

Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead

Inspection report

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Type of provider: Local authority

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Information about the provider

1. The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM) Family and Community Learning Service (FCL) contracts with the Skills Funding Agency to provide personal and community development learning (PCDL), first steps, wider family learning and family literacy, language and numeracy programmes. The PCDL programme is increasingly supported through fee income. This inspection focused on and graded FCL's family and community learning provision as a single entity, and sampled the PCDL programmes delivered by the colleges. All but two of RBWM's courses are non-accredited.
2. The FCL's management and administrative team includes 7.5 equivalent full-time core staff and 40 sessional tutors. During 2010/11, 465 courses were offered and over 300 were provided directly by RBWM, with the remainder by subcontractors. Around 17% of RBWM's learners were over 60 years old and 8% declared a learning difficulty and/or disability. Learners from a minority ethnic heritage comprised 23% of learners.
3. RBWM's total population is 146,100, of whom 64% are aged between 16 and 64. Just over 83% of the area is green belt. Compared to other areas in England, RBWM has a low level of recorded social and economic deprivation. Approximately 75% of adults have qualifications above level 2 compared with 67% nationally. The percentage of the population with no qualifications is 6.2% compared with 11% nationally. The percentage claiming job seekers allowance is 1.9% compared with 4% nationally. The percentage of the population of minority ethnic heritage is around 15%. In 2010/11 the percentage of young people in RBWM gaining five GCSE passes at grades A* to C including English and mathematics was 63% compared to 58% nationally.
4. RBWM does not provide training on behalf of other providers. The following organisations provide training on behalf of RBWM:
 - East Berkshire College
 - Berkshire College of Agriculture
 - Community Multi-Services.

Type of provision	Number of learners in 2010/11
Adult and Community Learning	
Provision for adult learners: Learning for social and personal development	2,957 part-time learners

Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Grade 3
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	3
Quality of provision	3
Leadership and management	3
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	3
Learning for social and personal development	
	Grade
Family and Community Learning	3

Overall effectiveness

5. The overall effectiveness of RBWM’s provision is satisfactory. Learners achieve at a high and improving rate and retention is also very high. However, the measure used to calculate achievement is sometimes based on achieving goals which are not sufficiently challenging for more able learners. The majority of courses are very short and are not accredited which predisposes a high retention rate. Learners develop and apply new practical and personal skills; their involvement in their local communities increases. Learners enjoy their learning. Attendance rates are good.
6. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory. The lessons observed during inspection were of varying quality. While many were good or better too many were only satisfactory or inadequate. The better sessions were well planned and interesting, and tutors often used group work particularly well to promote learning. Tutors do not use initial assessment consistently well to plan learning and monitor progress.
7. The range of the provision is satisfactory, but too few accredited courses are available including those linked to employment. Productive partnership working is a particular strength of RBWM’s provision, and used very well to provide courses for new learners in closely targeted areas of the borough.

8. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The provision is managed effectively on a day-to-day basis. Performance monitoring is satisfactory. A very wide range of data-based information has been developed but the service does not yet analyse this deeply enough. Well-considered strategic plans for expanding the range and scope of the provision through merger are about to be implemented. Quality improvement arrangements focus on a large number of improvement actions but most are work in progress.

