

Inspection of North Lincolnshire Council

Inspection dates: 28 September–1 October 2021

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Adult learning programmes	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Inadequate

Information about this provider

North Lincolnshire Council's Adult Education and Community Learning Service is in the council's Learning, Skills and Culture directorate. Currently, there are 146 adult learners on programmes. The largest numbers are on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses at entry 1 to level 2 and non-accredited family learning courses. The remaining learners are on functional skills English and mathematics and digital skills courses. Learners from across the authority area attend courses, although most are from the Scunthorpe area.

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

Learners from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures show a high level of respect towards each other in the classroom. For example, during discussions learners are careful not to interrupt others when they are talking. Learners on ESOL courses use what they learn to help them to contribute to their local communities.

Learners feel safe and secure when attending the community learning hubs. They abide by signing-in procedures and appreciate the care and consideration given to them by staff. Learners can recall the content of the discussions during their inductions about safeguarding and the need to stay safe while online.

Learners develop useful new skills and knowledge across the different courses on the adult learning programme. For example, parents on the baby massage course use the techniques they have learned to massage their babies' faces as part of their bedtime routines.

Learners improve the standard of their work as they progress through their courses. For example, learners on ESOL courses, who struggle to construct simple sentences when they begin, improve their writing skills over time. As a result, there are fewer mistakes in learners' most recent written work.

Learners on family learning courses benefit significantly from returning to classroom activities after long periods of social isolation caused by COVID-19 restrictions. They bond quickly with other members of the class, giving advice and support to each other based on their early experiences of parenthood.

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

Leaders and managers have successfully transformed the curriculum since the previous inspection. They have removed the club-like classes, which attracted repeat learners, replacing them with a curriculum that targets those residents who live in the most disadvantaged areas and who are furthest from the labour market. The curriculum provides a 'skills escalator' in English, mathematics and digital skills to enable learners to progress to higher-level qualifications and employment.

Leaders and managers have been less successful in ensuring that the new curriculum is used by residents in all parts of the county. At the beginning of the new academic year, most learners live in the main town of Scunthorpe, with few learners attending the community hubs in other parts of the authority area. Enrolments on English courses are low for an authority area of this size.

Managers took the sensible decision to make family learning courses accessible to all parents to counteract the social isolation that parents have experienced during the lockdown. However, as a result, learners are predominantly motivated parents rather

than those that are hard to reach. Managers plan to revert to a more targeted approach when the pandemic ends.

Managers have recently recruited experienced and specialist staff to lead and teach across the different subjects in the curriculum. In English and mathematics, a lead tutor has successfully developed the pedagogical skills of teachers. Tutors on family learning courses are early years specialists who use their experience and contacts within the sector to inform the content of their teaching and provide valuable advice to parents on the development of their children. As a result, the quality of education has improved since the previous inspection and is now good.

Tutors teach the curriculum in a sequence that builds learners' knowledge and skills in a coherent way. For example, in family learning, tutors start with the benefits of family learning both for the parent and child, such as the importance of rhymes and songs in the development of children's speaking, listening and communication skills. They then demonstrate, and get learners to practise, the techniques that can be used by parents at home, such as the need to sing the words of songs slowly so that children can begin to recognise them.

Tutors use questioning effectively in order to check learners' understanding of what they have learned previously and that the knowledge that they have gained is correct. For example, tutors on ESOL courses pose challenging questions and give encouraging feedback to learners. They correct any errors sympathetically to ensure that learners are not discouraged to try new things.

Tutors measure and record the progress and achievement of learners appropriately on short family learning courses. They have recently introduced quizzes towards the end of courses to assess what learners can recall and identify any gaps in learners' knowledge.

Tutors promote a respectful and inclusive environment for learners. They support and help their learners to become good citizens and make good progress with their studies, irrespective of the learners' background and culture.

Parents and carers on family learning courses have access to a wide range of resources to enrich their learning experience. For example, all learners are given access to library membership and can join the North Lincolnshire Imagination library project, which provides children with 60 books before they reach the age of five.

Tutors work with learners effectively, to ensure that career plans are completed at the start of courses to identify possible job roles in the future. Staff provide a dedicated careers advice service which aids learners in their search for employment or the next steps in their education.

In a very few cases, potential learners do not benefit from effective initial information, advice and guidance, with the result that they are not encouraged to enrol on a course.

Governance has been strengthened since the previous inspection. The board of governors now benefits from the expertise and influence of external members and senior leaders from the council's Learning, Skills and Culture directorate. As a result, governors provide the necessary challenge to service managers to help them evaluate and improve the quality of the curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and managers implement an effective set of safeguarding policies and procedures to keep their learners safe. Experienced and appropriately trained designated safeguarding leads are highly visible and known to learners at community hubs.

Staff act promptly to report safeguarding incidents and concerns. Managers respond quickly and appropriately to these reports. For example, they challenge learners who make inappropriate comments to members of staff.

Managers work effectively with partner organisations to keep learners safe. For example, they arranged for the police's community cohesion officer to explain to learners who felt threatened in the town centre due to their ethnic origins about who they should report their concerns to and how to protect themselves.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Increase the number of learners accessing the new curriculum at the network of community hubs in all parts of the county, including those studying English.
- Ensure that the proportion of hard-to-reach parents accessing family learning increases once the pandemic is officially over.
- Ensure that all learners receive consistently helpful and motivational information, advice and guidance to encourage them to enrol on courses.

Provider details

Unique reference number	53589
Address	Ashby Community Hall Ashby High Street Scunthorpe DN16 2UT
Contact number	07917 514 708
Website	www.northlincsadulteducation.co.uk
Principal/CEO	Sarah Johnson
Provider type	Local authority
Dates of previous inspection	18–21 June 2019
Main subcontractors	N/A

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the service 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 visiting 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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