

North Lincolnshire Council

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 53589

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Type of provider: Local Authority
North Lincolnshire Council
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Information about the provider

1. North Lincolnshire Council (NLC) is an Adult and Community Learning (ACL) provider for learner-responsive and adult safeguarded provision. It has an administration centre in Scunthorpe and provides learning programmes through a network of four main centres and 17 community-based venues located across North Lincolnshire.
2. A major restructuring of the service was undertaken in 2005/06 to manage service costs and reductions in core revenue funding. There has been a continuing review of service costs to ensure financial viability.
3. In 2010 another re-structure resulted in a management structure with a head of service supported by two senior managers. One of these has line management responsibility for six curriculum managers who then manage the tutors. The other senior manager has responsibility for all support services including centre management, learner support and marketing.
4. This reinspection follows the inspection that took place in September 2008 in which achievements and standards, leadership and management, capacity to improve and arrangements for equality and diversity were all inadequate. Quality of provision was satisfactory. Six sector subject areas were inspected. Information and communication technology (ICT) was graded as good; early years and playwork and arts, media and publishing were graded satisfactory; education and training, preparation for life and work and family learning were all graded inadequate.
5. This inspection focused specifically on ICT, preparation for life and work and family learning. The main focus of NLC's work is in preparation for life and work.
6. The government funds 86% of NLC's work through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) Yorkshire and Humberside region. Unemployment levels are just above the national average in North Lincolnshire but wage levels are low. Twenty-eight per cent of those who are unemployed in North Lincolnshire and 30% of those in Scunthorpe are aged under 25, compared with a national average of 25%. Some 3.71% of the population are from a minority ethnic background.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Provision for young learners: Further education (16 to 18) Foundation learning, including Entry to Employment	35 part-time learners 13 part-time learners
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	1,328 part-time learners
Safeguarded adult provision: 19+	1,559 part-time learners

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Grade 3
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	3
Subject areas	Grade
Information and communication technology	2
Preparation for life and work	3
Family learning	4

Overall effectiveness

7. The overall effectiveness of NLC's provision is satisfactory. Outcomes for learners, the quality of provision and leadership and management are all satisfactory. Learners in ICT have good provision and those in preparation for life and work have a satisfactory experience. However, provision in family learning is inadequate. Learners gain good levels of skills and confidence. Some teaching and learning is varied and challenging while other sessions are dull and lack stimulus. Effective partnership working has helped NLC to better meet service priorities. The service has re-positioned itself well and is now a modern, outward-facing service. Arrangements for promoting equality and diversity and safeguarding learners are satisfactory. Learners feel safe and arrangements for health and safety are comprehensive.

Main findings

- Learners develop good skills and confidence across all programmes. They are better able to mix with others and apply the skills they have learned well, both in the community and at work.
- Success rates are satisfactory, being at the national benchmark. Some subject areas, such as education and training, have made significant progress. However, the small cohort of learners aged 16 to 18 do not achieve as well as adult learners.
- NLC has made some good improvements in teaching and learning since the last inspection. Learning resources are mainly of a good quality with some good ICT equipment. In the better sessions, teachers plan well, with activities to meet the needs of all the individuals in the group. Learners fully engage with the activities and enjoy their learning.
- The recognition and recording of progress and achievement (RARPA) processes are comprehensive; however, their application remains an issue. In two of the large subject areas, NLC is applying the processes better. However, there remain areas for improvement in both Skills for Life and family learning programmes.
- The range of the provision offered by NLC is good. The service's provision has been re-organised well to meet the needs of priority groups more effectively. NLC's planning and re-designing of courses is effective in ensuring that the needs of local communities are met.
- NLC has established strong and effective partnerships. This was a strength at the last inspection and remains so. However, the nature of the partnerships has changed significantly in that they better reflect the changing priorities of the service. There is significant activity in areas of deprivation as well as increased working with local employers.
- The individual care and support that learners receive are satisfactory and help them to achieve their learning goals. Tutors are helpful and supportive and many do considerable amounts of extra work to help their learners. The newly formed teaching support assistant role is beginning to have an impact in supporting learners in classrooms better.
- Some learners have insufficient access to impartial information, advice and guidance (IAG) to help their longer-term planning. Initial contact with NLC is satisfactory; however, learners who request more detailed information sometimes find the guidance confusing. The quality of advice given to learners during their programmes varies. Learners have limited access to impartial IAG workers.
- The service has very effectively re-focused the provision to meet both council priorities and the needs of the wider community. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Managers have taken good actions to re-organise the staff. Roles and responsibilities are much improved, line management responsibilities are clear and staff are much more accountable.

