

# Lincolnshire County Council

Local authority

**Inspection dates**

11–14 June 2019

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>			<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>	16 to 19 study programmes	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>	Adult learning programmes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>	Apprenticeships	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for learners	<b>Good</b>		
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection			<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings

### This is a good provider

- Leaders and governors provide residents in the most disadvantaged areas with excellent opportunities to attend learning venues close to their homes. Here they promote employability and support young people at risk of not being in education, training or employment.
- Leaders' robust commissioning procedures for selecting and monitoring subcontractors ensure that learners attending subcontracted provision receive the same consistently high-quality teaching and learning as those attending directly delivered provision.
- Tutors have high expectations of learners regardless of their social and educational background; as a result, most progress well and achieve their learning goals.
- Despite their exceptionally diverse backgrounds, most learners complete their programme and make good progress from their starting points, which are often low.
- Learners receive high-quality impartial advice and guidance throughout their programme. As a result, most progress into employment, further study or voluntary work.
- Learners develop an excellent range of personal, social and employability skills that enhance their prospects of finding employment.
- Managers do not plan sufficiently to develop and share good practice across the three teams that deliver adult learning, apprenticeships and study programmes.
- In a few cases, tutors and trainers focus too much on task completion rather than on developing and building further on learners' existing knowledge and skills.
- Too few learners on study programmes gain their functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics.

## Full report

### Information about the provider

- Lincolnshire County Council (LCC) offers adult learning programmes across the county through a range of subcontractors and by direct delivery. At the time of the inspection, two thirds of the 1,032 learners were on these programmes at levels 1 and 2. LCC also offers study programmes for young people aged 16 to 19, delivered by its special educational needs and disabilities division. Since April 2017, LCC has offered apprenticeship training funded through the employer levy. At the time of the inspection, 38 business administration apprentices were in training at levels 2 and 3.
- Lincolnshire is a large county with significant pockets of socio-economic deprivation, particularly in its rural and coastal districts. The population is predominantly White British but has a growing migrant population. The proportion of the population that is unemployed and the percentage that do not have any qualifications are slightly higher than the national rates.

### What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Managers should ensure that the different council teams responsible for learning and skills communicate more effectively with each other to develop and share good practice across adult learning, apprenticeship and study programme provision.
- Tutors and trainers should ensure that they do not focus solely on the completion of tasks during lessons; they should also challenge learners and apprentices to extend and build on the skills and knowledge they already have.
- Leaders should ensure that more learners gain qualifications in English and mathematics.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Leaders and governors ensure that adults and young people in Lincolnshire are served well by the range of educational and training provision offered by the council. The council's clear and ambitious strategy to create an aspirational culture and better future for residents is being realised through the carefully planned range of provision. The high achievement of personal learning goals, despite learners' frequently low starting points, reflects this strategy well.
- Leaders' curriculum planning aligns closely with the shared vision of the council and its major stakeholders, including the local enterprise partnership (LEP). This vision focuses on improving the employability and skills of residents across deprived rural and coastal areas of Lincolnshire. This drive to meet the diverse needs of the most disadvantaged communities supports the council in preparing learners positively for the next steps in their careers.
- Partnership work across the county is outstanding. Leaders collaborate very effectively with high-quality subcontractors to plan the adult curriculum. As a result, increasing numbers of residents, including those with few or no formal qualifications, participate in education and develop skills and qualifications that improve their life chances. For young people, including those with high needs, high-quality work placements in a range of council departments improve their chances of future sustained employment.
- The commitment of council leaders to their role as corporate parents to children who are looked after and care leavers is strong. Leaders ensure that these young people have excellent opportunities to improve their education and career prospects. The council currently employs 12 care leavers as apprentices, with many more benefiting from work experience in council departments as part of their study programme.
- The council's strategy of 'growing its own' staff has been a key driver in developing an in-house apprenticeship provision to meet the need for skilled administrators required by a large county council. As a result, apprentices can develop their careers from level 2 business skills to professional qualifications and beyond. The careers of several council employees who have achieved managerial positions following completion of their apprenticeship demonstrate this well.
- Teaching staff are enthusiastic and well supported through high-quality professional development and performance management to develop and improve the quality of their work with learners. Managers use a range of methods, including observation, moderation of work and frequent staff development opportunities. They monitor well the quality of teaching and learning of all delivery staff, resulting in good-quality teaching that benefits learners.
- Robust and supportive management of subcontractors means that adult learners experience good-quality provision. Subcontractors value the support they receive to ensure they are delivering relevant, sustainable provision that contributes to improving lives. Managers closely monitor the performance of subcontractors and take swift and effective action to deal with identified dips in performance.
- Self-assessment is robust and supported by good-quality information from monitoring

