

Hampshire Learning

Focused monitoring visit report

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Focused Monitoring Visit: Main Findings

Context and focus of visit

Hampshire Learning (HL) is the adult and community learning service for Hampshire County Council. The service develops adult learning by using a range of learning opportunities across the county to encourage adults and their families to take part in their own development.

HL offers programmes in seven areas: Family Learning; Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy; First Steps; Skills for Independent Living, Personal and Community Development Learning; Neighbourhood Learning in deprived Communities; and a small Adult Skills Budget provision. In 2010/11 over 17,500 people accessed HL provision.

At its previous inspection in June 2010, the overall effectiveness of the provision was good. Outcomes for learners, quality of provision, leadership and management, and equality and diversity were good. Literacy and numeracy, visual arts and crafts, and family learning were good. Community learning was outstanding. Safeguarding and information and communication technology were satisfactory. This report focuses on the themes explored during the visit.

Themes

Self-assessment and improvement planning

What progress has been made to maintain the good self-assessment and improvement planning?

Reasonable progress

HL has made reasonable progress in maintaining and improving the quality and effectiveness of its self-assessment and development planning, which was graded good at the previous inspection. HL issues self-assessment forms and guidance to all its providers. Link officers offer good support with the self-assessment process through providing feedback and advice to providers. HL provides comprehensive performance data to each provider as well as an overall summary data table to enable comparison. The providers' self-assessment reports are reviewed by HL which then produces the overall self-assessment report. Managers recognise that there are still differences in self-assessment between providers and they are issuing new guidance to rectify this. The self-assessment report is well written, accurate and relates well to the quality improvement plan.

The quality improvement plan is used effectively and most of the issues identified at the previous inspection have been addressed. The targets set are rational and realistic and are monitored carefully through the quality meetings and monthly team meetings. HL has improved its recording and analysis of performance data. These are used particularly well to identify the performance of different groups and to monitor the impact of actions taken to reduce gaps in achievement.

Outcomes for learners

What progress has been made in maintaining the good and improving success rates and acquisition of personal and social skills?

Significant progress

At the previous inspection, outcomes for learners were good and had improved over the past three years. This trend has continued for non-accredited courses and success rates are now very good. Non-accredited courses account for the vast majority of the provision. HL is using data much better to identify retention and achievement and these rates have improved and are good. Learners continue to show gains in confidence and in the development of personal and social skills. Some learners are now volunteering and others are progressing to further study or employment. Many learners in the family learning programmes feel better able to support their children's learning and also improve their lifestyle through healthier eating.

Success rates on the majority of accredited courses have also improved and are now good. Success rates for the small number of learners in family literacy, language and numeracy have declined. Managers recognise that retention rates on the longer courses have been an issue and are taking action to improve them. It is too early to assess the impact of this on success rates in the current year.

Quality of provision

What progress has been made to improve the information about progression opportunities for learners?

Reasonable progress

At the previous inspection, HL was judged not to be working sufficiently closely with providers to ensure opportunities for progression for learners were clearly explained. It has now developed the website to enable course search information to be readily available to learners and providers. Providers are actively encouraged to upload progression information onto the website and many have now completed this. Progression information is also available on course documentation and typically progression routes are identified during the actual programmes by tutors.

HL has improved its links with local colleges and is developing stronger progression pathways through the next funding round. Progression opportunities are introduced particularly well with vulnerable learners in subtle, non-threatening ways such as the links between the needlework and numeracy classes. HL has targeted the progression from wider family learning to family literacy, language and numeracy as a priority and there are signs of improved progression.

What progress has been made to improve the standard of course goals and learning objectives?

Reasonable progress

At the previous inspection, inspectors found that for a minority of courses the course goals were vague and the learning plans were insufficiently precise. HL has improved the observations of teaching and learning to focus more clearly on learning and the quality of the documentation. HL has also introduced workshops and network training specifically to improve course goal setting. Course goals are much improved and the learning plans are now more precise. The proportion of accredited courses has increased and these courses are used as exemplars of good practice for planning non-accredited courses. HL has increased the number of providers who deliver the teaching qualifications so that more tutors receive specific training on course planning and development. The link officers monitor the course files to assure the quality of the documentation.

Leadership and management

What progress has been made to improve the support given to teachers to include relevant equality and diversity in lessons?

Significant progress

At the previous inspection, some tutors' understanding of how to apply equality and diversity in their work was judged to be underdeveloped. The promotion of equality and diversity in classes was insufficient. HL has provided a range of training in equality and diversity which is available to all tutors. It has developed cultural awareness training on the virtual learning environment and many tutors have accessed this. Link officers check that sufficient emphasis has been placed on equality and diversity in classes through the observations of teaching and learning. Good practice is being developed into case studies which are shared with tutors at termly training events and the virtual learning environment. Learner feedback indicates that these actions have been successful in promoting understanding of equality and diversity. HL's own observation system has identified innovative promotion of equality and diversity, such as music and cooking from diverse cultures and the impact of social networking within current political events such as riots. HL reviews each programme annually and this review now includes evaluation of the impact of the promotion of equality and diversity within the course.

What progress has been made to provide up to date guidance on safeguarding for all teachers?

Significant progress

At the previous inspection tutors with the providers needed to receive further guidance and develop confidence in recognising and reporting safeguarding concerns. HL has developed a training course specifically to meet these needs from already existing courses for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. It is available on the virtual learning environment as a training programme and also as a refresher course. It includes an online assessment which tutors are required to

complete. Providers also offer safeguarding training to their own tutors to meet the specific needs of their own learners. Link officers make thorough checks of all aspects of safeguarding through the contact visits. HL is now getting feedback from learners which indicates that they have a good understanding of safeguarding and that they feel safe in their classes. HL has managed the few safeguarding issues which have arisen in a timely and appropriate way.

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