- NLC has taken effective actions to improve provision. The service has made a significant investment in its management information system. NLC now has reliable data for planning. NLC is starting to use data to identify gaps in the achievement of different groups. For instance, the service has identified the relative under-performance of learners aged 16 to 18 in contrast to learners aged over 19. However, while the service has now identified this gap, actions to bring about improvement are very new and have had insufficient impact.
- The observation process is effective in identifying action points and in monitoring improvement. However, NLC staff do not use observations to identify and promote good practice. There are insufficient tutor meetings to spread best practice. Moderation processes are effective. NLC does not use service level agreements sufficiently in family learning to ensure the quality of partner delivery of provision.

What does North Lincolnshire Council need to do to improve further?

- Continue to apply the measures already developed to accelerate the improving trend in success rates across the provision.
- Continue applying the RARPA processes across NLC's provision and consider applying the best practice seen within the service across all subject areas.
- Consider using the peer review group more effectively to develop sector-specific knowledge.
- Improve the learners' experience when they first contact NLC. Explore good practice in delivering IAG demonstrated by other providers. Use NLC's qualified IAG workers more effectively, ensuring that they visit classes to explain their roles to learners
- Use existing quality improvement processes to identify good practice across the service. Instigate a number of events to share good practice and consult with staff on ways to continue to implement these practices. Include agreed actions in the quality improvement plan.
- Continue identifying under-performing groups and individuals; implement improvement plans to address reasons for under-performance.
- Ensure that strategic planning leads to meaningful action plans that are understood by all staff. Involve all staff in agreeing improvement targets that are clear and measurable. Ensure that staff understand their responsibility for achieving agreed targets.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the helpful, patient, knowledgeable and, above all, friendly tutors
- good gains through working with ICT including more confidence, being able to keep in touch with family and saving money with internet shopping

- working at a pace that suits each individual without unnecessary pressure
- good development of maths and English skills needed in life and at work
- getting out of the house, meeting new people and making new friends
- not having to do an exam at the end relieves much anxiety.

What learners would like to see improved:

- more information about when courses do not run so we do not waste time going out to classes
- not having to worry that courses will be withdrawn
- better access to provision, particularly weekly provision
- more provision for learners with difficulties and/or disabilities.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the flexibility with which NLC meets my needs well using bespoke training.

What employers would like to see improved:

- more provision please.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

8. NLC's capacity to improve is satisfactory. Since the last inspection NLC has taken effective actions to address the poor success rates across its provision. Overall performance is in line with national averages and is now satisfactory. Some subject areas, such as education and training, have made good progress and are above the national benchmark. Despite the extensive changes and re-organisation leaders and managers have maintained the support of staff and learners. Morale is high. The management information system is reliable and managers and staff routinely use data to identify problems and set appropriate targets for development. NLC have exceeded some targets; however, others have been insufficiently challenging. Actions to improve the provision have had a positive effect across most of the provision. These include greater clarity in roles and responsibilities for staff, more focused provision targeted to learners with most need, more effective partnership working, improved initial assessment in most sector subject areas and improved learning support. The observation process is now reliable and gives an accurate picture of teaching and learning, showing it to be satisfactory in most subject areas. However, insufficient progress has been made in family learning. Staff and other resources are sufficient to secure satisfactory value for money. Effective partnerships with libraries are starting to improve cost efficiency through the sharing of some premises.
9. The self-assessment report and process are both satisfactory although the overall assessment of provision does not sufficiently collate key judgements. The provider has been appropriately self-critical and is beginning to use its data and other quality improvement tools effectively to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 3

10. Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Learners develop good skills and confidence across most subject areas. They enjoy their lessons; most make good progress and improve their self-esteem. In particular, learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities demonstrate good improvements in their social skills and team working abilities. In ICT lessons, learners speak of their improved confidence in using computers. Learners taking courses in art, media and publishing make very good progress, many starting their course with little or no previous experience of producing artwork.
11. The service has taken appropriate action to address the low success rates identified at the previous inspection and has raised them to a satisfactory level. For example, it has improved both learner support and the assessment of learners' skills prior to starting their courses, ensuring that learners are now on the most appropriate programmes. Success rates on accredited courses have improved and in 2008/09 they were at the national average of 77%. Success

rates on ICT programmes are high at 83%, compared with the national average of 75%. Success rates on education and training programmes have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now good at 89%, nine percentage points above the national average. Success rates for learners on health, public services and care courses have remained high at 86% and are above the national average of 79%. Learners aged between 16 and 18, who represent 3% of the provision, do not succeed as well as those who are aged over 19. The service has well-developed plans to address this issue but these are not yet implemented.

12. Information showing learners' achievement of non-accredited goals was unreliable at the previous inspection. New and significantly improved processes for recording non-accredited outcomes are now in place but data produced are not yet sufficiently reliable to make judgements about success across all subject areas.
13. Some learners use the skills that they develop on their courses to improve their economic well-being. One learner on an arts media and publishing course who had no previous experience of drawing, has developed her skills to such a level that she is now proficient enough to sell her pictures at craft fairs. The service has opened a shop where learners are able to sell their pictures. Learners on numeracy and literacy courses gain skills which improve their chances of securing employment. Many learners progress from one level of course to the next, some onto higher level programmes at other providers.
14. Learners use safe working practices during their lessons. The service has well developed and effective health and safety policies and practices. Learners feel safe in the learning environment.
15. NLC encourages learners to work as volunteers either within the service or with other organisations to enable them to contribute to the local community. The service runs a short course about volunteering to support them before they start.

The quality of provision

Grade 3

16. The quality of provision is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. NLC has introduced an effective process for observing teaching and learning. Observers now make accurate judgements about the quality of sessions and provide clear guidance for tutors to improve their teaching. Good tutors plan sessions well and use a variety of activities to stimulate learners. Learners enjoy these sessions, engage with the activities and learn well. Other sessions are less stimulating and fail to meet individual learner needs.
17. At the previous inspection arrangements for the planning, monitoring and recording of individualised learning was judged to be an area for improvement. Since the inspection NLC has introduced an improved process for RARPA in non-accredited learning, which includes internal verification and moderation

processes. Where NLC has implemented the process fully it is working effectively; however, not all subject areas are using it well. In these areas many individual learning goals lack sufficient detail to motivate learners or to help them progress. Learners' diaries have too much emphasis on what learners have done rather than on what they have learnt. The service's self-assessment report recognises that the system needs to be used more effectively across all areas.

