

# Sheffield City Council Learning, Skills and Employment

Focused monitoring visit report

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## FOCUSED MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

### Context and focus of visit

Sheffield City Council Learning, Skills and Employment (LSE), established in 2007, is part of the Lifelong Learning and Skills Service in the City Council's Children and Young People's Directorate (CYPD). LSE contracts with the South Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council to provide further education, adult safeguarded learning (ASL), apprenticeships, National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and Train to Gain programmes. In 2008/09, there were 9,624 enrolments. LSE subcontracts some of its provision to a number of other organisations.

In 2008/09, 15% of enrolments were on further education courses, 71% on ASL and first step programmes and 2% were work-based learners.

At the previous inspection the overall effectiveness of LSE was satisfactory but inspectors judged it inadequate for the contributory area of work-based learning and in business, administration and law. Overall, success rates for most learners were satisfactory. Learners gained a good range of skills and developed self-esteem and confidence in their ability to progress to other courses or employment. Success rates and timely rates on apprenticeship programmes were generally low.

### Themes

#### Self-assessment and improvement planning

What impact and progress has LSE made in self-assessment and development planning since the previous inspection? Reasonable Progress

LSE has made reasonable progress in further developing its self-assessment and development planning processes. Since the previous inspection LSE recorded completion of 90% of the quality improvement plan actions for improvement for 2008/09. The current self-assessment process, quality improvement and post-inspection planning are effective, focusing well on the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. LSE monitors progress towards achieving these targets well. Managers allocate action plan targets to specific staff and effectively review these by incorporating them into appraisal and one-to-one review meetings. A range of cross-service events have included staff training workshops focusing attention on self-assessment, quality improvement planning and the sharing of good practice.

LSE managers now receive useful quality data reports. These derive from the improved systems to track and monitor progress of learners. Managers are better informed and are able to evaluate progress at individual tutor or curricular level. Managers use a wider range of performance indicators to monitor the progress rates. These include the observation of teaching and learning, the complaints and compliments system and external verifier reports. The current self-assessment is

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adapted to meet the revised common evaluation schedule and the framework for excellence fully.

### Outcomes for learners

How much progress has the council made in improving the success rates across all provision and improved the use of individualised target setting for all learners? Reasonable Progress

LSE has made reasonable progress in improving success rates for all learners. Since the previous inspection, LSE has placed a strong focus on learner success rates and the slow progress identified by inspectors. LSE data for outcomes in 2008/09 indicate improved success rates for apprentices and advanced apprentices at 68% and 60% respectively and improved timely success rate at 58% and 40% respectively. These results bring LSE performance closer to the national average. Current LSE data indicate an improvement in adult safeguarded learning (ASL) accredited provision by 9% to 90%. Non-accredited ASL provision also improved slightly to 96%.

LSE now places a much greater emphasis on progress tracking. Curriculum leaders now track learner progress by unit achievement and report these regularly to senior managers. LSE staff involve learners, employers and supervisors in managing learner assessment opportunities better. LSE has achieved the Matrix national quality accreditation and learners receive high quality information, advice and guidance. All staff have been trained in a range of areas including recognising and recording progress and achievement (RARPA), target setting and progress reviews. LSE has completed a service-wide review of RARPA and the format of individual learning plans.

### Quality of provision

How successful have actions been to increase the quantity of good or better teaching? Reasonable Progress

LSE has made reasonable progress in improving the quantity of good or better teaching. At the completion of the 2008/09 cycle the observation of teaching and learning (OTL) system recorded an improvement in the number of good or better teaching sessions by 7% on the previous year. LSE has focused on key areas to impact on the quality of teaching. These include developing a more robust OTL process. The system now incorporates both paired observations as well as newly introduced peer graded OTL. The system to moderate OTL grades has also been reviewed and is now more robust. LSE has delivered a wide range of staff training at cross-service and at individual curriculum level. These include opportunities for staff to share good practice.

LSE has also completed a detailed review and audit of its RARPA system that inspectors judged as insufficiently thorough at the previous inspection. LSE has

delivered specific training in individual subject areas to develop an improved understanding and application of RARPA and the use of individualised learning plans.

LSE has invested significantly in resources to support teaching. Facilities and venues are being re-furnished to include new technologies to support tutors.

What progress has the council made in improving the use of information and learning technology (ILT) to support learners particularly in health, public services and care? Reasonable Progress

LSE has made reasonable progress in improving the use of ILT to support learners. The service is making significant investment in technology resources. Funding and plans to refurbish two main centres are in place. This will include a range of high technology systems such as a 3D projection room and laboratories. LSE staff source and incorporate innovative resources in specialist areas such as family learning. The service places a good emphasis on ensuring appropriate safeguarding measures are in place for learners who include children.

