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Ms Sue Wynne
Chief Officer, Employments and Skills
Leeds City Council
Employment and Skills Service, Level 4 Thoresby House
2 Rossington Street
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Dear Ms Wynne

Short inspection of Leeds City Council

Following the short inspection on 8 and 9 February 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in April 2013.

This provider continues to be good.

You, leaders and councillors, who are responsible for setting the direction of the adult learning provision delivered by Leeds City Council, have established a clear vision and appropriate strategy to target provision to residents who will benefit from it the most. You have ensured that the service continues to provide, very effectively, learning programmes for residents who are most in need of community and family learning. Locating adult learning in the employment and skills service of the council provides clear benefits by effectively informing the scope of the provision in relation to the needs of communities and employers. You have sustained the strengths identified at the previous inspection.

You have made good progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection, although you have yet to resolve all of these fully. You, other leaders and managers have a clear understanding about what you need to do to bring about further improvements. The procedures for judging and improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are now reliable. You have strengthened the performance management of subcontractors but managers need to do more to assure themselves that all subcontractors are providing programmes that are appropriate to the council's strategy for adult and community learning. For a small minority of courses, this is not sufficiently clear. Managers have put much effort into actions aimed at improving the way that tutors who work for subcontractors use arrangements for assessing and recording learners' progress. These have been successful in the majority of cases. However, a small minority of tutors still do not comply with your explicit expectations and for learners on these

courses, their progress is not clear.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and managers have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that action is taken to safeguard learners. They set clear expectations for all subcontractors through performance management arrangements. The designated lead for safeguarding maintains comprehensive records of all tutors who deliver programmes, including proof that they have the necessary clearances and entitlement to work.

Through the lead for safeguarding, the employment and skills service maintains good links with other departments and teams within the council who have expertise in matters relating to safeguarding. Through these, managers receive helpful advice on how to deal with safeguarding concerns, including the risks of learners being exposed to, or expressing, extremist views and how to refer these to appropriate agencies if necessary. In addition, these effective links help in the development of safeguarding training that all tutors, including those who work for subcontractors, are required to undertake. As a result, tutors have a good understanding of how to raise awareness and deal with issues relating to the health, safety and well-being of learners. For example, how to stay safe online and being aware of the risks of sexual grooming and exploitation, including female genital mutilation.

Inspection findings

- Leaders, including elected members with responsibility for governance, take effective steps to ensure that the adult learning provision uses the funding it receives effectively to target the communities and residents that are most in need. Members of the adult learning trust board use their wide range of expertise well to oversee the strategic direction of the service. They receive a good range of information about the quality of provision and the impact this has on the residents of Leeds. They support leaders and managers well and challenge them effectively to make improvements where these are required. They receive very clear information about the social impact of the service. They are informed about the changes that need to be made both to locations of delivery and to programmes provided so that they continue to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged individuals and communities. As a result, the provision links effectively to the broader priorities the council has for improving the lives of residents in areas such as physical and mental health and well-being, housing, increasing participation in the community, and in gaining and sustaining employment.
- The adult learning service works with a wide range of partners and subcontractors to provide programmes that meet the varied needs of different communities in Leeds. Leaders have responded well to new and emerging challenges, such as establishing English language programmes for refugees from Syria. Through these, learners increase in confidence to engage in British society, for example by being able to communicate with doctors about health issues and with their children's school teachers about their education and well-being.

However, for a small minority of courses delivered by subcontractors, it is not sufficiently clear how the subjects provided, such as elementary Spanish, meet the council's objectives of targeting adults who are most at need.