activity and surveys throughout the year. Leaders seek the views of partners, including subcontractors and staff. The resulting report is largely accurate, reflecting most of the findings identified during the inspection. Managers make good use of learner and employer feedback to identify and respond to areas for improvement.

- Managers do not have sufficient planned opportunities to develop and share good practice across the three different types of provision offered, which different teams within the county council deliver. The very recent development of an operational group comprising managers from all three teams aims to provide a more effective and consistent approach to implementing improvements and sharing good practice. However, it is yet to have a demonstrable impact.

### **The governance of the provider**

- Governance is effective. Two elected members have responsibility for the council's learning programmes. They take a very close interest in the quality of service that learners receive. They regularly go out to different areas of the county to meet and listen to the views of learners and staff. One attends LCC's learning board meetings and offers regular challenge on the direction and performance of the service. LCC's executive council holds the learning board to account through regular and thorough scrutiny by elected council members.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- A clear and effective approach to safeguarding recognises the vulnerability of many learners and ensures that learners are, and feel, safe. Learners know what to do if they feel unsafe. Managers act swiftly when necessary to ensure learners' safety and welfare.
- All staff working with learners have regularly updated checks on their suitability to work with young people and vulnerable adults. Leaders provide staff with well-planned and delivered training to ensure that they have a good understanding of safeguarding issues, including in relation to the 'Prevent' duty. A dedicated 'Prevent' duty officer supports subcontractors and council staff to develop effective approaches to identifying and tackling radicalisation and extremism.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Tutors are determined to help learners to make good progress from their frequently low starting points and to achieve their full potential. They use their extensive skills and experience to build productive relationships and a secure and welcoming environment where learners feel safe, and are motivated and enjoy learning.
- Tutors have high expectations for learners' behaviour and attitudes. In lessons, they successfully promote the British values of tolerance and mutual respect towards others. Learners respond positively by respecting the diversity of their communities, cooperating willingly with their peers and supporting each other enthusiastically in class.
- Tutors plan lessons carefully and use a good range of teaching approaches to motivate and enthuse learners. As a result, most learners make good progress and achieve their

personal goals. They gain useful qualifications and practical skills that help them to find employment.