Main findings

- Learners' outcomes are satisfactory. Learners' achievement rates have improved over time and are generally high, but the goals and targets set for learners against which learners' achievement is measured are not always sufficiently challenging for more able learners. Retention rates for the mainly short, non-accredited courses offered by RBWM are high, although high retention is to be expected with the programmes being offered.
- Learners enjoy their learning and feel safe in the good range of learning venues. Many learners are well motivated, improve their personal skills and confidence and develop and apply a variety of practical skills. RBWM records insufficient information on learners' progression to further RBWM courses, or to external training and employment.
- Learners have high levels of satisfaction with the courses offered and the quality of teaching and support they are receiving. Attendance is at least satisfactory and punctuality is generally good.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is satisfactory, but wide variations are evident in the consistency and quality of practice. Tutors generally support learners well in sessions. Learners are enthusiastic and respond knowledgeably to questioning and discussion. Group work is used particularly well. However, the pace of a few lessons is too slow and insufficiently stimulating. Initial assessment is not used consistently well by all tutors.
- The range and breadth of the provision are satisfactory. The service offers a wide range of subjects in numerous accessible venues. Courses are scheduled to match learners' availability, including at weekends. However, the range of provision is predominantly non-accredited, short programmes. Progression routes between courses and to further learning are not well established.
- Partnership working is very effective, productive and valued by partners, resulting in enhanced local participation in learning, improved local skills and social interaction. No over-arching, strategic-level partnership forum is in place but RBWM has well-thought-out plans to create one.
- Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Bilingual staff provide effective in-class support. Numerous well-attended sessions provided by an in-house RBWM agency have provided advice for people seeking information on employment and career options.

- On a day-to-day basis, the management of the provision and performance monitoring is effective. Some long-standing staffing and capacity issues have been resolved and the family and community learning team is at full strength. RBWM uses local market information effectively to target the service provision. The venues used are generally of good quality and well equipped.
- Long-term strategic and policy-level planning in RBWM has been effective and plans to expand and develop the provision through merger with a neighbouring council are being implemented.
- Governance and supervision are satisfactory. Formal reporting is regular and supported by an adequate range of data. Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. RBWM has accorded safeguarding an appropriately high priority.
- The arrangements for the promotion of equality and diversity are satisfactory. All staff receive adequate training. RBWM has been particularly successful in identifying and engaging with learners in areas of economic and social deprivation. Equality and diversity are not incorporated sufficiently within the content or context of learning sessions.
- Quality improvement and self-assessment practices are satisfactory. RBWM has a strong commitment to developing the existing provision. A detailed quality improvement plan is being used effectively as the basis for action planning and monitoring improvement. The actions identified are very extensive and prioritised but most are still work in progress. The system for observing teaching and learning is not well developed.

What does the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead need to do to improve further?

- Set group and individual goals, and targets, that are challenging for all learners and which take account of individual ability, learning style and prior knowledge to enrich and promote learning.
- Identify the key areas for improvement in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment as the basis of a systematic and intensive tutor training programme which improves the consistency and effectiveness of learners' experience in all learning sessions.
- Improve initial assessment and target setting to plan, develop and monitor the progress of learners' knowledge and skills.
- Develop and widen the curriculum to include planned progression opportunities and pathways, and significantly expand the opportunities for accredited courses and those linked to employment.
- Further develop quality improvement arrangements through deeper summary analysis and reports based on data, including learners' progression, an improved approach to the observation of teaching and learning and more evaluative self-assessment practice.
- Incorporate equality and diversity in the context and content of all lessons to enrich learners' understanding of these twin aspects.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the very enjoyable courses
- increasing self-confidence through learning
- the friendliness and encouragement from staff
- relaxed environments with good facilities
- keeping in touch with the modern world
- making lots of friends
- getting new skills
- the bilingual teaching in classes.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the extent of opportunities to learn
- the high cost of some courses.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

9. RBWM's capacity to make and sustain improvement is satisfactory. Learners' achievement rates are high and have improved since the last inspection. Retention rates remain high. A strategic merger with an adjoining borough's adult and community learning service is imminent. Governance arrangements are satisfactory. RBWM has paid good attention to improving its current provision over the past eight months. Staffing levels in the core and administrative team have returned to full strength and extensive quality improvement actions put in place, many of which are ongoing. Learners' views are sought routinely and help identify improvement. The system for observing teaching and learning does not take sufficient account of learning and requires further development. Self-assessment practice is satisfactory, although the self-assessment report is too long and descriptive. RBWM provides satisfactory value for money.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 3

10. Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. In 2010/11, the overall achievement rate was high, at 94%. A more thorough progress measurement system was introduced in 2011/12 and RBWM's data for the year so far show that the overall success rate for learners remains high, at over 90%. However, the goals against which learners' achievement is calculated are still not sufficiently challenging for more able learners.
11. Retention rates are high. However, RBWM provision is not accredited. Many courses are either one-day workshops or two-hour tasters and the remainder are short courses of less than 20 hours. In this context high retention is to be expected. Learners from minority ethnic groups achieve at a similar rate to the overall cohort, although the small proportion of male learners succeeds at a higher rate.
12. A high proportion of learners report high satisfaction with the quality of teaching and the support they receive. RBWM's records show that attendance is good, but during inspection week it was only satisfactory. Punctuality is generally good and tutors challenge lateness well. Over the last two years the provision has been at or above the target for average class size, but during 2011/12 numbers attending the majority of PDCL courses have declined below target.
13. Learners enjoy their learning and feel safe in the wide range of learning venues. Most learners improve their personal skills, confidence and self-esteem. Learners develop a variety of good practical skills. For example on information technology programmes bilingual learners develop their numeracy and financial skills as well as their facility in the use of spreadsheets. On other digital courses older learners learn how to format text, use digital cameras, use smart phones for gaining access to information and news, take photographs and improve their

ability to shop online. On courses in English for speakers of other languages learners become more independent and confident speakers on the telephone, at the doctors and when shopping.

14. RBWM knows of learners who have progressed to further courses or employment, such as learners on a childcare course who found paid work in child minding, but such information is not systematically collected or analysed. A significant minority of learners do not feel they are given good information or advice on progression to further learning.

The quality of provision

Grade 3

15. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is satisfactory. The classes observed by inspectors ranged from good or better in many cases, but too many others were either only satisfactory or inadequate. In community learning programmes tutors are sufficiently qualified and experienced in the subjects they teach, but on family learning programmes the tutors, while competent, do not have subject-specific qualifications.
16. During sessions observed by inspectors most tutors engaged with learners well and encouraged them to participate and contribute fully. In the best sessions, tutors made good use of interactive learning technology. Learners were actively involved in their learning, contributing enthusiastically to questions and class discussions. Effective use of group work helped promote learning. For example, learners in a bilingual driving theory class worked effectively in small groups to practise pronouncing unfamiliar terms together and shared their experiences and challenges of learning for the theory test. In a wider family learning course learners enjoyed sharing their understanding of why play is an important element of a child's development.
17. In less effective lessons, the pace was often too slow to sustain learners' interest and more able learners were not sufficiently challenged. A few tutors did not systematically check and immediately correct learners' errors during sessions, offering insufficient opportunities to improve learners' skills and knowledge. In a very few lessons tutors spent far too much time covering theory with little opportunity for learners' involvement, feedback or participation.
18. Initial assessment is not used consistently well by all tutors to inform planning for learning or to set meaningful group and individual targets.
19. The range and breadth of provision are satisfactory overall. A good range of community and family learning courses is offered in a large number of accessible venues. The number of learners on RBWM's courses has risen progressively over each of the past three years. Nevertheless, the programme overall is too narrow with only non-accredited, short programmes currently offered. Progression routes between courses, to further learning or employment, are not well established.

20. Partnership working is a particular strength of the provision. Its impact has been to increase the extent of local participation by closely-targeted groups, improve the local skill base and promote social interaction. Partnership working is particularly strong in family learning where the service has established very close links with extended centres, children's centres and schools. No over-arching strategic-level partnership forum is in place but RBWM has well-defined plans to create one.
21. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Bilingual staff provide effective in-class support. Numerous well-attended sessions provided by an in-house RBWM agency have provided advice for people seeking information and advice about employment and career options.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

