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Newcastle City Learning Self-assessment Report

Academic Year 20-21

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Overview

Adult Community Education (ACE) changes lives. It seeks to play a vital role in supporting residents on their journey to learn skills, to enter, return, or progress in work. Alongside the economic benefits, it reduces loneliness and makes people happier, healthier, more confident and resilient – making places smarter and more inclusive.

Newcastle City Learning (NCL) is the post-16 delivery service within Newcastle City Council. Newcastle City Learning works within the context of the city's demographics and priorities. The stated purpose of the service is

"Providing opportunities in Newcastle for all to learn, improve and grow".

In October 2021 Ofsted reported that:

Across NCL's different types of provision, managers and teachers design and teach effective programmes that enable learners to acquire the skills and knowledge that they need to progress in education, find employment and lead more independent lives. (Ofsted, 2021)

Within the City Council, Newcastle City Learning (NCL) sits within the Education and Skills Division of the Children, Education and Skills Directorate, newly established on 1st December 2019. NCL is also represented on a number of key local authority groups including the Skills & Employability Group, the Skills Hub steering group, and the North of Tyne Apprenticeship Hub Working Group.

At the heart of the service, is an ethos of supporting the people furthest away from the labour market in the city to develop their skills and confidence to move them closer to the jobs market. The majority of our provision is directly delivered and is underpinned by the city council's values of "proud, fair and ambitious". In addition, this year we have partnered with our first sub-contractor to offer alternative curriculum in the area of digital technologies.

As well as delivering adult community learning provision, NCL has strong links with a range of partners including Job Centre Plus (JCP), Council Careers Advisors, Social Services, Your Homes Newcastle, Newcastle Futures Ltd, North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA), schools and a range of employers with whom it collaborates to provide additional training and support to the residents of the city.

In addition, NCL delivers programmes of learning to young people (16-19 years, and up to 25 if they have an EHCP). Many of the cohorts have progressed from local schools and alternative provision providers. Many of our young learners have a wide range of additional needs and require higher levels of support to make the transition into further education, apprenticeships or employment.

Newcastle sits within the North of Tyne Combined Authority (NTCA) area and Adult Education Budget (AEB) funding has been devolved from the 2020-21 academic year. NCL is one of the largest providers within the combined authority and is working very closely with the leaders of NTCA to ensure that our curriculum meets both the needs of the city and the wider geographical area within the northeast region.

NCL receives funding through the Adult Education Budget (including the former Community Learning element), 16-18 Study Programme, the Apprenticeship levy, Advanced Learning Loans and some full cost delivery.

In 2019-20 there was significant growth in English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) provision. However, the city still has a significant unmet demand for ESOL, and local providers are working with Job Centre Plus to try to manage this as effectively as possible, within the budget constraints. This curriculum area continues to be a very important part of our provision and continues to perform very well, despite the additional challenges faced by both our teachers and staff during pandemic. NCL continues to work in partnership with the Job Centre and Newcastle College to ensure sufficient coverage within the city and to try and alleviate the backlog created during the recent lockdown within the city.

NCL also has a strong basic skills curriculum which provides core support in the development of literacy and numeracy to the residents of the city. NCL also has a developing offer of vocational training to help adults gain qualifications to help them move closer to the jobs market. The curriculum leaders have established good working relationships with a number of employers to support the delivery of this strand of the curriculum and continue to look at regional trends to ensure that the curriculum offer remains relevant and meets local priorities.

The service also provides a range of community learning and recreational learning to support the residents of the city.

The service offers courses from four main buildings across the city:

- Westgate Community College
- Newcastle Skills Centre (on the Westgate site)
- Heaton Community Centre
- Gosforth Library and Learning Centre.

Context of this self-assessment report

The service received a full Ofsted inspection visit in October 2021. At this visit the service was awarded the judgement of good in all provision types and key judgements. Overall effectiveness was also judged as good in recognition of the significant improvements made since the last inspection. A full copy of the report findings can be read @ [50172434 \(ofsted.gov.uk\)](#)- the inspectors reported that: -

Learners of all ages thrive in a learning culture that celebrates diversity. NCL offers courses for many of the city's most marginalised groups, such as asylum seekers, refugees, vulnerable adults and young people from difficult backgrounds. Staff promote and value the aspirations of all learners, irrespective of their backgrounds.

Despite the continued challenges presented in the academic year 20-21, overall achievement rates were sustained and remained high and the majority of learners who attend education programmes at Newcastle City Learning stayed until the end of their programmes and passed their planned qualifications. Achievement rates in adult learning are particularly high, this being the largest provision type within the service.

Achievement rates in our Programmes for Young People (PYP) have greatly improved in the academic year 20-21 due to a comprehensive quality improvement plan being implemented across the curriculum provision.

Apprenticeship performance did take a dip in 20-21. This is against a backdrop of very difficult circumstances due to the continued COVID-19 pandemic still requiring a lot of employers to keep staff working from home. The continued uncertainty within business also saw us lose some apprentices during the period. In addition, we carried out a data cleansing exercise during the academic year which further reduced our achievement rate for that year. We suspect that our overall achievement rate was still seen as positive. There are no current published national rates to compare with and anecdotal evidence would suggest that all apprenticeship providers have seen a significant dip in achievement rates as a result of the very difficult circumstances in which we are currently operating.

Overall Effectiveness

The quality of education received by the overwhelming majority of learners at Newcastle City Learning in the academic year 20-21 was at least good.

The quality of education received by adult learners, the largest provision type within the service was again exceptionally good despite the many challenges posed during the extended lockdown period in 20-21. Ninety seven percent of those adult learners who stayed until the end of their programme passed their qualifications. There have been many other benefits gained by our adult learners, including increased confidence and resilience, and improved mental-wellbeing which our learners continue to mention in learner feedback surveys.

Newcastle City Learning apprentices continue to progress well and have been very well supported during the pandemic. It was hugely pleasing to see our apprenticeship provision judged as good following an intensive quality improvement plan being implemented within the provision in May last year.

In Programmes for Young People (PYP) we saw the implementation of a comprehensive Quality Improvement Plan (QIP), and an overhaul of the curriculum model of delivery from September 2021. Leaders and managers worked tirelessly to further develop the workforce with targeted continuous professional development opportunities for staff working with our younger learners throughout the year. Leaders and managers also introduced a new behaviour policy and approach to work with our young people on improving their behaviour both in class and around college and looking to develop a better attitude to their learning. A radical change came in working to offer as many of our young people the opportunity for relevant work experience as an integral part of the programme which posed its own challenges during a further lockdown period.

Newcastle City Learning continues to provide good quality specialist support to learners of all ages with learning difficulties and disabilities including those who attract additional high needs funding. The college has established itself as a high-quality provider of education for learners with high needs. We work in partnership with the council to ensure that these learners continue to receive specialist support and education which continues to help them make progress against individual targets within their Educational Health Care Plans. It was extremely pleasing to see this work recognised in the recent inspection report and our High Needs provision to be judged as good.

Safeguarding at NCL is effective.

The safety of our staff and learners is of the utmost importance to us. A safeguarding lead and deputy lead are identified and have undertaken the required training to fulfill those roles.

The Chair of the Advisory Board takes the lead responsibility on safeguarding and provides regular support and challenge in this respect.

NCL carries out safer recruitment practices and provides appropriate training to all staff to ensure that their own knowledge and understanding around how to keep learners safe is updated on a regular basis.

NCL operates a comprehensive recording system called Toottoot to allow the service to record safeguarding concerns and to monitor our response and follow up actions in keeping our learners safe.

