

Nottinghamshire County Council

Local authority

Inspection dates

16–19 October 2017

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

Summary of key findings

This is a good provider

- Study programme learners achieve their main qualification and functional skills in English and mathematics at high rates and this makes a valuable contribution to meeting their future aspirations.
- Young learners carry out a wide range of work-related and extra-curricular activity that accelerates their development and prepares them well for future employment.
- Adult learners participating in non-accredited courses achieve their planned learning aims well; they improve their personal effectiveness, well-being and future employability very effectively.
- Learners feel safe and enjoy their learning; they usually produce work of a high standard and are motivated to achieve further.
- Taught sessions are of a good or better quality, because tutors plan lessons skilfully and use a wide range of activities to engage learners so that they make good progress.
- Learners who require extra help receive very effective additional support that ensures that they achieve at the same high level as other learners.
- Learners demonstrate excellent behaviour during taught sessions in which tutors and learners treat each other with mutual respect and value each other's opinions.
- Leaders and managers plan the range and location of courses very effectively to meet learners' needs and minimise barriers to participation.
- Leaders and managers use quality assurance arrangements well to raise the standards for learners, although action planning for improvement following lesson observations is not always good enough.
- A small minority of younger learners do not develop a good enough understanding of fundamental British values and the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.
- Young learners' success in achieving high GCSE grades in English and mathematics requires improvement.
- In a small number of cases, tutors do not plan and record adult learners' non-accredited programme achievement targets and progress well enough.
- Attendance on community learning and study programmes is not high enough.

Full report

Information about the provider

- Inspire Culture, Learning and Libraries was established in April 2016. This community benefit society delivers a range of services on behalf of Nottinghamshire County Council. This includes services formerly offered by the Community Learning and Skills Service. At the previous inspection, subcontractors' tutors provided all the family and community learning programmes. During the 2016/17 academic year, the provider's tutors delivered 25% of the family and community learning programmes. Managers have targeted this ratio to grow to 50% of provision in the 2017/18 academic year.
- Nottinghamshire has a population of 810,700. A fifth of the population lives in small towns and villages with a population of under 10,000. Inspire Culture, Learning and Libraries provision operates throughout the county. Some 14% of residents of Nottinghamshire live in the 20% most deprived areas in England. Approximately 14% of the working age population have no qualifications.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and managers should ensure that:
 - the action planning following direct observation of taught sessions is both sufficiently detailed and used to improve tutors' professional practice quickly
 - all tutors consistently plan and record learners' non-accredited programme attainment targets to a high standard that promotes learners' progress and achievement
 - tutors develop all younger learners' understanding of fundamental British values and how to protect themselves from the harmful effects of extremism and radicalisation
 - the rate at which young learners achieve English and mathematics qualifications at GCSE is significantly improved so that their future employment opportunities are increased
 - strategies are introduced to raise and sustain high attendance on all community learning and study programmes sessions.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- During the period when adult and community learning transferred from the council to the provider, leaders and managers managed the change very skilfully. The transitional arrangements were highly effective and there was no adverse effect on learners.
- Course planning is good. Managers give careful attention to designing courses that enable learners to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding, including English, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT). Managers plan courses that make a strong contribution to learners' employability prospects, health and well-being, and personal and social development. They review the provision very effectively to ensure that it is also relevant to local, regional and national priorities.
- Leaders and managers have a clear rationale for ensuring that their own tutors, rather than those of subcontractors, deliver a significant number of adult programmes. This includes placing the service in a strong position to continue to receive public funding for training purposes.
- Leaders and managers ensure that courses are located in areas where there is the greatest need for adult and young people's education. In addition, they use libraries, community centres and other venues throughout the county that are convenient for learners. Many of these learning centres are in areas of high deprivation. The provider agrees there are still some districts where adult programmes are not available. Consequently, they have prioritised future actions and partnership working to establish learning centres that will address this shortfall.
- Leaders and managers have a very detailed annual selection process for appointing subcontractors. Their commitment to working with training providers who offer high-quality adult, community and family learning courses is strong. Managers evaluate subcontractors' bids very carefully and in accordance with detailed criteria.
- Managers make good use of data to check recruitment, retention, attendance and achievement on all programmes. They identify trends quickly and, where necessary, take action to tackle any poor performance. The quality improvement group meets regularly and its work raises standards effectively. Members share examples of best practice readily.
- Managers promote equality, diversity and inclusion very effectively. Tutors and learners work cooperatively and mutual respect is good. Managers' commitment to recruiting learners with significant barriers to learning and to supporting them through their training is very good.
- Managers are passionate about improving continually the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Self-assessment arrangements are good. Subcontractors submit detailed mini self-assessment reports that contribute to the overall self-assessment report and quality improvement plans. However, a number of variations exist in practice. For example, there are inconsistencies in the reporting of learners' progress, achievement and target setting, that self-assessment and quality improvement activities have not identified.
- The approach to observing the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is systematic. Observers produce a detailed report on each observation, listing the strengths and

