

Inspection of Derbyshire Adult Community Education Service

Inspection dates:

31 January to 3 February 2023

Overall effectiveness**Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Education programmes for young people	Good
Adult learning programmes	Good
Apprenticeships	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Information about this provider

Derbyshire Adult Community Education Service (DACES) is part of Derbyshire County Council. DACES provide education programmes for young people, adult learning programmes and apprenticeships across Derbyshire.

At the time of inspection, there were 1,812 learners and apprentices. There were 1,593 adult learners. Just over two thirds of adults were on a wide range of community learning courses in arts and crafts, family learning, yoga and flower arranging. The remainder of adults study qualification-based courses such as English for speakers of other languages, essential digital skills and functional skills English and mathematics. One hundred and twenty-eight young learners were on entry-level study programmes in occupational areas such as hospitality and construction. A few young learners were on supported internships. There were 91 apprentices following standards-based apprenticeships. The largest apprenticeship areas were level 3 teaching assistant, business administrator and team leader or supervisor.

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

Most learners and apprentices make good progress on their courses or apprenticeships. They feel safe and protected. Learners choose to study at DACES because it feels like a community and staff treat them with respect. A significant number of learners face substantial barriers to their learning. They have poor mental health, or physical disabilities or are foreign nationals who speak English as an additional language. Through staff's dedicated support, learners and apprentices gain qualifications and improve their well-being. This helps them to move closer to achieving their personal and career goals.

A significant number of young learners are vulnerable and have a history of not attending school or college. They feel their course at DACES is better than school or college. In particular, learners benefit from the small numbers in their classes. They attend their classes because they want to develop work skills so that they can have a career and improve their lives. As a result, learners' attendance is improving. Learners steadily develop their employability skills and gain vital knowledge of sectors such as hospitality and construction before they complete their upcoming industry placements.

A few young learners are on supported internships at a local hospital. To promote independence, work coaches purposely reduce their support to learners over time. This helps learners to become more successful both at work and in their daily lives. For example, learners learn to accurately tell the time so that they can catch the bus to arrive on time to work.

Adult learners on community learning courses increasingly improve their mental and physical health and well-being. They paint or make pottery for enjoyment, social reasons or to help with physical disabilities. Learners on mathematics courses confidently help their children with school homework.

Most apprentices develop the skills they need to be successful at work. Programme development workers work closely with apprentices' line managers to plan sufficient opportunities for apprentices to practise and hone their skills at work. Team leader apprentices successfully manage and monitor work projects and ensure they are completed on time.

Most learners and apprentices receive effective careers information, advice and guidance from staff. They know the options available to them once they complete their courses.

A significant majority of learners and apprentices have a secure understanding of British values and how it applies to them in life and at work. Learners on essential digital skills courses understand the importance of recognising the protected characteristics in order to treat people fairly.

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

Leaders have carefully considered their programmes for young people, adults and apprentices. They are ambitious to provide meaningful learning programmes so that learners and apprentices can improve their future career prospects and their lives. This includes those learners who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The large majority of adults and young learners progress into employment or further learning. Around three quarters of apprentices remain in employment or progress to further learning.

Leaders order their curriculums so that most learners and apprentices incrementally build their knowledge, skills and behaviours. Level 3 teaching assistant apprentices first learn about vital safeguarding legislation. They then learn about the different stages of child development through school. Finally, they move on to more complex aspects such as working with teachers to accurately assess pupils' knowledge. Learners and apprentices develop the skills they need to be successful in day-to-day life and at work.

Programme development workers and tutors have the appropriate qualifications and expertise to teach their subjects. They benefit from a range of useful training, for example the effective use of assessment, how to give helpful feedback and cognitive load and metacognition. This develops staff's teaching skills further and ensures that most learners and apprentices receive a high standard of education.

Most programme development workers and tutors use a range of appropriate teaching and assessment strategies to teach learners and apprentices. They use quizzes, discussions and probing questions. This helps programme development workers and tutors to identify gaps in learners' and apprentices' knowledge, consolidate learning and inform teaching. Consequently, most learners and apprentices retain knowledge in their long-term memories.

The feedback that learners and apprentices receive is inconsistent. Learners and apprentices do not always know what they have done well or what they need to do to improve. This means that too many learners' and apprentices' work does not improve quickly enough. Not all apprentices know how to achieve high grades in their final assessments.

Most learners and apprentices develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours. In construction, young learners develop practical skills in plastering. They proficiently erect plasterboards and render and skim walls. Adult learners on essential digital skills courses efficiently use a range of software applications. They produce professional business documents such as letters, spreadsheets and presentations. Most learners and apprentices make at least their expected progress. A small minority of apprentices have not completed their apprenticeships on time. Leaders have appropriate plans in place to ensure that they swiftly complete. Programme development workers and tutors ensure that most learners and apprentices are effectively prepared for their examinations and final assessments.

Learners and apprentices routinely complete practice assessments and past examination papers. Consequently, most apprentices are successful in their final assessments at their first attempt. Two thirds of apprentices achieve a distinction grade. The large majority of learners pass their examinations at their first attempt.

Most staff are proud to work at DACES. They appreciate that leaders are considerate of their workloads and well-being. Leaders have trained a significant number of staff to become mental health first aiders. Staff know who the mental health first aiders are and how to contact them if necessary.

Leaders recognise that a few of the key improvement processes they have put in place require further strengthening, for instance the process to improve the information senior leaders receive to ensure the curriculum is meeting the needs of its learners and apprentices.

Board members have a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for improvement. They receive a range of useful information from senior leaders. Board members routinely challenge senior leaders to improve the quality of education. For example, board members challenged leaders to improve learners' and apprentices' attendance. As a result, attendance has improved since the previous inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a culture of safeguarding and protection. They complete appropriate checks when appointing new staff to make sure they are suitable to work with learners and apprentices. The designated safeguarding lead and their deputies are appropriately trained to carry out their roles effectively.

Learners and apprentices feel safe. They know how to keep themselves safe at work. Construction learners wear appropriate personal protective equipment, such as safety boots. They safely use a range of plastering tools. Teaching assistant apprentices understand safeguarding and how to report any concerns they may have about pupils at their school.

What does the provider need to do to improve?

- Leaders should ensure that programme development workers and tutors provide consistent feedback that helps learners and apprentices know what they have done well and what they specifically need to do to improve their work.
- Leaders should ensure that those apprentices who have not completed their apprenticeships on time are supported to ensure that they swiftly complete.

Provider details

Unique reference number	50217
Address	Hunloke Centre Church Street South Chesterfield Derbyshire S40 2TF
Contact number	01629 535002
Website	www.derbyshire.gov.uk/education/adult-education
Principal, CEO or equivalent	Mark Homer
Provider type	Local authority
Date of previous inspection	3 to 6 March 2020
Main subcontractors	None

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the learning and skills 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.

Inspection team

Kim Bleasdale, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Robert Bamford	His Majesty's Inspector
Jackie Rossa	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Gay	Ofsted Inspector
Steve Kelly	Ofsted Inspector

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.

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/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: 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
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023