- Leaders and managers have strengthened quality monitoring and improvement procedures since the previous inspection, when aspects of these were found to require improvement. Frequent observations of teaching and learning across all subcontractors provide managers with a good understanding of the strengths of the provision and areas that require improvement. These are used to plan and provide individual support for tutors to help them to improve, and a good range of staff development and training activities. Tutors who are on hourly paid contracts receive additional payment to attend staff training, ensuring good participation. The self-assessment process involves all subcontractors and considers the views of stakeholders, other council departments and community groups well. The self-assessment report is accurate and identifies clearly what managers and tutors need to do to improve the provision further and address the few areas of improvement that remain.
- The range of adult learning programmes and the locations they are delivered in enable a good proportion of learners to participate and make progress compared with their starting points. Many learners who take short community-based courses with subcontractors move on to accredited qualifications in subjects such as childcare, English, mathematics, and information and communication technology (ICT) when they complete. Effective links with other departments of the council provides managers with a good understanding of potential employment opportunities across the city. As a result, they plan provision well to prepare learners to obtain employment. Planning application approvals for business and commercial developments now require clients to consider local applicants for new jobs the development will create. The adult learning service targets programmes aimed at helping adults to improve their employability skills, prepare applications and to undertake interviews. By delivering this provision in local communities where commercial and retail developments have been approved, adults who have often been unemployed for considerable periods of time are helped to obtain work.
- Local residents who attend community hubs for advice and support on a range of domestic matters, such as housing, welfare, health and family, receive good guidance about community and family learning courses that they can take that will help them better participate in society. The service has a good range of anecdotal and case study evidence about the improvements learners make in their personal confidence, well-being and willingness to participate in further learning and community activities. However, leaders and managers know they need to do more to formally record and review the progress all learners make and what they move on to as a result of taking adult education courses. They recognise that by strengthening these aspects of their management, they will be able to make informed judgements about the suitability and impact of all programmes provided.
- Managers have overseen improvements to the arrangements for recording learners' progress and achievements since the previous inspection. The large majority of tutors now make accurate judgements about learners' progress and

achievements. However, not all staff comply fully with the guidelines and expectations set out by the service. Leaders and managers have identified the areas of non-compliance and are taking action to address inconsistencies. Actions taken include increasing the rigour of the internal moderation process and providing detailed guidance for tutors on how to set specific and challenging learning and personal development targets for learners. Although the action taken by managers has improved the reliability of judgements made by the majority of staff about learners' progress and achievements, this has not yet improved the weaker aspects of practice across all subcontractors.

- Through participating on programmes, adults, many of whom have multiple and complex barriers to becoming involved in learning, work or life in their community, improve their personal, social and employability skills. As a result, they become more confident and effective as jobseekers, citizens, parents and consumers. Effective employability provision, including bespoke employability programmes, such as 'get into retail' and 'get into health and social care', leads to learners improving their chances of finding work in these sectors. Provision is effective in reaching those who are furthest from the job market, including the long-term unemployed, refugees and those who have been victims of domestic violence and human trafficking.
- Leaders, managers and tutors, including those employed by subcontractors, effectively promote all forms of equality through the programmes they deliver. Employment and skills managers have prioritised training for tutors in how to raise learners' awareness about life in modern Britain in their lessons. Tutors value the 'toolkits' made available to them which provide good advice and guidance on strategies and practical activities they can consider and use. Learners are encouraged to collaborate with and support each other. As a result, a positive and harmonious culture exists across the provision. Learners are encouraged to treat each other with tolerance and respect. They respond well to this approach and improve their understanding about life in modern Britain.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- performance management of subcontractors continues to be strengthened so that leaders are assured that all of the provision meets the service's objectives and the needs of the learners they intend to target
- they have access to robust and comprehensive information about learners' destinations and next steps when they complete their adult learning programmes, so they are fully informed about the suitability and impact of the programmes they provide
- managers continue to monitor how well tutors recognise and record all learners' progress and achievements.

I am copying this letter to the Skills Funding Agency and the Education Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Fraser
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Inspectors were assisted by the adult learning project and programmes manager. We met with senior leaders and spoke to councillors. We observed lessons and assessments taking place, including those at subcontractors'. We held meetings with, or spoke to, managers, tutors and learners. We scrutinised learners' work and assessment records. We scrutinised key documents relating to the provider's strategy and implementation plans, self-assessment, improvement planning and safeguarding. We considered the views of learners through discussions during learning sessions and through the responses received through Ofsted's online questionnaire.