

# Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council

Reinspection report

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Reinspection date

26 February 2009

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Reinspection number

330575

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## Background information

### Reinspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

#### Key for reinspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

### Scope of the reinspection

In deciding the scope of the reinspection, inspectors consider the previous inspection report ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)), reports from the inspectorate's reinspection monitoring visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection. Inspectors also take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body.

This reinspection reports on adult and community learning and focused on:

- Preparation for life and work
- Community learning

## Description of the provider

1. Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC) delivers its adult and community learning through the Adult, Family and Community Learning Service (AFCL). The service is a direct provider of learning and is located in the council's Children and Young People's Services directorate. A senior management team comprising the head of AFCL, the strategic curriculum manager and the quality manager are responsible for the service, supported by a team of four curriculum managers. The head of AFCL reports to the assistant director of early intervention, prevention and support.
2. This partial reinspection follows a full inspection in October 2007, when the council's work-based learning provision was good, and most aspects of adult and community learning were inadequate. Achievement and standards were satisfactory.
3. South Yorkshire local LSC funds the provision. The adult safeguarded funding allocation for 2008/09 is £829,586. DMBC provides core funding for senior management posts and funds support work in schools. Provision focuses on three main areas: Skills for Life, family learning and community learning. Learner numbers in Skills for Life and family learning are low so were jointly inspected as preparation for life and work. Community learning provision in education and training is partly income generating. In 2007/08, 2,817 learners enrolled on AFCL courses.
4. Doncaster is the largest metropolitan district in the country, by geographical area, and is recognised as one of the most deprived local authorities in the country. It ranks as the 41<sup>st</sup> most deprived district in the 2007 indices of deprivation.

## Summary of grades awarded at previous inspection

Effectiveness of provision	Inadequate Grade 4
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4
Capacity to improve	Inadequate: Grade 4
Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4
Quality of provision	Inadequate: Grade 4
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4
Leadership and management	Inadequate: Grade 4
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4

## Sector subject areas

Preparation for life and work	Inadequate: Grade 4
Community learning	Inadequate: Grade 4
Family learning	Inadequate: Grade 4

## Summary of grades awarded at reinspection

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

## Sector subject areas

Preparation for life and work	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Community learning	Satisfactory: Grade 3

## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

#### Adult and community learning

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

5. The overall effectiveness of DMBC's adult and community learning is satisfactory. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates on accredited courses are high. Learners develop a good range of skills that many apply in their daily lives. New learners gain enthusiasm for learning and become highly motivated to progress.
6. The quality of provision is now satisfactory. Teaching and learning remain satisfactory but the proportion of good teaching has improved recently and inadequate teaching has reduced. The use of personal learning targets to plan and monitor learning and achievement was a key area for improvement at the previous inspection. Some improvements are in place, but the use of personal learning targets remains ineffective. The range of programmes was inadequate at the previous inspection. It is now flexible and responsive and meets the needs and interests of learners, local communities and community groups well. Support for learners was inadequate at the previous inspection and is now satisfactory overall. Well structured and effective information, advice and guidance are available on all courses. Tutors provide effective informal support.
7. Leadership and management are now satisfactory. Leadership of change and improvement since the previous inspection is good. Managers understand their roles and responsibilities clearly and scrutinise all aspects of the service regularly. Many curriculum initiatives are based on good strategic links. Quality procedures are comprehensive, documented well and audited regularly. However, progress has been slow in some areas. Targets to support service aims are not always sufficiently precise and measurable to monitor progress against strategic aims.
8. The promotion of equality and diversity is now satisfactory. DMBC's approach to social inclusion is good. It is making good progress towards meeting its annual targets for learners from priority groups. Following the appointment of a lead manager, the promotion of equality and diversity has improved. However, it is not yet integrated sufficiently within the provision.

#### Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

9. DMBC has a good capacity to improve. It has managed change and improvements well making good use of external support. The pace of improvement in most areas is good. At the previous inspection, DMBC's adult and community learning had just one key strength and eight areas for improvement. It now has strengths in most key questions of the *Common Inspection Framework*. In particular, retention and achievement is high, a significant improvement since the previous

inspection. The previous strength of good partnerships has developed further and supports some current strengths. Quality improvement arrangements are good. A comprehensive quality framework is in place where none existed previously. All inspection grades have improved. DMBC generally understands its provision well. Effective actions are in place to continue the pace of improvement.

10. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. The process is inclusive and staff have a strong sense of ownership of the findings. Some account is taken of the views of external partners and procedures to moderate findings are good. The report is broadly accurate. However, position statements updating the findings of the self-assessment are too positive in some areas.

## Key strengths

- High success rates for accredited courses
- Good skills development
- Flexible and responsive provision
- Well structured and effective information, advice and guidance
- Good leadership of change and improvement since the previous inspection
- Comprehensive quality framework, systems and processes
- Effective targeting and inclusion of learners from priority groups and neighbourhoods

## Key areas for improvement

- Ineffective use of personal learning targets to plan and monitor learning and achievement
- Slow implementation of improvements in some areas
- Some insufficiently precise strategic aims and targets
- Insufficient promotion of learners' understanding of equality and diversity through the provision



## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

11. Achievement and standards were satisfactory at the previous inspection; they are now good. The self-assessment report identifies this strength. Success rates on accredited courses are now high, a significant improvement since the previous inspection when completion rates were poor. In 2007/08, most learners were successful in preparation for life and work and community learning. Success rates in the council's support work in schools are good at 78% at level 2 and 80% at level 3, over the two years of delivery 2006 to 2008.
12. Learners develop a good range of skills. Depending on their courses, they gain practical and creative, technical, personal, learning and parenting skills. Learners and, in some cases, their wider family benefit from learning. Learners gain confidence and social benefits. The skills they develop help them become more independent. Many new learners quickly gain enthusiasm for learning and become highly motivated to progress. Early developments in monitoring progression indicate that a significant number of learners progress to one or more courses following engagement. Attendance is effectively monitored, and is good in most sessions.

### Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Adult and community learning

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

13. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning remains satisfactory overall. This was identified in the self-assessment report. Early indications suggest that the proportion of good teaching has improved. In better sessions, tutors use an effective and varied range of teaching strategies. A range of good quality resources including information and learning technologies supports learning. In these sessions, learners accurately evaluate their progress and clearly identify what they need to do next. In less effective sessions, tutors use a narrow range of teaching strategies and rely too heavily on worksheets. Tutor input is excessive and learners are insufficiently engaged.
14. The use of personal learning targets to plan and monitor learning and achievement is ineffective. This was an area for improvement at the previous inspection and was identified in the self-assessment report as remaining so. Managers have introduced newly designed individual learning plans, but tutors use them inconsistently. Initial assessment is satisfactory but is not always used well in Skills for Life sessions to set individual targets and monitor progress. In community learning, many goals relate to the whole group rather than individuals. Many goals are too broad and the recording of progress against them is often vague.

15. The range of programmes was inadequate at the previous inspection. Flexible and responsive provision now meets the needs and interests of learners and local communities and community groups well. Provision effectively attracts new learners from the targeted priority neighbourhoods. The self-assessment partly identifies this. From September 2008 to January 2009, 73% of the learners recruited were new to learning, and 68% were from priority areas, 13% above the service target. Clear progression routes are available from taster courses to modular courses that learners can attend for up to 18 weeks and to courses with other providers. Support work in schools provision is available as a supported distance learning programme. Some tutors use the newly developed virtual learning environment well to extend personal learning opportunities. Good links with strategic and local partners provide information about local need which contributes to programme development, provides access to a wide range of community venues, and helps to publicise courses.
16. Support for learners was inadequate at the previous inspection. It is now satisfactory overall. Well structured and effective information, advice and guidance are available on all courses. The self-assessment report identifies this. The guidance worker attends a session towards the end of each course to discuss the range of options for progression, using good information and a range of resources to show the progression of previous learners into further learning or employment. Many learners indicate interest in progression following these sessions. Course information is now available for all courses. The online Learning Gateway provides an effective information, advice and guidance tool that shows all provision for every provider and enables the identification of courses near learners' homes. Tutors provide effective informal support to learners during sessions. Support for learners with additional needs is satisfactory.

## Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Adult and community learning  
Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3  
Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

17. Leadership and management are now satisfactory. Leadership of change and improvement to the service since the previous inspection is good. The self-assessment report identifies this strength. Additional appointments to the senior management team have enhanced the team and strengthened strategic, quality and sector subject area management functions. Managers understand their roles and responsibilities well and scrutinise all aspects of the service regularly. The creation of additional lead tutor roles supports developments in virtual learning and drives accredited provision and internal verification. The quality of tutor support, from their managers, has improved. Good communications have helped improve staff morale. The strategy for planning and developing provision is coherent and guided by a good knowledge of local needs. Areas where resources for staffing were inadequate have been largely improved although some posts are dependent on short-term funding. Staff are appropriately qualified and some have, or are working towards, higher level specialist qualifications. Strategic links with colleagues in the Children's Directorate and Doncaster College are

developing well and have contributed to curriculum initiatives. The management of health and safety remains thorough to ensure safe learning environments for staff and learners.

