

Lancashire Adult Learning

Follow up re-inspection monitoring visit report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This is the third follow up re-inspection monitoring visit to Lancashire Adult Learning (LAL) following publication of the inspection report on 11 December 2014, which found the provider to be inadequate overall.

LAL is the service in Lancashire County Council that receives funding from the Skills Funding Agency to provide learning for social and personal development, learning for qualifications and employer provision, which are mainly apprenticeships. It provides learning at three main centres and over 400 community based venues throughout the county. It provides courses in 15 subject areas as well as family learning and community development.

Non-accredited provision makes up around four fifths of provision. Apprenticeships are mainly in business administration and law, health, public services and care, and in education and training. A large number of accredited and non-accredited employability programmes are provided for adult learners. The provider delivers training throughout Lancashire and recruits learners from a very diverse range of backgrounds including from areas of relatively high unemployment and socio-economic deprivation.

Themes

What progress has been made in ensuring that Lancashire Adult Learning (LAL) has strong leadership and management and effective governance?	significant improvement for learners
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The Council and governing body have agreed a new structure for the college. A new Principal will lead the organisation supported by two assistant principals, one with responsibility for curriculum and the other with responsibility for quality, resources and learning support services. The curriculum management has been restructured to reflect the changes in LAL's provision. The number of permanent teaching posts is being increased from 15 currently to 52.5 in the new structure in order to ensure a more stable teaching pool. All new posts have been advertised and many have now been filled. Meanwhile, the current interim Associate Principal and Interim Principal have been confirmed in post until June 2016 to ensure progress in improving the quality of provision is maintained until an effective handover occurs.

LAL managers have consulted with the Skills Funding Agency and agreed to withdraw from the direct delivery of apprenticeships. Plans are well established to migrate the apprenticeship provision to other providers before September 2015. LAL will continue to support existing apprentices until the handover is complete, by which time many will have already completed their apprenticeship. New business plans demonstrate how LAL will focus on increasing the direct provision of community learning, in line

with council priorities, to meet the needs of disadvantaged communities across the twelve districts of Lancashire. Business planning has been informed by the specific needs of each district and the planned provision has been designed accordingly.

LAL has made significant improvements in providing tutors with increased access to improved teaching resources. Managers have improved communications and the sharing of good practice is now effective. Staff report feeling more accountable and empowered to improve provision for learners.

The new governing body is now established and has had three meetings and a training event in April 2015. The board is comprised of experienced leaders in education, business and the voluntary sector as well as council members to provide the breadth of expertise necessary. The role of the board as a decision making body with a critical role to play in leading LAL and setting the future strategy has been agreed with Lancashire County Council. The board has considered qualitative documents including the Ofsted inspection report (November 2014), the re-inspection visit reports (January 2015 and March 2015), the Minister's letter and recommendations and the FE commissioners report as well as SFA case conference notes and reports from the interim principal covering progress since the previous inspection. The agreed key performance indicators, reported to the board at each meeting, critically include information on lesson observation grades, attendance at sessions, and outcomes for learners in terms of progression and achievement of personal goals. All indicate an improving trend. Plans are in place to ensure that governors are highly visible through participation in walkthrough observations and in joint lesson observations.

What progress has been made to improve the quality of provision through accurate self-assessment informed by strong evidence, and thorough and frequent monitoring of challenging and measurable quality improvement plans, which contain clear targets and milestones? reasonable improvement for learners

The overarching post inspection action plan now has clearer targets and milestones. Senior managers and the newly established governing body monitor regularly the progress towards completion of targets. The action plan is underpinned by curriculum area self-assessment reports and associated action plans for each area. Curriculum self-assessment reports have been validated and accurately identify strengths and areas for improvement. The curriculum action plans have been revised since the previous re-inspection monitoring visit. Although some identify the intended impact they do not provide sufficient detail on how actions taken have improved outcomes or other aspects of learners' experience.

Quality assurance and improvement plays a more prominent role in the new structure with clearly defined roles and responsibilities in the new quality management team. The new quality cycle is now fit for purpose and has been approved by the governing body. The self-assessment reports and action plans

reference the quality of teaching, learning and assessment but do not yet summarise the key characteristics of teaching, learning and assessment in each curriculum area. Progress reports in the action plans still focus too much on process rather than impact. The process to quality assure teaching, learning and assessment still focuses solely on teaching and learning sessions. Other aspects of the learner experience, such as initial assessment, support, reviews and exit interviews are not yet subject to the same scrutiny. Themed walkthrough observations to lessons have provided an additional source of learner views to improve the quality of provision.

The monitoring of quality in subcontracted provision has been improved. New service level agreements include specific requirements regarding staff qualifications and experience along with the necessity to follow LAL's new quality assurance processes.

