

# North Yorkshire County Council

Local authority

#### **Inspection dates**

4–7 June 2019

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

## Summary of key findings

#### This is a good provider

- Leaders and managers develop the curriculum effectively to enable residents in North Yorkshire who are in most need to gain the skills that they require to find work and improve their life chances and well-being.
- Leaders and managers have taken effective action to improve provision for adult learners and to ensure that learners who have high needs experience good provision.
- Teachers know their learners well and use this knowledge to provide flexible learning and assessment which engage learners' interests and help learners to develop their knowledge and skills well.
- Learners are clear about what they want to achieve and how and when they will do this. They engage well in establishing their starting points, setting their own goals and measuring their progress towards achieving them.
- Teachers identify quickly any additional learning and specialist support needs that learners have. As a result, learners who receive support make progress, manage their behaviours and reduce their anxieties.

- Learners who have high needs benefit from a well-tailored programme with high-quality facilities and resources and skilled staff. They participate fully in their learning, develop their independence and prepare well for the future.
- The proportion of adult learners who achieve qualifications, particularly in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT), has improved markedly since the previous inspection.
- Adult learners increase in confidence and develop their self-esteem. They engage more actively as citizens in their communities.
- Leaders and managers have been slow to bring about improvements to apprenticeships. This area of provision has not improved sufficiently since the previous inspection.
- Too few apprentices achieve their qualifications and, of those who do, too many go beyond the planned time.
- The attendance of adult learners is too low. Leaders and managers do not maintain a sufficient overview of attendance to identify concerns about attendance and take swift action.



# Full report

#### Information about the provider

- North Yorkshire County Council's Adult Learning and Skills Service (ALSS) delivers learning programmes across the county for adults, apprentices and learners who have high needs. The seven district council areas are organised into three areas for the purposes of management and delivery of the provision.
- North Yorkshire is the largest county by area in England. Although the county has a lower rate of unemployment than the rest of England, it comprises diverse communities characterised by contrasting forms of both affluence and deprivation. Much of the county is rural, where access to services for some residents is difficult.

## What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Leaders should improve the coordination and management of the two separate teams within the council that provide apprenticeships. They should ensure that managers share best practice and improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment on all apprenticeships that the council provides.
- Managers of apprenticeship programmes need to ensure that assessors assess apprentices' starting points accurately so that they can plan high-quality and challenging learning programmes which ensure that apprentices successfully complete their apprenticeships within the planned time.
- Leaders and managers must ensure that they receive accurate and timely information about the attendance of adult learners so that they can identify the reasons for nonattendance and take swift action where attendance needs to improve.



## **Inspection judgements**

#### Effectiveness of leadership and management

- Leaders communicate well their clear strategic direction for the ALSS. They focus available resources effectively to establish a curriculum that targets the most disadvantaged and vulnerable residents of the county. Leaders and managers carefully consider the range of courses and the locations where delivery takes place, based on a thorough analysis and understanding of local need.
- Leaders and managers have taken effective action to improve provision for adult learners since the previous inspection. They use their funding for adult learning effectively to provide programmes which enable learners to acquire the knowledge and skills to find work and improve their life chances and well-being. The curriculum focuses well on supporting learners to improve their skills and gain qualifications in English, mathematics and ICT.
- Leaders, elected members and managers have successfully completed a county-wide review of the provision for learners who have high needs. They have developed good partnerships with a range of stakeholders, subcontractors, employers and services in the local area. This work has resulted in a well-designed curriculum that meets the individual needs of learners and is responsive to the regional and local context.
- Leaders and managers develop and sustain very effective partnerships with a wide range of employers and agencies such as Jobcentre Plus, National Health Service trusts, community centres, nurseries and voluntary groups. They have used these links to extend the provision into areas of the most need. For example, they offer targeted provision for the homeless and those experiencing poor mental health and make provision more accessible to learners.
- The management of subcontractors is good. Leaders carefully identify and engage with organisations that add value to the range of specialist provision, particularly in respect of programmes for learners who have high needs. Managers deal effectively with any underperformance of subcontractors and renew contracts based on the achievement of positive outcomes for learners.
- Leaders and managers ensure that learners and apprentices receive impartial, accurate and timely careers advice and guidance. This enables learners and apprentices to make well-informed choices about which learning programme to take to prepare for their next steps in education or employment. Learners who have high needs are provided with a wide range of options and advised to discuss these with their parents or carers. However, in a few instances, the advice does not help these learners enough to choose their best options about next steps into supported employment.
- Managers have improved significantly the management of teachers' performance. Observations of teaching carried out by specialist teachers and curriculum managers result in detailed action plans, setting out what teachers need to do to improve their practice. Curriculum managers closely monitor the progress that teachers make in improving their practice, providing continuing professional development and support. Managers offer development workshops for all staff, which include activities designed