18. Quality procedures are comprehensive and documented well. They cover self-assessment, teaching and learning observations and internal verification. Audit checks ensure consistent use of standardised documents and practice. Arrangements to assure the quality of teaching and learning are thorough and effective. Good practice is shared more systematically within sector subject areas and across the service. The quality and accuracy of data is now good and generally used well for planning and monitoring key stages of learning. Stringent monitoring through electronic registers has contributed to good attendance.
19. Progress in making improvements has been slow in some areas. A service-wide Skills for Life strategy is in development and some staff have attended training. Action to embed Skills for Life across all sector subject areas is scheduled to start in April 2009. Discussions are underway with Doncaster College to secure additional funding to deliver Skills for Life in the community. The learner involvement strategy has resulted in only small improvements. Insufficient use is made of opportunities for learners to express their views on proposed developments and focus groups are not yet established. The quality of individual learning plans varies and learners' personal goals are not always sufficiently challenging or measurable. The service has identified the need for further improvements to arrangements to recognise and record learner progress and achievement.
20. Targets to support service aims are not always sufficiently precise and measurable. The service has a clear sense of direction and its seven strategic aims reflect borough and national priorities such as the development of employability skills. However, targets to measure progress towards these aims are not always established sufficiently and make it more difficult to measure progress. Management information is not used sufficiently in all areas, such as summary analysis of learner progression.
21. The promotion of equality and diversity was inadequate at the previous inspection. It is now satisfactory. Targeting and social inclusion of learners from priority groups and neighbourhoods is effective. The service is making good progress towards meeting its annual targets for the numbers of male learners, learners with learning difficulties or disabilities, learners from minority ethnic communities and deprived wards. Numbers from these groups are increasing. The promotion of equality and diversity has improved following the appointment of a lead manager. A steering group monitors progress against the action plan. Its monitoring role is not supported sufficiently by targets for improvement. Where targets and actions are identified, they are not always sufficiently specific and measurable.
22. The promotion of equality through sector subject areas and in the classroom is insufficient. Tutors miss opportunities to raise learners' awareness of other traditions, faiths and cultures. Procedures for observing teaching and learning do

not concentrate sufficiently on the responsibility of tutors to promote equality through the provision.

23. The procedures for safeguarding learners and their children meet current government requirements. All staff are checked to ensure that they are authorised to work with children and vulnerable adults. The Safeguarding Adults policy is widely available but not all tutors have attended the borough's safeguarding training yet. DMBC complies with equalities legislation. All staff have completed online training on the requirements of equality legislation. Increasing numbers of tutors have attended appropriate training including in specialist areas such as gypsy and traveller awareness and working with faith communities. An appropriate range of handbooks, posters, and publicity materials, with some produced in community languages, provides information for learners and staff about their rights and responsibilities. Links with translation services and with local community organisations, including those representing Sikh and Irish groups, are good.

## What learners like:

- 'I have more confidence to help my child with schoolwork now'
- 'I didn't do very well at college when I was younger, but want to go back to complete my qualifications now'
- Gaining confidence and self-belief
- 'I come to this class with my daughter. It's good that we can do this together'
- Learning skills that are useful at work
- Being encouraged to progress further

## What learners think could improve:

- More courses with different modules
- Access to computers in some courses
- The availability of crèche provision for some family learning courses
- The induction process; it was not really understood and there was too much paperwork
- Being consulted about the provision

## Sector subject areas

### Preparation for life and work

Satisfactory: Grade 3

#### Context

24. The service provides five numeracy and four literacy workshops for learners to access at any point during the year. Currently 31 learners attend literacy workshops and 61 learners attend numeracy workshops. Learners work towards national qualifications at a range of levels from entry to level 2. The service also offers 14 short wider family learning courses attended by 58 learners. Fifteen learners attend two family literacy and numeracy courses. Most family learning courses include opportunities for parents, carers and children to learn together. Approximately 7% of learners are male. Courses are normally held in schools or children's centres across the borough. Additional courses are planned for the summer term.

