

Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council

Local authority

Inspection dates

6–9 December 2016

Overall effectiveness		Requires improvement	
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement	Adult learning programmes	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement		
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement		
Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection		Good	

Summary of key findings

This is a provider that requires improvement

- Leaders and managers do not implement actions to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and learners' outcomes quickly enough.
- Leaders and managers do not have access to sufficiently detailed data about learners' progress and achievements to enable them to identify areas for concern early enough, such as when learners fall behind schedule in their learning.
- Too few learners achieve their qualifications in English, mathematics, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) writing skills, and information and communication technology (ICT).
- Tutors make insufficient use of information about learners' starting points or the progress that learners make to plan sufficiently challenging learning activities, particularly for the most able learners.
- Tutors do not explain clearly to adults on community and family learning courses the progress that they are making and, as a result, a minority of learners make slow progress.
- Staff do not reinforce sufficiently modern British values and how these relate to learners as citizens of Barnsley on their programmes.
- Staff do not develop learners' understanding of risks associated with radicalisation and extremism well enough.

The provider has the following strengths

- Leaders and managers lead highly effective partnerships which they use well to establish an adult learning curriculum that supports the most vulnerable and hardest to reach members of the community.
- Tutors plan and deliver a range of interesting and enjoyable learning activities that inspire learners so that they are keen to learn.
- Through attending programmes, adults improve significantly their confidence, communication skills, and employability skills.
- Managers and staff have established inclusive and welcoming environments where learners, many with significant barriers to participating, feel safe and motivated to learn.
- A high proportion of learners who take accredited vocational qualifications make good progress and gain the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve and progress to further learning or employment.

Full report

Information about the provider

- The adult skills, employability and community learning service provided by Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) has its main delivery location in Barnsley town centre. The service provides courses in around 30 other venues across the borough. At the time of inspection, there were 1,419 learners on adult learning programmes. Family and community learning courses account for approximately half of the provision. Learners follow courses in a range of subjects including English, mathematics, ESOL, employability, ICT, childcare, health and social care, hospitality and catering, business management, modern foreign languages and visual art.
- The metropolitan borough of Barnsley has a population of around 231,000, 97% of whom are from a White British background. At 11%, a higher proportion of residents have no qualifications compared with the national figure and with the Yorkshire and Humber region. The proportion of residents who have qualifications at level 3 or above is below the regional and national averages. Unemployment in Barnsley is higher than regional and national averages.

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and managers should ensure that improvement plans and the targets within them focus on the specific actions required to bring about swift improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes for learners in the areas where these are not good enough.
- Leaders should ensure that managers and staff have access to sufficiently detailed and meaningful information about learners' progress on their courses and on to the next steps in their learning, and that they use this information to ensure that learners are on appropriate programmes and make the progress of which they are capable.
- Leaders and managers should implement performance management and staff training activities more effectively to:
 - bring about improvements in the planning and delivery of weaker areas of the provision, particularly English, mathematics, ESOL and ICT, to increase the proportion of learners who achieve
 - ensure that tutors are better able to plan learning activities so that learners on all courses make the progress of which they are capable based on their starting points.
- Leaders and managers must ensure that all tutors who deliver community education and family learning programmes understand and use the procedures for setting targets for learners and recording learners' progress and achievements effectively, so that adults improve the progress they make towards achieving their personal learning and progression targets.
- Improve tutors' skills and confidence in planning activities that increase learners' awareness of modern British society and life, and the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism, and how these relate to them as citizens of Barnsley.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders and managers do not give sufficient priority to improving the quality of teaching and learning or learners' outcomes. They produce a quality improvement plan which they monitor regularly and update throughout the year. Too often, the improvement actions are not detailed and precise enough, referring to the application of processes rather than the impact they have on learners' progress or the quality of teaching and learning.
- Although managers use comprehensive performance management systems to effectively identify examples of poor staff performance, remedial actions they take to improve performance take too long to implement. This, combined with high levels of staff absence, results in a minority of learners not making sufficiently good progress.
- Managers who carry out observations of teaching and learning provide insufficiently detailed feedback to tutors on how they can improve their practice. Leaders and managers provide staff with a wide range of staff development activities but too few of these focus on improving teaching, learning and assessment.
- Leaders and managers do not have sufficiently detailed data about learners' progress and achievements to enable them to identify areas for concern early enough and take swift action to bring about improvements. Leaders recognise this but have been slow in implementing improvements.
- Leaders' self-assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the service results from an inclusive process involving staff and managers at all levels. The summary report, however, is insufficiently evaluative and overlooks some key areas that require improvement such as the insufficient promotion of British values throughout learners' programmes and the lack of clarity provided for adults on community education and family learning courses about the progress they are making.
- Leaders and managers do not ensure that all learners receive appropriate initial advice and guidance prior to joining courses or, once they are on courses, advice about their next steps. Managers have yet to establish reliable systems for monitoring learners' progression into further education, work or training once they have left their courses. As a result, they cannot fully review the effectiveness of provision in meeting learners' short-term and career aspirations.
- Leaders and managers work very effectively with education and community partners to develop clear and well-researched plans for the adult education curriculum. As a result, they provide an appropriate and highly relevant provision which aligns very well to local need and avoids unnecessary duplication.
- Courses successfully target the learners who are hardest to reach, including those who are unemployed and those who have few or no formal qualifications. Leaders review the relevance of the provision frequently and recognise that additional new courses are necessary to attract even more learners from their target group such as males who have been unemployed for a long time.
- Council members, leaders and managers have high aspirations for, and a strong

