

# Rutland County Council

## Local authority

<b>Inspection dates</b>		<b>16–18 June 2015</b>
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>This inspection:</b>	<b>Good-2</b>
	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

## Summary of key findings for learners

### This provider is good because:

- the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good
- success for learners studying English and mathematics is good and has improved significantly
- learners make good progress, produce work to a high standard and enjoy their studies
- tutors make good use of a wide variety of resources to stimulate learning
- leaders, determined in bringing about improvement, have instigated a number of significant changes that have secured improved outcomes for learners
- managers have revised the curriculum to meet the needs of learners better and match local and national skills needs
- managers' use of data is robust and ensures staff and learners' performance is regularly reviewed and swift action is taken to address any underperformance.

### This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- not enough teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding
- tutors are not sufficiently knowledgeable and confident in applying equality and diversity into learners' studies
- tutors do not use information learning technology sufficiently well to consolidate learning
- the development and reinforcement of learners' skills in English and mathematics in work-based learning programmes are insufficient
- tutors do not use in-class support sufficiently to maximise independent learning.

## Full report

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

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching, learning and assessment through training and sharing of good practice.
- Train observers to identify ways to improve tutors' practice in order to enable them to become outstanding practitioners.
- Develop tutors' skills in the use of information learning technology to promote learning.
- Increase tutors' knowledge, confidence and ability to promote discussion with learners on topics related to equality and diversity in lessons and through assessments.
- Improve in-class support for learners so that they fully develop confidence and independence.
- Develop assessors' ability to integrate English and mathematics into workplace training and assessments.

### Inspection judgements

<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	Good
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- Rutland Adult Learning and Skills Service (RALSS) offer a range of programmes to support the life and work of local residents and businesses on behalf of Rutland County Council. The vast majority of learners are over 19 years of age. Community learning, consisting of non-accredited courses, accounts for two thirds of the total enrolments. Programmes include 'learning for well-being' and 'computing and ICT'. The remainder of learners take courses leading to qualifications and a small minority are on apprenticeship programmes including childcare and business administration. Most courses are delivered at the Oakham Enterprise Park. The largest area of accredited provision is preparation for life and work at entry levels and levels 1 and 2.
- Outcomes for learners are good. The proportion of learners who successfully achieved their qualifications within planned timescales declined slightly in 2013/14 to just below those of similar providers nationally; success for learners on apprenticeship programmes varied considerably. Managers, many of whom are new, have taken swift action to tackle these areas of underperformance and, as a result, around two thirds of learners have already achieved their qualifications. Retention is high and the proportion of apprentices who achieve their qualifications is improving and already exceeds the level of the previous year. Early indications are that the strong focus on the English and mathematics aspects of their apprenticeship framework at the beginning of the course is contributing to raising achievement.
- Learners study a wide range of non-accredited courses, including painting and languages, and those aimed at improving access to employment by developing English and mathematics skills. For some learners this has been instrumental in changing their lives by providing a first step into learning. The vast majority achieve their qualifications and meet their personal goals.
- Tutors' promotion of personal, social and employability skills is good, with, for example, business administration tutors placing a high priority on learners' punctuality and appearance. This helps learners to develop skills such as teamwork and self-confidence and to appreciate the need for high professional standards at work. Learners are respectful to one another and work diligently to achieve their qualifications. Attendance and punctuality are good with only a small minority of courses where attendance requires improvement.
- The majority of learners make good progress and produce work to a high standard. They enjoy their learning and value the support they receive from tutors and assessors. Well-qualified staff use their knowledge and experience to develop learners' skills and understanding to a high level.