LSE has delivered a range of service-wide and curriculum-specific staff training events including use of the virtual learning environment, interactive white boards and other available technologies. OTL reports include assessment of the use of ILT and analysis of these indicate improved use in several subject areas. LSE provides laptops and projectors to staff to support the delivery in the community.

The health, public services and care curriculum area has specifically focused on offering and delivering training to staff on the use of ILT. Schemes of work and lesson plans are required to indicate potential ILT use. Staff can access development to achieve relevant qualifications such as the European Computer Driving Licence.

#### Leadership and management

What actions have LSE taken to implement quality improvement systems? Reasonable Progress

At the time of the last inspection there was slow implementation of some quality improvement processes. LSE has taken many positive actions to improve the arrangements for quality improvement. The more robust observation of teaching and learning includes induction and progress reviews. LSE has introduced new quality processes covering key training activities such as assessment planning and monthly reviews of learners' progress. These actions have resulted in learners making good progress through their qualification and improved overall and timely success rates.

LSE staff have revised and created new individual learning plans and the documentation for recording quarterly reviews of learners' progress; LSE will introduce these in January 2010. Guidance for the completion of the new documents is being written and new arrangements are being devised for the auditing of key

aspects such as the quality of target setting in assessment planning and the completion of individual learning plans. It is, however, too soon to measure the impact of these improvements.

#### Business, administration and law

What progress has the council made in improving the inadequate provision in business, administration and law? Reasonable Progress

Overall, LSE has made reasonable progress in improving the inadequate provision in business, administration and law. LSE has made reasonable progress in addressing the low success rates and slow progress of learners, the quality of provision and leadership and management.

What progress has the council made in improving the inadequate learner outcomes in business, administration and law? Reasonable Progress

At the time of the last inspection success rates on apprenticeship were low and well below the national rate. Many learners were making slow progress towards their qualification.

LSE has made recent significant improvements in overall and timely success rates in business, administration and law. LSE's own data for 2008/09 show overall success rates for apprentices and advanced apprentices are satisfactory at 78% and 67% respectively. Timely success rates are now good; 62% for apprentices and 67% for advanced apprentices. Train to Gain timely success rates have remained satisfactory at 71%. Learners aged 14-16 achieve well, with a good overall success rate of 92%.

What progress has LSE made in improving the quality of provision in business, administration and law? Reasonable Progress

At the time of the last inspection teaching and learning were judged inadequate, assessment planning was insufficiently individualised, the use of targets to promote learning and monitor progress was weak and there was no initial assessment of literacy and numeracy skills carried out for Train to Gain learners. Following the inspection, LSE introduced a new, more robust observation of teaching and learning. The providers own data indicate that teaching and learning in the area is now at least satisfactory. Staff training has taken place to support staff in developing targets that are more challenging for learners. LSE staff now set good, individualised, specific, measurable and time-bound targets for learners during their monthly progress reviews. They now use these challenging targets more effectively to help learners' progress. Managers have introduced helpful assessment planning documentation. Assessment planning is now good; it is individualised and detailed. All Train to Gain learners now complete an appropriate initial assessment including their literacy and numeracy skills. LSE offers additional support for literacy and

numeracy to learners who would benefit from it. Staff use the outcomes of initial assessment to inform the learners' individual learning plans.

What progress has LSE made in improving leadership and management of business, administration? Reasonable Progress

The judgement at the last inspection was that the leadership and management of business and administration were inadequate. Following the inspection, senior managers clarified and redefined staff roles; this has enabled staff to focus on one subject area more clearly. There is now a clear staffing structure and a good management focus on the importance of overall and timely success rates. The quality of management information provided to the team has improved and staff understanding of learner success data is good. LSE monitoring of learners' progress has improved by setting targets for staff to improve the overall and timely and success rates. Monitoring of learners' progress is now effective and is carried out at regular meetings between the programme leader and each assessor.

Staff and external consultants have worked well together to identify exactly what processes needed to change to improve success rates and how they would implement the improvements. All staff have undertaken a significant amount of appropriate training covering key aspects such as target setting. Managers and tutors have devised new teaching materials and strategies for promoting equality and diversity. Staff monitor the performance of different types of learners and in 2008/09, learners from a minority ethnic background and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieved as well as other learners.

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