NCL regularly have to deal with safeguarding concerns on behalf of learners within our provision and provide timely and effective responses to all concerns raised.

All learners received information on how to keep themselves safe from the threat of radicalization and the wider threats to their safety, including online safety during induction and throughout their learning programmes.

NCL have positive working relationships with multi-agency teams within the Council who they can call on for guidance and support should it be required.

Safeguarding is judged effective by Ofsted.

Quality of Education

Teachers had to adapt their practice very quickly and undergo a lot of additional training in respect of delivery of online learning during the academic year 19-20, and then had to adapt again in the new academic year of 20-21 back to face-to-face learning. It has therefore been challenging for all delivery staff to maintain a good level of practice. Our own evidence collected from Learning Walks, Lesson Visits and feedback from our learners would suggest that our teachers have done a remarkable job in this respect and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment practices have remained good in 20-21.

Tutors are experienced and highly qualified. Many have practical experience in the subjects they deliver, for example, our salon owner who delivers in Beauty, art tutors are experienced artists themselves and counselling tutors are also qualified counsellors. Tutors within the Apprenticeship team have the relevant specialist occupational knowledge and current competence to meet the requirements of the standards.

Teachers use their vocational knowledge and expertise well to provide engaging learning for the majority of our learners, and as a result they develop substantial new knowledge, skills and behaviours which better prepare them for adulthood, employment or to be able to take part in their communities and live more fulfilling lives.

Our teachers have become very good at both classroom and online delivery, with evidence of much improved practice being seen in our latter Lesson Visits during the year. Our work to support our teachers in this respect continued in 20-21 with further CPD sessions to further develop their confidence and their practice in the delivery of online learning.

Additional funding was secured last year to continue with our workforce development plans to further support the improvement of teaching, learning and assessment at NCL.

A comprehensive CPD programme was delivered to curriculum leaders and managers initially based on the Re-thinking the Way We Teach programme. This evolved from the Teacher Effectiveness Enhancement Programme (TEEP) which encourages curriculum leads and teachers to use evidence-based practices to reenergise their thinking about the way they currently teach.

The CPD programme focused on the four key areas of: -

- Accelerated Learning
- Thinking for Learning
- Collaborative Learning
- Assessment for Learning
- Effective use of technology to support learning.

Leaders and managers were then asked to devise a further continuous professional development programme to disseminate this new knowledge into their relative departments.

This programme has now further evolved in the academic year 21-22.

Teaching, Learning & Assessment practices

Leaders and managers carried out a number of visits to lessons last academic year to collect evidence of the quality of education within our provision. We also asked our learners to provide feedback about the quality of teaching and learning and support they received whilst learners at NCL on our end of year surveys.

All tutors received a learning walk (theme specific) and a lesson visit to verify the quality of the educational experiences of our learners.

The feedback from our visits to lessons confirmed that the majority of our learners received a good standard of teaching, learning and assessment. They also report receiving very high levels of support which enable them to make good progress in their learning and to build confidence and a wide range of other softer skills.

We also took time to identify where we still needed to improve. The most prominent areas for development in 21-22 are:

- improving tutors critical, high level questioning skills to ensure deep learning
- more consistent continuous formative assessment in lessons, especially online
- a minority of lessons are rushed: this could be a side effect of online learning as tutors struggle to 'read' a 'room' and adjust their pace; they need to allow learners the time to process new information
- a minority of sessions are still too tutor led and learner participation is too low: tutors need to exploit opportunities for peer teaching and peer assessment more.

To further develop our classroom practice, a new CPD programme has been developed and introduced called the Peer Enhancement Programme (PEP) and based on an action research module: they include the following modules to address the areas for development mentioned above:

1. Thinking for Learning
2. Assessment for learning
3. Collaborative learning
4. Digital Skills.

This project commenced in 20-21 and will continue into 21-22 academic year.

Moving forward

Four lead tutors are leading the programme: 14 tutors are involved and researching their practice. Findings will be disseminated to all teaching staff.

In addition, four tutors are undergoing an Education Training Foundation (ETF) mentoring programme. They are completing a 40- hour course and delivering up to 50 hours (each) of mentoring to a number of mentees (tutors) to enhance teaching and learning.

Additionally, NCL has successfully been accepted on the ETF funded Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment (OTLA) programme which is an action research project to develop a critical questioning activity called Socratic dialogues. This involves an initial group of five tutors from across the service.

NCL has successfully run two funding cycles of the ETF EdTech mentoring programme which has allowed four tutors to offer additional digital teaching support for colleagues and run CPD workshops. The group are known as the Google Gurus.

Key Weaknesses - Quality of Education

What does the provider need to do to improve? -

- Ensure that teachers have high ambitions for apprentices and provide them with the guidance and teaching that they need to achieve distinction grades on their apprenticeship programmes.
- Ensure that teachers identify and correct errors in the standard of written English produced by learners with high needs, so that they can provide learners with feedback on how to improve the accuracy of their work.
- Invest in the internal and external fabric and facilities of the buildings used by adult learners so that they can enjoy a more comfortable and inspiring learning environment.
- Ensure that more learners enjoy an outstanding experience in lessons by continuing to provide high quality workforce development to our teachers to develop more outstanding teaching, learning and assessment practice at NCL.

Behaviour and Attitudes

Attendance by our learners has been affected in 20-21 by the continued uncertainty and the continued pandemic situation. However, attendance overall still remained strong.

The behaviour of our adult and apprenticeship learners continues to be excellent. The behaviour of our young learners has vastly improved in the last academic year due to the implementation of a new behaviour and expectations policy, and a consistent positive approach model being adopted within the Skills Centre environment and classrooms.

The majority of teachers are able to create a calm and orderly environment for learning across all provision types.

Staff have continued to provide a very wide range of support during the continued difficult circumstances presented by an extended lockdown and then the return to face to face lessons for many of our learners. Staff have provided additional support to offset any additional anxiety learners have faced when returning to the learning environment following a long time learning online and/or in isolation.

The majority of learners at Newcastle City Learning have an excellent attitude to their studies.

Newcastle City Learning is good at developing effective learner behaviour and establishing a culture underpinned by British Values. In ESOL, adult learners clearly value the multilingual aspects of the ESOL classroom and how it becomes a mini culture, representative of broader life outside the classroom: *'speaking is getting better because what happens in the classroom helps me with what happens outside'* (Ofsted 2021)

In arts, learners quickly become aware of what is acceptable in an online classroom and a calm, disciplined and conducive approach to learning is quickly established across the whole of the online provision

In vocational areas tutors use the diversity in their classes by encouraging learners to translate key language into their first languages and share with other learners. Opportunities are taken in some classes to consider cross-cultural similarities and differences in values: in an observed Care Academy lesson a culturally diverse group of learners discussed and shared their personal definitions of equality through sharing their experiences.

Tutors at Newcastle City Learning are good at developing effective relationships with their learners. Apprentices feel safe and have a positive relationship with their tutors (Ofsted 2021). Learners on team leading apprenticeships were able to articulate local threats and apply these to their place of work. They understand their responsibility while at college and at work.

The learners with learning difficulties and disabilities (LLDD) learners set their own ground rules for how they want to be treated by each other at the beginning of the course. They then ensure these rules are upheld (Ofsted 21).

Personal Development

The curriculum offer across all provision types at NCL supports our learners to develop their knowledge and skills, but also to develop a range of wider skills such as building their confidence, resilience, communication, and wider social skills.