- The large majority of tutors promote the development of good English and mathematics skills both in discrete lessons and alongside learners' main studies. Most learners achieve their English and mathematics qualifications and for learners taking GCSE mathematics, grade A\* - C achievement is outstanding. However, for the few learners who study GCSE English, achievement rates of high grades are low and require improvement.
- Managers thoroughly analyse and take effective action to ensure the retention and achievement of all learner groups are broadly equal. Managers have improved the rigour of assessment and screening at the start of courses to identify and provide the support learners need in order to achieve their qualifications. As a result, the gaps that existed in 2013/14 between male and female learners have closed. Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities have also succeeded in line with learners with no declared disability.
- Managers know the destinations of almost all learners and progression onto higher-level courses, employment or training is good. The large majority of learners continue their studies or use their qualifications to gain employment or apprenticeships.

<b>The quality of teaching, learning and assessment</b>	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment in classroom and work-based learning are good. This reflects learners' success in their main programmes and the high standards of learners' work. Learners effectively develop a good range of employment-related skills, as well as personal and social skills that significantly enhance their everyday lives.
- Tutors plan stimulating learning activities, which learners find motivating and enjoyable. Learners work diligently and make good progress. In foundation learning, learners develop strategies to calculate fractions and identify how they can budget and manage money much more effectively. Learners who initially arrived with significant difficulties in reading and writing are developing these skills well. They delight in their new learning and identify confidently that they are now able to read to other family members and complete tasks such as writing in paragraphs and writing cheques.
- One-to-one coaching and assessment in the workplace are good. Assessors plan work carefully, to meet course requirements and the needs of individual learners effectively. Discussions are appropriately related to learners' work contexts, with very effective links between learners' developing knowledge and understanding of theory and their work roles. Tutors make good use of a wide range of helpful learning resources and materials, such as well-designed handouts, photographs, games and materials from everyday life. These provide interest and variety for learners, as well as supporting their effective learning. Currently, tutors and learners do not make sufficient use of information and learning technologies, for example the use of available interactive whiteboards, to consolidate and extend learning.
- Initial assessment clearly identifies learners' starting points and any specific learning needs, such as dyslexia. In the less effective sessions, tutors do not make sufficient use of this information to plan learning to meet the needs of all learners in maximising their learning and progress.
- Assessment practice is good. Tutors check learners' individual progress well in lessons. In GCSE English and mathematics, assessment is comprehensive and provides learners with clarity with regard to their progress over time. Tutors in classroom and work-based learning provide helpful oral and written feedback to learners that encourages them to expand their answers and to focus on what they can do to improve their work and rate of progress. However, a small minority do not provide sufficient written feedback to enable learners to improve their skills further.
- In the vast majority of courses, the use of target setting with learners to support their progress and development is detailed and helpful for them. In a small minority of courses these targets

are too broad and do not focus learners sufficiently well on the individual skills that they need to develop and to improve.

- The development of learners' skills in English and mathematics in classroom-based learning is good. In work-based learning, apprentices appropriately complete functional skills qualifications at the correct levels. Assessors are not yet sufficiently skilled at further developing and reinforcing apprentices' skills in English and mathematics across all parts of their work-related programmes.
- Additional in-class support for learners is not always effective. For example, support staff and volunteers do not promote all learners' independence sufficiently well and at times they intervene too much. Care and personal support for learners are good. Learners value the individual support and the access to helpful information on issues such as housing, budgeting, transport and health-related matters.
- Information, advice and guidance are good, both in relation to learners accessing appropriate courses and in ensuring that learners are well placed to make informed decisions about their future progression. Tutors pay good attention to safety in lessons and in the workplace, with ongoing reinforcement of safe learning and working practices. Learners report that they feel safe.
- Learners work well together and are respectful to each other and to their tutors. Staff do not have sufficient knowledge or confidence to focus sufficiently or systematically on the further promotion of equality and diversity with learners, in order to broaden and deepen their knowledge and understanding.

