

Isle of Wight

Adult and Community Learning

Inspection dates		4–7 December 2012
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Requires improvement-3
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Local authority

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- Standards of teaching, learning and assessment vary too much and in some curriculum areas require significant improvement.
- Learners from minority ethnic backgrounds do not achieve as well as other learners.
- Self-assessment is not accurate or self-critical enough.
- Observations of teaching and learning are not frequent or effective enough to bring about improvement.
- The service does not monitor the quality of commissioned provision closely enough.

This provider has the following strengths:

- Learners on short courses and those taking family learning programmes achieve well.
- Learners gain good personal and employability skills.
- Highly effective partnership working leads to productive engagement with learners facing disadvantage.
- Community learning champions effectively support and engage with new learners in the community.
- An effective strategy prioritises and meets adult learners' needs well.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Observe teaching and learning in direct and commissioned provision regularly; identify areas for improvement and plan, implement and monitor actions to remedy identified weaknesses.
- Investigate the reasons why learners from minority ethnic backgrounds do less well than others and take appropriate actions to close the achievement gap.
- Make tutors' assessments of learners on short courses more rigorous so that their targets are more realistic and challenging.
- Develop and improve the virtual learning environment (VLE) so that learners can become more autonomous.
- Make self-assessment reports more evaluative and rigorous by training tutors and partners to analyse the quality of teaching and learning.
- Give commissioned partners regular detailed written feedback which clearly evaluates the quality of their provision and develops their capacity to evaluate themselves.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- In 2011/12 around three quarters of the learners took courses of between one and nine hours in duration. Success rates for these learners in 2011/12 were good but have declined very slightly from previous years largely due to fewer learners completing their programmes.
- Outcomes for learners on family learning programmes are good. In these programmes, the learners, often from disadvantaged communities, successfully develop self-confidence and make significant strides towards helping their children read and write more effectively. In addition, they find new ways of enjoying learning for themselves and their children.
- Learners enjoy their studies and above all become more confident about their own abilities and gain in self-esteem. They make best progress where practical activities and community-based programmes help them develop skills and improve their employability and self-confidence. Many learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities taking short courses gain useful new skills and make valuable social contacts.
- The achievement of learners working towards externally accredited qualifications is satisfactory and many go on to further study and training. However, those on First Steps and Adult Skills courses achieve less well. Learners from minority ethnic backgrounds achieve less well than other learners, as not enough of them complete their courses.
- Very short community and commissioned courses are effective in engaging and enthusing learners. However, not enough learners gain intermediate qualifications in English and mathematics through community courses, despite this being a priority for the council across the island. Managers acknowledge that there is work to do in this area to improve literacy and numeracy levels.
- Learners of all abilities and backgrounds make real gains in their personal confidence and take pride in their achievements through, for example, creative arts projects, carnival preparations and making learning materials for their children. Their successful achievements reflect the support and encouragement they get from their tutors.

- Inspectors observed safe working practices in classrooms and community venues throughout the inspection week. Attendance and punctuality are good, especially in view of the substantial distances learners travel to attend their courses.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement. In the best lessons, which are characterised by clear structure, good pace and active learning, learners work eagerly. They know, and appreciate, that they are gaining relevant skills and knowledge. This is the case for many learners in family learning, beginners' information and communication technology (ICT) classes and creative subjects.
- Learners enjoy their courses and are cared for well by the tutors who successfully build their self-confidence. They give good follow-up work to lessons to reinforce learning. However, they do not always use tasks and activities that challenge learners enough to make good progress.
- Too few observations of teaching, learning and assessment have taken place over the past fifteen months. Staff training has only recently concentrated on developing the skills and expertise of observers. Tutors and managers do not meet regularly to share good practice and the pace of improvement is too slow.
- Where practical sessions are most effective, tutors demonstrate activities expertly and show learners what to do and how. For example, learners in a didgeridoo lesson were so actively involved in a new rhythmic exercise that they did not want to stop. The momentum created by this course has led to learners forming a club to continue to meet.
- Tutors' passion for their subjects and commitment to the learners are undermined by inadequate or imprecise planning. This leads to sessions where learners are not pushed to extend themselves because the activities are not differentiated enough. The questions tutors ask learners, whilst used appropriately to check understanding, are too basic and do not promote deeper learning.
- Tutors give good verbal feedback and encouragement to learners; they model the qualities they seek from learners such as respect, sensitivity to each other, resourcefulness and persistence. However, they do not offer enough challenge or support to help learners set goals and targets at the start of their programmes. As a result, many learners' targets are not challenging and do not encourage high aspirations.
- The service has invested well in information and learning technologies (ILT) and resources are good. Tutors prepare learning materials conscientiously, but the virtual learning environment (VLE) to support learning is underused and underdeveloped.
- Support for learners is good, particularly help with childcare. Tutors are very attentive to supporting learners who experience financial and personal difficulties such as mental health problems. Tutors pay good attention to health and safety and the management of risk. Well-qualified staff give sound guidance and appropriate advice to help learners to progress to other suitable programmes.
- The service fosters equality of opportunity by providing a well-considered and learner-centred curriculum that attracts learners from diverse backgrounds. However, tutors do not always capitalise on the rich experiences of learners to adequately promote appreciation of diversity in lessons.

