Royal Borough of Greenwich Adult and Community Learning (ACL)

Local authority

Inspection dates		14–17 May 2013
Overall effectiveness	**This inspection:**	**Good-2**
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- Teaching and learning are good. Many learners benefit from well-planned, purposeful and challenging teaching and learning.

- Tutors have high expectations of their learners. They successfully extend learners' knowledge, enabling learners to acquire and develop good skills, improving their opportunities to continue their studies and for employment.

- Learners make good progress on their courses. They gain in confidence and are better able to contribute to their local communities. Learners enjoy their courses and work in a safe and friendly environment.

- Learners' success on their courses is high. Their standards of work and the skills learners develop, including practical skills, are often good.

- Good leadership of adult and community learning places ACL at the heart of the borough's initiatives for economic and social recovery. ACL's courses meet the diverse needs of its local communities well and often improve the employment prospects of learners.

- Excellent partnerships, including those with the subcontracting partners, promote education and employment for learners. ACL's record of innovation in developing new programmes, including those with the private sector, is impressive.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Teaching and learning are not yet consistently good across all subjects and there is too little that is outstanding.

- ACL's arrangements to assess and record learners' progress and achievements are not yet consistently rigorous. Not all aspects of learners' progress and achievements are fully recorded and taken into account in final assessments.

- ACL's capacity to promote quality improvement vigorously and to monitor the effectiveness of improved quality improvement measures, including those for teaching and learning, is insufficient.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the continued improvement of teaching and learning, so that more is good or better. Rigorously apply the ACL scheme for the observation of teaching and learning sessions. Build on the good practice that is evident in the observation schemes of key subcontracting partners, including the expert moderation of all session observation grades.

- Improve ACL's capacity and staff expertise to promote quality improvement and monitor performance. Continue to work closely with subcontractors to share, and build upon, good practice, but also ensure that ACL staff take the lead in driving up the quality of provision.

- Tighten the arrangements for recording and recognising the achievements of learners, so that final assessments of learners' success are consistently complete and accurate. Improve the rigour of targets to be met by learners, in order for them to be successful at the end of their courses. Urgently establish ACL's newly introduced arrangements for the moderation of subcontractors' records of success.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good

- Learners often make good progress on their courses, all of which are non-externally accredited. These are often courses which help learners to return to education after many years away from any studies. For some learners, courses delivered through ACL are a key element in helping to recover their health or to help maintain health in their later years.

- Many courses are also designed to help learners progress to, or regain, employment, or to improve their current job prospects. For example, in sessions for information and communication technology (ICT), unemployed marketing graduates learnt how to use newly available computer software to add to their skills for potential future employment.

- Learners are well motivated, enjoy their studies and often attain their personal learning goals. They enjoy their studies and feel safe and well supported. They value the benefits of studying alongside others and are proud of their achievements.

- Learners develop the confidence and enthusiasm to study further and significant numbers progress to further courses at ACL, some of them at a higher level. Although there is considerable evidence of particular learners' successful progression when leaving ACL, there is currently no systematic tracking of leavers' destinations or further progress.

- Learners often achieve good standards in their work, including their practical work. In arts and crafts, standards are high. In ICT, the quality of work and of learners' understanding is particularly good and closely aligned to what would be expected within employment. Learners develop their skills well and often apply them in their employment, with their families and in the community. A significant number of learners use the skills they have developed to set up their own small businesses.

- Learners' success rates in their final assessments are high. According to ACL systems for recording and recognising achievement, overall success rates for learners have been high and improving over the last three years. This level of success is reflected in most areas of provision. Learners' retention on their courses is high.

- There is little variation overall between the achievement of learners from different ethnic, age or social groups. ACL and its partners thoroughly analyse a good range of reliable success data to determine any significant achievement gaps for their learners and have worked well to address the few that have been identified.

- Learners have good opportunities to improve their English and mathematics skills as part of their courses. Tutors are often skilled at integrating the use of language and number with learners' main studies.

