

# Short inspection of City of York Council

Inspection dates:

26–27 November 2019

## **Outcome**

City of York Council continues to be a good provider.

## **Information about this provider**

City of York Council provides education and training as York Learning, which is in the communities, education and skills directorate of the council. York Learning currently provides learning programmes to 146 adult learners, with just under half studying courses at level 1 and just over half studying at level 2. The majority of learners are studying courses in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). There are 139 learners funded through advanced learner loans and 558 learners following community learning programmes, of whom around a third are on family learning courses. There are 80 apprentices, two thirds of whom are on level 3 programmes and just over half of whom are studying the children and young people's workforce apprenticeship framework. York Learning makes provision for 87 learners who have high needs to follow programmes preparing them for independent living and work; most learners study with partner organisations, the largest being Blueberry Academy. There are 14 learners on the Routes2Success education programme for young people.

## **What is it like to be a learner with this provider?**

Young learners and those who have high needs value the welcoming atmosphere that tutors work hard to create. Learners believe that they matter to their tutors and they describe a feeling of belonging that they have not experienced in previous learning environments. Learners make many new friends and learn to work cooperatively with others, which helps them to become increasingly independent in their daily lives or move into employment.

Tutors have high expectations for what adult learners can achieve. Learners respond well to these expectations and start to realise their potential. They learn important and empowering knowledge that they need to fulfil their ambitions. A high proportion of adult learners progress from short introductory courses in English, mathematics and ICT to courses that lead to valuable qualifications.

Apprentices following the children and young people's workforce apprenticeship quickly gain new knowledge about childcare which they apply responsibly in their job roles. They learn how to encourage speech, language and communication in

children and the importance of play in children's development. Apprentices lack confidence in their ability to apply their mathematics knowledge to unfamiliar scenarios in examination questions. Consequently, too many do not pass this component of their framework.

## **What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?**

Managers provide a high-quality curriculum for adult learning that focuses on improving learners' knowledge and skills in English, mathematics and ICT. They recognise the importance of these subjects in tackling social disadvantage. Learning is delivered in safe and accessible community locations such as local libraries and children's centres.

Tutors on adult learning English courses sequence the learning well, ensuring that learners develop their reading comprehension skills and then move on to improve their writing skills. Tutors select interesting material which they use to teach reading comprehension and writing. For example, they use topics such as the use of plastics and climate change which capture learners' interests. Tutors provide resources which help learners to identify and correct their own errors and improve the quality of their written work. As a result, learners produce written English with increasing accuracy and apply their knowledge to improve the quality of letters and emails that they send in their daily lives.

In family learning mathematics lessons, tutors demonstrate clearly to learners how topics such as fractions are taught in primary schools. Consequently, learners improve their own knowledge of these topics and use it to support their children with their school work. Learners rightly value the impact that these courses have on their family.

In community learning classes in creative arts, expert tutors inspire learners to apply their knowledge and skills in more complex ways. They provide effective one-to-one coaching for learners which enables learners to apply dressmaking knowledge to produce a range of garments for themselves and their families. Learners proudly wear the clothes they have made when they attend classes. Tutors are less effective at identifying precise learning goals for learners so that they can identify when learners have achieved those goals and are ready to move on to their next steps.

Managers plan a curriculum for learners who have high needs that very effectively focuses on the knowledge and skills that these learners need for work or greater independence. Tutors identify learners' starting points accurately and comprehensively. They use this information to develop learning activities to address gaps in learners' knowledge and to meet the planned outcomes in learners' education, health and care plans. In mathematics, tutors enable learners to bake gingerbread to apply their developing knowledge of measurements in weight and capacity accurately and independently. Learning and work advisers provide helpful and frequent careers information and guidance to learners who have high needs. They ensure that learners participate in good-quality work experience closely

tailored to their career goals. Learners enjoy their programmes and develop their confidence and resilience greatly.

Managers plan good-quality programmes for younger learners who have had previous poor or unsuccessful experiences of education. Tutors get to know learners well during the induction period, and the courses that learners undertake are well matched to their career aims. Staff provide learners with good-quality advice and guidance so that learners know what they need to achieve to reach their goals. Tutors focus extensively on learners' personal development by teaching topics such as healthy living, improving sleep routines and stress management. As a result, learners improve their confidence and resilience. A few learners miss too many of their lessons, and managers' expectations of acceptable rates of attendance are too low. This is not preparing learners well enough for the reality of working life.

Leaders, managers and those in a governance capacity have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of York Learning. They recognise that they need to improve the proportion of apprentices who achieve their qualifications rapidly. They have appointed a coordinator to improve the teaching of English, ICT and particularly mathematics. The strategies that staff are implementing, such as increased opportunities to practise examination questions, are beginning to have a positive impact on apprentices' ability to apply their knowledge successfully.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Learners feel safe. Staff respond quickly and sensitively to safeguarding incidents when they occur and refer learners to external agencies as appropriate. Managers have a good understanding of the risks that their learners face. They identify that younger learners and learners who have high needs are at risk when online. They have ensured that learners know that they must be very careful about who they make friends with on social media.

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

- Ensure that the improvements to the teaching and assessment of mathematics lead to improvements in apprentices' knowledge, confidence and ability to pass their examinations.
- Raise the aspirations that staff have for the attendance of younger learners in order to improve attendance and ensure that learners recognise the importance of good attendance for success at work.
- Set clear goals for learners on community learning courses. Identify when learners have gained the knowledge and skills to meet these goals so that they can progress more quickly to further study or on to their next steps.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	55476
<b>Address</b>	West Offices Station Rise York YO1 6GA
<b>Contact number</b>	01904 554277
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.yorklearning.org.uk">www.yorklearning.org.uk</a>
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Angela Padfield
<b>Provider type</b>	Community learning and skills
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2 and 3 February 2016
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Ad Astra, Blueberry Academy, Choose2Youth, Tang Hall Smart, Toolbox, United Response.

## Information about this inspection

The inspection was the second short inspection carried out since City of York Council was judged to be good in June 2011.

The inspection team was assisted by the strategic manager, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including observing learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

### Inspection team

Rachel Angus, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Derek Williams	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Frear	Ofsted Inspector
Priscilla McGuire	Ofsted Inspector
Alison Humphreys	Her Majesty's Inspector

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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](mailto: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/](http://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](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

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 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2019