#### Strengths

- High success rates on accredited courses
- Good skills development
- Particularly effective strategy to engage learners from deprived areas

#### Areas for improvement

- Ineffective induction process
- Insufficient use of data to guide quality improvements

#### Achievement and standards

25. Achievement and standards are good. In 2007/08, success rates were high on accredited family learning and Skills for Life courses, including the SHARE OCN family learning and literacy and numeracy national tests at entry level 3 and levels 1 and 2. Learners have good opportunities to take national tests throughout the year, when they are sufficiently skilled and confident, in their local schools and family centres.

26. Learners' skill development is good. They are enthusiastic about learning and many are highly motivated to continue to develop their skills and knowledge. Many gain confidence and social benefits by working with other adults and children. Learners realise the importance of developing their own literacy and numeracy skills for personal development and for supporting their children's learning.

27. On family learning courses, learners develop good parenting and personal skills. They increase their understanding of how children learn, of teaching approaches and the specialist language used by teachers and children when talking about literacy and numeracy in school. Learners become more confident in managing

their children's behaviour at home and benefit from spending time on a wide range of activities with their children. Learners gain confidence in talking to tutors, explaining ideas and sharing their opinions with the whole group. Attendance in observed sessions was satisfactory at 81%. On short five and six week courses attendance is good.

### Quality of provision

28. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Since the previous inspection, family learning sessions have successfully increased their focus on the development of adults' skills. In better sessions, tutors effectively use a range of teaching strategies. Learners work enthusiastically in pairs and groups to tackle problems, discuss solutions and build their skills through a range of activities. Tutors use open questions and constructive feedback effectively. Imaginative, practical activities help develop learners' personal skills and materials for their children's learning on family courses. A range of good quality resources including information and learning technologies supports learning. Learners are able to evaluate their own progress accurately and clearly identify next steps towards their main learning goals on a clear learning plan.
29. In less effective sessions, tutors do not plan sufficiently to meet individual needs and rely too heavily on worksheets, which are too often dull and uninspiring. Learners work at one pace on a narrow range of activities. More able learners are not challenged sufficiently while others struggle to keep up. Learners have few opportunities to work with others, insufficient access to computers to enhance their learning experience and little opportunity to develop independent learning skills.
30. The initial and diagnostic assessment process is thorough and identifies learners' skills gaps effectively. Family learning tutors use a range of informal methods to gain a good understanding of individual learners' needs. However, assessment information is not consistently used in all Skills for Life sessions to guide individual target-setting and monitoring and evaluation of progress.
31. The induction process for new learners is often ineffective. Tutors spend too much time on completing the standardised paperwork, some of which is not relevant to learners' immediate learning needs. Learners have few opportunities to talk with each other or discuss their learning needs or concerns. They spend too much time listening to tutors. Tutors do not always fully check learners' understanding, and some rely too heavily on paper-based resources. These do not always take account of some learners' reading difficulties.
32. The range of programmes meets learners' needs and interests well. The timing of courses enables learners with children to fit in with school and nursery timetables. Well designed short courses attract adults into learning, often for the first time since leaving school. Programmes enable learners to access a wide range of courses to support their children's learning. Flexibly planned Skills for Life workshops enable learners to join at any time during the academic year.

33. Support for learners is satisfactory. Learners have good access to information, advice and guidance. Towards the end of most courses, the guidance worker attends a session to discuss the range of options for progress to further training, education and employment. Tutors effectively support learners informally with much praise and constructive feedback. Some tutors use the virtual learning environment to give increased support to learners, particularly those who have difficulty attending sessions regularly.

#### Leadership and management

34. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The strategy to engage learners from deprived areas is particularly effective. Good partnerships with schools, children's centres and other agencies enable course information to be shared well. The service targets organisations and adults in areas of deprivation systematically. Since the previous inspection, it has made good progress in the reorganisation of management. Enhanced staffing resources support their effective response to demanding learner recruitment targets. Staff communication is satisfactory. Teams meet regularly to share good practice.

35. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Strategies to promote social inclusion and engage new learners are good. Tutors provide appropriate support for learners with disabilities and other learning needs. However, tutors are not sufficiently proactive in raising learners' awareness of the implications of equality and diversity.

36. The use of data to monitor and contribute to quality improvement is insufficient. Sector subject area managers and co-ordinators do not analyse data systematically to check, for example, the progress of learners towards accreditation, further progression to other learning opportunities or attendance and achievement on particular courses.