- Venues offer a safe social and learning environment. Tutors pay close attention to implementing safe working practices. Learners' attendance is mostly good.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good

- Good teaching and learning predominate and reflect the good outcomes for learners, although too little is better than good. ACL's scheme for the observation of learning sessions and the schemes used by the larger subcontractors have helped to improve the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection. Tutors successfully engage and interest learners, who have very varied needs and interests. Most learners make good progress in their sessions. Tutors' good management of learning enables learners to extend their knowledge significantly and to acquire and develop good skills.

- Learners benefit significantly from tutors' emphasis on helping them to gain practical and vocational skills. For example, learners on art and design and family learning craft courses receive good practical teaching, with many opportunities to practise techniques and extend their skills and knowledge. Many are able to further their economic well-being by producing high quality items to sell. In many sessions, for example in ICT for users, tutors use their very current commercial experience well to enliven learning.

- ACL works closely with prospective learners to assess their individual needs and requirements and to match them to appropriate courses. Tutors have a good understanding of learners' starting points and often make good use of this in planning their teaching and learning. In less successful sessions, learners' individual needs are insufficiently addressed.

- Tutors' assessment of learners' work and progress in sessions is usually sound. Learners receive good feedback on how well they are achieving in tasks and in applying their learning within sessions, helping them to improve their skills and understanding. However, targets set to guide and assess their progress on longer courses are insufficiently challenging or too general for learners' individual needs. They are often brief and do not always identify the intended wider learning outcomes or provide a means of recognition of learners' achievement.

- Tutors ensure that learners have good, appropriate opportunities to improve their English and mathematics skills. Learners develop mathematics skills well through calculations and scaling activities in ICT and in the accurate measuring, cutting and materials calculations required in arts and crafts sessions. In family learning sessions, learners make good progress in developing speaking and listening skills. Learners attending courses at Ravensbourne have access to particularly good information and media technologies and make good use of them to improve their ICT skills and employment potential.

- A good range of courses meets individual and local priorities well. Learners have good local access to courses, across a large number of centres. Advertising, marketing and recruitment within the local communities have learners' best interests in mind. ACL makes very good use of a network of advisers from a variety of agencies and charities, such as the Greenwich Community Learning Champions. Subcontractors have a good awareness of the other aspects of provision available through ACL's 'Skills Framework' and use this intelligence well to inform and guide learners to alternative provision and their next steps.

- ACL has successfully increased, year on year, the participation of adult learners who have not undertaken any formal learning since they left school. In a minority of provision, the proportion

of learners who re-enrol on the same course, for example in jewellery making or painting, remains too high. Good efforts continue to further increase the number of new learners.

- Provision is very responsive to individuals and the diverse nature of the communities within the borough. Tutors promote equality and diversity well within learning sessions. Learners from diverse backgrounds work well together in lessons. Promotional and learning materials are good and reflect the diverse backgrounds of the communities using ACL.

ICT for users Community learning Employability	Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, as reflected in the good outcomes for learners. Learners work hard in lessons, very effectively developing ICT skills and securing relevant technical knowledge and specialist vocabulary. They demonstrate confidence in using sophisticated software packages to create and manipulate images and develop websites. Learners' emerging ICT skills help them in seeking employment and setting up their own businesses.

- Learners receive good support from enthusiastic tutors, who have high expectations of what learners can achieve. Tutors use questioning well to check learning, develop understanding and encourage problem solving. They make good use of peer learning to help learners challenge and support each other. As a consequence, learners improve their communication skills. Individual coaching support in lessons is effective, but occasionally learners have to wait too long for help.

- Tutors plan lessons well and promote learners' understanding by giving clear explanations and providing well-constructed exercises. Most tutors make good use of their commercial experience to enliven lessons and to interest learners. Tutors make good use of information technology to support learning. For example, they produce websites to provide supporting materials to encourage independent learning. Learners manipulating photographic images benefit from the provision of commercial standard software and hardware. Learners at Ravensbourne College have access to state-of-the-art laser cutting machinery which enables them to turn their digital designs into three-dimensional objects.

