

**Report of the Executive Director Core Services  
and the Executive Director Place,  
to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC)  
on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2019**

**Inspection of Local Authority Adult Skills and Community Learning Service (ASCL) by the  
Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) Report**

**1.0 Introduction**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Overview & Scrutiny Committee of the recent Ofsted inspection of the local authority's Adult Skills and Community Learning (ASCL) Service. The full report can be found at Item 5b.

**2.0 Background**

2.1 The ASCL Service delivers adult education across the community of Barnsley. It is funded primarily through public funds from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) which brings it into scope for inspection by Ofsted.

2.2 In December 2016, Ofsted's inspection of the ASCL Service resulted in the judgement that the Service 'Requires Improvement'. Five recommendations for improvement were made mainly in relation to improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the impact this had on outcomes for learners.

2.3 To support the required improvement journey, an Improvement and Governing Board was established in May 2017. The Board is made up of two Elected Members; Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) officers – both strategic and operational; local and regional further education sector representatives; and a voluntary and community sector representative.

**3.0 Current Position**

3.1 Ofsted inspected BMBC's ASCL Service from the 13th to 16th November 2018. The inspection found the Service to be 'good' across all the following judgement areas:

- Overall effectiveness
- Effectiveness of leadership and management
- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- Outcomes for learners
- Adult learning programmes

3.2 A summary of Ofsted's key findings is shown below:

- Council members, senior leaders, managers and staff ensure that the service's provision makes a positive contribution to enhancing the lives of people in Barnsley
- Leaders and managers have established and promote a culture of mutual respect and tolerance that contributes effectively to maintaining a supportive learning environment
- Leaders and managers have taken effective action since the previous inspection to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, which is now good
- Learners make good progress, and the proportion who achieve their qualifications or intended outcomes is high
- Learners benefit from effective pastoral support, and they improve their skills, knowledge, self-confidence and well-being as a consequence of attending their courses

- Leaders and managers have established good working relationships with several external partners to ensure a consistent approach to improving the life chances and well-being of the residents of Barnsley
- Leaders and managers have an accurate understanding of the quality of the provision, and they challenge tutors successfully to improve their teaching and outcomes for learners
- Learners are punctual, attend well and arrive at their lessons prepared to work hard
- Managers and tutors provide good information about safeguarding and the possible risks from extremist groups and radicalisation. Learners understand and articulate these issues well and know to whom to report any concerns
- Too few learners on courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and on functional English courses achieve their qualifications
- A minority of tutors do not use information about learners' starting points well enough to challenge learners, particularly the most able, to make more rapid progress
- Managers and tutors do not ensure that support volunteers are used effectively enough in lessons to enhance learners' progress

#### **4.0 Future Plans & Challenges**

4.1 The inspection made three recommendations for improvement, as follows:-

- Improve further the quality of ESOL and English provision so that learners make better progress and a higher proportion achieve their qualifications
- Ensure that all tutors set suitably demanding work using information about learners' starting points, particularly for the most able learners
- Ensure that tutors make better use of support volunteers to support learners in lessons

4.2 Under the existing inspection framework, providers judged to be good or better will receive a 'short' two day inspection every three years, rather than a 'full' week long inspection within two years of a 'requires improvement' judgement. This will now apply to ASCL.

4.3 The Ofsted recommendations for improvement will be managed and progressed within the ASCL Service Improvement Plan which will be overseen through the continuation of the current governance arrangements. A summary of the current plan indicating progress to date can be found at Item 5c.

#### **5.0 Implications for Local People**

5.1 Local authority providers of adult education continue to be subject to rigorous external inspection and the outcome of Barnsley's inspection provides assurance to all stakeholders that a quality service is being delivered and that it is effective in meeting the needs of all participants.

#### **6.0 Invited Witnesses**

6.1 The following witnesses have been invited to today's meeting to answer questions from the committee:

- David Shepherd, Service Director for Regeneration & Property, Place Directorate
- Tom Smith, Head of Employment & Skills, Place Directorate
- Anne-Marie Holdsworth, Adult Skills, Employability & Community Learning Manager, Place Directorate
- Councillor Chris Lamb, Member of the ASCL Service Improvement & Governing Board

## **7.0 Possible Areas for Investigation**

7.1 Members may wish to ask questions around the following areas:

- How do you plan to increase the number of participants who achieve a qualification on ESOL and functional English courses?
- How do you engage with the public to promote the services offered by Adult Skills & Community Learning?
- Given the service's journey, which area of improvement are you most proud of?
- How did you approach improvement and what were the obstacles?
- What are you doing to ensure that improvements are sustainable?
- How can support volunteers be used effectively to enhance learners' progress?
- What are the biggest future challenges that the service faces?
- Looking back on the improvement journey, what have you learned and is there anything you would do differently?
- When do you expect to be in a position to be able to assess all the actions in the improvement plan?
- What areas of data collection need to be developed in order to effectively track learner progress?
- How did you involve staff and service users in your improvement journey?
- What local agencies do you work with to promote mental wellbeing and how effective are these partner relationships?
- What can Members do to support the improvement journey of Adult Skills & Community Learning?

## **8.0 Background Papers and Useful Links**

- Item 4b (attached) – Ofsted Inspection Report on Barnsley Adult Skills & Community Learning Service, November 2018
- Item 4c (attached) – ASCL Service Improvement Plan Summary

## **9.0 Glossary**

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| ASCL   | Adult Skills & Community Learning                                 |
| BMBC   | Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council                             |
| CCF&P  | Contract Compliance, Funding & Performance                        |
| ESFA   | Education and Skills Funding Agency                               |
| ESOL   | English for Speakers of Other Languages                           |
| Ofsted | Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills |
| OSC    | Overview & Scrutiny Committee                                     |
| OTLA   | Observation of Teaching, Learning & Assessment                    |

## **10.0 Officer Contact**

Anna Marshall, Scrutiny Officer, 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019