, representing a sharp decrease on the previous year. Overall achievement of qualifications has remained static for the last two years, at slightly above the average for similar providers. Achievements vary across vocational areas and age groups. Apprentices aged 16 to 18 achieve at a much higher rate than those aged 19 and above.
- In 2015/16, the proportion of adult learners who achieved their intended qualifications declined slightly on the previous year and was below the average for similar providers. Achievements across subjects and courses varied, with low rates in most English, mathematics and ESOL courses.
- The proportion of learners who progressed onto further learning within the service, including onto higher level or accredited courses, upon completion of their studies was low in 2015/16. Data for the current year shows a considerable improvement. However, the service does not have comprehensive information on learners' progression beyond the ACES provision, such as into further training with other providers or into employment, nor does it have information on apprentices' progression once they have completed their programmes.
- Achievement of GCSE English qualifications was around that seen nationally in 2015/16, but the proportion of learners obtaining grades A* to C was high. In GCSE mathematics, the proportion of learners who achieved their qualification was high and the achievement of A* to C grades was very high.
- In the current year, significant improvements have been made in the achievement of functional skills English and mathematics and ESOL qualifications, which are very high. The vast majority of learners passed their external tests at their first attempt.
- A very high proportion of adults on programmes that do not lead to qualifications achieve their personal learning targets. Arrangements to recognise and record learners' progress and achievement are effective.
- The vast majority of adult learners are making good progress and are on course to succeed in their studies. The service uses a detailed and accurate system to track progress at learner, class and programme level. Support plans are in place for the small minority of learners who are at risk of falling behind.
- In 2015/16, the achievement of learners from a non-white British background compared to their peers was low. Managers have taken effective action to close this achievement gap by improving the quality of the ESOL provision.

Types of provision

Adult learning programmes

Good

- A total of 606 adult learners are currently enrolled on a range of courses including English, mathematics, ESOL, information and communication technology, employability skills, British sign language, family learning, hairdressing and beauty therapy. A small minority of learners take courses leading to accredited qualifications. Courses are delivered at three local authority centres in Sandal, Featherstone and Castleford and at a range of additional community venues across the district.
- Leaders and managers have taken effective action to stem the decline in the achievement of qualifications, including a full staffing restructure in September 2016. The initial assessment of learners' abilities has improved and is now thorough and accurate. Improvements in learners' achievement of qualifications are evident this year, with significant increases in English, mathematics and ESOL.
- Two newly appointed business development managers work with a range of relevant partners including local community groups, schools and Jobcentre Plus, to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of employers and the local community.
- Learners enjoy their studies and are supported by their tutors very effectively during and outside of lessons. The majority of tutors use a wide range of teaching and learning activities very effectively to engage and motivate learners to ensure that they make good progress.
- Tutors use a learning diary very effectively to monitor and record learners' progress and provide feedback on how to improve their work and develop their skills. Where learners are not working towards a qualification, tutors maintain accurate records of their achievement of individual learning goals.
- Learners improve their confidence and self-esteem, which enables them to take a more active part in their communities and to support their families. For example, learners attending an art course have developed the confidence to exhibit and sell artwork.
- Learners also develop good vocational and employability skills. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, learners carry out treatments to high professional standards, while also developing a wide range of employability skills through working in realistic work environments. Learners on employability programmes learn how to become more effective in searching for jobs and writing job applications. They improve their interview skills and develop their understanding the importance of personal presentation and first impressions.
- Well-structured learning activities in ESOL improve learners' speaking and listening skills which they use to enhance their daily lives; for example, they use their skills in communicating with others and helping children with homework.
- The majority of learners make good progress in developing their English and mathematics skills and achieve relevant qualifications. Tutors take the opportunity, where appropriate, to include English and mathematics learning lessons. For example, learners with learning disabilities mastered the names of different shapes such as circles, tubes and spheres during a cookery class.
- Leaders and managers have created an inclusive environment where learners are safe and secure. Tutors promote diversity well and learners show respect for their tutors and

peers. Tutors are friendly, helpful and caring, and this helps less confident learners to feel at ease and make progress. The majority of learners have an understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

- Staff provide effective advice and guidance to ensure that learners enrol onto the right course within the service. Specialist tutors also provide guidance relating to specific career paths. The service is strengthening links with a local general further education college to provide clearer career routes for learners to progress beyond the ACES provision.
- In a minority of lessons, tutors do not plan appropriate learning activities to enable all learners to progress. Learning resources are not at an appropriate level to engage learners and aid their learning.
- On occasions, tutors do not provide sufficiently useful feedback to learners on their work to accelerate their learning. In particular, feedback on learners' writing does not always help them improve the accuracy of their spelling and grammar.

Apprenticeships

Inadequate

- Currently, 101 apprentices are on intermediate and advanced learning programmes. Wakefield Council employs around half of apprentices in a range of departments and roles. Two thirds of apprentices are on business administration programmes; the rest are on programmes in supporting teaching and learning in schools, customer service and health and social care. Three subcontractors provide programmes for 16 apprentices in construction, motor vehicle, accounting and youth work.
- Management of the apprentice provision is weak. Managers do not oversee the detail or quality of programmes effectively. They do not ensure that apprentices undertake at least the minimum the number of guided learning hours to meet apprenticeship requirements. Arrangements to monitor the quality of programmes, including those delivered by subcontractors, are inadequate.
- Apprentices make slow progress. Managers do not monitor and track apprentices' progress effectively to identify those who are falling behind and take remedial action. Too many current apprentices have already passed their intended programme completion dates. The proportion of apprentices who completed their qualifications on time in 2015/16 was low. Recent action has been taken to track apprentices' progress more effectively and work more closely with employers to support those who are making slow progress, but it is too soon to see the impact of these actions.
- Target setting is weak. Assessors rely too heavily on apprentices setting their own targets independently and, too often, these targets are not helpful. Assessors do not challenge apprentices by setting demanding and specific targets to speed up their learning and develop their wider study and employability skills beyond the minimum requirements of the qualifications. However, apprentices on the subcontracted provision have useful targets that aid their progress. These apprentices are on track to achieve their qualifications on time.
- Reviews of apprentices' progress are poor with insufficient input by workplace supervisors to take account of the full range of information on their performance. Where apprentices raise concerns or difficulties at progress review meetings, assessors provide

too little follow-up support and guidance.

- The service does not have full information on the progression and destinations of apprentices once they have completed their programmes.
- Apprentices feel safe, although not all know how to identify and report safeguarding concerns appropriately.
- Apprentices' work meets the professional standards required by employers, and the presentation of their written work is good. Assessors' feedback to apprentices on their work is helpful.
- Assessors use their considerable vocational experience to help apprentices to link learning about theory learning to its practical application at work, such as taking minutes of meetings, so that apprentices can see the relevance and importance of their studies. Apprentices value the individual guidance they receive from their assessors during scheduled visits and through email and telephone contact between visits.
- A minority of apprentices who are employed by the council participate in a good range of enrichment activities such as shadowing councillors and undertaking job swaps during National Apprenticeship Week. Nine apprentices took part in the Brathay Apprenticeship Challenge 2016 to develop their team building, leadership, logistical and communication skills.

Provider details

Unique reference number	55247
Type of provider	Local authority
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	2,251
Principal/CEO	John Wilson
Telephone number	01924 303 313
Website	www.wakefield.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 or above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	0	424	0	136	0	46	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	32	19	26	24	0	0		
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:	Leeds College of Building Wakefield College Rathbone Training							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the service 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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Gill Reay	Ofsted Inspector
Gillian Forrester	Her Majesty's Inspector
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