- Learners complete a useful informal self-assessment at the start of their course to identify existing experience and ICT skills and to determine any extra support needs. They sometimes usefully complete additional questionnaires to assess previous experience in greater detail. The information gathered helps tutors to plan learning activities and provide additional materials to support and extend learning. They use self-assessment information to set clear course objectives and additional personal goals in individual learning plans.

- Assessment of learners' work is accurate and frequent. Tutors make effective use of questioning to check and reinforce learners' understanding. Tutors' effective coaching during sessions helps learners to improve the images and web sites that they are developing. Tutors record regularly learners' progress against course objectives. Marked work generally provides good feedback on what needs to be done to improve. Feedback on learners' reviews is very encouraging and supportive, but does not always clearly explain how learners can improve their work.

- Learners develop their mathematics skills well, for example through the calculations required in scaling images and working out colour ratios. They improve their English skills in script writing exercises and through the language skills required in developing websites.

- Learners receive accurate guidance on choosing an appropriate course and on the progression routes available. Towards the end of a course, tutors clearly explain the progression options available to learners. The courses offered meet the needs of learners well and many go on to further study.

- Tutors effectively meet the needs of each learner during sessions. Learners from diverse backgrounds work very well together and support each other effectively. Learning materials feature images that reflect the diversity of the communities served by ACL.

Community learning **Community learning**	Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, as reflected in the good outcomes for learners. Tutors use their expertise in their subjects to enthuse learners. They use their skills and experience well to raise learners' interest and encourage independent learning, resulting in good gains in learners' confidence. Learners enjoy their activities, are well motivated and are keen to complete their work and to further improve their skills.

- Learners often make good progress and take pride in their work. They attend regularly and most arrive punctually. They develop, relatively quickly, a wide range of practical and theoretical skills, for example in crafts such as beadwork, ceramics, pottery, upholstery or sugarcraft, where standards of learners' work are high.

- Learners benefit from their tutors' high expectations. For example, tutors encourage them well to use new skills to improve their financial position. Many learners sell their work at Christmas fairs and in the college shop, or raise money for charities, start their own businesses and save money by, for example, restoring used furniture purchased at low cost. Many improve their health. For example, those recovering from brain injury or with severe arthritis improve their dexterity through minute beadwork, ceramics or pottery activities and produce work at commercial standards.

- Tutors support learners well in sessions. In the best sessions, teaching and learning are suitably challenging and the large majority of learners are provided with opportunities to achieve their full potential. Tutors help learners to develop English and mathematics skills alongside their core subject. They give effective demonstrations and encourage learners to reflect on their work. Tutors guide learners very well for individual study in sessions, although they make insufficient use of group work to develop team skills. In less effective sessions, learning is insufficiently planned to meet the needs of all learners.

- Tutors generally promote well the use of information and learning technology (ILT) to support learning. For example, learners use digital cameras to record work in progress, and are referred to useful websites to enhance creativity and develop independent learning. Tutors use electronic boards to initiate discussions, record learners' ideas or discuss visual artistic images.

- Ongoing assessment of learners' work and progress is good. Useful informal self-assessment at the start of courses identifies learners' skills and additional needs. Tutors frequently check learners' understanding and progress and offer timely and helpful advice, helping learners to concentrate on what they need to do to improve further.

- Care and support for learners are good. Learners value the time and support they receive from their tutors, both during and after sessions. Greenwich Community College provides financial support for learners to help them pay for course fees or materials. Learners studying at children's centres benefit from free courses.

- Learners' target-setting and progress reviews are not of consistently good quality. Individual learning goals are often too broad and insufficiently specific and measurable to focus learners on their individual needs. Although a few tutors skilfully engage learners in reflecting on their performance during sessions, reviews of their progress provide insufficient guidance on what they need to do to improve further.