A further focus across all provision types is to develop employability skills to ensure that our learners move closer to the jobs market. In some areas where employment may not be possible in the future there is a focus on ensuring that learners can play a full and active part in their families and communities.

Learners at NCL understand how to keep themselves and their peers safe and who to report any concerns to. They receive comprehensive training on the varied risks to their safety in modern Britain. They are familiar with the risks of radicalisation and extremism that they might be exposed to in the north east.

Newcastle City Learning promotes a highly inclusive environment where all learners are valued.

Learners of all ages thrive in a learning culture that celebrates diversity. NCL offers courses for many of the city's most marginalised groups, such as asylum seekers, refugees, vulnerable adults and young people from difficult backgrounds. Staff promote and value the aspirations of all learners, irrespective of their backgrounds. (Ofsted 2021)

A further key focus in 20-21 has been the development of learner digital skills. Online working combined with the social isolation and challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic has strengthened the desire of many learners to improve their ICT skills. Over 70% of MFL learners report that they felt more confident with the use of technology as a result of their course. Many learners report developing increased resilience and the benefits of learning on their mental health during lockdown, saying that studying online help them to combat the loneliness of lockdown. Eighty-three percent reported an increase in confidence and 87% said that they had a deeper understanding of other cultures as a direct result of their MFL studies.

Adult ESOL learners feel provision contributes very positively to them as people and the lives of those around them:

- *'The course is not only about studying, it is more about the life. I am able to understand people better and am not afraid of (applying to) the English university anymore'*
- *'ESOL just made me happy, I started learning new skills and improved myself for my career in the future'*
- *'I have confidence to speak fluently with my manager, colleagues, nurses and my mates who are from different countries'*
- *'I understand the British culture and the (British) system of life'*

Learners aged from 16 to 19, learners with high needs and adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities get opportunities to develop their physical health through exercise programmes on the campus playing fields. They also receive support developing safe and consensual relationships with their peers.

The service continued to provide learners with ongoing impartial advice and careers guidance to assist them to make informed choices about their education and careers choices. All ESOL learners have access to an external specialised agency which provides both pastoral and career advice. English and maths learners have access to formal career guidance through the National Careers Service.

Learners can access impartial advice and guidance via referral to the national careers service on request.

Leadership and Management

The leadership, management and governance have seen much change this academic year.

Leaders and managers have endeavored to develop the curriculum offer to meet the rapid external demands during yet a further pandemic year.

Leaders and managers have successfully adapted the service's curriculum to reflect long-term changes in the local jobs market and the more short-term impact of the pandemic. For example, they have widened the vocational curriculum by introducing higher-level qualifications in subjects such as beauty therapy and through the creation of a care academy. The very recent partnership with a subcontractor specialising in digital coding provides progression opportunities into apprenticeships in this growing occupational sector in the city. (Ofsted report, 2021)

Leaders and managers have implemented a comprehensive quality improvement plan across several areas of provision within the academic year 20-21. In addition, we saw the continued delivery of a comprehensive programme of training and support for teachers.

The new Service Manager has embarked on a journey to change the culture within the organisation, introducing a coaching style of leadership. Two of the senior management team have undertaken leadership coaching training. In 20-21 a new approach to appraisals, using the Council My Conversation procedures has been introduced to allow coaching conversations to take place with all staff to support a period of change within the service and to ensure that staff feel valued and supported through what has been a very challenging year.

The My Conversation process has also been used within Newcastle City Learning to disseminate and focus on the Children, Education and Skills Directorate and NCL strategic objectives to ensure that all staff are aware and working towards relative objectives in order to move the service forward and improve our provision.

A new format of regular Curriculum Progress Review meetings was established to closely monitor progress against both quality and financial targets during the academic year.

Specific Quality Improvement Plans were implemented and managed in both Programmes for Young People (PYP) and apprenticeship provision. It was pleasing to see that the impact of those quality improvement plans, and workforce development strategies came to fruition in time for the re-inspection.

Leaders and managers have been very conscious of teacher workload in unprecedented circumstances, but it has been difficult to prevent workloads from increasing. Leaders and managers have therefore had to be very aware of the possible impacts to staff well-being and keep regular checks on staff and make referrals to occupational health where appropriate.

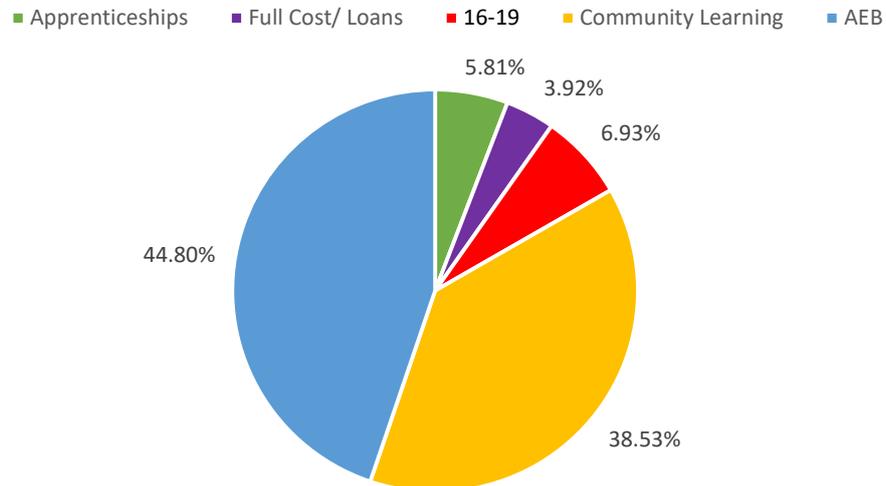
Leaders and managers have worked very hard to minimise the impact of the pandemic and loss of face-face-learning. However, this has been a huge challenge faced by the service.

Governance

The service had a long-standing membership providing governance, support and challenge to the service. The governance of the service underwent a full review during the academic year 20-21 and a new Advisory Board was established with clear job descriptions being issued to all board members. New Board members have brought in a broader set of expertise and experiences to the team.

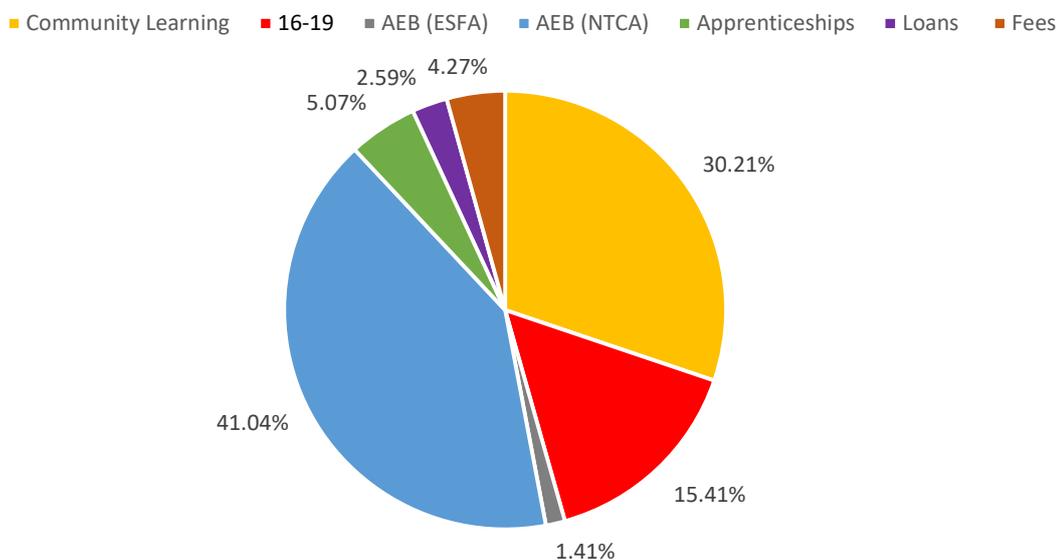
Provision Type breakdown

Learner Numbers in 2020-21



16 -19	514	6.93%
community learning	2857	38.53%
full cost loans	291	3.92%
Apprentices	431	5.81%
AEB	3322	44.80%
	7415	100.00%

Funding in 2020-21



Provision Types

Adult Learners - Self-assessment- Author: Hardus du Plessis
(coordinating the findings of individual curriculum managers)

Overall Achievement

Overall achievement rate for 19+ Adult learning programmes is 93% (+3.6% on last year).