around the themes arising from observations of teaching. However, attendance at these workshops is not mandatory.

- Senior leaders are not sufficiently critical when appraising the work of managers. The targets that they set for managers do not focus well enough on driving improvements to the service. While many aspects of the provision have improved since the previous inspection, a few weaknesses such as the quality of apprenticeships and the low attendance of adults have not been overcome.
- Leaders and managers have not acted quickly enough to bring about improvements to apprenticeships. The management and delivery of apprenticeships is split between the ALSS and the council's staff training and learning team. The quality of provision that apprentices experience varies considerably, with too much requiring improvement.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders' and managers' access to timely data about learners' progress and achievements has improved significantly. However, leaders and managers still do not receive timely information about the attendance of adult learners. As a result, they are unable to identify swiftly enough the reasons for non-attendance or the courses and locations where attendance is too low to enable them to bring about improvements.

## The governance of the provider

- Governance has improved since the previous inspection. Corporate directors and elected members have established a formal governing body with subgroups to focus on specialist areas such as teaching, learning and assessment and special educational needs and disabilities. Representatives external to the council add valuable skills, knowledge and experience to the board. However, attendance at governors' meetings is low.
- Governors receive detailed reports about the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and learners' progress and achievements. Reports provide them with an accurate understanding about the quality of provision within the ALSS and subcontracted provision. As a result, they make well-informed decisions about the development of the strategy for the ALSS. However, governors still lack the confidence to challenge aspects of performance, reducing their effectiveness in holding leaders fully to account.

#### Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and managers ensure that effective policies and procedures are in place and implemented to safeguard learners, including appropriate arrangements to ensure the safe recruitment of staff.
- All staff have completed appropriate training in safeguarding for their roles. As a result, learners and apprentices have a good understanding of how to stay safe, including of online safety and the arrangements in place to protect them. Recent communication with staff and learners has raised their awareness about the dangers of 'county lines' drug-related gang activities. In response to feedback from learners, the designated safeguarding lead obtained resources for safeguarding training which use language that is more easily understood by learners.



Staff and learners know how to report any concerns relating to safeguarding. The designated safeguarding lead maintains up-to-date records of all safeguarding incidents. Any reported incidents are investigated thoroughly, but records do not show when a concern has been closed. Leaders and managers have carried out a thorough risk assessment to support the implementation of a 'Prevent' duty action plan. However, the plan lacks reference to specific local issues, such as recent arrests for terrorism in Northallerton.

#### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

- Teachers and assessors know their learners well. They use this knowledge to plan and deliver learning and assessment that is tailored to learners' needs and which engages learners and helps them to develop good knowledge and skills. Teachers understand learners' starting points, their difficulties with learning and their learning preferences, and they use this information well to plan learning. Learners can start courses throughout the year, and teachers expertly accommodate new learners into existing groups.
- Teachers carefully engage learners in group activities and discussions. They skilfully encourage learners, including those who are mandated to attend by Jobcentre Plus, to develop their ability to reflect on interesting issues and communicate with others. If learners are unable to attend, because of ill health or other reasons, teachers send them work and support them to continue learning. This enables most learners to make good progress.
- On English and mathematics courses, teachers spend time individually with learners and apprentices to address their misconceptions and areas for development. As a result, learners and apprentices on these courses make good progress in developing their English and mathematical skills.
- On the community learning programme, teachers recognise and record learners' progress effectively. On programmes that lead to qualifications, teachers use individual learning plans well. Learners are clear about what they want to achieve and how and when they will do this. They engage well in establishing their starting points, setting their own goals and measuring their progress towards achieving these.
- Teachers and assessors routinely and effectively check in lessons to ensure that learners and apprentices understand new concepts and are comfortable discussing and applying these before moving on to the next topic. Teachers use questioning and class discussions well to build the level of complexity and, through this, extend learning.
- Learners on adult learning programmes and learners who have high needs benefit from the quick identification of any learning, psychological or physical support needs. They receive effective support to meet these additional needs.
- Teachers and support staff use a range of effective strategies to help learners manage their behaviours and reduce anxiety, so that learners can participate in learning and make progress. Staff quickly identify often complex difficulties which present barriers to learning for a few learners. They plan effectively to help learners overcome these barriers and minimise disruption to learning and progress. Teachers and support staff use a wide range of communication methods that enable learners who have high needs to participate fully in learning and join in discussions.



- Teachers and assessors promote equality of opportunity, respect for diversity and British values effectively in lessons. Staff, learners and apprentices show respect for each other and for their peers. Discriminatory behaviour and language are not tolerated.
- The large majority of teachers and assessors provide learners and apprentices with helpful feedback in lessons and on completed work which helps them to improve their work and make good progress. However, in a few cases, teachers' and assessors' feedback is not helpful enough. As a result, a small minority of learners and apprentices make slow progress in improving their work and achieving what they are capable of.
- In a small minority of cases, teachers do not do enough to ensure that learners receive literacy support to succeed on their programmes. For example, learners who speak English as a second language taking courses to improve their skills in other subjects, such as mathematics or ICT, do not consistently receive the support that they need to understand important terminology or complex instructions.
- In lessons where attendance is particularly low, this restricts the ability of the few learners who do attend to have meaningful discussions and share experiences about topics.
- Although managers have been successful in bringing about many improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, a few weaknesses, particularly relating to apprenticeships, have not been resolved. Until very recently, assessors on health and social care standards-based apprenticeships did not effectively establish apprentices' starting points or clarify to them how and when they would develop new skills.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

- Through participating in learning programmes that are targeted effectively, vulnerable residents of the county develop employability skills and improve their opportunities, self-esteem and well-being. Managers have increased the range of provision for learners with poor mental health, helping these learners to cope better with life and work. Courses targeted at the long-term unemployed help them overcome barriers to finding jobs by improving their confidence and self-presentation.
- Teachers provide adult learners with clear and helpful feedback about their progress in improving their confidence and developing their personal and social skills.
- Learners and apprentices behave well in lessons. They treat each other with courtesy and take an interest in the well-being of their peers. Learners and apprentices discuss respectfully opinions and viewpoints which differ from their own.
- Learners receive good support to develop their understanding about how to stay safe, including when using the internet and social media. They improve their knowledge about the personal benefits of making healthy choices about diet and exercise.
- Learners who have high needs make good progress in developing the skills and behaviours that they need to become more involved and independent in everyday life in modern Britain.
- Managers provide good training and resources that enable teachers and assessors to raise learners' and apprentices' awareness about a range of subjects relating to British values, diversity, safeguarding and the risks of radicalisation. Most teachers and assessors integrate these subjects well into their teaching and assessment activities. As a result,



learners and apprentices make good progress in developing their knowledge and understanding.