commitment to adult learners. They have made a significant investment in a new education centre in central Barnsley, suitably situated near to key partners and support services. In addition, leaders plan provision carefully so that learners can study at venues near to where they live and which are located in areas of high economic and social deprivation. This encourages greater participation. Within these safe environments, staff and learners treat each other with respect and tolerance and promote equality and celebrate diversity in a way which encourages learners to take the first steps to new learning and employment.

- Leaders and managers ensure that learners receive excellent personal support which removes many of their personal barriers to success. In particular, managers ensure that learners who are required to attend basic employability programmes by Jobcentre Plus are placed with great care on the right level of course and that they receive good support in the early weeks from a dedicated team of staff.
- Leaders and managers monitor the headline progress and achievement of different groups of learners by gender, ethnicity and learning difficulty or disability thoroughly. They are aware of the under-achievement of learners from a non-White British background compared to White British learners. They have accurately identified weaknesses in the delivery of ESOL writing courses as the cause and have identified this provision as an area they need to improve

The governance of the provider

- Elected members and senior leaders responsible for governance do not receive sufficient detailed information from service leaders and managers to enable them to challenge rigorously areas of underperformance. As a result, they do not have sufficient awareness of, and have not been able to prevent, the decline in the quality of provision and outcomes for learners since the previous inspection.
- Governors have a well-defined and clear ambition for the service and how the adult skills, community and family learning courses it provides contribute to the borough council's strategies and plans. They effectively scrutinise the adult learning strategy and content, and the appropriateness of provision for Barnsley's residents.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Senior leaders have developed appropriate key roles and responsibilities, policies and procedures and reporting arrangements that safeguard learners and staff well. Appropriately trained and qualified managers deal effectively with safeguarding concerns and maintain good links with key stakeholders in the council and the community to ensure the safeguarding of vulnerable learners extends beyond the service.
- Learners feel safe and have a good knowledge of safeguarding, which is particularly relevant to their everyday lives. Learners feel confident that they can report any issues safely and in a way that will protect them from harm.
- Staff do not develop learners' understanding of risks associated with radicalisation and extremism well enough.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good. Although there are many examples of well-planned and delivered courses that enable learners to make good progress and achieve well, in too many cases, teaching and assessment does not cater well enough for the very different needs and abilities of learners. As a result, a minority of learners make slow progress. Too often, tutors make insufficient use of information about learners' starting points or the progress they make to plan sufficiently challenging learning activities, particularly for the most able.
- Tutors do not explain clearly to adults on community education and family learning courses the progress they are making and, as a result, a minority make slow progress.
- A minority of tutors do not monitor the progress that learners make rigorously enough. They focus on ensuring that the learners in their lessons meet the minimum standards of the qualification rather than on ensuring that learners work towards challenging targets.
- Tutors' feedback on learners' work does not provide them with sufficient information about what they have done well and how they can improve their work. Tutors frequently use descriptors such as 'good' and 'well done' when marking learners' work without providing learners with the information about why something is good or what they have done well and how they can improve further. Tutors pay insufficient attention to identifying spelling, punctuation and grammar errors in learners' work, and to showing learners how to make corrections. As a result, learners continue to make the same mistakes.
- In too many cases, when tutors ask questions they direct them to the whole group and readily accept the initial responses of one or two learners as evidence that all learners in the group have learned and understand key concepts. A few tutors ask questions very effectively and, as a result, check learners' knowledge and understanding thoroughly.
- Tutors plan and deliver a wide range of activities and produce good quality learning resources. As a result, learners enjoy attending courses and are keen to learn. Learning activities encourage good peer and cooperative learning. Through these, learners develop high levels of confidence, improve their speaking and listening skills and use subject specific terminology and language well.
- Tutors and specialist staff support learners very well during and in between sessions to ensure that learners are involved actively in their learning. The majority of tutors successfully help learners, a few of whom are particularly vulnerable, to overcome difficulties they have in participating in learning. Learners who are absent and miss work value and take up the opportunity to attend catch-up sessions so that they do not fall behind with their work.
- Specialist tutors effectively identify at the beginning of courses the support needs of learners who need extra help to make progress and achieve. In lessons, tutors use allocated learning support assistants well to support individuals and groups who require support.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