Retention improved in the academic year 20-21 and rose to 95% which is in line with previous years (pre-pandemic).

Once again, the majority of adult learners who stayed to the end of their programme in this second challenging year, have passed their planned qualifications. The pass rate rose to 97% in 20-21.

Quality of Education

Intent

Curriculums are well constructed: they provide learners with the knowledge, skills and behaviours which enable learning, progression and access to work but also meet personal needs and interests and the demands of other stakeholders such as employers. For instance, about 50% of ESOL learners are mandated by the DWP so the sequencing of the ESOL curriculum focusses on the job market and the gradual development of job search lexis and skills. (Ofsted, 2021)

Many learners are asylum seekers, refugees and new arrivals to the city who are socially disadvantaged, and the curriculums aim to bring them closer to their host communities, allow integration and play an active role in everyday life.

In Access to HE the course prepares learners for university entry. The curriculum is supplemented by tutorials and support for UCAS applications and personal statements.

Arts facilitates progression into exhibiting and selling work, starting small businesses or reaching a professional standard such as that required for the Royal Photographic Society.

Curriculums are carefully sequenced to allow academic progression: in maths roll on roll off classes, teachers plan and deliver aspects of measure, shape, space, and handling data at the beginning of the academic year; progressing onto mastery of number and calculation skills without a calculator once learners' confidence and class numbers have improved. This enables a more effective and collaborative approach to learning throughout the course.

Modern Foreign Languages (MFL) enable progression towards achieving a qualification, increased ability and confidence conversing with native speakers and the fulfilment of personal needs such as speaking with a family member.

Leaders and managers have successfully adapted the service's curriculum to reflect long-term changes in the local jobs market and the more short-term impact of the pandemic. For example, they have widened the vocational curriculum by introducing higher-level qualifications in subjects such as beauty therapy and the creation of a care academy.

The very recent partnership with a subcontractor specialising in digital coding provides progression opportunities into apprenticeships in this growing occupational sector in the city (Ofsted, 2021).

Vocational areas are planned so that employment is achievable through the level three and five offer or progression onto other provision. In accountancy the service offers level two and three which are the industry starting points for employment and likewise the counselling offer extends to level five.

The 20-21 curriculums address skills and knowledge gaps caused by less face-to-face lessons due to the pandemic. For example, at Entry level ESOL additional emphasis is given to study skills, communicative ability and weaknesses in grammar.

Curriculums are inclusive and designed to cater for very diverse needs: in LLDD (adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities) learners with language needs receive discreet language and skills tuition to help them complete their courses. This includes provision for a deaf non-vocal learner from Eritrea.

Implementation

Since the previous inspection, teachers have significantly improved the way they identify the starting points of learners. Consequently, they plan and teach programmes that enable learners to develop new knowledge and skills. In LLDD the tutors' identification of learners starting points and the more effective use of assessment have resulted in learners making more substantial progress in their acquisition of new knowledge and skills (Ofsted 2021).

ESOL teachers spend the first three weeks of the course carrying out a range of exercises to assess learners' English skills before agreeing a set of goals for each learner's language development. (Ofsted, 2021)

All vocational subjects now include an initial interview where advice and guidance are given. Accountancy includes an awarding body skills scan that accurately ascertains starting points. Tutors are skilled at advising learners what their starting points are. Regular tutorials are built into accountancy, beauty, counselling and STLS (supporting teaching and learning) courses, which act as learning reviews.

On adult learning vocational programmes such as beauty therapy, teachers make sure that learners understand the requirements to keep clients safe before developing learners' communication skills and basic massage techniques. They then progress to supporting learners to acquire more complex and challenging knowledge and practical skills in body electrotherapy, facial electrotherapy, Indian head massage and microdermabrasion (Ofsted, 2021)

In LLDD success is celebrated through regular reviews, which ensure that learners with high needs fully understand the progress they are making over time.

Teachers use a range of effective techniques to ensure that learners retain knowledge and can apply the practical skills that they develop.

ESOL teachers provide opportunities for learners to practice and rehearse spoken English and encourage them to listen carefully and respond in the correct register. They use their expertise to develop learners' fluency, pronunciation, and appreciation of a range of words, idioms and colloquialisms. (Ofsted, 2021).

In maths, direct questions relating to key mathematical terms and concepts regarding circles, demonstrates that learners are able to apply their knowledge of circles to a wide variety of situations. In English, effective use of open and critical questions enables learners to contribute and use the opportunity for branching discussions well. (Ofsted, 2021)

Tutors assess effectively: learner assessment is detailed and thorough and learners receive feedback on how to improve. (Ofsted, 2021).

In English, teachers complete regular standardisation of learners' written tasks. This improves teacher confidence and how consistently assessment criteria are applied to borderline pass candidates. The majority of the English team are also participating in staff development with a focus on assessment for learning.

The majority of tutors use their subject expertise well to engage learners in challenging and stimulating learning activities: in maths, online interactive 3D nets are used to recap and reinforce properties of shapes, drawing nets and measurements. In English chat/poll facilities, Google docs and Jamboards are used well within Google meets - learners are highly engaged and make progress throughout.

All lead vocational tutors are qualified teachers to at least L5. They are active professionals in their subject outside their work for NCL. The accountancy and counselling lead tutors are active in local professional associations, whilst the lead beauty tutor runs her own salon.

Access to HE and Arts online classroom observations show that lessons are well prepared and executed and the features of Google classroom used well. A good balance of whole group working, use of online chat facilities and effective use of breakout rooms for small group work are evidenced, with excellent resources available in the classroom space.

Impact - Adults

Performance

Year	Retention	Pass	Achievement
2020-21	95.1%	97.4%	92.6%
2019/20	89.9%	95.5%	85.8%
2018/19	94.7%	97.6%	92.5%

Overall performance figures for adult learning illustrating impact over a 3-year period.

