

Inspection of Derbyshire Adult Community Education Service

Inspection dates:

3–6 March 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Requires improvement
Leadership and management	Requires improvement
Education programmes for young people	Good
Adult learning programmes	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

Information about this provider

Derbyshire Adult Community Education Service (DACES) is part of Derbyshire County Council. DACES runs programmes for adults and young people across Derbyshire.

Many adult learners study English, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) or mathematics. Smaller numbers study vocational programmes, and programmes to increase their employment prospects, improve their mental well-being or for leisure. Most adults study at level 2 or below. Young learners study part-time and full-time courses at level 2 or below. DACES also offers apprenticeships. The large majority of apprentices work for Derbyshire County Council.

At the time of the inspection, there were approximately 2,000 adult learners, 70 full-time young learners and 130 part-time young learners. Approximately half of the part-time young learners were aged 14 or 15. Just over 150 apprentices studied at levels 2 or 3. Approximately one third of apprentices were aged 16 to 18.

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

Learners and apprentices rightly value the calm, respectful and supportive culture. Almost all adult learners, apprentices and young learners behave well and work hard at the various learning venues across Derbyshire.

Many of the young people have had difficulties at school or in larger college settings. They benefit from small venues and friendly staff who are committed to helping them move into employment. Most adult learners receive useful academic and pastoral support from their tutors.

Tutors do not always have high enough expectations of learners. For example, in mathematics, English and ESOL classes, tutors frequently allow adult learners to arrive late or leave early. This disrupts the learning of others. Adult learners studying these subjects do not always benefit from challenging classwork. Tutors do not always encourage them to complete work at an appropriate pace. As a result, these learners gain new knowledge too slowly.

Adults on vocational programmes benefit from how tutors use examples from real-life job roles during classes. As a result, they are more confident while on voluntary work placements. Most young learners benefit from programmes that meet their needs. For example, they study confidence building and subsequently find it easier to communicate with unfamiliar people.

Young learners develop social skills during community projects and charity work. Those studying vocational courses confidently use specialist vocabulary and skilfully complete practical activities, such as pipe-bending and bricklaying. However, young learners on the second year of their programmes do not always benefit from challenging and ambitious programmes.

Apprentices are enthusiastic about their learning. Joint work between staff and employers ensures that they plan apprentices' training well and link it closely to their job roles. As a result, apprentices perform well at work. At the end of their programmes, many apprentices obtain a permanent job or continue learning at a higher level.

Learners and apprentices are right to feel safe. However, too many learners do not have a good understanding of the dangers of radicalisation and extremism, or of the importance of British values to their personal and professional lives.

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

Leaders do not have a clear oversight of the provision. In too many cases, management information systems and processes are cumbersome or out of date. Tutor training records and session timetables are inaccurate. This reduces leaders' understanding of current provision and means that simple actions take too long to complete.

Actions to improve quality are too detailed to be useful to managers and teachers. As a result, managers and teachers struggle to prioritise the areas that need the most improvement. This means that weaknesses become longstanding. For example, managers have not effectively tackled the issue of low attendance in English, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) classes that has been a problem for several years.

Leaders and managers do not know tutors' development needs. Tutors complete mandatory training such as in safeguarding, but leaders and managers do not focus professional development on tutors' teaching skills or subject knowledge. They have introduced a coaching model to support tutor development, but very few coaching sessions take place. Managers do not understand the purpose of these sessions for their tutors. Leaders have trained a team of advanced practitioner coaches to support tutors' development, but they do not make good use of these specialists.

Governors do not have sufficient oversight of the quality of education. Consequently, they do not challenge leaders sufficiently well to improve the weakest areas of provision. Leaders have made improvements to just one of the five recommendations that inspectors made at the previous inspection. Governors' knowledge of safeguarding is not detailed enough.

Leaders and managers have a clear focus on providing education that meets the needs of the local community. For example, they target the provision of English, mathematics, ESOL and ICT programmes in the most economically disadvantaged areas of Derbyshire. Health and well-being programmes support local people experiencing mild to moderate mental health difficulties.

Leaders and managers use local partnerships well to develop the curriculum. Good relationships with job-centre managers ensure that the provision for unemployed people is appropriate. Leaders and managers focus on local employment opportunities through specialised programmes that meet the needs of local employers and of sectors that have job opportunities. Community links have enabled staff to set up other local programmes, such as those for refugees and women who are isolated.

Leaders and managers focus provision for young people on those at risk of not being in education, training or employment. This includes part-time programmes for 14- and 15-year-olds who also receive home schooling. Managers of apprenticeship programmes have worked very effectively with Derbyshire County Council to plan and deliver programmes that meet priority training and employment needs.

