

Inspection of Community Learning and Development in North Lanarkshire Council

14 August 2017

Contents

1. Context.....	1
2. How good is the strategic leadership of community learning and development?	1
3. How good is the learning and development in this community?	2
4. What happens at the end of the inspection?	4



1. Context

Community learning and development (CLD) partners within North Lanarkshire Council and the area of Motherwell West were inspected by Education Scotland during May and June 2017. During the visit Education Scotland staff talked to children, young people, adults and community organisations. We worked closely with local CLD managers, CLD providers, partners, paid staff and volunteers. We wanted to find out the quality of the strategic leadership of CLD and the quality of CLD provision in the area. We also looked at how well paid staff and volunteers are developing their own practices and building capacity. We looked at how partners are contributing to current and evolving national policy objectives such as closing the poverty-related attainment gap; prevention; reducing social isolation; tackling health inequalities; and empowering communities.

2. How good is the strategic leadership of community learning and development?

Leadership of CLD is strong. CLD practice is recognised and valued by senior leaders in North Lanarkshire Council and strategic partners in North Lanarkshire Partnership. CLD providers are viewed as core partners in delivering against many key community planning and council priorities. CLD managers are well connected to strategic groups addressing priorities. This enables CLD providers to respond to and perform important roles in priority projects and programmes including Developing Scotland's Young Workforce and the Scottish Attainment Challenge. CLD methodologies have been successfully extended to partners working on children's services and health improvement priorities. The Motherwell Health and Social Care Consortium members use CLD approaches to engage with and involve the community in reshaping services.

Partnership working is well developed, very strong and characterised by mutual trust. A collaborative approach and strong networks create a sense of shared mission. Partners' clear understanding of each other's roles and resources enables them to respond well to priority and emerging needs. This supports the delivery of efficient and effective services which have positive impacts. Members of the Motherwell CLD partnership are proactive in working together to create new ways of meeting identified priorities. Partners work together well to evaluate progress and are appropriately focused on improving outcomes and reaching those most in need. Partnership groups make good use of intelligence including research and prior experience to inform their work. For example, partners used their previous experience of working with Congolese refugees to very effectively identify and meet the needs of Syrian refugees. As a result they deliver a comprehensive package including housing, English for Speakers of Other Languages classes, and a volunteer befriending scheme which together enable the arrivals to settle very well into their new communities.

A key feature of learning in North Lanarkshire is the close and productive partnership working between schools and the CLD service. CLD staff contribute very effectively to a wide range of school priorities including parental engagement, family learning, positive transitions and programmes for children and young people with additional support needs. Home School Partnership work in schools significantly extends and enriches the learning offer. Recent changes at local and strategic level to planning structures mean that partners now need to revisit reporting arrangements to ensure they are clear, efficient and will best enable

stakeholders to understand CLD's contribution. There is also scope to increase opportunities for communities to influence strategic decision making.

Staff members at all levels are highly motivated, resilient and skilled. CLD staff are confident to take on devolved leadership roles and be innovative and creative. An effective learning and improvement culture has been established. Staff are proactive in using the findings from self-evaluation and their learning from professional development opportunities to inform future action. They have a good understanding of the impact they make on individual learners. Sharing of practice and training is well developed. CLD staff across the partnership have good access to well-planned professional learning opportunities and this is improving practice. CLD staff contribute effectively to the learning of other professionals and sectors.

3. How good is the learning and development in this community?

The learning and development across Motherwell West is very strong with aspects that are excellent. Across the area the high quality services delivered by CLD partners are having a very positive impact on learners and are improving lives and communities. Partners are highly effective in reaching and supporting those facing significant challenges including learners with additional support needs, those with mental health issues and those furthest from employment. Partners are pro-active in sharing data and other sources of intelligence to identify need, inform planning and evaluate impact. Opportunities are very effectively targeted to reach priority groups and address key challenges. For example, over the last four years the number of young people undertaking Activity Agreements in Motherwell has risen from 22 to 36 and nearly all have progressed into education, training, employment or volunteering.

In 2016/17, CLD service staff in Motherwell met or exceeded the majority of their key performance targets. Staff are increasingly confident to interrogate performance information to identify issues and progress. A relatively low conversion rate for those undertaking Duke of Edinburgh's (DoE) awards was identified through analysis of data. Work to address this has seen the number of young people gaining DoE awards in the Motherwell locality rise from 20 in 2013/14 to 69 in 2016/17. Increasingly provision is targeted at need with 44% of adult learners in 2015/16 and 47% in 2016/17 coming from the 20% of data zones with the highest level of deprivation. Trend information shows a mainly stable or increasing level of capacity building support to voluntary and community groups in Motherwell by CLD service staff. The number of projects receiving support to develop the confidence and skills of activists has risen year on year from 15 in 2014/15 to 25 at the end of 2016/17. Performance reports also show consistently high levels of participant satisfaction with learning programmes. There is scope for partners to further refine which intelligence will enable them to efficiently gain an overview of impacts and trends at local level. Young people would benefit from partners working together to more systematically track achievement in order to identify any gaps in provision or participation.

Active, skilled volunteers of all ages contribute very effectively to their communities. They facilitate learning, run groups and support potentially excluded or marginalised groups very well. Intergenerational support is a key feature across many projects with, for example, young volunteers contributing to older adults digital learning in several groups. Young people in Motherwell Youth Forum are skilled, active and confident. They are addressing key concerns of their peers such as mental health. The dynamic parent led youth club at Firpark Primary School enables young people with additional support needs to successfully undertake a range of youth

work activities. Local families benefit from the volunteer led *New Opportunities* Project at North Motherwell Parish church. This community organisation supports some of the most vulnerable local families and community members to build their resilience. Their well-used café reduces social isolation and the holiday programme provides families with a much needed break. The Parkinson's Self-help Group is proactive in delivering support from counselling to advocacy for people with the disease and their carers. For many users it is a crucial lifeline. North Lanarkshire Carers Together engage very effectively with a high number of carers and their families. They work with partners to provide a wide range of responsive interventions. They empower carers to have a voice in local and national developments.