	18/19 %	19/20 %	20-21 %	Difference from 19/20
Retention	94.7	89.9	95.1	5.2
Pass	97.6	95.5	97.4	1.9
Achievement	92.5	85.8	92.6	6.8

Retention by area

	18/19 %	19/20 %	20-21 %	Difference To 19/20
ESOL	96.4	89.5	97.3	7.8
LLDD	95.9	77.2	92.9	15.7
English and Maths	96.4	93.9	96	2.1
Arts	94.0	93.8	94.4	0.6
Beauty	95.6	68.6	100	31.4
Health Voc - Counselling	86.2	86.5	82.2	-3.6
Access	73.2	86.5	77.8	-8.7
MFL	95.4	92.6	89.6	-3.0
Education	89.8	95.2	96.6	1.4
Digital	93.9	85.7	95.7	10
Business admin	92.6	88.4	91	2.6
Family learning	93.8	88.6	NA	NA
Cookery	97.8	94.7	100	5.3

Achievement by area and numbers of leavers

	18/19 %	19/20 %	20-21 %	Difference to 19/20
ESOL	93.6	87.2	95	7.8
LLDD	94.6	77.2	92.9	15.7
English and Maths	91.5	85.4	92.4	7.0
Arts	93.2	93.3	93.9	0.6
Beauty	91.3	48.6	100	51.4
Health voc	86.2	84.6	79.2	-5.4
Access	69.6	83.8	72.2	-11.6
MFL	93.9	91.2	89.6	-1.6
Education	89.8	93.7	95.9	2.2
Digital	91.7	86.1	91.9	5.6
Business admin	85.3	56.2	76.4	20.2
Family learning	88.9	80.6	NA	NA
Cookery	97.8	94.7	83.3	-11.4

Learners of all ages thrive in a learning culture that celebrates diversity. NCL offers courses for many of the city's most marginalised groups, such as asylum seekers, refugees, vulnerable adults and young people from difficult backgrounds. Staff promote and value the aspirations of all learners, irrespective of their backgrounds. (Ofsted, 2021)

On average 45% of learners from the vocational areas are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities and tutors work effectively to overcome language barriers and progress learners through qualifications and into work. In accountancy two learners gained employment having achieved fully qualified bookkeeper status. One learner comment: *'I joined level 1 as a way of updating my skills for getting back into work. I enjoyed the class even more than I expected and quickly progressed through the level 2 and 3 accounting courses. I received my qualified bookkeeper status and I'm now working on my professional level 4 qualification.'*

Internal progression, work placements and secured employment in vocational areas are high. In beauty 33.3% of level three learners progressed from NCL level one and two courses. All the learners in the first-year cohort of L5 Counselling learners progressed from NCL L3 courses. All second-year level five learners gained placements with different organisations, including Place to Be, Newcastle Carers and Anxious Minds. A high percentage (62.5 %) of level five counselling learners have gained employment since completing their qualification.

Course planning for The Care Academy is centred around the 6 values (soft skills) and Skills for Care syllabus, as outlined by NCC Social Services and 5 main care companies. Over 70% of learners are offered employment and the unsuccessful receive continued support and opportunities. Delivery links with council priorities for Adult Social Care and Integrated Services

Over 2300 NCL learners were supported to access online learning in 2020-21. Recognising that older learners were disadvantaged by their lack of digital skills during the pandemic, this demographic is a focus for recruitment. A large number (54) of the 68 learners on digital skills courses from September to October were over 50 and 26 were over 70.

In MFL end-of-course surveys learners state that Newcastle City Learning supported them both personally and academically during the pandemic. The ability of teaching staff to learn new skills and adapt to the situation by 'leading by example' clearly inspired many learners to do the same

ESOL programmes give learners the ability to communicate more fluently with potential employers and with staff at housing and support agencies (Ofsted, 2021).

English and math tutors support learners to develop their study skills and their digital skills well, enabling them to produce a high standard of work in addition to accelerating individual progress, both in face to face and online settings. In math, opportunities are provided for learners to extend their own learning through the completion of additional activities, which are supported by video tutorials and demonstrations on Google Classroom. External verifier reports for Functional Skills continue to be exemplary and commend the high standard of the learners' work and assessment practices.

In Access to HE the high standard of work produced by learners across the curriculum was evidenced by classroom visits and internal and external moderation.

Self-assessment Report 2020/21

Learners comment to the external moderation team on the excellent teaching and pastoral support they receive and the moderator's comment on how exceptionally well the learners are prepared for university.

Achievement on Access to HE declined by 7.3% from 19-20. During the pandemic learners were severely impacted by the lockdown: many work in the health and care sector and are overburdened 'front line workers'. Others were forced to homeschool children and deteriorating mental health also played a significant role. Consequently, a significant number took a break in their learning which impacted on performance. These learners are now completing in 21-22. Despite the quality of provision, the programme struggles from year to year to be financially viable as it requires intensive resource for relatively small cohorts.

Therefore, the programme will not be offered in the next academic year.

Overall, Newcastle City Learning learners rate their learning experience high, be it online or face to face. They think:

- tutors are approachable and knowledge and lessons are fun and interesting
- feedback is detailed, timely and informative
- they learn something new each time they are in class
- they make significant progress
- their confidence is improving
- the college and online is a safe place.

(source: - lesson visit learner feedback).

Areas for Improvement moving forward – Adult Learning

Provision Type – Adult Learning		
	Issue	Action Required
Curriculum Intent	We need to continue to broaden our offer to our existing learners to further develop their skills to move them closer to the jobs market.	<p>Broadening our offer to current cohorts of learners: facilitating lateral progression for learners, for instance more ESOL learners offered Beauty courses.</p> <p>More collaborative working between Departments to ensure that all learners have suitable information about the wider offer within the service.</p>
Curriculum Intent	<p>We need to continue to develop our curriculum to meet changing needs within the city.</p> <p>For example, we need to further develop our ESOL capacity to meet growing demands.</p>	<p>Developing tutors to support second language users more effectively.</p> <p>Continuing to provide suitable training to those tutors who wish to diversify their teaching.</p> <p>Continue to work with partners and employers across the city to identify what training we need to develop and offer to meet the rapidly changing need of both our employers and residents within the city moving forward.</p>
<p>Curriculum Intent</p> <p>Financial viability</p>	We are not demonstrating value for money for the Community Learning allocations at present.	<p>Be more creative in what we offer as part of Community Learning: make use of our base in Heaton to draw the wider community in and offering enquiring/debating/conversation workshops to all learners to practice language, share views and develop mutual understanding.</p> <p>Continue to develop new ideas for community learning programmes which meet learners' current needs, post pandemic.</p>
Curriculum Implementation	Too few lessons are judged as outstanding	<p>Continue to offer a wide range of continuous professional development opportunities to our teachers and wider workforce to work towards the delivery of more outstanding lessons: continue to work on areas for development through PEP, heavily facilitate peer classroom visits and sharing of practice.</p> <p>Embedding a coaching and mentoring culture across the service.</p>

	Issue	Action Required
Curriculum Implementation	The key weakness identified in our recent Ofsted visit was the lack of investment in the internal and external fabric and facilities or the buildings used by adult learners so that they can enjoy a more comfortable and inspiring learning environment.	Lobby Council to support NCL financially to improve the internal and external fabric of the facilities and building at Westgate College. To continue to invest, where possible financially in updating the classroom environments within both Westgate and the Skills Centre buildings.
Curriculum Implementation	We do not maximise opportunities to share best practice across curriculum areas and to ensure that learners are offered opportunities across our curriculum.	Create more opportunities for learners from different areas to connect with each other and share their experiences.
Curriculum Impact	Less positive performance in 20-21 in Health Voc – Counselling. Access to HE Business admin	Monthly monitoring checks on these areas of provision. Monitoring closely retention and reasons for withdrawals and non-achievement.
Curriculum Impact	Limited evidence held currently of impact of learning, and final destinations of our adult learners from last year.	Review of destination data collection systems. J2Research commissioned to carry out a destinations data follow up activity in February 2022.