- Tutors work hard to devise teaching strategies that meet the needs of learners from widely differing educational and social backgrounds. They try alternative approaches to meet these learners' needs and to help them progress. For example, learners who were previously anxious about speaking in public become confident in expressing their views to their peers and asking questions in class.
- In family learning, parents become more confident in their own abilities and are better able to support their child's development effectively. Apprentices gain a good range of vocational skills and additional qualifications and experience. This benefits their employers and expands their future career opportunities. Adult learners develop an enthusiasm to continue their learning, and many progress to further education or training.
- Tutors know their learners well and work hard to encourage and support their development. As a result, learners grow in confidence and make at least the progress expected of them, and often much faster progress than anticipated. For example, on the study programme, tutors provide sensitive and personalised support for learners with complex personal, behavioural and learning needs. Working closely with parents and carers, they act carefully to address and resolve any concerns.
- Tutors use the available information on learners to design programmes that meet their needs well. They use a comprehensive range of strategies to identify carefully these needs. For example, on family learning programmes, learners complete a detailed skills health check to help identify their strengths and agree suitable personal goals. As a result, learners enjoy their learning and make at least the progress expected.
- Tutors give learners frequent, encouraging feedback, and most learners can explain what they need to do to improve. As a result, learners recognise their progress and take pride in their achievements.
- Tutors monitor and assess learners' knowledge and understanding frequently to ensure they are learning and making progress. Adult learners on non-accredited programmes record their progress accurately in personal learning diaries. In family learning, learners often highlight their achievements very effectively in their diaries by including photographs of the activities they have completed with their child.
- Learners receive good initial and ongoing information, advice and guidance. This helps them to choose the most suitable programmes to meet their personal goals and to progress into further study or employment. For example, on adult learning programmes, tutors regularly and frequently discuss with learners the opportunities available to them to continue their learning or to progress into employment. Consequently, adult learners make informed choices about their future steps.
- On study programmes, learners receive regular and suitably frequent reviews where tutors provide ongoing advice on progression opportunities. Tutors support learners who have high needs very effectively to identify suitable next steps. They then help learners over an extended period to make a smooth transition into further education and training or paid employment. As a result, a high proportion of learners with high needs progress into further education and training, supported internships or employment.
- Most learners improve their skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. As a result, many learners overcome their fear of

mathematics, attend classes regularly and make good progress. Apprentices achieve their required qualifications in functional skills and become confident in using specialist technical terms accurately in the workplace. Although learners on study programmes make progress in developing their skills in English and mathematics, too many of them struggle to pass their functional skills qualifications.

- In a few instances, tutors and trainers focus too much in their sessions on the completion of tasks. As a result, learners and apprentices complete tasks promptly but they do not always receive sufficient opportunities to enhance and build further on the skills and knowledge they already have. Consequently, a few of these learners and apprentices receive insufficient challenge during learning sessions.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

## Outstanding

- Leaders and managers have worked tirelessly to promote a positive culture across the council that celebrates learning, achievement and social inclusion. Learners and apprentices benefit from studying and working with committed and supportive tutors who want to see them progress and achieve, regardless of their social background, prior educational attainment or previous life choices. As a result, learners and apprentices develop self-confidence and a thirst for learning, which helps them to understand better their next steps and how to achieve their learning goals.
- Many learners and apprentices have significant barriers to learning when they begin their studies. The majority of these have a learning difficulty and/or disability, and many suffer from mental health conditions such as anxiety and depression. Over half of the 225 young people on study programmes are in receipt of an education, health and care (EHC) plan and of these, 68 are in receipt of high-needs funding. Many have a history of substance misuse, offending or family instability. The exceptional level of care and support provided by tutors and support staff ensures that despite these obstacles, most learners go on to progress and achieve their learning goals.
- Learners and apprentices treat each other and staff and visitors with respect and courtesy. They are enthusiastic about the opportunities that LCC provides for them to improve their life chances. As a result, most make good progress and improve their lives for the better. A wide range of moving and powerful individual case studies illustrates this well. These describe how learners, including those with high needs, overcame significant barriers to learning and made a positive difference to their lives and those of their families.
- Learners develop excellent employability and personal and social skills that enhance their prospects of finding and staying in work. Apprentices become invaluable members of the council's business support function and many gain enhanced responsibilities and promotion. Young people on study programmes develop skills and confidence that bring them much closer to the job market. Most, including those with high needs, progress to further study at a higher level. A few gain employment or voluntary work.
- Learners and apprentices, including those with high needs, know how to keep themselves safe. They know to whom they should report a concern about their safety or welfare. They have a good awareness of how to stay safe online and when using social media. Apprentices understand and observe the basic principles of health and safety in the

workplace.