Community groups are active and committed to positive change in their communities. Many are part of cohesive local networks alongside service providers which improve the learning offer. New facilities are being established through community action such as the Magna Play and Skate Park and Forge Wood Community Centre. Community organisations are confident to contribute to and challenge local decisions. Ladywell Community Council successfully challenged a new supermarket development. Polish Lanarkshire Community Forum members are ambitious and proactive in representing the interest and needs of the local Polish community and in running local activities. Volunteers of all ages and community groups across Motherwell West receive highly effective and appropriate support from CLD partners. This support enables both individuals and groups to train, progress and become increasingly confident to respond to local needs. Partners should now consider how they can build on the effective local networks and active community groups to strengthen community representation and engagement in local planning structures and decisions.

Very well planned programmes enable learners to progress and achieve across Motherwell West. Nearly all activities run by CLD partners provide an excellent level of personal support. This is life changing for many participants. Learners' views are consistently taken into account when developing activities. Family learning and parenting activities such as the *Healthy Mummy Happy Baby* and the *Big Chef Tiny Chef* programme reduce social isolation, increase parents' confidence as educators and improve relationships. CLD staff play an important and valued role in North Lanarkshire Council's approach to the Scottish Attainment Challenge. Programmes such as the *Family Learning* work at St Bernadette's Primary School and the *Can-Can* (Challenge Attainment North Lanarkshire/Care and Nurture) in Muir Street Primary School effectively reach parents most in need of support. Parents are more involved and engaged in their children's learning and their relationships with schools strengthen. Children are better able to concentrate, listen and participate in their learning and have improved wellbeing.

Home School Partnership Officers (HSPOs) provide a key link between schools, families and CLD partners. The learning offer delivered by them is needs led, flexible, well planned and very highly effective in achieving positive change. The trusting relationships built by HSPOs with school staff, young people and families ensures outcomes for children and young people are maximised across diverse programmes from summer schools to college link programmes. The *This Is Me* programme run by HSPOs, schools and Autism Scotland improved the attendance and enjoyment in learning of young people with autism. The *Mentors In Violence Prevention* programme challenges young people's perceptions and views whilst providing a safe space for them to explore topics such as gender based violence. Young people who have disengaged from mainstream education or are at risk of not gaining a positive destination on leaving school are supported effectively through partnership programmes such as Supported Access to Learning and Employability and the Learning Hub. Programmes are flexible, tailored to suit

individual needs and provide an appropriate level of challenge. Young people successfully gain a range of accredited learning awards, are more confident and progress to a positive future.

Learning programmes for adults are very well planned and suited to learner needs. Individual adult learners, many of who face considerable challenges in their lives, are clear about their goals. They are well supported by CLD staff to learn at their own pace whilst being ambitious about what they can achieve. Learners, including those furthest from employment, who participate in activities such as the *Personal Development* programme receive very effective support from highly experienced adult learning workers. As a result they have improved confidence and capacity to deal with anxiety, stress and related health issues. They gain skills for life and work and are better placed to progress. Celebrations of learning and achievement are regular and valued by learners. Partners should now consider how gaps in aspects of adult learning provision, largely caused by resource constraints, can be overcome.

What is the capacity of the local authority and CLD partners to further improve?

This inspection of CLD in North Lanarkshire Council found the following key strengths.

- Strong shared ethos and values across partners which increases CLD capacity.
- Experienced, skilled and responsive staff and volunteers who use networks very effectively to improve provision.
- Very high quality support to learners and communities that is improving outcomes.
- Well targeted activities having positive life changing impacts.

We discussed with partners how they might continue to improve their work. This is what we agreed with them.

- Continue to develop efficient planning and reporting arrangements to best capture impacts and sustain progress.

4. What happens at the end of the inspection?

We are satisfied with the overall quality of provision. We are confident that the local authority's self-evaluation processes are leading to improvements. As a result we will make no further evaluative visits in connection with this inspection. During the inspection, we identified aspects of interesting practice which we would like to explore further. As a result we will work with the education authority in order to record and share more widely the interesting practice.

Alona Murray
HM Inspector
14 August 2017

Quality indicators help CLD providers, partners and inspectors to judge what is good and what needs to be improved. You can find these quality indicators in the publication *How good is the learning and development in our community?*

<https://education.gov.scot/improvement/Pages/frwk4hgiocommunitylearning.aspx>

Education Scotland evaluates four important quality indicators to help monitor the quality of CLD across Scotland. Here are the results for this inspection.

Improvements in performance	very good
Impact on the local community	very good
Delivering the learning offer with learners	excellent
Leadership and direction	very good

This report uses the following word scale to make clear judgments made by inspectors.

excellent	outstanding, sector leading
very good	major strengths
good	important strengths with some areas for improvement
satisfactory	strengths just outweigh weaknesses
weak	important weaknesses
unsatisfactory	major weaknesses

Education Scotland

Denholm House
Almondvale Business Park
Almondvale Way
Livingston EH54 6GA

T +44 (0)131 244 4330
E enquiries@educationscotland.gsi.gov.uk

www.education.gov.scot

© Crown Copyright, 2017

You may re-use this information (excluding images and logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence providing that it is reproduced accurately and not in a misleading context. The material must be acknowledged as Education Scotland copyright and the document title specified.

To view this licence, visit <http://nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence> or e-mail: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk

Where we have identified any third party copyright information you will need to obtain permission from the copyright holders concerned.