

# Reading Borough Council New Directions

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number:</b>	54075
<b>Name of lead inspector:</b>	Charles Clark HMI
<b>Last day of inspection:</b>	25 November 2011
<b>Type of provider:</b>	Local authority
<b>Address:</b>	Reading Borough Council New Directions 330 Northumberland Avenue Reading RG2 8DH
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## Information about the provider

1. New Directions (ND) is part of Reading Borough Council's (RBC) Education and Children's Services and is funded by Berkshire Skills Funding Agency. New Directions provides adult education in three RBC-owned centres, one leased centre and a number of outreach centres in the borough. The council's adult and community learning provision was inspected in 2007 and reinspected in 2009.
2. ND offers a wide range of both accredited and non-accredited learning. The main provision includes information and communications technology (ICT), arts, media and publishing, languages, literature and culture, preparation for life and work and family learning. Learner numbers in some areas of provision are very small and these were not inspected. Almost all the provision is government funded.
3. The senior management team comprises the head of service with two senior managers. These staff manage a team of coordinators who themselves manage the delivery leads responsible for the tutors.
4. Reading is the largest town in the South East, with a population of approximately 144,000 and about 200,000 living in Reading's greater urban area. Reading is a multicultural town and the third most ethnically diverse in the South East. Around 20% of the population comes from Black minority ethnic group communities and over 150 languages are spoken in Reading's schools. Reading was ranked 151st in the Index of Multiple Deprivation in 2007. Some 10% of the population have no qualifications, 74% only have level 1 qualifications and 25% have level 2 numeracy qualifications.
5. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the provider:
  - Graft
  - Earley Crescent Centre
  - Wokingham Borough Council
  - Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
  - Adult Dyslexia
  - Bracknell Forest Council
  - Slough Borough Council
  - Link Up
  - Destiny
  - Skills Store
  - West Berkshire Council
  - RCLC

- Resource
- Chrysalis
- WEA

<b>Type of provision</b>	<b>Number of learners in 2010/2011</b>
<p><b>Provision for young learners:</b></p> <p>Further education (16 to 18)</p> <p>Foundation learning</p>	<p>42 full-time learners</p> <p>82 part-time learners</p>
<p><b>Provision for adult learners:</b></p> <p>Learning for qualifications</p> <p>Learning for social and personal development</p>	<p>1,389 part-time learners</p> <p>1,899 part-time learners</p>
<p><b>Employer provision:</b></p> <p>Train to Gain</p>	<p>17 learners</p>

## Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
	<b>Grade</b>
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	2
<b>Learning for qualifications</b>	
	<b>Grade</b>
Information and communication technology	2
Preparation for life and work	2
<b>Learning for social and personal development</b>	
	<b>Grade</b>
Arts, media and publishing	2

## Overall effectiveness

6. ND has good provision. Most learners on courses leading to qualifications achieve well. Those on courses without qualifications typically achieve their learning goals. Learners feel safe and enjoy their learning. They make good gains in their skills and confidence. All learners have a good understanding of the progress they have made and what they need to do to achieve their learning goals. However, this information is not always recorded well in individual learning plans.
7. Teaching and learning are good. The majority of lessons observed were good or better. ND has implemented a new system for the observation of teaching and learning which is well established and is effective in improving the quality of teaching. Inspectors found that a few observations were over graded. Tutors use a good variety of teaching methods but some do not use the resources available effectively.

8. ND meets the needs of learners and the broader community very well. Partnership working is excellent, involving a wide variety of organisations. It is successful in identifying and engaging the most disadvantaged learners. Good practice is shared very well. The range of provision is wide and opportunities for progression are good.
9. ND has made significant and well-managed improvements to the delivery of the provision. The senior management team has a clear vision for future improvement and well-developed plans to improve the provision further.

## Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. The majority of learners are on personal and social development courses and their achievement is good. On courses leading to qualifications, success rates declined in 2009/10 but improved significantly in 2010/11. In-year data indicate that they continue to improve and success rates are now close to the national average.
- Learners are enthusiastic and enjoy their courses. They gain in confidence and self-esteem. They develop personal and social skills well in addition to more specific subject-related skills. They are highly motivated and many progress to further courses and some to employment.
- Learners feel safe and ND emphasises health and safety issues which are understood well by learners. They adopt safe working practices and have a good awareness of safety issues concerning internet access.
- Teaching and learning are good overall. Most lessons are well planned. Initial assessment is good. Individual learning plans are used well in most courses, although some contain objectives which are unclear. Individual learning plans are not used consistently across the provision. Tutors give good feedback to learners who have a clear understanding of their achievement. Information and learning technology (ILT) is used well but there is too much paper-based activity in some classes.
- Courses generally meet the needs and interest of learners well. The range of courses is good. The timing and location of courses make them accessible to learners, although arts courses are less well dispersed and too many courses are cancelled. The amount of progression opportunities is satisfactory and these are used well in most courses.
- Partnership working is excellent. ND works very effectively with a wide range of different organisations to promote participation and engage the most disadvantaged learners. They meet regularly to plan joint events and to ensure that the provision is well coordinated across the borough. Partnership working is successful in securing additional funding and in subcontracting aspects of the provision.
- Care, guidance and support are good. Information, advice and guidance extend to dealing with any personal issues learners may have. The ICT programme has a summer school to assist learners achieve their qualification. Arts courses have

some very good enrichment activities which promote the understanding of different cultures effectively.

- Leadership and strategic planning are highly effective. The senior management team has a very clear vision of how the provision needs to be developed to meet learners' needs and market forces. This is communicated well to all staff through very effective team meetings. Operational management of the provision is good.
- Managers provide good oversight of health, safety and safeguarding matters and give good support to staff. Safe recruitment practice is followed. All staff receive safeguarding training relevant to their role and are alert to the welfare needs of learners. Routine risk assessments are undertaken at centres and in classes, and consistent health and safety practices are in place.
- Equality and diversity are promoted effectively. Good management oversight of equality data and information and effective action have led to improved outcomes for learners from minority ethnic groups. When managing change, the needs of vulnerable learners are effectively considered. ND successfully engages those learners whose circumstances make them vulnerable and those who are taking their first steps into learning.
- ND has worked very effectively to improve the quality of the provision. The management information system is used very well to monitor performance in conjunction with detailed quality improvement plans. Success rates and other performance measures are checked carefully at team meetings, with remedial action taken where necessary.
- ND uses feedback well from both learners and partners to improve the provision. The self-assessment process is good and includes contributions from tutors, learners and partners. However, the self-assessment report is not always sufficiently judgemental.

### **What does New Directions need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that all learners have clear, personalised learning targets and individual learning plans are used consistently well in order to improve achievement and success rates.
- Use the feedback and information collated during the self-assessment process more critically in order to produce a self-assessment report which is more judgemental.

### **Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors**

#### **What learners like:**

- the good quality teaching
- the social aspects of learning
- studying and working together with people from different backgrounds
- the good individual support and help that they receive

- the improvements in their confidence and skills
- visits to galleries and enrichment activities
- attending the women's centre.

**What learners would like to see improved:**

- the range of arts classes
- the availability of handouts in some lessons
- the use of individual learning plans in some leisure classes.

**Summary of the views of partners as confirmed by inspectors**

**What partners like:**

- the open and encouraging ethos
- the strong commitment to widening participation
- the good support to identify funding streams and prepare bids.