- The behaviour and attitudes to work and learning of learners and apprentices are exemplary. Attendance and punctuality are good on adult programmes and on apprenticeship provision, but require improvement for a small minority of learners on study programmes.
- LCC's tutors and managers implement the 'Prevent' duty strategy well and tutors integrate topics related to British values during lessons where appropriate. Apprentices have a well-developed understanding of the risks posed by radical and extremist ideologies. Most can articulate clearly their understanding of British values. Study programme learners and those on adult programmes have a suitable, if basic, understanding of these risks.

### Outcomes for learners

**Good**

- Learners' and apprentices' starting points are exceptionally diverse, particularly for those on study programmes and adult learners referred by Jobcentre Plus staff to LCC's employability courses. Almost all have multiple and complex barriers to learning as a result of long-term unemployment, mental health difficulties, or a history of offending behaviour or substance misuse. Despite this, almost all complete their programme and make good progress relative to their starting points.
- No significant gaps exist in the performance of different groups of learners. Managers respond swiftly to the few occasions when their analysis of performance identifies any disparities, such as the slightly higher achievement of women and learners with a learning difficulty and/or disability on adult learning programmes. Learners in subcontracted provision perform as well as their peers in directly delivered provision.
- Progress to the next stage of their education or into jobs that meet local needs is good for most learners. Apprentices remain in employment with LCC after they complete their studies and become invaluable to the council's business support services. Most learners on study programmes, including those with an EHC plan and those with high needs, progress to further learning programmes.
- Evidence from case studies indicates that learners on adult programmes progress to other courses and that many become committed, lifelong learners. However, managers do not have comprehensive data on the destinations of adult learners.
- Qualification achievement rates on accredited adult programmes are high. Adult learners and young learners on study programmes following non-accredited courses achieve suitably challenging learning aims and objectives. However, achievement rates for young people in functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics are too low.

## Types of provision

### 16 to 19 study programmes

**Good**

- LCC has 225 learners on 16 to 19 study programmes. Learners have a wide range of additional learning needs and around one quarter have high needs. They study non-accredited units in a range of employability-related subjects. They also study functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics and can opt to study additional units that

lead to a qualification.

- Tutors and leaders ensure that provision meets in full the principles of 16 to 19 study programmes. Leaders have carefully developed study programmes that build on each learner's prior attainment and enable them to make good progress and move on to a higher level of qualification, employment or supported internship when they are ready to do so.
- Leaders promote high expectations of learners regardless of their background. They have rigorous processes to drive improvement, including through regular and frequent monitoring during the programme. Consequently, most learners, including those with high needs, make good progress from very low starting points.
- Tutors prepare and deliver effective lessons that motivate, support and challenge learners in developing the skills and knowledge necessary to complete their learning aims.
- Tutors provide excellent support for learners, particularly for those with high needs, which ensures that most learners progress and achieve well. Most learners have previously failed to thrive at school and many have personal barriers to learning such as a history of offending behaviour, substance misuse or a difficult home life. Despite these obstacles, tutors ensure that each learner has the best possible opportunities to improve their life chances. As a consequence, most learners make considerable gains in their personal, social and employability skills.
- Learners benefit from high-quality work experience that considerably enhances their confidence and ability to deal with conflict, social interaction and work pressures. They gain a good awareness of the range of employability skills that they will need to succeed in the job market. The work experience also motivates learners to consider carefully their next steps.
- Learners benefit from high-quality enrichment activities such as community fund-raising activity and charitable work. Around half of all learners also complete additional qualifications that help to prepare them for employment. Learners receive high-quality, impartial careers guidance that prepares them well for their next steps and enables them to make well-informed decisions about their future.
- Most learners, including those who have high needs, progress to the planned next stage in their careers, including further education and training, employment or volunteer work.
- Learners feel safe and understand what to do if they are at risk. They have a generic awareness of the dangers of extremism and radicalisation, but are not always able to articulate clearly how this risk might manifest itself in their community or workplace.
- Leaders and managers recognise that attendance for a small number of learners requires improvement and are taking steps to address this. They have implemented measures that are beginning to support and re-engage those learners who are most at risk of withdrawing from their studies. However, these interventions have limited impact because of the ambiguity of the actions recorded by tutors and the lack of prompt follow-up by managers.
- Learners make good progress in developing their skills in English and mathematics, often from very low starting points. Tutors support learners well to develop their confidence to communicate effectively and to use basic number skills in their everyday life. However, despite this, learners struggle to pass the external functional skills tests at the first



attempt.

