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Ms Judith Kirk  
Deputy Director Education, Employment and Skills  
City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council  
Appleton House  
130 Barkerend Road  
Bradford  
BD3 9BD

Dear Ms Kirk

### **Short inspection of City Of Bradford Metropolitan District Council, Skills for Work**

Following the short inspection on 6 and 7 December 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in March 2014.

#### **This provider continues to be good.**

You, other leaders and managers with responsibility for the council's skills for work (SFW) provision have established a well-articulated vision and a clear strategy which clarify how the service will contribute to two of the six strategic priorities in the Bradford Council Plan. You have maintained the strengths identified at the previous inspection and made good progress in addressing areas for improvement.

Leaders have ensured that community education provision is delivered in the areas of the city where residents can benefit from it the most. Learners from these communities who follow family learning programmes gain valuable skills. They increase in confidence to help their children to prepare for, and participate in, their education in local schools. Many of these learners, who very often have not participated in education or training for considerable lengths of time, progress onto accredited courses as a result of their positive experiences on family learning courses.

Leaders promote accredited courses well in English, mathematics and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) to Bradford residents who lack the skills and confidence to find work and engage in community life. A high proportion of those who undertake courses achieve qualifications. In addition, they gain valuable skills that increase their chances of obtaining work or progressing onto further education and training programmes with other learning providers in the city.

The service provides carefully planned apprenticeships that align with and meet the skills development needs of local employers. This enables residents of all ages to gain the skills and qualifications that they need to improve their career prospects. The SFW service works closely with other education and training providers in Bradford to ensure that apprenticeship provision across the city meets the priorities of businesses and the local enterprise partnership.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and managers have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that action is taken to safeguard all learners. The SFW manager has undergone appropriate designated safeguarding lead training, and she ensures the clear communication of safeguarding policies and procedures to staff and learners.

All staff have undergone mandatory child protection, safeguarding and 'Prevent' duty training. In addition, many take up the wide-ranging opportunities available in the SFW service and across the council to improve their awareness about current safeguarding and counter-terrorism issues. Recent training has covered subjects such as forced marriage, modern slavery and female genital mutilation. As a result of this extensive training, staff increase their skills and confidence to discuss safeguarding issues in lessons. This ensures that learners improve their awareness about how to keep themselves safe. Tutors and assessors successfully ensure that safeguarding has a high priority in learning activities, with a strong focus on online safety.

Staff use their knowledge and understanding of safeguarding well to identify the small number of concerns that arise and use the clear and well-publicised procedures that are in place to report these. Logs of safeguarding incidents, which are held securely by managers, record actions taken, including where referrals have been made to other specialists such as social workers.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders and managers maintain an effective oversight of the quality of provision. They use feedback from employers and learners effectively to inform their evaluation about the impact of the provision. Leaders and managers take swift action to bring about improvements when these are identified. For example, when leaders recognised that aspects of the delivery of apprenticeships in health and social care were weak, they ensured that underperformance by staff in the team was dealt with swiftly. Through their good links with partners, leaders have identified that other providers in the city are better placed to deliver health and social care apprenticeships. Consequently, the service has not recruited new apprentices in this vocational area since May 2017. Leaders and managers have evaluated accurately the reasons for the slight decline in adult learning achievement rates in the previous year. They rightly recognised that rather than a decline in the quality of provision, this was the result of ceasing the delivery of short qualifications and encouraging more learners to take more demanding full functional skills qualifications. Achievement rates on function skills qualifications remain high and above the average for similar providers.