What progress has been made in improving the use of data and feedback as an effective tool to manage and improve the provision and to provide frequent measures of learners' achievements and, in particular, the wider impact of community learning? **reasonable improvement for learners**

Managers and staff in LAL now make better use of data. A new proprietary data system allows managers to have good access to robust data to monitor in-year performance. Managers have received appropriate training in the use of the new system and are confident in using it to interpret data more effectively. For example, reports are now produced which show the impact of support interventions in raising success rates for learners receiving support. Staff at all levels recognise the importance of data and achievement as an indicator of the college's success. Managers are refining how the data system is being used, for example, more detailed analysis of learner data and the use of trend data to support improvements from the start of next academic year.

Data produced immediately prior to the re-inspection monitoring visit indicate that success rates are improving in classroom-based learning. The in-year retention and the predicted success rates are closely monitored and support actions put in place where necessary. Data are used well at curriculum reviews, curriculum manager meetings and team meetings, which ensure improved communication and team working.

What progress has been made in improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, particularly in recognising and recording progress and achievement on non-accredited provision? **significant improvement for learners**

The revised process to check the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is now an integral part of the improvement culture of the college. The vast majority of teachers have been observed this year, with many receiving a second observation. Managers are focussing on the observation of classroom delivery and have not yet

extended the observation programme to include other activities such as induction, advice and guidance, and the review of learner's progress. Many teachers have been observed in walkthrough and ungraded developmental observations. A themed walkthrough by managers to gather learners' views of the provision has been used very effectively to inform further improvements.

A small team of curriculum managers carry out dual observations to improve consistency. The key findings from the joint observations completed with inspectors and LAL managers during the visit are very similar. Managers are quick to identify where discrepancies occur in grading and moderation is effective. The percentage of sessions observed by the college that are good or better has increased from 74% in March to 83% in June but not enough teaching is outstanding. Increased rigour in action planning and monitoring, combined with one-to-one support for teachers graded as less than good is resulting in improvement, with a reduction in the proportion of inadequate teaching from 8% to 3% in the same period. In an increasing number of sessions, learning is planned well to meet individual learner's needs and learners can clearly describe the progress they are making.

Teachers recognise the value of additional observations and the subsequent support to improve their practices. Developmental, ungraded observations form part of the support for teachers who are not yet judged as good. The best examples of observation reports have very precise specific actions and examples to aid teachers' improvements. Advanced practitioner and peer support has been effective in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers who have not responded positively to the support and improved the quality of their delivery have now left the college.

Managers have a very clear insight into the aspects of teaching, learning and assessment that still require improvement, for example, individual learner target setting and the use of information technology. The introduction of weekly staff training sessions provides an effective starting point to develop teachers' skills. Attendance at two of the sessions covering "What makes an outstanding lesson?" was mandatory but attendance at other sessions has been voluntary. Attendance at voluntary sessions has been low due to other commitments of part-time staff and the location of the venues for the staff training. Staff development is not yet linked to the observation process.

Analysis of observation records indicates that there is some correlation between attendance at staff training sessions and improved observation grades but college managers do not systematically monitor this. Lesson observations do not sufficiently drive targeted staff development. Staff complete anonymous questionnaires on how they will use what they have learned in staff development sessions to improve their teaching practice. However, the impact of the training is not systematically followed up or evaluated fully; consequently good practice is not shared sufficiently.

The recognition and recording of learners' attainment on entry has improved. Initial target setting is much improved and many learners have precise relevant targets. However, for a significant minority of learners, targets are still not detailed enough

and refer to broad sweeping statements, for example, 'improve personal CV'. Walkthrough observations carried out by managers identified that 79% of staff are using effective targets and those who are not have action plans to improve. The revised documentation supports improved target setting but there needs to be more focus in staff development on ensuring that all staff understand the fundamental importance of setting specific and meaningful short-term targets.

A review of provision for learners with learning disabilities has identified that the range of needs of learners in sessions is too great. Information, advice and guidance for this group of learners is poor and does not fully consider suitability and long-term aims to enter further education or employment. Improvement in the use of external support assistants to ensure they are supporting learners in class is a temporary, but effective measure. Plans are in development to realign provision with local partners from social and health services, employers and further education provision to better meet individual learner's needs.

LAL managers have upgraded the online interactive learning environment. LAL staff are supported by the staff of Nelson and Colne College to populate and improve this resource. Some courses, for example, British Sign language, have developed their online resources well, but very few learners in other subject areas are benefitting from using online learning resources. The new management structure contains a specific post to develop and promote the use of the online learning environment.

Managers continue to review learning venues to assess their suitability and provide better online resources. LAL managers have purchased 20 'popup classrooms' to improve the accessibility to broadband facilities and provide laptops for use in community venues.

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