

19 March 2013

Agenda Item: 5

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, YOUTH, FAMILIES AND CULTURE

SKILLS FOR EMPLOYMENT: OUTCOME OF OFSTED LEARNING AND SKILLS INSPECTION, NOVEMBER 2012

Purpose of the Report

1. To update Members on the outcome of the Ofsted Learning and Skills Inspection of Nottinghamshire's Skills for Employment Team's provision on 12 - 16 November 2012.

Information and Advice

2. The Skills for Employment (SfE) Team is part of the Young People's Service group, and is led by the Ashfield Locality Manager.
3. SfE delivers programmes of Foundation Learning to some of the most vulnerable 16 and 17 year old young people in the County who have underachieved at school or have not been in school, may be from the Looked After cohort or have been involved with the youth justice system. Many have very low levels of literacy and numeracy skills.
4. The Service operates from six bases across the County. Currently these are located in Stapleford, Eastwood, Ollerton, Retford, Mansfield and Sutton in Ashfield.
5. Funding for the SfE programme of is now solely from the Education Funding Agency (EFA).
6. The priorities of the Service are directed by both the EFA and the local knowledge of the Team.
7. The Skills for Employment (SfE) Service and the Adult and Community Learning Service (ACLS) (located within the Libraries, Archives and Information Service) are subject to a combined Ofsted Skills inspection. A report outlining the outcomes of the inspection of the ACLS was considered at the Culture Committee meeting on 5 February 2013.
8. SfE was previously inspected in May 2009 under the previous inspection framework and was judged as a 'Good' service.
9. The five day inspection was undertaken from 12 November 2012 under the new Ofsted inspection framework, providing less than 2 days advance notice.

10. The overall inspection outcome judged the overall Council skills provision to be Good, with some areas falling into the Needs Improvement category for SfE.
11. The report summarises the key findings for learners as:
- the large majority of learners achieve their learning objectives in their chosen subject areas. Many, who have previously had poor learning experiences or limited opportunities to learn, join courses, enjoy learning and progress well
 - most learners gain confidence, improve their self-esteem and raise aspirations for their lives. They gain new knowledge and skills that they use to help themselves, their families and communities
 - much teaching, learning and assessment is good or better
 - leadership and management are good. Managers provide good levels of staff training and resources for learning and manage tutors' performance well
 - the Service, in partnership with other providers, delivers a very broad range of learning opportunities successfully. Learners from socially and economically disadvantaged communities attend classes well in many local venues, where they feel safe.
12. Areas for improvement for the SfE were identified and these are listed below with the actions (in italics) which are being implemented to rectify them:
- Management do not use data effectively for comparative purposes.
There is now a technical specialist in place who is providing more robust management information. This is being analysed by the management team on a monthly basis and targets are being set for each individual base. SfE is now also working with ACLS as a critical friend to support further development in this area.
 - Not enough learners achieve their qualification and progress positively into further education, apprenticeships or employment.
Currently positive progressions stand at 56% and achievements of accreditations stand at 64%. All individual students progress is now discussed at monthly management meetings to identify progression and for those falling behind additional actions are put in place to bring them to the expected level.
 - Programmes of work and supporting session plans are not detailed and are not meeting the individual needs of learners sufficiently.

Individual student's needs are now identified in all session plans. Tutors were aware of, and acted on, individual needs before but they were not explicit in the session plans.

- Learners are not set targets to prepare for work experience and they do not feel the urgency to learn valuable employability skills.

Work experience is now incorporated into the induction programmes for all students and is discussed in every review. Targets have also been set for all units to ensure 90% of students will undertake work experience.

- Learning environments are good at most centres but workshops in one of the larger centres lack the level of required facilities, although the premises are undergoing refurbishment.

The refurbishment of the Eastbourne site was underway during the inspection and is due to be completed in March 2013.

- Information from initial assessment is not effectively used to set challenging targets to drive achievement and success.

All managers will undertake an increased level of checks and a new more rigorous initial assessment is being developed and implemented. Improved staff training will also be undertaken.

- Targets in reviews are vague, and are not specific or time-bound.

Further staff training is being undertaken and managers will undertake increased checks on student files and formally report back at SfE management meetings so that interventions can be put in place.

13. A SfE improvement plan is being implemented following the outcome of the inspection with the aim of moving the service towards that of a 'Good' service, and an additional Joint Leadership and Management Post Ofsted Action Plan will be followed by SfE and ACLS .
14. A copy of the full report is available as a background paper from the Ofsted web site.

Other Options Considered

15. The report is for noting only.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

16. The report is for noting only.

Statutory and Policy Implications

17. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, equal opportunities, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Implications for Service Users

18. Service users can be confident that they are accessing a service quality assured by an independent inspection framework and process. Recommendations for improvement outlined in paragraph 12 will be implemented with users as appropriate.

Financial Implications

19. SfE is a full cost recovery based service. There are no specific financial implications following the inspection.

Equalities Implications

20. The inspection highlighted good practice in promoting equality and diversity and states 'All learners feel safe and respected'.
21. The report also highlights the challenging targets set by the County Council to engage hard to reach and marginalised learners from almost all of the economically deprived areas and isolated rural communities.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the outcome of the Ofsted Learning and Skills Inspection of Nottinghamshire's Skills for Employment provision on 12 -16 November 2012, along with the resultant actions for the service, be noted.

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Constitutional Comments

23. As this report is for noting only, no Constitutional comments are required.

Financial Comments (KLA 04/03/13)

24. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers

Learning and Skills Inspection Report – Inspection Number 399152 – URN: 53674 –
Ofsted,
December 2012: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/files/2152463/urn/53674.pdf>

Skills for Employment Quality Improvement Plan

Leadership and Management Post Ofsted Action Plan: Skills for Employment and
ACLS

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the
documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section
100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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