Provision Types

Programmes for Young People - Self-assessment

Author: Colleen Pittman

(coordinating the findings of individual curriculum managers)

Quality of Education

Intent

Programmes for Young People consists of individualised study to progress young people into employment, an apprenticeship or further education. The provision is targeted at the most vulnerable young people in the city aged 16-19 or 19-24 who have an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP). The programme focuses on preparing the young person for an independent life and being able to confidently contribute to their society and community. The programme focuses heavily on the development of positive behaviours and attitudes for life and work. The young people can choose from a range of vocational study options including -

- Childcare
- Health & Social care
- Construction
- Occupational Studies
- Personal & Social Development

For learners with EHCPs we align the delivery of programmes with the Preparing for Adulthood Agenda. Targets within the learner's EHCP are aligned with their programme of study.

Work Placement and preparing for work are mandatory and an integral part of the programme. We work closely with employers to identify work experience and employment opportunities. Labour market intelligence is used to identify job opportunities within our local area and inform our vocational pathways curriculum offer.

A team of Pastoral Support Officers provide a wrap-around service to support all learners. This is an integral part of our offer and ensures that our learners are ready to learn. They work closely with a number of external agencies to ensure a holistic approach is used to support, develop and retain our young people on programme. The following quotes from the day two feedback from our PYP inspector are examples of the impact of the additional support offered by our curriculum and pastoral teams at NCL.

“Curriculum offer and pastoral support really does meet the needs of the learners. High expectations about being ready to learn – punctuality – is challenged – supported by pastoral team. Culture – inclusive culture – welcoming and friendly. Learners do value this. Learners feel safe and feel welcome here”.

Collected on day two of inspection – feedback meeting

Implementation

The academic year 20-21 started with face-to-face classroom delivery. Lack of suitably qualified staff and resignations resulted in gaps in our teaching team. The vocational pathways affected by this were predominantly Childcare and Health and Social Care.

In January 2021, we secured agency staff for delivery. The country then went into another lockdown, and most learners reverted to on-line learning. Some of our more vulnerable learners stayed for classroom delivery, and many accessed ongoing support from the Pastoral Team.

Staff have designed innovative education programmes to meet the needs of young people with challenging personal circumstances who have made limited progress at school. Teachers use information in EHCPs effectively to set personalised targets to develop the communication skills of learners. (Ofsted, 2021).

Google Classroom, Chromebooks and dongles were used to mitigate the disruption for those learners learning on-line. Some learners were not able to engage effectively. Learners returned back to classroom delivery by Easter. Additional sessions were delivered to bridge the skills gap that had been identified in vocational, maths and English classes due to lockdown and staffing issues.

Independent living skills sessions were delivered to all learners to give them the opportunity to develop important life skills including cookery, budgeting, keeping healthy, social awareness and community involvement. This included helping and supporting learners to independently access and arrange health appointments etc.

Teachers use a range of effective techniques to ensure that learners retain knowledge and are able to apply the practical skills that are developed. The majority of learners are actively engaged in lessons. Since the previous inspection, teachers have significantly improved the way they identify the starting points of learners. Consequently, *they plan and teach programmes that enable learners to develop new knowledge and skills.* (Ofsted 21). Tutors are skilled at enabling learners to recognise their starting points.

Tutors assess effectively: learner assessment is detailed and thorough and learners receive feedback on how to improve (Ofsted 2021). In English, teachers complete regular standardisation of learners' written tasks. This improves teacher confidence and how consistently assessment criteria is applied to borderline pass candidates. The majority of the English team are also participating in staff development with a focus on assessment for learning.

The majority of tutors use their subject expertise well to engage learners in challenging and stimulating learning activities: in maths, online interactive 3D nets are used to recap and reinforce properties of shapes, drawing nets and measurements. In English chat/poll facilities, Google docs and Jamboards are used well within Google meets - learners are highly engaged and make progress throughout.

Impact

Year	Retention	Pass	Achievement
2020-21	81.3%	89.2%	72.6%
2019/20	80.6%	60.3%	48.6%
2018/19	86.2%	84.8%	73.1%

Lack of qualified delivery staff for Childcare and Health and Social Care had a negative impact on delivery in these areas. This was further impacted upon by these two cohorts containing extremely challenging young learners. Due to the time taken to employ agency staff, these cohorts had a January start. The programmes were re-designed and a model for intense delivery was implemented. This model aimed to bridge the gaps and all learners in these areas attended meaningful work experience.

The Preparing for Adulthood Programme developed learners' skills and attitudes which enabled them to achieve their individual targets and make informed decisions on what they wanted to do next.

The Knowledge, Education and Enrichment Programme (KEEP) has been designed to provide alternative bespoke education to those young people who have struggled with regular attendance at school, who may have not reached the minimum levels of attainment at 16 and are at risk of becoming not in education or training (NEET). The programme also offers a safe environment for those who are leaving care, are associated with the Youth Justice System or just in need of a greater level of support than found in general Further Education Colleges or school 6th form provision.

Three rounds of KEEP were delivered across the academic year. The primary focus of KEEP was the delivery and completion of a practical project. In 2020-21 this involved the renovation of an outdoor space at WGCC. Manual Handling and Health and Safety sessions were delivered to develop knowledge and ensure learners worked safely at all times. Learners also had the opportunity to study and achieve their CSCS card.

All KEEP learners attended work experience at Leazes Park with Urban Green. This was very successful and feedback from Urban Green was very positive in relation to learners' behaviour and attitude to work.

KEEP included enterprise projects that provided learners with the opportunity to raise money to buy resources for the practical project, and for their chosen charitable causes.

All learners thrive in a learning culture that celebrates diversity. NCL offers courses for many of the city's most disadvantaged young people from difficult backgrounds. Staff promote and value the aspirations of all learners, irrespective of their backgrounds (Ofsted 21).

Dedicated pastoral support and a person-centered approach from all agencies involved with the young learners resulted in the majority making excellent progression. All learners had been disengaged with education for a considerable time and had other barriers and issues to learning.

Self-assessment Report 2020/21

Pastoral Support Officers worked in partnership with various support agencies to devise a support package to meet each individual learner's needs. These partnerships were very strong and an integral part in ensuring that the programme was successful for each and every learner where possible.

A celebration event for the young people was held at the end of the academic year to reward and acknowledge hard work and commitment throughout the year. All learners received a certificate of achievement alongside their accredited qualifications. This was the first time that we had held a celebration event that incorporated all parts of the PYP, mainstream, LLDD and high needs learners. This event was really successful, and all learners positively acknowledged and celebrated each other's achievements.

Work experience was difficult to arrange in the pandemic and only 22% of learners experienced a work placement. Many LLDD learners were shielding due to medical vulnerabilities, and some parents were reluctant to allow them to enter a work placement.

Attendance and punctuality significantly improved on the previous academic year despite the pandemic. Attendance was 90% and punctuality was 94%. The inspection team (Ofsted 21) identified the pastoral team as unique and an integral part of being able to manage attendance and the overall achievement of the learners on programme.

English and maths tutors support learners to develop their study skills and their digital skills well, enabling them to produce a high standard of work in addition to accelerating individual progress, both in face to face and online settings. In GCSE maths, opportunities are provided for learners to extend their own learning through the completion of additional activities, which are supported by video tutorials and demonstrations on Google Classroom. External verifier reports for Functional Skills continue to be exemplary and commend the high standard of the learners' work and assessment practices.

