

# Short inspection of City of Doncaster Council

Inspection dates:

5 and 6 December 2023

## **Outcome**

City of Doncaster Council continues to be a good provider.

## **Information about this provider**

City of Doncaster Council provides adult learning courses in family and community learning, English, mathematics, digital and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). Courses take place in venues in the local community. At the time of the inspection, there were 149 learners, of whom 114 were enrolled on community learning courses including vocational introduction courses and ESOL. There were also five learners on functional skills English courses, eight learners studying functional skills mathematics, 14 enrolled on digital courses and eight enrolled on the award in volunteering.

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

Learners who have a history of non-participation in education become fully engaged in learning through their courses and are keen to progress and achieve. They are enthusiastic and positive, and value the tuition that they receive. Learners appreciate the opportunity to gain new skills and qualifications. They are proud of their achievements, their improved skills and knowledge and the increased confidence that they acquire for progressing to their next stage of education, training or employment. Learners attend punctually and ready to learn. They respond well to the expectations of their tutors and produce a good standard of work.

Family and community learners benefit from the opportunity to learn in their community. In family learning sessions, learners work with their children to encourage a love of reading. Learners are taught to encourage their children's enjoyment of reading by alternative means, such as making puppets to recreate the story. Learners also design games to encourage the development of their children's mathematical skills, which include designing their own currency and making their own dice. Learners, together with their children, enjoy these sessions which enhance their skills in supporting their children's education and development.

Tutors use a wide range of assessment methods to check learners' understanding and identify any gaps and misunderstandings. These include group discussions, directed questioning and interactive quizzes. Staff identify mistakes and correct them quickly. Although they quickly provide learners with feedback on their work, this is often not specific enough and does not routinely include feedback on spelling or grammar. As a result, learners often repeat the same mistakes.

Leaders and managers ensure that learners are prepared for their next steps. Learners receive appropriate careers guidance during their courses. They have the opportunity to meet regularly with dedicated careers advisers and receive assistance in writing CVs, job applications and personal statements.

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

Leaders and managers respond effectively to the changing demands of the local population. They rightly recognise the impact of the pandemic and the economic crisis on adult engagement with learning. They recognise barriers such as the cost of transport and mental health and well-being, and have resourced and planned their curriculum accordingly. They widen participation in learning through offering courses in the more rural communities so that residents in these communities are more likely to access and attend sessions. They also provide courses to enhance parents' interaction with their children and in mental wellness and healthy lifestyles.

Leaders and managers review and tailor their curriculum offer frequently to ensure that it is responsive to the needs of the local community. They engage effectively with community partners including schools, family hubs and employers, to plan and support the education of learners and to help meet local skills needs. They respond swiftly and effectively in times of crisis to support local people in securing employment, developing skills or maintaining stability. For example, leaders and managers work with partner agencies to support those who have faced redundancy following the closure of local businesses to help with job applications and further learning.

Most tutors skilfully teach learners to develop and apply their learning. For example, in mathematics sessions learners gain confidence in completing challenging calculations through working in groups with support from their tutor. They then apply and consolidate their learning through accurately completing individual worksheets with several types of calculations. They are then able to use their new mathematical skills in their everyday life. However, the quality of teaching is not consistently high across all subjects.

Leaders and managers have in place appropriate processes to monitor and review the quality of teaching and the experience for learners. They carry out activities such as learning walks, learner surveys, work scrutiny and meetings with tutors to inform their evaluation and identify improvement targets. They frequently review progress towards these targets at line management meetings and governor

meetings. As a result, leaders, managers, governors and tutors are clear about the aspects of provision which are strong and those which need to improve. They then successfully implement strategies to improve the quality of provision in identified areas.

Leaders and managers support their staff well. They involve tutors in key processes such as self-assessment, planning for teaching and quality assurance. They involve them in discussions about training needs and enable staff to access relevant opportunities. Managers are aware of the workload of their staff and prioritise their well-being. Leaders regularly check on the welfare of their staff. Tutors find managers approachable and supportive and can raise issues which affect their role, knowing they will be listened to and that concerns will be addressed, where possible. Staff appreciate and value this dialogue with leaders and managers.

Leaders and managers have in place an effective governance model with communication channels to senior council boards. Governors bring local knowledge, relevant skills and experience to their roles, including from schools and family hubs. They receive timely reports that enable them to monitor performance and quality effectively. They provide helpful scrutiny, challenge and support to leaders to ensure that they are making progress in tackling any identified areas of concern.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have implemented appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures for adult learners. Staff know how to identify potential vulnerable adults on their courses and how to report safeguarding concerns. However, leaders and managers do not identify and record effectively the indicators of vulnerability or potential vulnerability of adult learners at enrolment.

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

- Ensure that all tutors provide precise and useful feedback to enable learners to improve the quality of their work, including spelling and grammar.
- Ensure that leaders and managers improve their recording process to assess more fully the vulnerability indicators of adult learners.
- Ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently high across all subjects.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	51578
<b>Address</b>	Civic Offices Waterdale Doncaster DN1 3BU
<b>Contact number</b>	01302 737800
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.doncaster.gov.uk">www.doncaster.gov.uk</a>
<b>Principal, CEO or equivalent</b>	Riana Nelson
<b>Provider type</b>	Adult learning provider
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23 to 26 May 2017
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	None

## Information about this inspection

The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since City of Doncaster Council was judged to be good in May 2017.

The inspection team was assisted by the learning transformation 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

Glenise Burrell, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alison Dennis

His Majesty's Inspector

Sharron Mansell

Ofsted Inspector

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