- Learning and skills advisors work closely with teachers, local job centres and other partners, including other departments of the local authority, to provide learners with impartial support and advice. Learners receive effective advice about how programmes can help them progress to their next steps and meet their career ambitions. They receive information and advice about the jobs that they can aim for.
- The attendance of adult learners is too low. Persistent absentees make slower progress in acquiring the skills and knowledge that they need to complete their courses successfully.
- Assessors do not do enough to inform apprentices about the skills that they will develop through their programme. As a result, apprentices do not recognise the personal steps and actions they could take to support their own development.
- Job coaches do not consistently provide support for those learners with high needs who could progress into employment earlier in their programme than initially planned. As a result, the progress of these learners into employment is unnecessarily delayed.

#### **Outcomes for learners**

- Most adult learners and learners who have high needs make significant progress in developing the skills that they need to make progress and achieve. Through the skills that they gain, learners engage more actively as citizens in their communities and access and use relevant services.
- The proportion of adult learners who achieve their qualifications has improved markedly in the past two years. Improvements have been greatest in the large number of programmes which help learners to prepare for life and work and improve their basic skills in English, mathematics and ICT.
- A high proportion of learners on community learning courses complete their courses and achieve their learning objectives. Many of these learners progress onto further learning, often taking qualifications.
- A high proportion of learners who achieve qualifications progress to higher-level learning. Many use the skills that they have gained to obtain work or apprenticeships or to be more effective in their current jobs.
- Almost all apprentices who complete and achieve their apprenticeships remain in or gain permanent employment. Many apprentices gain promotions or are trusted to work in positions of higher responsibility.
- Too few apprentices achieve their qualifications and, of those who do, too many take longer than the planned time to do so.
- In the previous year, too many of the small number of adult learners who used advanced learning loans to take level 3 and, in a few cases, level 4 qualifications either left their course early or did not achieve their qualification. Although improving in the current year, the proportion who have stayed on their course remains too low on courses in supporting teaching and learning in schools, business administration, and accountancy.



## Types of provision

#### Adult learning programmes

- Just over 1,500 learners are enrolled on adult learning programmes. Of these, about a third are enrolled on accredited part-time courses, with the rest following short, non-accredited community learning courses. The large majority of learners follow programmes in English, mathematics, ICT and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). Learners also take programmes in health and social care, supporting teaching and learning in schools, business, accountancy and retail. A small number of learners are in receipt of advanced learning loans.
- Leaders and managers have a clearly defined strategy for the effective use of the funding that the service receives for the different strands of adult learning provision. They have continued to work effectively with partners to develop the curriculum to ensure that it meets the diverse needs of learners across North Yorkshire. Leaders and managers use community learning funding to meet the needs of those residents who can benefit from it the most.
- Most teachers know their learners well and use this knowledge to plan learning effectively so that it meets learners' needs. They create a welcoming and non-threatening environment, where learners feel safe and are well supported. As a result, the large majority of learners make good progress.
- Through participating in well-planned learning activities which engage their interest, learners develop the knowledge and skills that they need to prepare them for employment and to live fulfilling lives. For example, learners taking courses at level 1 and 2 to help them find work as teaching assistants learn about different school structures and the types of work to which they could aspire. Learners taking ESOL courses develop their skills and confidence to speak, read and write using the English language.
- Teachers recognise and record well the progress of learners in community education. They use individual learning plans effectively for learners on courses leading to qualifications. Teachers ensure that learners engage effectively in setting their own goals and in reviewing the progress that they make. As a result, learners are clear about what they want to achieve and when they will do this.
- Teachers create welcoming and non-threatening learning environments where learners feel safe and well supported. This makes them keen to learn. Teachers use a range of effective strategies to assess learners' progress. Most teachers provide feedback in a way which helps learners to improve and grow in confidence.
- Learners receive helpful advice and guidance before they start and during their time on courses. This helps them to make well-informed decisions about moving back into learning and about their next steps.
- A high proportion of learners achieve their learning objectives. Those who take qualifications now achieve well, demonstrating that improvements have been made in this provision since the previous inspection.