18. Resources, in particular accommodation, are generally good. Most teaching rooms are bright and attractive, with interactive white boards and access to the internet. Most tutors use the resources well. The service has an effective virtual learning environment that NLC staff and learners are beginning to use well, although the service is not currently using it routinely to share good practice.
19. Learners receive appropriate help to develop the numeracy, literacy and language skills needed to achieve their main learning goals. Early indications are that this support, which is offered by a team of learning support assistants, is beginning to have a positive effect.
20. Both the range and levels of subjects and courses offered by NLC meet the needs and interests of learners well. The service has effective systems in place to identify the parts of North Lincolnshire where few residents engage in adult education. It has effective ways of gathering the views of the public using face-to-face interviews on local high streets to identify the courses that might attract them. Work to develop an appropriate curriculum with local community groups is very effective. The service also works with local employers, in particular a national steel company and North Lincolnshire Council, to develop provision to meet their specific needs. The service has changed its focus well since the previous inspection and is now more responsive to local demands.
21. The service has strong and effective partnerships with a range of organisations that have clear benefits for learners and the wider community. This was identified as a strength in the previous inspection and remains so. NLC responds well to the needs of the community and local businesses. Many partnerships widen participation effectively. For example, the service has a strong working relationship with social services and runs a series of accredited programmes for adults with moderate learning difficulties. Links with the community centres in some of the more deprived areas in North Lincolnshire enable the service to offer a range of programmes to meet the needs of the residents of these areas. Other partnerships, including the Humber Learning Consortium, reduce the amount of duplication in provision across the area and identify any gaps in provision. NLC belong to a peer review group of four adult and community learning providers. The group provides a forum for sharing good practice and moderating both self-assessment and the observation of teaching.
22. Learners receive satisfactory care and support that helps them to achieve their learning goals. Learners speak of helpful and supportive tutors, many of whom do considerable amounts of extra work to help their learners.

23. IAG is generally satisfactory. The service has a team of appropriately qualified advisors. Prior to enrolling, learners can see course details on the service's website or telephone to speak to an advisor who may direct them to another provider where appropriate. This part of the process is satisfactory. However, where a learner is referred to specialist subject staff for additional information, the process is poorly managed. Some learners do not receive the required assistance and fail to enrol. The service recognises that this initial stage is an area for improvement and has instigated a formal review of its effectiveness.
24. Tutors who provide IAG during and at the end of the course are not appropriately qualified and are not always impartial. Too few learners take up the opportunity to have a guidance interview towards the end of their programme.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

25. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The service has very effectively re-focused the provision to meet both council priorities and the needs of the wider community. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Managers have taken good actions to re-organise staff and have created new posts to augment existing teams. Roles and responsibilities are now clear and staff are much more accountable. Management of most of the provision is now highly effective. Managers monitor performance well. NLC has managed the organisational change well with morale remaining high. Strategic management is now satisfactory. Partners report a distinct and positive change in NLC's culture from an organisation too focused on past practices to a more responsive provider genuinely committed to the wider needs of the local community.
26. NLC has placed a high priority on the development of key systems to effect improvement. The service has put significant investment into developing its management information system and now has reliable data with which managers can plan. Senior and middle managers use the data to analyse where problems are apparent and take effective actions to bring about improvement. NLC is benefiting from a good council software package which allows the service to map where the most vulnerable groups are in comparison to the existing learner population. Staff use this information well to target learners with multiple barriers to learning. Success rates are now satisfactory, having improved from a very low base at the last inspection.
27. NLC's RARPA processes are comprehensive; however, the service is not applying them with sufficient rigour in some subject areas. NLC has good peer review systems in place, having formed effective partnerships with other local authorities. NLC's observation process is effective in identifying action points and in monitoring improvement. Moderation processes are effective. However, while NLC use quality processes effectively to identify areas for development, it does not promote or share good practice sufficiently. In family learning no observations have taken place this year to assess quality of teaching and learning and there is no service level agreement in place with relevant partners.

28. Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. NLC is meeting government requirements for the safeguarding of children up to 18 and vulnerable adults. It has completed risk assessments to identify the most vulnerable adults and has very effective systems to outline what staff and learners should do to support those with severe health care issues. Senior managers take an interest in safeguarding and receive regular reports. There is a central list of Criminal Records Bureau checks of all staff, partner staff and volunteers. All staff except those newly recruited have received basic training in safeguarding. Safeguarding policies and procedures are comprehensive and staff are familiar with them. The named person responsible for safeguarding issues has attended both the Local Children's Safeguarding Board's training and supplementary training. NLC takes good actions to raise learners' understanding of safeguarding through induction, a revised learner handbook and posters around the buildings. These are beginning to have some impact though not all learners are sufficiently aware of the specific issues they raise. Arrangements for health and safety are rigorous. Learners feel safe and are fully aware of how they can access support and guidance.
29. Arrangements for promoting and monitoring equality and diversity are now satisfactory. NLC has successfully repositioned its provision to better target areas of deprivation using appropriate data and research. It has a stronger focus on learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Policies and procedures are comprehensive and include all relevant legislation. Staff training is comprehensive. The staff and learner handbook and induction checklists make appropriate references to equality and diversity. Representatives from a learner forum were well involved in the development of a presentation on learner expectations in adult education, which included their views on equality and diversity. Session plans contain a section on equality and diversity. However, while some good practice exists, for instance in an information communications technology session which included some good work on promoting information on diversity, this practice is not universally replicated. Observations of teaching monitor the inclusion of equality and diversity within sessions; however, improvement has been slow. NLC is starting to use data to identify gaps in the achievement of different groups. For instance, the service has identified the relative under-performance of learners between 16 and 18 compared with those aged over 19. However, actions to bring about improvement have had insufficient impact.
30. Staff and learner views are well considered and used to raise the quality of provision. The self-assessment report and process are satisfactory. NLC has been appropriately self-critical and staff and learner views are well considered. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and areas for improvement identified. Action plans developed to bring about improvement contain insufficient guidance for staff. Some targets provide insufficient challenge. Some strategy documents covering areas such as RARPA and Skills for Life are either new or require further development. Plans to implement these strategies developed at both service and subject level often lack detail and contain few measurable goals or deadlines. Plans do not consider resource implications.

Responsibility for action is unclear. Progress in completing actions is not always rigorously monitored.

31. NLC's arrangements for managing resources and ensuring cost-effectiveness are satisfactory across most of its provision. However, although a satisfactory level of resource is allocated in family learning, it is seriously under-deployed.
32. Arrangements for sustainability are satisfactory. Two NLC staff have attended some awareness training on sustainable development which they have shared with all staff.

Subject areas

Information and communication technologies

Grade 2

Context

33. A full-time curriculum manager and one full-time and 10 part-time tutors support 399 learners, enrolled on 27 courses. Subjects offered include using common information technology programmes and the internet, and digital imaging. They range from introductory to intermediate level. All learners attend one of the four main learning centres or one of five community venues.

Key findings

- Success rates are high. Success rates on European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) programmes rose in 2008/09 to 82% with Computer Literacy and Information Technology (CLAIT) learners achieving at 75%. Learners on completed non-accredited courses in 2009/10 have achieved a good success rate of 85%. The success rate for those from minority ethnic groups is lower than that of other learners.
- Learners develop their skills well. They enjoy their learning and attendance at sessions is high. Learners in classes successfully overcome their initial anxiety and gain confidence. Their personal and social well-being is enhanced as they develop their skills well, both for jobs and for social purposes.
- Teaching and learning are good in the majority of sessions. Learners enjoy their sessions. Tutors use questions well to help learners relate new skills to previous learning. They use assessment well to promote and monitor progress and achievement. Learners on non-vocational courses gain confidence from mid-course reviews and weekly learning diaries that effectively help them reflect on their progress.
- The pace of learning is slow in a minority of sessions. In some whole-class activities, the pace is too slow for more able or experienced learners who have to wait excessively for other learners to complete a technique. Some teachers fail to promote assistive features effectively; progress is slowed for those with poorer vision or motor control.
- NLC has formed good partnerships with organisations working with hard-to-reach learners, including those from urban and rural deprived communities, minority ethnic groups, recovering substance abusers, young homeless and disaffected people. Participation by these learners is good. The programme is delivered at different times of the day and is geographically widespread to accommodate learners' needs. Accredited courses are available up to intermediate level and include fast-track provision.
- Support for learners is satisfactory. Learners with literacy and numeracy needs are referred for appropriate support. Assistance is also available in class for learners who need additional help to achieve their learning goals. The use of

adaptive technology is satisfactory and learners with more severe disabilities are able to use software or hardware that meets their individual needs.