- Senior leaders within the council maintain a good oversight of the performance of the SFW service and provide good support and challenge to leaders. The deputy director ensures that the elected member with portfolio responsibility for employment and skills is briefed on key aspects of the service's work. However, although plans are in place to establish a clear reporting and accountability framework for formal governance of the service, to be introduced early in 2018, elected members do not currently maintain a sufficiently comprehensive oversight of the performance of the service or scrutinise the outcomes it achieves.
- Leaders and managers use performance management arrangements, including observations of teaching, learning and assessment, well to help staff to improve their practice. These arrangements are effective in sustaining the service's good quality of provision. Reviews of staff performance are comprehensive and targets agreed with staff are appropriately developmental. Managers provide tutors and assessors with high levels of support, including expert mentoring. Staff appreciate and are motivated well by the opportunities that they have to undertake training to support them in their role. These include enabling new staff to take teaching qualifications.
- Tutors on family learning programmes use very effective learning diaries to record initial assessment outcomes and set clear targets for learners. In addition to learning targets, tutors set learners appropriate personal development targets, such as listening carefully to instructions and asking more questions if clarification is required. Tutors provide learners with clear and helpful feedback on work that they complete, which ensures that learners know what they need to do to improve their work. Tutors record accurately the progress that learners make towards achieving their targets. Learners refer to their targets and the feedback that they receive frequently. This helps them to keep track of how well they are progressing and what they need to do further to achieve their learning goals.
- In 2016/17, the proportion of apprentices who completed their programmes within the planned timescales decreased, although it remained above the average for similar providers. The decline was mainly due to the slow progress made by apprentices following health and social care programmes. As a result of improvements that managers have made to the organisation and delivery of these programmes, the proportion of apprentices that now make good progress has increased. For example, managers identified that the slow completion of functional skills qualifications was a significant factor contributing to too many apprentices not completing within planned timescales. As a result, managers now ensure that functional skills are delivered early in apprentices' programmes. Assessors now monitor apprentices' progress very carefully and take early action to support those who are at risk of falling behind. Managers recognise that it is a priority for them to ensure that the proportion of apprentices who complete within the planned timescale continues to increase.
- Managers and tutors provide adults with helpful information, advice and guidance both before they enrol onto courses and during their learning activities. This enables learners to make appropriate choices about their learning and the qualifications that they should take to support them to progress to their next

steps in learning and employment. As a result of participating in English, mathematics and ESOL courses, adult learners are successful in developing the skills, behaviours and attitudes that they need to succeed in achieving qualifications, progress to further learning at a higher level, find employment or engage in volunteering in the community. Through their learning, adults become more independent and increase in confidence to support their families and participate in society. However, managers do not collect and analyse quickly enough information about the learning activities that adult learners move on to with other providers, or the employment that they obtain. This impedes their ability to evaluate thoroughly whether the provision is meeting effectively the needs of all the adults who use the service.

- Leaders, managers and staff promote British values very effectively across the service. Consequently, learners and staff exemplify these values by treating each another with respect and tolerance. Staff create an inclusive and welcoming environment for learners in the diverse venues where learning is delivered. Tutors model appropriate attitudes and behaviours well, and encourage learners to consider how they can contribute further to community life. Learners work collaboratively and support each other well. They take turns to make contributions in lessons and respect each other's points of view.

### **Next steps for the provider**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the plans that have been proposed to establish a reporting and accountability framework for governance of the service are implemented without delay
- the changes that they have made to the management and delivery of apprenticeships result in a significantly higher proportion of apprentices who complete within planned timescales
- the service collects comprehensive and timely information about the next steps in education, training and employment that adults move on to so that they can evaluate thoroughly whether the provision is meeting effectively the needs of all adults who use the service, and make any necessary changes.

I am copying this letter to the Education and Skills Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Fraser  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Ofsted Inspector were assisted by the skills for work manager. We met with leaders of the SFW service and senior leaders

within City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council. We observed lessons and assessments taking place. We held meetings with, or spoke to, managers, tutors, assessors, learners and apprentices. We scrutinised learners' work and assessment records. We scrutinised key documents relating to the provider's strategy and implementation plans, self-assessment and improvement planning and safeguarding. We considered the views of learners through discussions during learning sessions and through the responses received through Ofsted's online questionnaire.