## Adult learning programmes

**Good**

- LCC has 314 adult learners on programmes delivered from entry level up to level 2. Learners can attend family learning programmes, courses for the unemployed and classes in English and mathematics. LCC also has a range of short courses designed to encourage new learners back into learning. The very large majority of courses are non-accredited.
- Leaders provide learners with an excellent range of accessible learning venues across the county. Many are located in relatively disadvantaged rural and coastal regions that maximise opportunities for people in these communities to participate in learning.
- Leaders have developed very productive links with high-quality subcontractor partners to widen participation and to meet community needs. As a result, many adult learners take their first steps into learning and became confident to progress to further learning.
- LCC's tutors deliver learning programmes in schools, military bases and community venues. Links with regional jobcentres ensure that Jobcentre Plus staff routinely refer unemployed adults to the council's range of employability and jobsearch programmes. This helps learners to develop their confidence and a wide range of skills that equip them well for employment or further study.
- Tutors are skilled and experienced in working with adult learners. They have high expectations for adult learners to improve their skills and to become lifelong learners. Tutors use a wide range of accessible and engaging learning activities that motivate learners to participate and progress. Learners develop personal, social and employability skills such as improved listening and communication, problem solving and CV writing.
- Learners attend well and come to sessions prepared to learn and to make good progress. They demonstrate high levels of motivation and confidence, take pride in learning new skills and can apply these new skills and knowledge confidently.
- Learners receive impartial and helpful careers advice and guidance. The quality of pre-course advice and guidance is good. Learners benefit from listening to guest speakers from local further education colleges and employers. LCC staff provide information about the opportunities available for further courses and employment in the county. This enables learners to make informed decisions about their next steps.
- Very effective support from learning support assistants, including for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, enables them to make good progress in sessions and to develop their confidence to try out new skills and practical activities in class. Support staff clearly understand lesson objectives and challenge learners to become independent learners.
- Learners make good progress in developing their English skills, learning to pay close attention to style, context and audience. Learners in a class for English for speakers of other languages developed the skills to self-correct their vocabulary and demonstrated high levels of confidence in doing so. This helped them speak clearly to each other and to communicate effectively with people outside the classroom, such as teachers, doctors and community workers.
- Adult learners referred by Jobcentre Plus staff to attend LCC's employability classes make

good progress in developing skills that equip them well for the workplace and help them to overcome barriers to employment. Many learners on these programmes reported that they had received offers of an interview for the first time since they became unemployed. Learners on family learning courses make effective use of their skills to create learning games and activities that enable them to evaluate their impact on their child's learning and development.

- Tutors use their knowledge of learners' starting points and record their progress and achievement well. Learners in a family learning class covering the topic of risks to children's health set their own personalised outcomes for the session. They described how to deal with an emergency confidently and calmly when, for example, attending to a child who is choking.
- A few tutors focus too much on task completion and do not always make effective use of learner contributions and experience in class to enrich and broaden their skills and knowledge. In other cases, a few tutors do not offer learners enough guidance in their feedback to help them to understand what they have done well and what they need to do to improve.
- Adult learners have a clear grasp of how to remain safe, including when using social media. They have a reasonable understanding of radicalisation and extremism, but are not always able to articulate how these topics might apply to them in their work or family life.