Overall, Newcastle City Learning learners rate their learning experience high, be it online or face to face. They think:

- tutors are approachable and knowledge and lessons are fun and interesting
- feedback is detailed, timely and informative
- they learn something new each time they are in class
- they make significant progress
- their confidence is improving
- the college and online is a safe place.
-

(source - lesson visit learner feedback)

Provision Type – PYP		
	Issue	Action Required
Curriculum implementation	Too many young people do not access relevant work experience as part of the programme at present.	A new role has been established within the team from 1 September 2021 with a view to increasing the number of suitable placements available to those who are ready to undertake work experience.
Curriculum implementation	Too many young people do not achieve higher level maths and English qualifications as part of their programme.	<p>Redesign of the beginning of the Autumn term for M&E team to develop relationships and rapport before delivery of the curriculum commences.</p> <p>Issues with a difference between prior achievement information and initial assessment findings will continue to be an issue.</p> <p>Making is very difficult to measure real distance travelled in these core subjects.</p>
Curriculum impact	Whilst overall achievement rates have greatly improved. Still too many of our young people fail to achieve their planned qualifications	<p>Pathways have been designed to ensure a broad curriculum which is attractive and responds to the needs of our young people and local employers.</p> <p>Greater use of pastoral within vocational sessions at the beginning of the academic year to build relationships and rapport and ensure that learners are settled early and ready to learn.</p> <p>Pastoral Support/Counselling Officer in place 8/12/21 to further support the team with emotional and behavioral</p>

		challenges which may impact on learner progress.
Financial stability	Impact of COVID 19 – we have now had two years of far lower numbers on the ESFA funded PYP programme which will have an impact on future funding.	Leaders and managers continue to monitor monthly the financial position of the Department, including the staffing structure to support this very valuable aspect of our provision.

Provision Types

High Needs - Self-assessment

Author: Colleen Pittman

(coordinating the findings of individual curriculum managers)

Performance

Intent

In 20-21, Newcastle City Learning had 15 commissioned places from the Local Authority to provide high needs provision. Due to increasing demand, additional commissioned high needs provision was agreed with the Careers Coordinator throughout the year to meet demand.

We work closely with Careers advisors to ensure that our programmes align with the Preparing for Adulthood pathways which is a factor that drives their agenda to source quality provision for high needs learners. This partnership working ensures our curriculum has been developed to meet the support needs, pathway choices and aspirations of learners.

The majority of our referrals come via Council careers advisors. We have successfully built good relationships and referral routes with schools so that the transition between provisions can be as smooth and effective as possible.

The curriculum plan met the needs of the local area and employers and the individual needs of high needs learners in the vast majority of areas. Staff have a good understanding of the curriculum intent. Education programmes are designed to meet the needs of young people with challenging personal circumstances some of whom have made limited progress at school. (Ofsted, 2021)

Some learners with high needs are also placed within our generic Programmes for Young People pathway. These learners are not yet ready for the Supported Internship Programme and require further skills development and support within an educational setting. When competent and confident these learners will be given the opportunity to participate in a supported work experience placement. This is a personalised programme which includes qualifications at a suitable level for the individual:

- Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2 Award in employability skills
- Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2 Certificate in Independent Living skills
- Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2 Preparing for Adulthood
- Entry Level, Level 1 and Level 2 Certificate in Occupational Studies for the workplace

The programme is designed around the identified needs and targets detailed within the young person's EHCP.

The Supported Internship Programme offers a personalised programme which includes qualifications at a level suitable for each intern these include:

- Entry Level 3, Level 1 and Level 2 Award in Skills for Employment, training and Personal Development
- Maths and English to an appropriate level including GCSE

The main aim of the programme is successful progression to paid and sustainable employment. Work placement hours on a Supported Internship will be up to 4 days a week (term time only). Work placement provides the intern with an opportunity to gain the required skills and competencies to achieve the positive outcome of paid employment.

In 20-21 there were 11 learners who were high needs funded on PYP, and 4 learners on the Supported Internship Programme.

Implementation

The Supported Internship programme is usually delivered predominantly in the workplace. Due to the pandemic, it was frontloaded with qualification delivery for 20-21. Two interns were placed successfully into a workplace - one within a school setting and the other in a retail setting. This was closely reviewed and dependent on the status of Covid restrictions imposed by the government. All continuing interns had periods of work placement throughout their course with the aim being to support them in applying for jobs as they neared completion of their programme.

The pastoral team provided a wraparound support package to every young person on programme to ensure their needs were met and they were ready to learn. They worked closely with many external agencies to ensure a holistic approach was used to support and develop our young learners. Ofsted '21 described our pastoral team as “unique”.

Teachers use information in EHCPs effectively to set personalised targets to develop the young person as a whole. Targets are transferred into the individual's learner journey and reviewed termly.

Teachers plan effectively and deliver engaging and relevant sessions to develop skills and knowledge within a conducive learning environment. Support plans are well documented and are used to inform teaching strategies.

Work Placement and preparing for work are mandatory elements within PYP and Supported Internships. There is a clear plan for work experience for all individuals who are ready for this element of the programme. (Ofsted 2021)

Due to the pandemic, it was difficult to source work placements for learners. Many businesses were closed, and many learners were classed as vulnerable due to poor physical and/or mental health. This year 22% of learners on programme attended work experience.

Delivery to high needs PYP learners started with classroom delivery, but there was a gap in the teaching team due to issues with staffing. Agency staff were sourced, and due to another lockdown, delivery was transferred to on-line. Some learners who were classed as vulnerable continued to attend classroom sessions. Google Classroom and Chromebooks were used to mitigate the disruption, but not all learners were able to engage effectively.

All learners returned to classroom delivery after Easter. Additional sessions were delivered to bridge the gap that had been made in vocational, maths and English subjects.

Independent living skills were delivered to all learners which allowed them to have the opportunity to develop skills within cookery, budgeting, keeping healthy, social awareness and community involvement. This included providing support for learners to access and arrange health appointments when needed.

Learners participate in a wide variety of well-planned enrichment activities, including fund raising events to enhance their personal, social and employability skills. The enrichment offer has been reduced this year in light of the ongoing restrictions. Some groups have continued to raise funds to support others during the pandemic.

Since the previous inspection, teachers have significantly improved the way they identify the starting points of learners. Consequently, they plan and teach programmes that enable learners to develop new knowledge and skills. Teachers use a range of effective techniques to ensure that learners retain knowledge and can apply the practical skills that they develop. (Ofsted 21).

Impact

Year	Retention	Pass	Achievement
2020-21	93.3%	94.6%	88.3%
2019/20	100%	87.8%	87.8%
2018/19	84%	95.2%	80%

There were 4 starts on the Supported Internship Programme in September 2020. 2 learners withdrew due to anxiety in relation to the Covid situation. A further 4 interns started in January 2021.

Three supported Interns were successful in gaining paid employment by January 2021.

From the 11 high needs learners on PYP, 7 moved onto social services/adult provision, 1 progressed to the Supported Internship Programme and 3 progressed to a second year of PYP.

Staff have established relationships of trust with their young people and the pastoral support is unique. (Ofsted 21). This enables the young people to disclose sensitive issues about sexual abuse and harassment.

The preparing for Adulthood programme developed learner skills and attitudes which enabled them to achieve their individual targets and make informed decisions on what they wanted to do next.

A Celebration of Success was held at the end of the academic year to reward and acknowledge the learners' hard work and commitment throughout the year. They all received a certificate of achievement alongside their accredited qualifications. This was the first time that we had held a celebration event which incorporated all parts of the PYP, Mainstream, LDD and high needs learners. This was really successful and the learners positively celebrated each other's achievements.