- Managers raise expectations and promote ambition well. A recent restructure has helped managers retain a focus on improving ICT performance. Teachers and managers enjoy clearer lines of communication and teachers feel well supported. All courses have demanding targets and success rates continue to rise. Measures of achievement on non-accredited courses are now reliable. Managers' recent initiatives to improve performance have been successful.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are satisfactory. Managers have given appropriate priority for ensuring all staff are trained and that appropriate checks are made on all staff and volunteers. All staff know who to contact if they have safeguarding concerns. Staff place a high priority on protecting learners' health and safety.
- Promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. One group of learners demonstrated particularly good understanding of how to challenge oppressive behaviour, though most learners do not have this level of understanding. Staff training in equality and diversity is appropriate. NLC handles complaints satisfactorily. Managers have been slow in using data to monitor the performance of different groups and take action to narrow achievement gaps.
- NLC does not share good practice sufficiently well. Managers fail to share best practice identified through observations of teaching. Managers make insufficient attempts to identify or share good practice from course reviews and learner feedback. There is no forum through which teaching staff can share their best practice.

What does North Lincolnshire Council need to do to improve further?

- Improve the pace of learning and degree of challenge by improving tutors' skills in delivering differentiated learning and using graduated learning activities. Ensure that staff are able to configure assistive technology features.
- Prioritise identifying good practice in observations and monitoring visits, and in internal and external peer observations. Analyse course reviews and learner feedback to identify courses where good practice exists. Collaborate with colleagues in other departments for further ideas. Provide a regular and frequent forum where teachers can present ideas for improvements to their colleagues in a supportive environment. Use the service's virtual learning environment to create a bank of quality assured handouts and tested teaching and learning techniques.

Preparation for life and work

Grade 3

Context

34. The service provides literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programmes from entry to intermediate level. Most provision is accredited. Courses are delivered at both NLC's premises and also at community venues. Classes take place during the day and in the evenings. At the time of inspection there were 763 learners enrolled on programmes.

Key findings

- Learners gain good levels of confidence and skills. They overcome fears and embarrassment about their literacy and numeracy needs and use their skills to achieve greater independence in life and to gain qualifications. Learners apply their learning at work and use their skills to support others.
- Success rates are satisfactory. There has been a significant improvement in success rates in literacy and numeracy for learners aged over 19. Success rates on these programmes match national benchmarks. Success rates for learners taking higher level ESOL qualifications are low.
- Partnership working is good. Staff work productively with a wide range of organisations to develop the skills of learners with a wide variety of needs. NLC uses partnership arrangements to deliver provision in the workplace, for learners in deprived areas or for learners with specific types of disability.
- The initial assessment process is very effective in identifying learner goals, their specific needs and interests and in enrolling them on an appropriate learning programme. Potential new learners are interviewed individually or if appropriate as a group by a 'referral team' of tutors.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Staff link session plans to the outcomes identified in Every Child Matters. Tutors use group and individual learner profiles effectively to plan sessions. Some sessions are too tutor-led and too reliant on paper-based resources. In the better sessions tutors use a range of teaching and learning methods. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced for their roles.
- Staff monitor learners' progress insufficiently. Targets are recorded in individual learning plans but are often general rather than specific and apply to many rather than to individual learners. In some cases, topics are mistakenly recorded as targets. Often targets are expressed in language only the tutor understands, using references to the adult core curriculum rather than in plain language understood by learners.
- Management of the curriculum is good. Since the last inspection, very effective actions have been taken to improve the quality of provision. The staffing structure has been changed and new posts are in place to ensure effective and regular monitoring of provision and to ensure tutors are well supported and managed.

- The self-assessment report is too descriptive and insufficiently self-critical. Some strengths identified by NLC were also identified by inspectors. However, some areas for improvement had not been recognised.

What does North Lincolnshire Council need to do to improve further?