- The attendance of adult learners is too low. Managers do not receive timely information about the reasons for non-attendance or the courses and locations where attendance is too low to enable them to make improvements.
- In a small minority of lessons, learners lack the necessary literacy skills to keep pace with the learning. This hinders their ability to participate fully and make good progress.
- In a small minority of lessons, teachers do not plan activities that are sufficiently challenging. As a result, learners in these lessons do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- The proportion of learners who achieve is too low on a small number of courses. This is particularly the case on courses at level 3.

## Apprenticeships

## **Requires improvement**

- Currently, 165 apprentices are following programmes, of whom 93 are following standards-based apprenticeships in health and social care at either level 2 or level 3. All these apprentices are employed by North Yorkshire Council and their programmes are provided by the council's staff training and learning team. The other 72 apprentices are following apprenticeship frameworks. Their programmes are provided by staff who work in the ALSS. They are enrolled on frameworks in business and management, children and young people's workforce, and health and social care.
- Although leaders and managers have ensured that programmes meet the requirements of apprenticeships, they have made insufficient progress in establishing good-quality apprenticeship provision across the two strands of apprenticeships that the council delivers. Managers are not always fully aware of their own or other managers' responsibilities across the apprenticeship provision. Leaders have not clearly defined which staff are accountable for implementing quality improvement procedures.
- Too few apprentices achieve their qualifications. Of those who do, too many go beyond the planned time. Leaders have implemented a detailed plan to improve achievement on apprenticeships that the ALSS delivers, but their actions have not yet led to sufficient improvements in all subjects. The proportion of apprentices who successfully complete their apprenticeships is improving, from a low starting point two years ago.
- On health and social care standards-based apprenticeships, managers have recently improved the way that assessors establish apprentices' starting points. However, where apprentices started programmes prior to these improvements, assessors did not plan programmes to meet apprentices' individual circumstances. These apprentices have only recently become aware of the full demands of their programme.
- Apprentices in health and social care have a good awareness of the technical and legal knowledge that they are gaining through planned off-the-job training. However, assessors have not provided them with enough clarity about how they will develop and apply new practical skills in their work.
- Assessors are very flexible in planning to meet apprentices' individual needs. They provide them with structured off-the-job learning activities that meet their personal and work circumstances well. Taught lessons take place in a variety of venues across the county to enable apprentices to have good access to learning. In addition, apprentices have access to high-quality online learning materials. Apprentices who need to achieve qualifications in



English, mathematics or ICT join well-planned and well-taught classes in their local area, alongside adult learners.

- Apprentices' employers contribute very effectively by providing opportunities for apprentices to develop their knowledge, skills and behaviours in the workplace. Employers work closely with assessors to alter apprentices' work-schedules and allocated tasks, so that apprentices can learn and develop new skills. They place apprentices with experienced staff, who provide them with good support to understand their job roles better.
- Assessors provide apprentices with helpful feedback on their written coursework, ensuring that they know the areas where they need to improve. Assessors provide good support to help apprentices do better.
- Apprentices who complete their programmes develop occupationally specific skills, knowledge and behaviours well. This attainment enables them to progress into successful employment, with many gaining promotions or being given work in positions of higher responsibility.

#### **Provision for learners with high needs**

- There are 59 learners on programmes for learners who have high needs. Eight learners are aged 16 to 18 and 51 are adults under the age of 25. All learners are enrolled on foundation programmes at entry level. The foundation curriculum provides opportunities for learners to study on three pathways: personal progress, independent living and employability. There are 13 learners on programmes provided by subcontractors.
- Leaders and managers use funding for learners who have high needs well to provide high-quality facilities, specialist resources, assistive technology and skilled staff for all learners, including those on subcontracted provision. These resources enable learners to participate fully in their learning and develop their independence, thus preparing them well for the future.
- Most teachers use learners' starting points effectively to plan and deliver learning activities that challenge learners and prepare them well for their next steps. Teachers know their learners well and use the outcomes recorded in their education, health and care plans to break down tasks into smaller targets that learners achieve well. Learning activities allow learners to make effective links to their everyday lives and develop skills and knowledge for their roles in the wider community and practical adult life.
- Staff create an inclusive environment, which enables all learners to participate fully. Learners are confident about sharing their views and contribute to discussions enthusiastically. They are not afraid of getting something wrong or making mistakes. Staff support learners well, using a broad range of communication methods that help learners to participate in learning activities and discussions.
- By participating in a range of activities, learners develop effective practical and personal skills which they can apply in their personal lives. Activities include creative crafts, gardening and landscape maintenance, drama shows, shopping, kneading pizza dough, and simple household cookery and cleaning tasks. Learners develop skills and confidence in travelling more independently to local facilities and learning centres. They develop ICT