- Tutors promote equality and diversity well. They provide safe and friendly learning environments where learners are able to work at their own pace, with respect for everybody's

individuality and needs. Accommodation is accessible, attractive and welcoming. Learners enjoy their activities and highly value the well-equipped learning spaces.

Family learning **Community learning**	Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, leading to good outcomes for learners. Tutors use their expert knowledge to motivate and inspire learners, using a good variety of learning activities and resources. Learners' work is of a good standard. Learners are enthusiastic about their courses and enjoy their learning, making productive use of their time. In parenting skills sessions, for example, in addition to developing greater self-esteem and confidence, learners acquire skills that they can use more widely in their lives.

- In the best sessions, tutors plan discussions well to support the development of communication skills, allowing learners the opportunity to explore and confidently exchange ideas with other learners. In craft sessions, tutors develop effectively learners' speaking and listening skills through the use of general and specific questioning to learners.

- Learners develop good skills in craft work and in the production of artefacts, whilst also improving their teamwork skills. For example, they work together on projects to create interesting reading materials for their children. Learners studying arts show their understanding of the use of scale and measurement when making folders, as well as clear evidence of improved literacy skills in their design briefs.

- Tutors use questioning skilfully to check learning and learners' understanding of the aims and objectives of sessions. They consolidate learning through regular summaries, and in better lessons learners monitor their own progress particularly well. Tutors' verbal feedback to learners, written comments on their work and the use of photographic evidence help learners to improve. Tutors use good quality learning materials and use ILT effectively to demonstrate key learning points. Learners are confident in their use of technology.

- Tutors provide good support for learners. They work well to support learners individually in sessions. Tutors have good knowledge of learners' starting points, based on a thorough initial assessment, and often make good use of the outcomes of this in their teaching. A minority of session plans does not identify how teachers plan to meet individual learning needs and a few learners are unclear about the purpose of session activities. Tutors sometimes miss opportunities to fully stretch or challenge more able learners.

- Learners' target setting for learning and assessment, recorded in individual learning plans, is inconsistently thorough. Targets are sometimes insufficiently personalised and measurable and a few learners are insufficiently involved in reviewing them.

- Tutors ensure that they integrate English and mathematics skills well with session topics. The development of financial literacy is good. Tutors effectively promote the development of learners' communication and speaking and listening skills. Learners enjoy the opportunities to interact with their peers during, for example, discussions on ideas to support social events for members of the family.

- A significant number of learners progress to other courses both within ACL and elsewhere. All learners have good opportunities to progress to longer courses with ACL. Tutors support their learners well to obtain skills for personal and social purposes, strengthening family relationships, and for employment, such as business administration, or self-employment.

- Tutors promote equality and diversity well in sessions. ACL provides a wide variety of courses to meet the needs and interests of the local communities and is particularly successful in attracting learners back to study. Learning materials reflect the diversity of the borough. Learners and staff have professional working relationships and tutors create a safe and comfortable learning environment.

The effectiveness of leadership and management	Good

- Leadership and strategic management are good. Councillors and senior managers are able and passionate advocates for the work of ACL. ACL's work is highly valued by the council, which has a strong strategic vision for adult learning and skills to meet the needs of its local communities. ACL is central to the council's strategies to promote economic regeneration within the borough and to help local residents take advantage of related improved employment opportunities. To this end, the work of ACL is managed within the council's directorate for regeneration, enterprise and skills, ensuring the integration of its work and that of the council overall.

- ACL's partnership working is excellent. Positively and closely aligned with the borough's approach to work in partnership, ACL delivers its courses entirely though subcontracted partners. These include the local further education college, outstanding providers in London and further afield, voluntary agencies and smaller private sector training organisations.

- The selection of these annually contracted partners is rigorous and not all partners have seen their contracts renewed year on year. Partners are chosen for the particular contribution that they can make to ACL's carefully planned programme for learners. For example, one of the more recent contracted partners is a specialist provider of job-seeking skills, reflecting ACL's enhanced priority in this aspect of learning.