## Apprenticeships

**Good**

- Currently, 38 business administration apprentices are employed by the council in a range of business support roles. All are funded through the employer levy and studying at level 2 or 3. The large majority are females aged between 16 and 25.
- Leaders make sure that programmes meet the principles and requirements of the Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education. They work closely with workplace supervisors to provide well-coordinated on- and off-the-job training. Leaders and trainers monitor rigorously the development of apprentices' job-related skills, knowledge and behaviours during off-the-job training. As a result, all are making good progress.
- Apprentices enjoy learning new skills, knowledge and behaviours and receive high levels of care and support from their trainers and workplace supervisors. As a result, they make significant contributions in the workplace and develop valuable skills from the very start of their programme. For example, apprentices learn how to communicate effectively with visitors and staff when working on reception, to manage budgets and supply chains when ordering stationery, and to take minutes during council meetings.
- Trainers make good use of the available information on each apprentice to identify accurately their starting points and to plan learning that meets individual needs well. Apprentices develop good skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology because trainers monitor carefully how each apprentice is progressing in these subjects.
- Trainers are well qualified and experienced. They work with apprentices to develop good business administration skills during workshop sessions and in the workplace. As a result, apprentices produce work of a good standard. Trainers assess submitted work promptly.

Feedback is constructive and focused on the most relevant areas for improvement.

- Workplace supervisors have a good awareness of apprentices' progress and plan learning and reviews rigorously with apprentices and trainers. All have access to an electronic portfolio that provides up-to-date progress information and details of the off-the-job training that apprentices receive. This allows supervisors to identify and respond promptly to any identified gaps in apprentices' training and development.
- The enrichment programme for apprentices is outstanding. Apprentices develop individualised learning programmes with their supervisors that allow them to further the skills, knowledge and behaviours they develop in their job role. They can shadow or gain work experience within any department of the county council. This provides substantial additional benefits and opportunities for apprentices that their workplace supervisors value. Former apprentices have progressed into promoted roles within the council's civil engineering, green energy and youth offending teams.
- Apprentices receive impartial information, advice and guidance at the beginning and throughout the duration of their programme. Leaders organise an annual Apprenticeship Week, during which guest speakers outline the wide range of career opportunities available within the council. This helps apprentices to make informed choices about the enrichment activities that they want to pursue, as well as their long-term career prospects as council employees. As a result, progression to further levels of study and to permanent positions within LCC is very good.
- Apprentices have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities as employees and as citizens. They understand the British values of democracy, individual liberty and the rule of law. They are aware of the risks of radicalisation and extremism and can explain these issues well. Apprentices understand and observe the council's health and safety policies and procedures when at work.
- Trainers set clear and achievable targets for apprentices. However, these targets focus too often on the completion of individual units of the apprenticeship. This limits apprentices' opportunities to develop and extend their existing skills, behaviours and knowledge to enable them to be even more effective in their job role.

## Provider details

Unique reference number	53042
Type of provider	Local authority
Age range of learners	16–18/19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	6,646
Principal/CEO	Justin Brown
Telephone number	01522 552222
Website	<a href="http://www.2aspire.org.uk">www.2aspire.org.uk</a>

## 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+
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	137	221	37	93	0	0	0	0
Number of apprentices by apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16–18	19+	16–18	19+	16–18	19+		
	0	30	0	8	0	0		
Number of traineeships	16–19		19+		Total			
	0		4		4			
Number of learners aged 14 to 16	0							
Number of learners for which the provider receives high-needs funding	68							
At the time of inspection, the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	Abbey Access Centre Boston College Three Counties Accountancy Training Community Learning in Partnership (CLIP) Construction Skills Solutions ESH Consultancy and Training East Lindsey Information Technology College Grantham College Grimsby Institute							

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Heritage Trust of Lincolnshire  
Lincoln College  
Linkage Community Trust  
Live and Learn  
New College Stamford  
Pelican Trust  
RHG Consult  
Riverside Training  
Seagull Recycling  
Skegness College  
Soteria Solutions  
TaylorITEX

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## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the adult 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

Jai Sharda, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Kathryn Townsley	Ofsted Inspector
Alan Winchcombe	Ofsted Inspector
Rhys Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Bob Hamp	Her Majesty's Inspector
Teresa Kiely	Ofsted Inspector

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