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Ms Sharon Mullen
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Employment & Skills
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Dear Ms Mullen

Short inspection of Nottingham City Council

Following the short inspection on 5 March 2018, 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 February 2015.

This provider continues to be good.

You, senior leaders and managers continue to make a valuable contribution to the council's stated aim of placing an individual's needs at the heart of everything it does. Family learning programmes support well the wider council strategic objectives, including improving the health, employment and future prospects of Nottingham City residents. Good management of the family programmes has ensured that the large majority of learners continue to progress and achieve at a high rate. Your use of good local partnership working has facilitated the establishment of venues that offer ease of access for learners, at a time that suits them.

You have continued to develop the family learning offer by successfully sourcing and using additional funding to enhance its effectiveness, for example through the introduction of a programme to raise adults' understanding of how they and their children can stay safe while using the internet. Managers have carefully based their actions for the future provision of English and mathematics courses on a sound understanding of funding methodology.

You are fully aware of the programmes' strengths and areas for improvement. Progress since the previous inspection in addressing identified weaknesses has been good. You have effectively enhanced tutors' professional practice so that learners continue to receive a high-quality learning experience.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The venues for programme delivery are suitably risk-assessed. They provide a protected environment for learners and tutors. You have ensured that all tutors are subject to relevant vetting as part of the recruitment process. Subsequently, managers appropriately review these checks on a regular and frequent basis. In addition, managers make sure that tutors have completed relevant training designed to enhance their professional practice.

Learners report feeling safe. The proportion of identified safeguarding concerns is relatively low. Learners know how to report any incidents where they feel unsafe. Tutors and managers deal with reported concerns swiftly and in confidence. Learners have an adequate understanding of fundamental British values. They can identify what the values are and how they can apply them within their lives. However, not all learners had a good enough appreciation of the 'Prevent' duty and the risks associated with extremism and radicalisation. Learners demonstrate an appropriate awareness of e-safety. Since the previous inspection, leaders have effectively enhanced the provision to better support learners' development in this area. Relevant filters to prevent the inappropriate use of the internet are in place. However, monitoring arrangements require strengthening for the very small number of school-based computers used by adult learners.

Inspection findings

- Managers expend much effort in collecting useful and detailed information on the effect family learning has on participating learners. Your analysis shows that learners make good progress in their personal and social development. For example, a significant majority of learners become more confident in helping their children succeed in their schoolwork. Learners are more empowered to make appropriate career decisions after successfully completing their programme. This has contributed to their confidence in making life-changing choices such as applying for – and gaining – employment or further-education places. Many learners have made more friends and become more active in community activities following programme participation. This has contributed to their enhanced feeling of well-being.
- You make effective use of very detailed data reports to manage the provision. This also supports the close and effective monitoring of subcontractors for performance management purposes. You recognise that the inclusion of established targets in the reports would significantly aid this process. Managers use data well to inform the formulation and updating of the detailed improvement action plan. Their monitoring and review of the plan secure a good range and pace of improvements for all learners. Participation of males in family learning, particularly with the termination of programmes held in Her Majesty's Prison Nottingham, has declined. You have addressed this in the action plan but have identified that the actions to engage male learners are not specific enough. Timescales for action completion are not challenging enough. This has slowed the identification and implementation of improvement initiatives.

- A high proportion of learners following non-accredited family learning programmes achieve their learning goals. Achievement rates for accredited English and mathematics qualifications are high. Current learners are making good progress in improving their competence in the use of English and mathematics. They are quickly able to apply this learning to support their children's literacy and numeracy skills development.
- Generally, the variances in the performance of different groups remain similar to those identified at the previous inspection. However, this relates to cohorts with very low numbers. Hence, a small change in the number of learners achieving has a proportionately large effect on the comparator ratios. A high proportion of learners complete their programme. However, attendance for a very small minority of sessions requires improvement.
- Subcontractors' tutors deliver all teaching, learning and assessment, which are of a good quality. Tutors are experienced and skilled in teaching family learning to a wide range of ability groups. They adeptly help each learner make good progress at their own pace and within the planned timescale.
- Tutors very effectively develop learners' independent and collaborative learning skills. For example, learners collectively support each other well to improve their English speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. Learners work effectively in pairs and as a team on tutor-set tasks. Tutors ensure that learners practise their skills so that they can successfully complete the individual set problems. For example, learners search for correct word spellings and meanings using a thesaurus and solve mathematical tasks by means of a calculator.
- Managers have significantly improved the availability of digital and information technology to support learning. A programme of staff development supports its appropriate use by tutors to enhance learning. However, you know that not all tutors are yet fully confident in exploiting the available technology to enhance all learners' life chances.
- Tutors use good arrangements to recognise and record learners' progress and achievement (RARPA). All learners receive an appropriate initial assessment of their development needs that tutors use well to agree and set targets. Tutors clearly identify and provide relevant additional learning support for learners. They skilfully guide learners during target-setting so that they take full ownership over the agreed outcomes. Tutors use the RARPA process to effectively track, monitor and record learners' progress. The use of RARPA to promote learners' English and mathematics skills development is good. Learners understand the RARPA process. They know how it allows them to gauge the progress they are making against their personalised targets. Managers' use of direct observations of taught sessions makes a valuable contribution to improving standards of RARPA use.
- The quality of information, advice and guidance received by learners is good. Knowledgeable tutors provide learners with a good range of information and direct them to additional help where needed. Family learning programmes benefit from the good involvement of the National Careers Service. This has contributed to the raised aspirations of many learners. A significant number of learners have been motivated to pursue higher-level courses and qualifications following

completion of their family learning programme. For example, one learner is applying to train as a primary school teaching assistant.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all learners develop an appropriate understanding of the 'Prevent' duty and the risks associated with extremism and radicalisation
- the very small number of school-based computers used by adult learners are subject to rigorous monitoring
- managers make full use of targets to support performance monitoring and that timescales for action completion are appropriately challenging
- learners' session attendance is consistently high
- managers effectively support tutors to exploit confidently the available technology so that they enhance learning during taught sessions.

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

Yours sincerely

Nigel Bragg
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, you assisted us as nominee. We met with managers and tutors. We used individual interviews and online questionnaires to gather the views of all learners. These views are reflected within this letter. We reviewed adult learners' assessed work and observed taught sessions. Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of key documents, including those relating to achievement data, the planning of training, quality assurance, performance monitoring and safeguarding. In addition, we took account of your organisation's policies, procedures, development plans and the previous inspection report.