- ACL meets the needs and interests of learners well. It is proactive in the development of new programmes and encourages its partners to reflect on the suitability of what is offered to local residents. Ambitious and innovative partnerships with the private sector and outstanding providers, such as Hadlow College, have led to the development of its Skills Centres to address the vocational course needs of learners better. These include operational centres for catering and hospitality, horticulture and equestrian and digital skills.

- Good management has improved outcomes for learners and teaching, learning and assessment since the previous inspection, all of which are now good. Much of the operational management of courses and learners is ably handled by the subcontracting partners. They are clear about what they are required to do. ACL sets overall targets for partners' performance and, in monitoring meetings with them, reviews progress monthly. Quarterly performance management meetings of all partners provide a valuable forum for discussing good practice, variations in performance and staff development. Partners speak positively about the high quality working relationships between them and ACL and between themselves.

- Self-assessment for improvement is thorough and involves all partners. The variety of evidence recorded for each provider is not always successfully translated into key findings for ACL as a whole. The reliability and availability of management data have improved since the previous inspection, although ACL's borough-based systems are painfully slow in providing essential learner data reports. Managers use data to much better effect than at the last inspection, especially in their work with partners.

- ACL's capacity to promote and lead further improvement is insufficient. The very small ACL team of three staff is too stretched and, in some respects, lacks the right experience to overview the work of partners and their tutors. For example, when judging the quality of teaching and learning, there is no practitioner expertise available for moderating the session observations carried out by partners.

- While considerable progress with quality improvement has been made since the previous inspection, some significant areas for development remain. For example, although aspects of weakness in recording and recognising the achievements of learners were identified at the previous inspection, too little has yet been done to improve this. At another level, although the much improved quality improvement framework requires the use of standard documents by partners, ACL has too little presence on the ground to check whether these are being used, or used effectively.

- Safeguarding of learners meets statutory requirements. It is appropriately assured through thorough and comprehensive arrangements, managed by ACL and applied by partners. Larger partners are often expert in the intricacies of safeguarding. Checks on all staff and volunteers are carried out and recorded. Areas for improvement from the previous inspection are all now addressed, including the need for compliance by smaller partners. Training for tutors, with online training, is up to date and learners receive safeguarding information when they enrol.

- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. All key policies and measures are in place, within the secure structure of the borough's arrangements. ACL promotes equality and diversity particularly well to those from the many disadvantaged communities in the borough, including the long-term unemployed and minority communities. ACL is particularly successful in encouraging local residents to return to learning.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Royal Borough of Greenwich Adult and Community Learning (ACL)

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
ICT for users	**2**
Community learning	**2**
Family Learning	**2**

Provider details

Royal Borough of Greenwich 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: N/A
	Part-time: 3377
Principal/CEO	Ms Jayne Deeley
Date of previous inspection	May 2009
Website address	www.royalgreenwich.gov.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	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Part-time	N/A	3278	N/A	99	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A
Number of community learners	2939
Number of employability learners	438
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	■ City Lit ■ Community Systems Limited ■ Flower Skills and Training ■ Global Solution Services Limited ■ Greenwich Community College ■ Hadlow College ■ Ravensbourne ■ Volunteer Centre Greenwich

Additional socio-economic information

The Royal Borough of Greenwich is in south east London, on the south bank of the Thames and is home to historic maritime Greenwich and world famous landmarks. In spite of this context, it has significant levels of deprivation and worklessness. Just over 20% of areas in the borough feature among the 10% most deprived in the country. Unemployment is higher than in London overall or nationally. Greenwich has benefited from considerable recent regeneration, with much derelict land taken back into beneficial use, many new jobs created and transport links improved. The population is diverse and expanding. Around a third of residents are of non-White heritage, with the largest proportion of these Black African.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	David Martin HMI

Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the Strategic Economic Initiatives Manager 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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