- Increase success rates across all the provision by continuing with the quality improvement measures already implemented and by sharing good practice both within the subject area and across the rest of NLC's provision.
- Use targets in individual learning plans that are specific to the needs of individual learners and which are used by tutors to measure, review and record progress in learning. Write targets in language that is understandable by learners, adopting good practice developed in other subject areas.
- Use a wider range of resources and teaching and learning methods during sessions. Use the observation process to promote more variety in teaching and learning and to identify and share good practice.
- Ensure the self-assessment report is evaluative and contains judgements that link more specifically to evidence and to key aspects relating to outcomes, quality of provision and leadership and management.

Family learning

Grade 4

Context

35. NLC has 40 learners enrolled on six wider family learning programmes and four learners on a programme to support language skills for parents. There is no family literacy or numeracy provision. Learners on wider family learning programmes are following courses to improve their parenting skills, to develop computer-based skills in music, to explore family science topics and to encourage family participation in cooking healthy meals.

Key findings

- Learners make slow progress. Teaching staff fail to provide learners with sufficient challenge in sessions; there is insufficient active learning. The standard of work does not match many learners' levels of ability.
- Learners enjoy learning. They improve in skills, confidence and understanding during their courses. Learners can show how their learning has improved their social and family life and supported better relationships with their children's schools.
- Initial assessment is inadequate and is not routinely included in wider family learning courses. The assessment used on one ESOL course was inappropriate for establishing levels of language skills, concentrating more on written English.
- Staff do not monitor learners' achievements sufficiently. Individual learning plans do not contain specific, measurable and time-bound targets. NLC has introduced new processes to tackle this; however, it has not led to better recording of achievements yet.
- Too few learners take up the opportunity to gain a nationally recognised award. The service is improving the way programmes are planned to help learners progress from wider family learning activities onto further courses, including those in family language, literacy and numeracy learning, but it is too early for any apparent benefit to learners.
- NLC have established effective partnerships with schools, extended school clusters and children's centres which give support to learners. Good information about learning opportunities and joint activities with partner agencies are available to encourage hard-to-reach learners to participate.
- Management of the curriculum area is inadequate. Arrangements with partners are effective; however, they are not supported by service level agreements. NLC uses management information insufficiently to plan provision. Quality monitoring arrangements, though adequate in themselves, are insufficiently applied in this subject sector area. There is no current observation of teaching and learning in family learning provision.

What does North Lincolnshire Council need to do to improve further?

- Improve the rate at which learners progress, by continuing to implement recent quality improvement measures and by sharing good practice, both within the subject area and across NLC's provision.
- Investigate initial assessment arrangements used by other providers, learn from their good practice and implement appropriate assessments across family learning. Use observations of teaching and learning to assess the effectiveness of measures taken.
- Improve recognition and recording of progress and achievement by learning from the better practice seen elsewhere in the service. Further develop staff training in this area and use established systems to evaluate its effectiveness
- Use management information to plan provision in conjunction with established partners to maximise the resources allocated and to broaden the range of courses. In particular, concentrate on the development of family literacy and numeracy provision to offer both progression routes and stand-alone courses.
- Review curriculum management arrangements and instigate actions to improve the identified shortfalls in provision. Implement very focused action planning and target setting, monitoring both rigorously to ensure actions to improve take place in the necessary timescales.

Information about the inspection

36. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's Head of Adult Education Service, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the LSC, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
37. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of NLC. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
North Lincolnshire Council

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners			
Full-time learners	1,376	48	1,328
Part-time learners			
Overall effectiveness	3		
Capacity to improve	3		
Outcomes for learners	3	4	3
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3		
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3		
How well do learners progress?	2		
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	3		
How safe do learners feel?	3		
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	3		
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	3		
Quality of provision	3		3
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3		
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2		
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2		
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	3		
Leadership and management	3		
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2		
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*			
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3		
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3		
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2		
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3		
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	3		

*where applicable to the type of provision

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