**What partners would like to see improved:**

- the promotion of information about informal learning in the community
- the advertising of New Directions and its resources such as Moodle.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

**Grade 2**

10. New Directions made reasonable progress in addressing the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection as detailed in the monitoring visit report of 2010. Subsequently, significant progress has been made to improve the management of the provision. The promotion of equality and diversity has improved and is now good. All legislative requirements for safeguarding have now been met. The senior management team has introduced new quality improvement measures, such as revised procedures for the observation of teaching and learning, which are now well established and effective. Quality improvement plans are detailed and used well to monitor performance which is reviewed regularly at team meetings using a score card of performance indicators.
11. Since the monitoring visit, success rates have improved and are generally satisfactory. Other outcomes, including the increase of self-esteem and improved employability skills, are good. Success rates for minority ethnic groups have improved over the last three years. However, success rates for a few courses are below the national averages.
12. The self-assessment process is good. It is thorough and includes contributions from staff, learners and partners. The self-assessment report is detailed and contains mainly accurate judgements, although it is not always sufficiently judgemental. It relates well to the quality improvement plans which are monitored carefully at team meetings. The grades awarded in the self-assessment report broadly match those of inspectors, although there is a tendency to under grade aspects of the provision.

### Outcomes for learners

**Grade 2**

13. Learners are enthusiastic and enjoy their courses. They have a good understanding of their achievement and make good progress. ND provides progression opportunities for most courses and these are generally used to good effect. Learners gain in confidence and self-esteem. They develop good practical skills and several learners in the arts course report that their health has benefited from the activities. Learners also develop personal and social skills such as improved parenting skills through family learning in addition to improving their literacy and numeracy ability.
14. Most learners are on personal and social development courses and their achievement is good. The success rates for courses leading to qualifications declined in 2009/10 but improved significantly in 2010/11 and are now close to the national averages. ND recognises the low success rates on a few courses and has put into place measures to rectify them. Although it is too early to assess the full impact of these measures, there are indications that success rates are improving. The performance of different groups is monitored and, where differences are identified, effective remedial action is taken. The



performance of learners from minority ethnic groups has improved consistently over the last few years.

15. Learners feel safe and adopt safe working practices. ND emphasises health and safety issues and learners understand these issues. Internet safety is promoted and is fully embedded in the ICT courses.

## **The quality of provision**

## **Grade 2**

16. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned with a good range of activities to interest learners. In the better lessons, tutors use initial assessment information well to plan learning and meet the individual needs of learners. Learners are actively engaged in evaluating their work and learn much from one another. ILT is generally used well; however, in the less effective lessons there is too much reliance on paper-based activities and learners are not sufficiently guided to the resources available on the Moodle.
17. Initial assessment is thorough and informs the individual learning plans well. Most learners and tutors use these plans effectively to monitor progress and record achievements. In the better individual learning plans, learners have detailed personal targets with encouraging and supportive comments. In some cases this detailed approach includes digital recordings and encourages learners to engage in independent study skills. However, in some areas, the processes for measuring and recording the progress learners make are insufficiently rigorous.
18. Courses meet the needs and interests of learners well. Courses are well located in centres and community venues across the borough and offered at times which meet the needs of learners. E-learning programmes and workshops are put in place for shift workers to complete courses and obtain qualifications. However, too many art courses are located in the north of the borough and too many classes are cancelled or merged.
19. Partnership working is excellent. ND works very effectively with a wide range of different organisations and hosts regular meetings. These are used well to plan joint activities, share good practice and prevent unnecessary duplication of provision. ND works well with these organisations to seek funding sources and to prepare bids. Collectively, there is a strong commitment to work together to promote participation and engage the most disadvantaged learners. ND has worked very successfully to engage some very disadvantaged and vulnerable young learners in a series of pilot projects. This has also led to better progression opportunities for learners and better provision of learner support across Berkshire. Plans are well developed to devolve some of the provision to partners through subcontracts.
20. A wide range of enrichment activities complement the curriculum, including contributions from partners and visits to museums and galleries. Progression opportunities are good. ND outreach workers liaise very closely with a wide range of community partners to recruit hard-to-reach learners.