skills by using computers, electronic tablets and internet search engines to produce work and promotional leaflets for enterprise projects.

- Learners develop a good awareness of how to make healthy lifestyle choices, including in personal relationships. They benefit from a broad range of enrichment activities that develop their independence, well-being and emotional resilience. Teachers and support staff use a variety of strategies to reduce learners' anxieties and manage behaviour very effectively.
- Teachers promote equality and celebrate diversity well in lessons and projects. Through these activities, learners develop a good understanding about a range of local and international topics. Learners are polite and respectful in sessions.
- Learners who participate in work experience or work placements develop their employability skills well. This experience supports them to plan for and progress to appropriate work-related activities at the end of their programme.
- Through the curriculum, learners improve their awareness and understanding of risks to their personal safety, including when travelling and when online. Learners demonstrate a good awareness of health and safety in lessons.
- Learners develop their practical writing and mathematical skills well. Activities and enterprise projects allow learners to build on their skills in these subjects and help to prepare them for greater independence in their everyday lives.
- Learners receive good advice and guidance at the start of their programme. Transition arrangements help learners to settle quickly when moving from other provision. However, learners who can progress into employment earlier in their programme than initially planned do not receive the support that they need from job coaches to help them prepare for their future destinations and understand the skills that they will require.
- A small proportion of staff are too quick to intervene and provide support for learners during activities. For example, they collect equipment and prepare items in practical lessons for learners who could do this themselves. At times, they answer questions for learners too quickly, without allowing the learners time to process the information and respond. These inappropriate interventions do not help learners to achieve as well as they could.
- In a minority of lessons, staff do not plan their input or use of learning resources so that they are appropriate for all learners. For example, a small minority of staff use language that is too difficult for learners to understand. On a very small number of occasions, staff use age-inappropriate and stereotypical materials which do not reflect learners' lives, local communities or non-traditional families.
- During progress reviews with learners, teachers do not consistently use information about the full range of skills that learners have achieved to plan their next steps. For a small proportion of learners, this slows the progress that they make towards developing the life and work skills of which they are capable.



# **Provider details**

Unique reference number	50229
Type of provider	Local authority
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	3,105
Principal/CEO	Alistair Gourlay
Telephone number	01609 533319
Website	www.northyorks.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			16–18	16–18 19+		19+	16–18	19+	
(excluding apprenticeships)	-	829	-	594	-	74	-	6	
Number of apprentices by	Intermediat		e Adva		inced		Higher		
apprenticeship level and age	16–18 19		)+	+ 16–18		16-	-18	19+	
	8	5	8	13	86	-		-	
Number of traineeships	16–19 -			19+			Total		
				-			-		
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-								
Number of learners for which the provider receives high- needs funding	59								
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Rural Arts, Yorkshire Yorkshire in Business Blueberry Academy Northdale Agriculture Disability Action Horticap Cockleshells Paperworks Easiworks								



# Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the team leader, quality and curriculum, 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**

Malcolm Fraser, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Bob Busby	Ofsted Inspector
Marina Gaze	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Scanlan	Ofsted Inspector
Tracey Mace-Akroyd	Her Majesty's Inspector
Gillian Forrester	Ofsted Inspector
Graham Cunningham	Ofsted Inspector



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