## Community learning

Satisfactory: Grade 3

### Context

37. Community learning is managed and co-ordinated by two sector subject area managers who each have specific responsibilities for different aspects of provision. The team includes one full-time lead tutor and 18 occasional tutors. Currently 247 learners are enrolled. Provision includes DIY, childcare, creative courses, health and fitness, languages, information and communication technology (ICT), introductory teacher training and personal development. Most provision is non-accredited but some courses, for example childcare, offer accreditation at level 1, and introductory teacher training at levels 3 and 4. Courses vary in length from short two-hour taster sessions to six-week modular courses that learners can attend for up to 18 weeks.

### Strengths

- Good skills development
- Good personal development
- Very effective community engagement

### Areas for improvement

- Weak planning for, and monitoring of, individual learning

### Achievement and standards

38. Achievement and standards have improved and are good. Learners develop good practical skills and gain subject knowledge. They develop good technical skills on ICT courses. Many, who have never used computers before, learn to use them with confidence to word process documents, search the internet and send and receive emails. Learners develop good practical skills on craft and creative courses. They work well in sessions and produce work of a good standard. Many apply their learning outside the classroom in their childcare practice and on personal projects such as art and craft work and DIY. Some, for instance in introductory teaching courses, apply their learning at work. Success rates on accredited courses are high and during 2007/08 were 94%.

39. Learners' personal development is good. They develop confidence and increased self-belief. Learners are highly motivated and enthusiastic about their learning and are confident about working independently. They support each other's learning in sessions and share their learning with family and friends. For example, learners on family history courses often engage in shared research activities with their families. Their increased confidence enables them to pursue further learning within the service or externally. Many enrol on taster sessions or non-accredited courses and then progress onto other courses. Learners organise themselves and their lives to attend courses regularly. Attendance monitoring is managed

effectively and tutors take personal responsibility for tackling absenteeism. Overall attendance is good and slightly exceeds targets set by the service.

### Quality of provision

40. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning remain satisfactory. In better sessions, tutors use effective strategies to engage learners and are particularly effective at using quizzes, discussion and illustrations to maintain learners' interest. They reinforce learning, make regular checks on learners' progress, encourage them to reflect on learning at home, and practise their new skills. Tutors are enthusiastic about their subject and share their enthusiasm with learners. In the weaker sessions, learner engagement is insufficient and too much emphasis is placed on paper resources. In these sessions, tutor input is excessive and a narrow range of teaching and learning strategies are used. Initial assessment is satisfactory.
41. Planning and monitoring of individual learning is weak. The use of individual learning plans across provision is inconsistent. Learning goals often relate to groups rather than specific individuals. Few measurable short-term targets are set for learners. Learning goals are often too broad to be achievable or meaningful. Recording of progress against specific targets is often insufficient, vague and fails to inform learners about the specific actions they need to take to improve. Managers have put strategies in place to improve the quality and use of individual learning plans. Changes have already been made to the design of the individual learning plan document.
42. Provision meets learners' personal needs and interests very well, and meets the needs of local communities and community groups. Community engagement is very effective. Courses take place in a very wide range of accessible local community venues including churches, libraries and children's centres. Facilities are adapted as required to meet the specific needs of groups. Links with community based organisations such as the primary care trust, disability organisations, drug rehabilitation organisations, tenants associations, and other community based groups help gather market intelligence, and deliver courses. An outreach worker liaises effectively with community organisations and other groups to develop programmes that respond to community needs. Courses are available in a wide range of accessible local venues.
43. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Information and guidance about further learning opportunities are good. The information and guidance officer visits every course and offers learners information and guidance about progression opportunities within the service and externally. Support for learners with additional needs is satisfactory. Resources are adapted or obtained as appropriate to support learners who, for example, have dyslexia, visual impairments or other disabilities. Learners receive good in-class personal support and encouragement from tutors. Tutors are sensitive to the needs of new learners.

## Leadership and management

44. Leadership and management of the provision are satisfactory. Team communication is effective and includes regular personal contact, email communication and regular meetings. Bi-monthly briefing sessions are held to keep tutors informed of developments within the service, highlight areas for development and help them to share good practice. Managers support tutors well. Tutor resources are good. For example, all tutors are issued with laptops, projectors and trolleys to transport equipment and resources.
45. Quality improvement is satisfactory. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. Tutors are appropriately involved through systematic course reviews. The self-assessment report is thorough and identifies most strengths and areas for improvement identified during inspection. Managers are taking action to tackle the remaining areas for improvement. For example, they are developing training and providing additional support for tutors to improve the ineffective use of individual learning plans. Tutors have a satisfactory awareness of equality and diversity issues but their approach to promoting equality and diversity is reactive rather than proactive.