Too many learners do not have a thorough understanding of British values. In particular, adult learners cannot relate British values to their personal and working lives. Younger learners' and apprentices' knowledge of British values is inconsistent. For example, business administration apprentices understand the importance of British values well, but adult care apprentices do not understand how democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law relate to their professional and personal lives.

Learners do not understand how to protect themselves from the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. Most have an insufficient understanding of these issues, including the risks within their local areas. Tutors do not plan to include these themes within programmes, other than during induction sessions. Apprentices have a more detailed knowledge of these dangers.

Too few learners receive impartial careers advice. Adult learners in particular do not benefit from careers guidance. Young learners attend work experience and careers-related group activities, but they do not receive enough individualised guidance on their next steps.

Tutors have appropriate qualifications and professional backgrounds. For example, tutors on the level 2 supporting teaching and learning in schools programmes have considerable experience of classroom teaching and support. They use their knowledge to provide useful practical advice to learners, such as how to improve their use of interactive whiteboards. However, many tutors do not use feedback to develop learners' and apprentices' knowledge. In many cases, tutors record only whether learners and apprentices meet course criteria. As a result, too many learners and apprentices do not develop a more in-depth subject knowledge. A minority of learners do not receive any feedback until well after they submit assignments. Apprentices do not always understand how they can achieve a higher grade.

In most cases, tutors plan learning well so that learners and apprentices develop the knowledge that they need. For example, level 4 higher level teaching assistant learners study government legislation before applying their understanding of this to their own classrooms. Adult learners, looking to find a job, study teamwork and organisational skills before they start work placements. Level 2 adult care apprentices develop their knowledge of human anatomy in realistic work contexts such as through lifting and moving. As a result of such careful planning, learners and apprentices perform well in both work and volunteer roles.

Tutors use activities effectively to enable learners to remember new knowledge. In programmes for young people, tutors regularly use questions to revise topics at the start of lessons. In vocational classes for young people, learners revise important theory points before starting practical tasks. Adult learners on level 3 teaching assistant programmes benefit from frequently revisiting previous material. Learners and apprentices with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive appropriate assistance to help them achieve their learning goals. For example, tutors working on programmes for young people direct learning support staff well to ensure that learners with SEND receive enough help. Adult learners benefit from useful in-class adjustments, such as tutors providing pastel paper. This enables them to read print more easily.

Adults who started their programme with low levels of confidence become able to use public transport and council services independently. Adult learners on health and well-being courses learn new skills such as painting and pottery, while reducing their

anxiety levels and developing social skills. Apprentices become more confident and resilient after long periods of unemployment.

Most learners and apprentices increase their subject knowledge, develop new skills and pass their qualifications. This enables them to perform more effectively in their current jobs or to improve their chances of finding better jobs. However, tutors do not always have high ambitions for learners, such as for adults on mathematics, English and ESOL programmes. A significant minority of second-year young learners do not develop enough new knowledge. This is because the amount of new information that second-year learners learn varies depending on the location at which they study.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive appropriate and frequent safeguarding training. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) holds an incident log and a separate record of particularly concerning cases. Although the DSL is aware of the current status of safeguarding issues, recording of updates on the incident log is at times slow. In a few cases, it is difficult to access safeguarding-related information quickly.

Leaders have responded to the risks associated with having 14- and 15-year-olds joining adult learning classes. They have a series of effective procedures and processes in place.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that managers and tutors understand the priorities for improving the quality of provision. This includes: training for tutors to develop their teaching and subject-specialist skills; ensuring all tutors are ambitious about increasing learners' progress; and using feedback well to support learners' and apprentices' development.
- Leaders, including those from other council departments, must review safeguarding processes to ensure that safeguarding information is up to date and readily available to relevant staff.
- Governors should challenge leaders more effectively to improve the weakest aspects of the provision. Governors should also develop their knowledge of safeguarding.
- Leaders, managers and tutors need to ensure that learners have a firm understanding of the dangers of extremism and radicalisation, particularly within their local contexts.
- Leaders, managers and tutors should ensure that learners have a thorough understanding of the importance of British values to their daily lives.
- Leaders and managers need to ensure that learners benefit from impartial careers guidance.

Provider details

Unique reference number	50217
Address	Block B Chatsworth Hall Chesterfield Road Matlock DE4 3FW
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Website	www.derbyshire.gov.uk
CEO	Mark Homer
Provider type	Local authority
Date of previous inspection	21–22 June 2017
Main subcontractors	Chesterfield College

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the learning and skills manager (north area), 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 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.

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