- Learners' attendance at lessons varies too much, and is too low in many subjects. In childcare and health studies, and on courses for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities, a high proportion of learners attend regularly. However, learners' attendance at functional skills lessons in English, ICT, and on a minority of programmes in community and family learning is not good enough. This contributes to the slower progress made by learners and lower achievement rates in these subjects compared with others.
- Staff do not provide learners with sufficient or timely advice and guidance so that they can make well-informed decisions about their next steps. This is particularly the case on family learning programmes.
- Although covered well at the start of courses, staff do not reinforce modern British values or the risks associated with radicalisation and extremism, and how these relate to learners as citizens of Barnsley sufficiently throughout their programmes. Learners who attend lessons at the main Wellington House site have a better understanding of these issues than learners who follow programmes in community venues.
- Managers and staff have established inclusive and welcoming environments both in the town centre of Barnsley and in a range of community venues where learners, many with significant barriers to participating, feel secure and motivated to learn. Many learners who start courses with BMBC have not been employed or engaged in learning for considerable periods of time. Through their participation, they improve their confidence to participate in further learning or find work. Learners who attend community and family learning courses improve their skills and confidence to help their children learn.
- Learners behave very well and are highly supportive of each other. They are respectful of their teachers and peers. Through attending adult learning and community education programmes, adults improve their social, communication and employability skills.
- Learners know how to raise any concerns they have about their safety. Staff provide a good range of information and guidance that enables learners to better understand the risks associated with the internet including inappropriate use of social media.

Outcomes for learners

Requires improvement

- The proportion of learners who achieve English and mathematics functional skills qualifications was low in 2014/15 and declined further in 2015/16. Learners generally make better progress in functional mathematics than they do in functional English.
- The proportion of learners who gain the skills and knowledge they need to achieve full qualifications in ICT is too low.
- The proportion of learners who achieve qualifications in ESOL is too low. Although learners make better progress in speaking and reading, too many do not make the progress they are capable of in writing. Low achievement rates in ESOL account for the lower achievement rates for learners from a non-White background compared to their peers.
- Learners with learning difficulties or disabilities improve their independent living skills well through attending courses. However, not all of these learners make the progress of which

they are capable because tutors do not plan activities sufficiently well to cater for the very broad range of learners' abilities within lessons.

- A high proportion of adults who are required by Jobcentre Plus to take short mathematics and English courses aimed at improving their employability achieve these skills. As a result of participating on these programmes, a high proportion progress onto full functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics or other learning programmes with BMBC.
- Learners make good progress, and gain the necessary skills and knowledge to achieve well in health and social care, childcare, hospitality and catering, modern foreign languages, business management and direct learning support. The proportions of learners who achieve A* to C grades in GCSE English and mathematics are high.
- A high proportion of learners who complete community and family learning courses enrol on further programmes with BMBC. A minority of these take accredited qualifications. However, due to the lack of detailed data available to them, managers do not have sufficient information about the proportions of these learners who take programmes at a higher level, repeat programmes, or progress to programmes in different subjects at the same or lower level that are appropriate to their needs.
- A high proportion of learners who achieve accredited qualifications with BMBC progress to employment or further learning and training either with BMBC or with other providers.

Provider details

Unique reference number	50609
Type of provider	Local authority
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1,464
Principal/CEO	Anne Marie Holdsworth
Telephone number	01226 775 287
Website	www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/adult-skills-and-community-learning/

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 or above	
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+
	-	1,118	-	263	-	38	-	-
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	-							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	-							
Funding received from:	Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	-							

Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the adult skills and community learning service manager, as nominee. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected within the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider.

Inspection team

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