21. The care, guidance and support for learners are good. In classes, learners receive good support from well-trained and qualified support workers and volunteers. Tutors know their learners well and provide much individual attention. ND makes effective arrangements for summer schools to help learners achieve qualifications. Outreach and employment workers provide good information, advice and guidance to learners on further progression or employment opportunities. They offer much encouragement and support on practical and personal matters so that learners can continue to attend their classes.

## **Leadership and management**

## **Grade 2**

22. ND's senior management team provides excellent leadership and strategic planning, which is supported well by the borough council. It has a very focused vision to identify and engage the most vulnerable learners and learners from the most deprived areas. ND has researched the borough very thoroughly and has well-developed plans to engage these learners effectively. It has a very good awareness of learners' needs and market forces and uses this well to implement realistic plans. ND makes particularly good use of partnership working and takes the lead in seeking funding sources and preparing funding bids.
23. ND manages the day-to-day provision well. Courses are generally well planned in response to previous provision and learners' feedback. The courses are managed in such a way as to enable good flexible access for learners.
24. Arrangements to safeguard learners are satisfactory. Learners feel safe in centres and classes. Managers provide good oversight of health, safety and safeguarding matters and good support for staff. Safe recruitment practice is followed in recruiting new staff. Appropriate pre-employment checks are routinely undertaken and all staff, including the high number of volunteers used, are subject to Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks. Three-yearly CRB re-checks of all staff are in place. All staff receive safeguarding training relevant to their role and are alert to the welfare needs of learners and have a good understanding of safeguarding issues. Volunteers understand their roles well. Routine risk assessments are undertaken at centres and in classes. Consistent health and safety practices are in place. Minimum standards in safeguarding are in place for subcontracted providers and safeguarding is routinely considered in the awarding of contracts.
25. ND promotes equality and diversity well. Good management oversight is provided through the equalities forum and information is routinely collated on the performance of different groups of learners. This features well in the self-assessment report. A comparatively high proportion of learners are from minority ethnic groups. A wide range of equalities data is analysed regularly and there are examples where concerted action has been taken and has improved outcomes for particular minority ethnic groups. Success rates for minority ethnic groups overall have improved consistently between 2008/09 and 2010/11.

Provision is flexible and the increasing use of community locations ensures that learning opportunities are more easily accessible and respond well to the needs of the community. Partnerships effectively extend the reach of the service and ensure that many new learners who are taking their first steps into learning are successfully engaged. In classes, learners from different backgrounds enjoy working and learning alongside each other.

26. ND engages with learners well and is responsive to partner and learner feedback. It has put into place a variety of different methods to obtain feedback from learners and partners which are used effectively to plan the provision.
27. The self-assessment process is good and tutors, learners and partners all contribute well. However, the self-assessment report is too descriptive and lacks sufficient judgemental detail. It is generally accurate, although grades awarded by inspectors tended to be higher than those in the self-assessment. ND has made significant changes to the way in which performance is monitored and managed. This includes a score card of performance measures which is reviewed each month at team meetings. ND's detailed quality improvement plans link closely with the self-assessment report and these too are monitored well to assess performance at management meetings.
28. The management of resources and value for money are good. The closure of one learning centre was managed carefully so that learners were not disadvantaged. The learning centres are maintained to a good standard and generally are well resourced. ILT resources are fit for purpose and available for most classes.

## Learning for qualifications

**Other learning for qualifications provision considered as part of the main findings but not separately graded: Arts, media and publishing; Languages, literature and culture; education and training.**