weaknesses they have identified. However, observers do not always produce suitably detailed action plans following the observation. This limits the effectiveness of the process for bringing about rapid improvements in the quality of taught sessions.

The governance of the provider

- Leaders and managers have effectively strengthened governance arrangements following the recent organisational change. Members of the learning and skills sub-committee have a very good range of experience and expertise. They provide a high standard of challenge and support to leaders and managers. Governors hold managers to account effectively for the performance of programmes. They monitor performance thoroughly to ensure that the service continues to meet local, regional and national priorities.
- Sub-committee members take a keen interest in relevant success indicators. For example, they have requested and used detailed achievement rates for the past three years to track trends and identify performance deficits.
- Members continue to strive to improve the effectiveness of governance. For example, members are considering the advisability of having a combined and clearer data report for adult learning and the 16- to 19-year-old programmes.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The designated safeguarding manager and deputy manager have a very good understanding of safeguarding. They ensure that learners are safe and protected. Managers swiftly and appropriately deal with safeguarding concerns. They follow up all incidents systematically and make referrals to specialist external agencies as required. Incident reporting and recording are efficient and effective. Managers conclude every case appropriately.
- Leaders and managers provide a good range of relevant staff training to keep tutors updated on safeguarding and the 'Prevent' agenda. Tutors do not ensure that all young learners have a sound appreciation of fundamental British values. In addition, tutors fail to raise sufficiently all young learners' appreciation of how to protect themselves from the dangers of radicalisation and extremism.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Tutors provide good teaching and learning that challenge all learners to succeed well beyond their starting point. The standard of taught sessions delivered by the subcontractors' and provider's tutors is equally high.
- Tutors plan sessions well and ensure that learners can apply theory to practical activities adeptly. For example, adults in a drawing class used discussion and observation to explore the relevant skills and techniques that they could use in their own work. Subsequently, learners applied their learning to improve their skills in composition, proportion and the use of pencils, charcoal and chalks.
- Tutors develop learners' understanding of the skills and standards required in the

workplace well. Tutors are well qualified and experienced. They use their industrial and technical knowledge very effectively to reinforce learning within a vocational or commercial context. For example, study programme learners acquire a detailed appreciation of the required health and safety standards for manual handling. As a result, learners participating in work experience at a community 'food bank' could identify and use the correct techniques for moving deliveries.

- Tutors use demonstration well to illustrate the application of practical techniques and the safe use of hand tools. For example, in creative crafts, adult learners apply this learning for decoupage and book-folding tasks to create three-dimensional effects and origami work.
- Tutors utilise a wide range of learning resources and activities, which enhance learners' progress and achievement effectively. For example, tutors use activities such as online quizzes, film clips and presentations creatively to support learning. Tutors use high-quality computer and paper-based resources to encourage learners to participate in independent study. Tutors use resources very effectively to extend learners' knowledge and appreciation of how their learning applies to different contexts.
- Tutors provide learners with helpful support, advice and guidance about using their new and improved skills, for example by signposting learners to available opportunities leading to paid work, including self-employment.
- Tutors expertly use teaching strategies to allow learners to explore equality and diversity topics that lead to changed behaviour. For example, learners on a traineeship programme identified situations where individuals find dealing with unfamiliar places difficult. They showed why this could happen and how they would respond to given scenarios.
- Most learners participate in good-quality review meetings that help them to take ownership over target formulation. For example, a reluctant reader with low levels of English identified targets in how to use the library to borrow books of personal interest. This has motivated him to read a wider range and complexity of texts. However, in a few cases, tutors on non-accredited programmes fail to give sufficient attention to the planning and recording of learners' targets, progress and achievements.
- Not all learners on study programmes develop a good enough understanding of fundamental British values. Tutors do not ensure that all learners fully understand how to protect themselves from the harm posed by radicalisation and extremism. Adult learners have an appropriate understanding of equality and diversity and the application of fundamental British values.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