Independent living and leisure skills and English for speakers of other languages

Learning programmes for 19+

Requires improvement

- Teaching, learning and assessment require improvement and reflect the achievements of the learners, which are broadly in line with recent national averages. Where learners make most progress, tutors plan activities that meet the needs of the learners well and support them in language acquisition and in personal self-confidence. Tutors have high expectations of the learners.
- Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LLDD) successfully gain relevant, new skills and enjoy working together. However, they do not always make enough progress because the learning activities are not sufficiently challenging.
- Learners recovering from stroke and those with mild dementia benefit from activities designed to improve their quality of life. Tutors, in collaboration with a museum, have prepared activities based around recent local history. These activities have created good opportunities for the learners to reminisce, to communicate with each other and to share their memories.
- Learners with brain injury, their carers and support workers successfully develop new skills together through craft activities and working towards a first-aid certificate.
- English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and English learners make satisfactory progress in their studies. Tutors do not always pitch the learning activities at the right level to help the learners make good progress. Some learners are not challenged enough, whilst others struggle to keep up.
- Diagnostic assessment tasks for learners on ESOL and English programmes are not fit for purpose. The tasks do not provide tutors with meaningful information on what the learners can and cannot yet do. Guidance for tutors on how to mark the test tasks is too vague to allow reliable diagnostic analysis.
- Monitoring and written feedback to learners are inconsistent and learners' goals and targets are insufficiently specific and do not always help them to develop important language skills fast enough.
- Managers and tutors work well with a wide and extensive range of voluntary organisations, the National Health Service (NHS) and Jobcentre Plus to develop provision for ESOL and learners with LDD. Well-targeted programmes, such as basic word processing and managing money, have helped learners prepare for the new Universal Credit system.
- In addition, managers have secured access to NHS training to help volunteers and learning champions to gain appropriate professional support for their roles.
- Tutors on short programmes for learners with LDD successfully promote equality and diversity by drawing on local history and learners' memories of the recent past. However, overall, the promotion of equality and diversity in the curriculum is satisfactory.