## Information and communication technology (ICT) Grade 2

### Context

29. ICT courses take place in a wide range of locations. Accredited courses are offered from foundation to advanced level on a part-time basis. The 78 learners are mainly adults working towards OCR Entry 3, ECDL Part 1 and ECDL Part 2 awards. The majority of learners are on long courses. Most learners are female and approximately one third is from a minority ethnic heritage.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory overall. Learners are enthusiastic and make substantial gains in confidence, self-esteem and develop good skills including using the internet and email, and in job search. Learners develop good employability skills and many progress well to volunteering and employment opportunities. Learners help their children effectively with school work and develop good relations with families and local communities.
- Success rates have improved significantly and are broadly at the national average. Retention for the year 2010/11 has improved and is well above the national averages. Success rates on long courses have improved.
- Punctuality is good and attendance is satisfactory. The new attendance monitoring system allows managers to monitor and follow up non-attendance. Managers are able to identify rapidly learners at risk of failing and take actions to ensure learners succeed. However, attendance monitoring is not consistently implemented across all centres.
- Learners feel safe. They develop a good awareness of health and safety and demonstrate safe practices in workshops. The induction process covers key health and safety matters and the lessons focus effectively on health and safety issues. Teachers respond well to the considerable needs of those with health problems.
- Teaching and learning are good. In the most effective sessions, learners are actively engaged in learning and make very good progress against individually planned activities. Initial assessment is used very effectively to inform the planning of teaching and learning. In the few less effective sessions, the objectives are not personalised and are often unclear.
- Learners find individual learning plans very useful. These help learners to review their progress and encourage them to develop independent learning skills. Learners receive good and constructive verbal feedback from tutors on assessments. However, there is not always enough written feedback.

- Learning programmes meet the needs and interests of learners well. Courses are accessible in terms of timing and location. Learning centres on school premises make learning accessible for parents and carers. Opportunities are available for learners to progress from first steps to foundation level and these have been consistently good at most centres. Similarly, there are progression routes from ECDL introductory level to intermediate level, but progression rates are low.
- Care, guidance and support for learners are good. Tutors, volunteers and learning support assistants provide good individual support for learners. Learners with additional learning needs are supported very well. ND has introduced a summer achievement school to enable continuing learners to complete work.
- Leaders and managers communicate well with teams through effective team meetings. The communication across all sites has improved significantly. There are frequent opportunities to share good practice. Managers have high aspirations for learners and ensure that tutors are set challenging targets for attendance and success rates.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Equality and diversity are embedded well in teaching and learning. Learners from different backgrounds work well together and respect each other. The promotion of safeguarding is good. Learners are briefed on safety during induction and this is reinforced in teaching sessions. Staff have undergone relevant training.
- The self-assessment process is accurate and staff and learners contribute to it well. Course evaluation forms, team meetings and learner evaluation forms are used effectively to inform the self-assessment report. The quality improvement plan links well with the self-assessment report and action points are monitored well.
- A number of measures have been introduced that have led to improvements, such as in the quality of teaching and learning and in the monitoring of learners' progress. New procedures have been introduced to ensure learners are recruited onto the most appropriate course. The observation of teaching and learning scheme is robust and judgements on the quality of teaching and learning are accurate.

### **What does New Directions need to do to improve further?**

- Implement more consistently the new attendance monitoring system across all centres in order to improve learners' progress and success rates.
- Ensure that all learners are aware of their targets and make consistently good progress through setting clear and personalised learning objectives in lessons.

## Context

30. Currently 131 learners follow English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses, 182 follow literacy courses and 163 follow numeracy courses ranging from foundation to intermediate level. Learners in literacy and numeracy are enrolled on a 10-hour assessment programme to complete their initial assessment. They then attend for two hours per week for up to 29 weeks. ESOL learners attend for four hours per week for 34 weeks. Courses run during the day and evening in main centres and community outreach locations across the borough. The programme is managed by three staff. Classes are taught by a team of three part-time tutors and 17 sessional tutors.

## Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates are good on shorter courses for ESOL and numeracy, and satisfactory in literacy; however, they are low on longer courses. Success rates in all areas are improving. Retention rates are good on shorter courses but lower on longer courses. The provider has strategies in place to increase the number of learners on the more effective short courses.
- Learners enjoy their courses very much. They are well motivated and keen to progress onto further study or improve their chances of promotion at work. They gain much confidence and make good progress in developing their language, literacy and numeracy skills.
- Learners make good improvements in their communication skills at work. They are able to speak more confidently with their employer and work colleagues. They make better use of local services and parents feel more confident in supporting their children with school work. Some learners successfully progress to becoming classroom volunteers.
- Teaching and learning are good overall. Lessons are well planned and structured to help learners achieve the learning outcomes. In the better sessions tutors meet the individual needs and interests of learners and use a range of topics and variety of activities to keep them actively engaged. However, in some sessions the pace of teaching is too slow and learners do not have sufficient opportunity to contribute and play an active part in their learning.
- The use of learning resources is satisfactory. In many lessons, learners use computers effectively to access interactive resources, and learning materials are topical and relevant. However, tutors do not always make the best use of ILT resources. On occasion, tutors rely too heavily on paper-based learning materials.
- Initial assessment is thorough and effectively identifies learners' starting points. Learners are placed on the right course and have a good understanding of their learning plan. However, the processes for measuring and recording learners' progress are insufficiently rigorous in literacy and numeracy. Individual learning plans are comprehensive and well used for learners on ESOL courses.

- The provision meets the needs and interests of learners well. Courses are offered in local and accessible centres and in community venues. Classes effectively meet the needs of learners who require qualifications to increase their employability or to meet citizenship requirements. ND makes flexible arrangements for shift workers. Progression opportunities for learners are good.
- ND has particularly good partnership arrangements with a wide range of community groups and organisations who work with hard-to-reach learners. Outreach workers have good local knowledge. They work very effectively with staff in community centres to recruit learners, monitor attendance and encourage continued attendance and progression. Partners contribute very well to the curriculum and enrichment activities.
- The support for learners is good. Tutors work closely with outreach and employment workers and staff in children's centres. Learners receive good information, advice and guidance on how to progress to further training or employment. Learners receive effective help on personal issues and in class gain much from the support provided by volunteers and support workers.
- Leadership and management are good. The managers and coordinator work well as a team. They provide good support to tutors. Communication is good, including that between tutors, support workers and volunteers in the classroom. Staff have good access to professional development and make effective use of this. ND provides an extensive and successful accredited volunteer programme.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Learners from a wide variety of backgrounds work well together in the classroom. However, equality and diversity are insufficiently embedded throughout the curriculum. The promotion of safeguarding is satisfactory. Tutors have a much-improved awareness and pay good attention to safeguarding and health and safety.
- The self-assessment process is thorough and inclusive. Managers know their service well and have identified actions to be taken to improve the quality of provision. The new process for observing teaching and learning is robust; however, reports do not always accurately reflect the grade awarded.

### **What does New Directions need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure the processes for measuring and recording the progress and achievement of learners in literacy and numeracy are effective by adopting the existing good practice in ESOL.
- Develop further the teaching and learning skills of tutors by improving the use of a wider range of learning materials and ILT.
- Provide further training and support to tutors to enable them to understand fully how to promote equality and diversity through the curriculum.

## Learning for social and personal development

**Other social and personal development learning provision considered as part of the main findings but not separately graded: Health, public services and care; Information and communication technology; Leisure, travel and tourism; Languages, literature and culture; Education and training; Preparation for life and work.**

### Arts, media and publishing

### Grade 2

#### Context

31. Currently 292 learners are enrolled to study part-time art and craft courses in the two main centres. The 21 craft courses include textiles, creative fashion techniques, pottery and digital photography. The six art courses are in drawing, painting and watercolour. Classes take place in the daytime and evenings, with some one-day sessions on Saturdays. Family learning and first steps arts and crafts classes take place in local community venues. The majority of learners are over 19 and 83% are female.

#### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Learners enjoy their classes and work with enthusiasm. A supportive environment is established for learners to develop their creative skills. The social interaction and peer discussions in classes improve confidence and promote self-esteem. Learners feel safe in all centres.
- Learners demonstrate good standards of work. Observational drawing is developed well and dressmaking, tailoring and corsetry skills are high and often to a professional standard. However, work in a minority of classes lacks personal creativity and ambition.
- Teaching and learning are good. Most lessons are well planned with appropriate activities for the wide experience and ability range of learners. In the best lessons, peer evaluation engages learners in analysing their own progress, and ICT is used effectively to extend subject knowledge. The few less successful lessons lack structure and the diverse needs of all learners in the mixed groups are not always met.
- Individual learning plans are in place but are not always used consistently for initial assessment or to monitor progress or record achievement. The best individual learning plans have personal targets with frequent supportive comments and include digital recording of work in progress. This prompts personal evaluation and reflection.
- There is a satisfactory range of courses to meet the needs and interests of learners; however, most classes are in the north of the borough. A few courses are combined or cancelled due to low numbers, although most learners are successfully placed on alternative courses.
- Partnerships with local community groups and local schools are satisfactory. Inter-generational classes and taster courses take place in the local community with family learning taking place in the holidays. The team is currently working



to extend partnerships, but it is too early to judge the impact of the planned activities.

- Good enrichment activities complement the curriculum. Regular visits, which many learners attend, are made to museums and galleries. Learners are exposed to diverse cultural influences and are often stimulated to use new techniques and images in their work. A regular blog of exhibitions and media programmes is sent to learners by the staff.
- Resources are satisfactory overall with good fashion and ceramic facilities and appropriate access to ILT. Sustainability and recycling have a clear focus and are successfully incorporated into many studio activities. In fashion, garments are mended, recycled and re-made and the impact of textile production worldwide is considered.
- Arrangements for promoting the safeguarding of learners are good. Effective health and safety procedures are in place with clear expectations of safe working practice. Health benefits and improved concentration are reported, with many students having improved their mobility and hand function after illness.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Ethnicity, gender and age are monitored with plans in place to reach more diverse groups of learners. Learners have a clear understanding of cultural, social and historical influences in creative work.
- Leadership and management are good. Managers and staff have a clear understanding of quality issues and a commitment to raise standards. Communication is good between the managers and the part-time teaching staff. The self-assessment process is inclusive with the tutor course reports used as the basis for self-assessment. However, the self-assessment report is not always sufficiently self-critical.
- Arrangements to monitor the quality of teaching and learning are robust. The process this year has re-focused on evaluating the learning experience rather than the teaching. However, the commentary in the self-assessment report does not always match the grade awarded. The good practice in planning challenging activities which are learner focused and reflective discussion and personal evaluation have yet to be shared fully across the curriculum.

### **What does New Directions need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure all learners in the mixed-ability groups are inspired to raise their aspirations and improve their progress by planning more challenging and more individually-focused activities.
- Ensure that individual learning plans are used consistently and effectively to prompt personal evaluation and reflection in order to encourage independent learning.

## Information about the inspection

32. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the New Directions' delivery and development manager, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the local funding body, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's monitoring visit and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
33. Inspectors used group, individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gather the views of learners. They looked at questionnaires learners had completed on behalf of the provider. They also visited learning sessions, assessments or progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subjects the provider offers.

**Record of Main Findings (RMF)**  
**Reading Borough Council – New Directions**

**Learning types: 14-16:** Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships. **Social and personal development:** all adult safeguarded provision

Grades <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Social and personal development
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>				
Full-time learners	0	0	0	0
Part-time learners	1194	33	525	636
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>2</b>			
<b>A. Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
A1. How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2			
A1.a) How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3			
A1.b) How well do learners progress?	2			
A2. How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2			
A3. Do learners feel safe?	2			
A4. <i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	n/a			
A5. <i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	n/a			
<b>B. Quality of provision</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
B1. How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2			
B2. How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2			
B3. How well do partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	1			
B4. How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2			
<b>C. Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
C1. How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	1			
C2. <i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	n/a			
C3. How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3			
C4. How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2			
C5. How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2			
C6. How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2			
C7. How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2			

\*where applicable to the type of provision

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