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Ms J Cunningham
Principal
Redbridge Institute of Adult Education
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Gaysham Avenue
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Dear Ms Cunningham

Ofsted 2011–12 survey inspection programme: employability - the impact of skills programmes for adults on achieving sustained employment

This survey evaluates providers' response to initiatives launched on 1 August 2011 to use Skills Funding Agency funds flexibly to support people on benefits.

Thank you for your hospitality and cooperation, and that of your staff and participants, during my visit on 19 and 20 March 2012 to look at your work in employability provision.

The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting. Published reports are likely to list the names of the contributing institutions but individual institutions will not be identified in the main text without their consent.

The evidence used to inform the judgements included: interviews with staff, participants and Jobcentre Plus representatives; scrutiny of relevant documents; analysis of participants' work; and observation of three learning sessions.

Key findings

- Redbridge Institute of Adult Education (RIAE) has a clear strategic focus on developing employability programmes that meet the labour market needs of the borough. Since August 2011, senior managers have worked extensively with partners to develop intensive short courses and programmes for specific identified groups and to introduce new subjects. They have appropriately recognised key areas for development in the employability strategy but it is too early for this to have had a full impact.
- Participants have suitable targets to help them achieve their qualifications, which they review regularly with their tutors. They receive very useful

feedback which motivates them and helps improve their skills. However, few participants have clear development goals for employment and some are unclear about what they need to do next to gain a job.

- The learning sessions observed were highly effective in developing participants' confidence and skills. Tutors used excellent learning activities to facilitate participants' progress. They made very sound links between the subject and participants' identified desired job roles, for those that had clear goals. Participants were encouraged to share recent experiences in looking for work, for example of job interviews, which provided particularly relevant opportunities for self-reflection and peer discussion.
- Tutors promote volunteering opportunities well with participants and for some subjects voluntary work is an integral part of the course. Although participants complete good and frequent activities where they can practice their skills, some have insufficient opportunities to do so in a real work environment.
- Many participants have very low levels of language and literacy and are significantly increasing their vocabulary, speaking and listening skills which they view as key barriers to employment. Participants have clear advice about future courses and a high proportion have progressed on to further training courses with RIAE.

Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include:

- ensuring that participants have suitable, individual employment goals
- implementing the identified priorities within the employability strategy, including developing volunteering and work experience.

I hope that these observations are useful as you continue to develop employability provision at RIAE.

As explained previously, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted website. It may be used to inform decisions about any future inspection. A copy of this letter is also being sent to the Skills Funding Agency.

Yours sincerely

Janet Rodgers
Her Majesty's Inspector