- Learners on non-accredited programmes develop a wide range of personal and social skills. Adult learners value the opportunity to participate in classes that allows them to interact with others and share experiences. They articulate well how this helps them gain in confidence and explore new learning opportunities that enrich their lives. For many learners, course attendance provides a refuge from social isolation and an opportunity to make new friends.
- Young people quickly acquire an appropriate understanding of acceptable behaviour. This helps them effectively to prepare for the demands of planned work experience and

sustained employment. They demonstrate the application of this learning by responding appropriately to others during their training and in their personal lives. For example, in a study programme class, a learner accidentally spilt display decorative material on the floor. She removed most of the material. Subsequently, she wrote a note to the training centre's cleaner apologising for what remained.

- Learners work together in a culture of tolerance and respect for social and cultural differences. Learning environments are safe. Learners have a good appreciation of how to stay safe when working online. This is particularly the case for younger learners, who explore the topic in detail. For example, learners on a citizenship programme demonstrated a good understanding of potential dangers when using mobile phones and social media accounts. They were able to give examples of how social media can affect an individual's mental health and well-being.
- Tutors provide learners with appropriate help to ensure that they have a clear understanding of the available options once they complete their programme. However, tutors do not always fully explore the breadth of available opportunities. As a result, tutors do not challenge and widen learners' perceptions of all possible career routes consistently.
- Attendance at family learning classroom sessions is high but requires improvement for other programmes. Not all study programme learners understand the importance of regular attendance. Participation in afternoon sessions is low. As a result, overall attendance is below the target set by managers. Punctuality across all programmes is generally good.

Outcomes for learners

Good

- The large majority of learners make good or better progress relative to their starting points. A significant proportion of learners with barriers to achieving, including those with high needs, attain to a standard beyond their anticipated level. This is particularly the case within study programmes where most learners have an identified learning difficulty and/or disability.
- Learners, particularly those on adult programmes, take pride in producing work of a high standard. For example, learners demonstrated the effective application of stacking, grouping and pinning techniques to produce high-quality autumnal floristry displays.
- Achievement of learners' main qualifications on study programmes is high. Learners on non-accredited programmes achieve their agreed learning aims well.
- No significant achievement gaps exist between different learner groups. Learners usually succeed at similar rates regardless of whether the provider or a subcontractor delivers the programme. However, learners attending subcontracted family learning achieve at a higher rate.
- Since the previous inspection, managers have improved the collection and analysis of adult learner cohort data effectively. A high proportion of adult learners are inspired to undertake further learning, including to a higher level of programme or to gain employment. Managers continue to recruit a high number of adult learners who have not recently studied with the provider. Study programme learners progress to their planned next step at a high rate.

- The proportion of learners on study programmes who achieve functional skills in English and mathematics is high. In non-accredited learning, tutors use appropriate teaching strategies that promote learners' skill development well. The proportion of learners on study programmes who achieve a high grade at GCSE English and mathematics requires improvement.