22. Day-to-day management of the provision and performance monitoring are sound. Managers use local market information well to target the service's provision. The venues used for service provision are of generally good quality and well equipped.
23. Strategic planning is good. A wide-ranging and thorough review of the service's scope and range identified that it could be sustained and expanded best through merger with Slough Council's adult and community learning service, with Slough as the lead body. The merger is imminent. RBWM has also focused well on reinvigorating its existing adult and community learning provision. Some long-standing and operationally-limiting staffing issues within its adult and community learning team were decisively resolved. Key coordination, quality improvement and data roles were filled and the team is now able to fulfil operational and developmental requirements.
24. Governance and supervision are satisfactory. Reporting arrangements to the lead elected member responsible for RBWM's adult and community learning service and to RBWM's cabinet are scheduled regularly and supported by an adequate range of informative data.
25. Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory. RBWM has accorded safeguarding an appropriately high priority. RBWM has thorough systems for initiating, recording and reviewing the Criminal Records Bureau checks on all staff who come into contact with young people or vulnerable adults. A trained, designated safeguarding person is identified within the family and community learning team. Links with specialist agencies are in place. Adult and community learning tutors have received adequate training in how to recognise and report any safeguarding issues. Learners receive a useful information booklet on the subject at induction. Routine risk-based, health and safety assessments of venues are undertaken annually.
26. The arrangements for the promotion of equality and diversity are satisfactory. Policies and procedures reflect current requirements. Staff receive adequate training. RBWM has been successful in identifying and engaging with learners in

areas of economic and social deprivation and has attracted new learners from target groups in good numbers. Many of these learners have had little or no previous experience of, or success in, formal education, are unemployed or seeking training in skills such as using a computer or the internet for the first time. RBWM systematically records and analyses the achievement, retention and attendance rates of its learners by a range of criteria including gender, age and ethnicity. Few significant differences in performance are found, but the achievement rate of male learners is 6 percentage points higher than for females. In most cases equality and diversity, such as cultural themes, are not woven into the content of learning sessions.

27. RBWM has effective arrangements in place to gather and analyse the views of learners. Responses from RBWM's regular surveys indicate that learners enjoy the courses offered. Ofsted's own online learner survey during inspection showed most individual responders recorded high or very high satisfaction.
28. Quality improvement and self-assessment practices are satisfactory. Senior managers have produced a comprehensive action plan derived from self-assessment for developing and improving the adult and community learning provision. The plan's format is unwieldy and too complex. The actions focus well on key priorities and include extensive training for teaching staff, the development of resources to support teaching, creating new accredited courses and the further development of formal reporting arrangements supported by data. These were all in progress at the time of inspection but their impact is at an early stage.
29. The system for observing teaching and learning is not used well enough to identify poor and better practice. The focus of observations is on teaching technique and classroom management and too little on the quality of learning. Currently, RBWM has no arrangements in place to evaluate teaching and learning of its subcontractors, although some joint observations are planned for later this year.
30. Self-assessment is satisfactory. RBWM assesses a wide range of information from service users, stakeholders and subcontractors. The self-assessment report is long and too descriptive but provides a satisfactory basis for quality improvement action planning. Inspectors agreed with the main grades awarded in the report but not all of the supporting grades.
31. Value for money is satisfactory. Outcomes are satisfactory. Learners' views are sought and acted upon. Resources are extensive and managed well for the benefit of all learners.

Information about the inspection

32. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by RBWM's family and community learning manager, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, a range of data and management information provided by the provider, the previous inspection report and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
33. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and an online survey to gather the views of learners. They visited learning sessions. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in a wide range of the subjects the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)
Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
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 using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	Social and personal development
Approximate number of enrolled learners		
Full-time learners	-	-
Part-time learners	1,844	1,844
Overall effectiveness	3	3
Capacity to improve	3	
A. Outcomes for learners	3	3
A1. How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	3	
A1.a) How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3	
A1.b) How well do learners progress?	3	
A2. How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	3	
A3. Do learners feel safe?	3	
A4. <i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	3	
A5. <i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	3	
B. Quality of provision	3	3
B1. How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	3	
B2. How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	3	
B3. How well do partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2	
B4. How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	3	
C. Leadership and management	3	3
C1. How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3	
C2. <i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	3	
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?	3	
C5. How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	3	
C6. How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3	
C7. How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	3	

*where applicable to the type of provision

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