Family Learning

Learning programmes for 19+

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good; learners achieve good outcomes and many progress to further study for the first time. The vast majority of learners complete their courses and they attend well. Family learning tutors successfully help parents who face barriers to personal development and employment to develop their English and mathematics skills.
- Tutors have good subject knowledge and are well qualified. They are skilled at helping parents to support and encourage their children to learn through play. These developments are ably supported by skilled learning support assistants who encourage active participation by the parents and children.
- Tutors use effective questioning to check learners' understanding and ensure learners feel included. They use a comprehensive variety of assessments, including relevant observations of parents' interactions with their children alongside detailed learner profiles and personal learner logs.
- Tutors and learners use a good variety of methods to record and monitor learners' progress. In addition, parents benefit from initial exercises to help them recognise their current strengths and reflect on what they need to develop. By using Our Learning Together Diaries, parents and their children record the activities and learning achieved and identify goals for future skills development.
- Many learning activities allow parents to create useful learning resources to use at home with their children. For example, laminated writing boards, number squares and key word charts, personalised with photographs of the children, are used to develop understanding of phonics and number.
- A good proportion of fathers, grandfathers and brothers attend family learning sessions. Sessions containing, for example, gravity experiments, exploring forces and creating simple circuits have successfully enthused male learners. Tutors and support staff take photographs in each session to record progress, to celebrate achievement and to help recruit new learners.
- Tutors use the VLE to share session planning and learning resources. However, the VLE does not contain enough resources to engage the learners. Learners do not get the opportunity to use ILT in lessons to widen their understanding. Parents are, however, directed to useful websites to help them to support their children through nursery rhymes and language games.
- Teaching in short family learning programmes is successful in encouraging parents to progress to further study, especially in English and mathematics. For example, the support and encouragement for learners with dyscalculia have resulted in good progression to further study.
- Tutors use local history materials skilfully to design activities which link families to their communities. For example, learners used traditional willow crafting techniques to make lanterns for the Cowes Lantern Parade. However, tutors do not always provide opportunities to promote equality and diversity through community and cultural links.
- Many learners feel more confident about their own abilities to support their children and gain a better understanding of current teaching methods in schools. They use number lines for basic functions such as addition and subtraction with increasing confidence. Learners who have attended family learning courses often become more involved in school activities and some have joined the parents' and teachers' association.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Strategic management and planning are good. The service has an inclusive mission to improve the lives and circumstances of local people through learning. The adult learning plan sets out clearly how it aims to meet the needs and raise aspirations of local residents facing disadvantage. Its stress on strengthening communities, developing productive partnerships and increasing the use of commissioning closely reflects the strategic direction of the local authority.
- Council leaders demonstrate strong commitment to the success of the service through a substantial financial contribution to the service's budget each year. Leaders have a good understanding of the strengths of the service and areas where it needs to improve. They provide the service with appropriate scrutiny, regular challenge and consistent support.
- Staff from the service and partner organisations benefit from well-organised professional development. Support for family learning tutors to train for relevant subject specialist awards is very effective. However, appraisal discussions and individual meetings between tutors and their line managers do not focus enough on improving teaching and learning.
- Quality improvement arrangements to raise standards of teaching, learning and assessment are insufficient. Observations of teaching and learning are too infrequent. Management scrutiny of the quality of schemes of work, lesson and individual learning plans is satisfactory, but these audits are not regular enough to promote improvement.
- The views of learners, staff and managers are used to inform self-assessment and the current self-assessment report provides a detailed overview of the service. However, some grades for curriculum areas and other aspects of the provision are too generous and curriculum reports are not sufficiently self-critical and do not evaluate the quality of teaching and learning rigorously. The quality improvement plan contains clear actions to remedy weaknesses, but measures to maintain strengths lack ambition.
- The service has a strongly collaborative approach to planning and developing adult learning provision. Through the island's Adult Learning Network, the service is highly effective in bringing together a diverse range of government, business and voluntary agencies. This partnership working is highly productive in identifying learners' needs and supplying often innovative means to meet them.
- Managers and other staff make very effective use of commissioning to extend the reach of the service. They have developed sound methods to encourage and support projects from established and non-traditional providers. Commissioned programmes cater very well for community needs the service could not otherwise meet.
- However, the monitoring of, and support for, commissioned providers requires improvement. It ensures that learners are recruited and courses take place, but does not sufficiently evaluate the quality of what learners receive. The feedback providers receive does not help them evaluate accurately their performance or develop their capacity to improve.
- A large cohort of learning champions adds value to the work of the service and increases its impact on learners. The 120 volunteers are highly effective ambassadors for adult learning. They routinely encourage and engage new learners, often directly supporting them in areas of need they have identified through their personal or professional experience.
- The service is highly effective in promoting inclusion. It sets and meets demanding targets to foster participation by groups traditionally under represented in learning. Learning sessions provide welcoming and inclusive environments where adults who are often nervous and reluctant to return to learning develop confidence and feel valued.
- Arrangements to ensure learners understand their rights and responsibilities in learning are adequate, but the extent to which learning sessions develop a wider appreciation of equality and

diversity is variable. The service pays suitable attention to the health and safety of its learners and staff and meets the statutory requirements for safeguarding learners.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Isle of Wight Adult and Community Learning

<p>Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance:</p> <p>1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate</p>	Overall	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	3	3
Outcomes for learners	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	3	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management	3	3

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Independent living and leisure skills and ESOL	3
Family Learning	2

Provider details

Isle of Wight Adult and Community Learning

Type of provider	Local authority
Age range of learners	19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 0
	Part-time: 1,709
Principal/CEO	Mr S Beynon
Date of previous inspection	May 2009
Website address	www.iwcommunitylearning.ac.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time								
Part-time		40		3				
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age								
	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
Number of learners aged 14-16								
	N/A							
Number of community learners								
	385							
Number of employability learners								
	N/A							
Funding received from								
	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:								
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Beachy Books ▪ Foyer for the Island ▪ Headway, Isle of Wight ▪ Barry Kemp ▪ Arts Apprentice ▪ Bodster Equine Assisted Learning Centre ▪ Growing Ideas ▪ InspirED ▪ Isle of Wight College ▪ Natural Interiors ▪ Oglander Roman Trust ▪ Porchfield Village Hall Association ▪ Footprint Trust 							

Additional socio-economic information

The Isle of Wight has a population of around 140,500 people, 83,800 of whom are of working age. Around two thirds of the working age population hold an intermediate level qualification or above compared with around 73% for the South of England. The island has some areas of affluence, but also has areas of urban deprivation alongside communities showing rural isolation and low aspiration levels. The service draws a significant number of learners from areas of high deprivation. Around 6% of the learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds; a proportion higher than that in the local population. Attainments in local secondary schools is modest and in 2012 only 44% of 16-year-olds achieved five or more A* to C GCSE grades including English and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Alex Falconer HMI

Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the Commissioning Manager for Adult and Community Education as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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