Improvement plan – High Needs

Provision Type – High Needs		
	Issue	Action Required
Curriculum implementation	A minority of teachers do not identify and correct errors in the standard of written English produced by learners with high needs, so that they can provide learners with feedback on how to improve the accuracy of their work.	Action plan to be instigated. Training and development session to be delivered around this theme, including closing the loop. Quality checks to be made moving forward.
Curriculum implementation	Not all young people were able to take up a work placement opportunity.	Increase work placement activity to ensure all Interns are in work for a minimum of 2 days a week.

Apprenticeships – Self-assessment – Author: Cara Hetherington

Year	Starts	Retention	Achievement
2020-21	76	73.3%	67.2%
2019/20	66	80.6%	76.7%
2018/19	60	86.2%	77.8%

Quality of Education

Intent

The apprenticeship offer currently includes standards in the following sectors:

Business and Administration
 Business Administrator Level 3
 Customer Service Practitioner Level 2
 Customer Service Specialist Level 3
 Team Leader Level 3
 Operations/Departmental Manager Level 5
 HR Support Level 3

Care Services
 Adult Care Worker Level 2
 Lead Adult Care Worker Level 3

Education and Childcare
 Early Years Practitioner Level 2
 Early Years Educator Level 3

Health and Science
 Healthcare Support Worker Level 2

The majority of the apprenticeships we offer, across all sectors, are at an intermediate or advanced level with a small number of higher apprenticeships in operations/departmental Manager.

The sector areas are carefully chosen to support the need of the local labour market and employers predominantly in the city of Newcastle Upon Tyne. We aim to offer apprenticeships to Newcastle City Council and help them to meet the public sector apprenticeship target of 2.3% of new apprentice starts annually. We also work in partnership with Your Homes Newcastle to support members of the community in local authority housing to become independent through apprenticeships.

Newcastle City Learning also aims to work with a range of other large employers such as school academies and the NHS, as well as a variety of medium and small SME's. The curriculum is effective for both learners and employers and meets the need of the local community. (Ofsted 2021).

Newcastle City Learning aims to support the city's aim of reducing unemployment. The rate of unemployed people in Newcastle upon Tyne between April 2020 and March 2021 is 6.4% in Newcastle and 6.4% in the Northeast. This rate is higher than Great Britain at 4.6% within the same timeframe.

The apprenticeship curriculum is developed around the skills, knowledge and behaviours that sit within the standards we offer. It is designed to enable apprentices to be successful in their chosen careers. The curriculum aims to support apprentices into sustained employment or further or higher education. It aims to increase employment prospects for apprentices or support career progression. Curriculum is well planned and sequenced. It enables learners to self-reflect and practice their newly acquired skills and knowledge at work. (Ofsted, 2021)

Implementation

Great strides have been made in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in 20-21. In the last academic year, we have taken steps to improve tripartite review paperwork, course information, learner inductions, skills scans and training plans. Prior to the recruitment of an apprentice, skills scans are completed by a tutor. The tutor dissects the skills and knowledge of the standard to ascertain that enough valuable learning remains. Employers are involved in the planning of the apprenticeship from the beginning and are invested in the development of the learner. Off-the-job training is planned in advance and in conjunction with managers or mentors.

Tutors are vocationally experienced and have good subject knowledge. They possess meaningful CPD plans. Teachers on the team leader supervisor apprenticeship standard call on their occupational experience in the public sector to plan and deliver off-the-job training that is relevant to apprentices and employers. (Ofsted, 2021)

Teachers plan and teach sessions in a considered way to build knowledge and skills of learners and apprentices over time. On leadership and management apprenticeships, apprentices receive a grounding in the theories of team dynamics and group conflict before developing stages on how to apply this conceptual knowledge at work. (Ofsted, 2021)

On leadership and management apprenticeships, apprentices receive a grounding in the theories of team dynamics and group conflict before developing strategies on how to apply this conceptual knowledge at work. (Ofsted, 2021)

The apprenticeship team are still delivering a blended approach to learning with tutors and tripartite reviews held virtually to prevent unnecessary face-to-face contact. Face-to-face teaching has returned, and essential observations were held in person where necessary. Tutors ensure that work is assessed regularly and that apprentices make good progress. (Ofsted, 2021)

English and maths learning is delivered by the adult learning team over a six-month duration with learners expected to sit an exam at the end. Teaching is delivered virtually on Google Classroom. Starting points are identified and programmes enable learners to develop new skills and knowledge. The vast majority of learners are making good progress.

Progress has been made in relation to engagement. Coordinators refer to a recruitment forecasting spreadsheet to target the number of learners we need to recruit in each month for sustainability. This forecast currently takes us to July 2022 and will be reviewed in 20-22. The Employment and Skills Coordinator refers to the forecast to plan and target recruitment in the right areas and ensure that the right information is shared with our partners, existing employers and any new developing links. Engagement is done by telephone, email or face-to-face by appointment.

In line with recruitment forecasting, we developed a recruitment plan that sets out the end-to-end process for recruitment of an apprentice. This has created improvements in the consistency of record keeping and ensures that we are compliant as an apprenticeship provider.

We now recruit to cohorts with a minimum target of 10 learners per group. Feedback from this change suggests that learners prefer to have a group to lean on for support and tutors can better manage progress and identify issues. Financially, it enables us to maximise tutor capacity and increase financial viability.

Impact

There were 76 apprentice starts in 20-21 and 39 so far in 21-22. There are currently 76 learners continuing on programme (not including those learners who are at EPA but have completed their practical period).

The vast majority of learners achieve their apprenticeship and pass their end-point assessment with pass, merit or distinction. In 20/21. The majority of learners (75%) achieved a pass and 25% achieved distinction in pass or distinction graded qualifications. No learners achieved distinction in pass, merit or distinction graded qualifications. Early indicators for 2021/2022 show that 83% of learners have achieved distinction and only 17% achieved pass in pass or distinction qualifications.

Learners are supported through tripartite reviews to develop the skills, knowledge and behaviours that are necessary in their chosen sectors to secure permanent employment or further education. (Ofsted 2021)

The number of apprentices on target is a much-improved situation from 2019/2020. Progress tracking indicates that less than 5% of learners are not on track and in red (more than 25% behind expected target). This is a reduction of 20% from in the previous year. Robust progress checking with tutors every three-weeks has created a tightening in monitoring and timely intervention.

Managers have a good understanding of apprenticeship delivery including the requirement for tripartite reviews, caseloads and monitoring of progress. (Ofsted, 2021)

Improvement plan – Apprenticeships

Provision Type – Apprenticeships		
	Issue	Action Required
Financial stability	Apprenticeship recruitment has fallen during the pandemic, putting the provision at financial risk	<p>Great new role of Business Development and Employer Engagement officer.</p> <p>Develop a targeted approach to employer engagement, including a range of strategies to increase new business to meet financial targets.</p>
Curriculum implementation	In a small minority of cases, the onboarding process for new apprentices does not meet funding requirements and paperwork is incomplete.	<p>Training to be delivered to new Business Development and Employer Engagement officer.</p> <p>Regular quality checks to be implemented to ensure full compliance.</p>
Curriculum implementation	In a minority of cases teachers do not have high ambitions for apprentices and provide them with the guidance and teaching that they need to achieve distinction grades on their apprenticeship programmes.	<p>Criteria for all grades to be provided to all new apprentices at induction.</p> <p>High expectations to be set at beginning of programme.</p> <p>Trainers to discuss regularly at tripartite reviews and provide continual feedback that informs learners what they need to do to achieve a high grade at End Point Assessment.</p>

For clarification on any aspect of this report please contact the Author for clarification.

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