Types of provision

16 to 19 study programmes

Good

- At the time of the inspection, 196 learners were enrolled on study programmes. The majority of learners have a history of not attending education sessions. All learners follow a vocational pathway that includes hospitality, catering, customer service, health and social care, painting and decorating, joinery, plastering and ICT.
- Tutors set high expectations for learners, who demonstrate polite and mutually respectful conduct in classroom sessions and communal areas. Learners have a good understanding of acceptable behaviour that they follow strictly. For example, during a taught session a learner who wished to use her telephone to carry out research asked permission prior to its use.
- Learners' development of English and mathematics skills is good. They understand how to improve and achieve or surpass their minimum target grades in these subjects. As a result, pass rates are improving. Tutors undertake effectively initial assessment of learners' skills development needs at the start of the programme. Tutors use the outcome of this process well to inform teaching strategies so that learners succeed.
- Tutors use teaching and learning activities very effectively to engage and motivate learners. This allow learners to improve and move quickly to more challenging tasks.
- Managers have exploited their external links well to implement successfully all elements of the study programme. Consequently, learners participate in a wide range and variety of work experience and work-related activity. These help them to clarify their career options and develop a good appreciation of the importance of vital employability skills such as punctuality.
- Learners participate in a wide range of extra-curricular activities that contribute well to their personal development. For example, learners explain enthusiastically the benefits to themselves and others of raising money for local community charities.
- Learners receive appropriately personalised information, advice and guidance that allows them to make informed decisions about their future options. The majority of learners have a clear understanding of the available career progression routes. Consequently, a high proportion of learners progress to their desired next step, particularly into further education and employment.
- The proportion of learners who remain for their planned period is too low. However, a significant number of learners leave early due to circumstances beyond managers' control. Managers have implemented successfully a wide range of actions to re-engage learners who leave early. In the current year, the number of retained learners is high.

Adult learning programmes

Good


- At the time of the inspection, 939 learners are on part-time adult learning programmes. This is over 80% of the provider's provision and is predominantly non-accredited community learning with a small family learning programme offer. The largest curriculum areas are preparation for life and work, arts, media and publishing and health, public services and care.
- Leaders have developed the learning programmes effectively so that they meet the needs of the local community, learners and employers. The range and variety of programmes contribute well to enhancing learners' employment prospects, health, well-being and their personal, social, and skills development. Learners value greatly the availability of the learning opportunities within local centres that they can access easily.
- Tutors provide learners with good individual verbal feedback and coaching that ensures that they know how to improve their work. This accelerates learners' progress in achieving their learning objectives significantly. For example, in drawing classes learners improve their skills in composition and proportion quickly. In computing, beginners learn how to use search engines, send emails and produce presentations: skills that they then apply successfully in their work and personal lives.
- Learners improve their social and communication skills well. They gain in confidence and well-being because of meeting new people and forging relationships. This success helps them to cope with further challenges. For example, adult learners participating in a self-awareness session learned to manage their feelings and use appropriate strategies to respond to others.
- Tutors develop learners' skills effectively in working both collaboratively and independently. Learners recognise these are useful skills to prepare them for employment and more fulfilling personal lives. For example, in dressmaking, learners work on individually planned projects, which build on their existing skills. In addition, they help and teach each other by suggesting different ways to complete tasks. The standard of their completed dresses, bags and ties, is high.
- Tutors integrate English and mathematics into learners' main programmes effectively, so they can develop their skills and successfully complete tasks. For example, in family learning parents and children worked out the number of triangles needed for the bunting they were making. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities measured how far their paper aeroplanes flew when learning about air flight.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53674
Type of provider	Local authority
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	8,981
Community learning and skills services manager	Ian Bond
Telephone number	0115 982 3823
Website	www.inspireculture.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+
	147	950	34	1	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	5		-		5			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	9							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Personal Learning Consultancy Advocacy 2 Engagement Bright Ideas Creative Paths DC Education Green Scene Groundworks Trust Life Education NG: She							

A solid light blue rectangular block on the left side of the page, partially overlapping the text.

Now Unlimited
Reach
Community Coaching Company
Workers' Educational Association
ATTFE
Vision West Nottinghamshire College
Rotherham and North Nottinghamshire College
The Nottingham College

Information about this inspection

The community learning and skills services manager, as nominee, assisted the inspection team. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and stakeholders; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions and assessments. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

Nigel Bragg, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Ken Fisher	Ofsted Inspector
Dilys Taylor	Ofsted Inspector
Andrea Dill-Russell	Ofsted Inspector
Kathleen Tyler	Ofsted Inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

Learner View

Learner View is a website where learners can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other learners think about them too. To find out more go to www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk.

Employer View

Employer View is a website where employers can tell Ofsted what they think about their employees' college or provider. They can also see what other employers think about them too. To find out more go to www.employerview.ofsted.gov.uk.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

This publication is available at www.gov.uk/ofsted.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2017