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management</b>	Good
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- Managers have tackled decisively the required areas for improvement from the previous inspection and their actions have had a rapid and positive impact on outcomes. Their use of data is increasingly robust and enables staff and learners' performance to be reviewed regularly and swift action to be taken to address underperformance.
- The local authority is constructively managing new contract arrangements entered into with Peterborough Regional College in 2014. The service provided by the contractor is good. As well as reviewing targets and performance, regular monitoring meetings increasingly provide a forum for joint planning. The benefits of these arrangements are coming to fruition and include extending the range and nature of skills related courses, better employer engagement and joint continuing professional development. Staff share a strong ethos of support for learners.
- The head of service and senior officers are successfully positioning the provision such that it contributes to broader council strategies, thereby allowing a more comprehensive council response to, for example, the needs of vulnerable families. Strategic managers and elected members are ambitious for the service and contribute actively to a recently introduced improvement board. The board successfully scrutinises the work and is challenging and supportive.
- With good support from partners and council departments, managers and tutors match the curriculum more closely to local economic and social need, aligned with the priorities of the Local Enterprise Partnership. New apprenticeships in shortage areas such as horticulture, accountancy and hospitality are being introduced. Work with groups and individuals with particular social and health needs is developing, but referral processes and classroom practice in respect to these groups require improvement.
- Managers effectively promote continuous improvement and there is a clear quality cycle in place. Classroom observations and learning walks have a generally positive impact on the quality of learners' experiences and the main contractor draws well on its internal college systems to add further rigour to quality assurance. However, staff skills need further development to

identify and overcome the specific weaknesses in classroom practice that will enable tutors to become outstanding. Examples of best classroom practice are not sufficiently shared across the service. Managers are self-critical and self-assessment documentation is regularly reviewed. The self-assessment report gives insufficient analysis of the evaluation of teaching, learning and assessment.

- Performance management is effective, well recorded and linked to tutors' classroom and workshop competence. The outcomes of performance reviews and classroom observations are collated and inform professional development and service policies. Induction arrangements support staff well in carrying out their responsibilities. Staff are suitably qualified and a relevant range of continuing professional development opportunities is offered, suited to the needs of tutors.
- An up-to-date equality and diversity policy is in place and training has been provided for all staff. However training has not sufficiently focused on developing managers and tutors level of knowledge, and therefore confidence, in applying diversity within the curriculum and classroom.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good, with procedures well linked to the local authority lead safeguarding officer. Managers have undertaken training in relation to radicalisation and are in the process of cascading the learning to all staff.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

### Rutland County Council

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:  1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	2					2	2	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2					2	2	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2					2	2	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2					2	2	2	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Foundation English and mathematics	2

## Provider details

<b>Type of provider</b>	Local authority							
<b>Age range of learners</b>	19+							
<b>Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year</b>	763							
<b>Principal/CEO</b>	Mr Robert Shore							
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	February 2014							
<b>Website address</b>	www.rals.org.uk							
<b>Provider information at the time of the inspection</b>								
<b>Main course or learning programme level</b>	<b>Level 1 or below</b>		<b>Level 2</b>		<b>Level 3</b>		<b>Level 4 and above</b>	
<b>Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)</b>	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	1	18	4	16	0	0	0	0
<b>Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age</b>	<b>Intermediate</b>		<b>Advanced</b>		<b>Higher</b>			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	9	14	9	21	0	0		
<b>Number of traineeships</b>	16-19		19+		Total			
	N/A		N/A		N/A			
<b>Number of learners aged 14-16</b>	N/A							
<b>Full-time</b>	N/A							
<b>Part-time</b>	N/A							
<b>Number of community learners</b>	248							
<b>Number of employability learners</b>	66							
<b>Funding received from</b>	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
<b>At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Peterborough Regional College.</li> </ul>							

## Contextual information

Rutland County Council (RCC) is the smallest mainland unitary authority in England with a population of 37,000. It is a predominantly rural area, the largest town being Oakham. The Rutland Adult Learning and Skills Service (RALSS) delivers adult learning and skills on behalf of the County Council, providing most of the courses from Oakham Enterprise Park as well as a small number at local Ministry of Defence establishments. RALSS employs approximately 28 full and part-time staff and contracts with Peterborough Regional College to deliver much of its accredited provision.

## Information about this inspection

**Lead inspector**

Tony Gallagher HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the Head of Service as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject area listed in the report.



## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/handbook-for-the-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-from-september-2012)

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