

London Borough of Harrow

Local authority

Inspection dates		15-18 October 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
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:

- Learners gain in confidence and take pride in their achievements, often meeting their personal goals and aims.
- Provision in visual and performing arts and family learning is good and well managed.
- The wide range of programmes across the borough meets the needs of the communities the service seeks to serve.
- Individual support and care for learners are good and successfully help them achieve their aims.
- Leadership and management are good and very successfully promote community learning throughout Harrow.
- Well-developed and excellent partnership working with training providers, colleges, charities and other groups focuses on widening participation by hard-to-reach groups.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- The recently-improved quality assurance arrangements have not yet had consistent and rigorous impact across the service.
- A minority of teaching, learning and assessment, especially in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), does not always meet the full range of learners' needs.
- Not all learners are helped to set realistic and challenging targets in order to improve their performance.
- Information and learning technology (ILT) is not used sufficiently to help learners to develop their research skills and become more autonomous.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Rigorously apply the recently improved quality assurance and monitoring arrangements across the service to ensure more consistent improvements.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, especially in ESOL provision, in order to improve the standards reached by the learners.
- Use the recently improved quality measures to make sure that learners' skills and progress are successfully recorded and acted upon.
- Make sure that all teachers have access to, and are confident in using, information and learning technologies imaginatively and productively.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Outcomes for learners are good. Most learners take courses that do not lead to external accreditation. Learners make good gains in self-confidence and develop useful personal and employability skills. Success rates are good when compared with national averages for similar provision. In the minority of provision where outcomes are only satisfactory, a few learners do not complete their courses.
- Outcomes on the small number of vocational courses, leading to accredited outcomes, are good and many of the learners progress on to further study or to employment.
- The service attracts learners from a very wide variety of ethnic backgrounds, reflecting the diverse cultural and ethnic mix that is in North West London. All learners achieve equally well.
- Learners on recreational and exercise programmes speak very positively about the personal gains they achieve. For example, they mention improved posture and physical confidence as a result of ballroom dancing, and suppleness and calm following yoga sessions. They negotiate and set challenging, but achievable, targets for themselves in these courses and take pride in their progress.
- Outcomes for learners on family learning programmes are good. Learners, often vulnerable families from deprived communities, successfully develop self-confidence and make significant strides towards helping their children read and write more effectively. Their teachers use photography and other assessment techniques imaginatively to track and evaluate the progress made by men attending Dads' Club.
- Learners in arts and crafts, information and communication technology (ICT) and a wide range of other programmes make significant gains in confidence and self-esteem. They learn useful research skills, using both electronic and paper-based sources. Many of the practical skills they learn help them to improve their personal and social skills as well as, where appropriate, enhancing their employability.
- Projects focusing on improving skills and confidence for learners with difficulties and/or disabilities are successful and have been in place for some years. Recently, learners with a range of difficulties and/or disabilities produced a short radio play and a theatrical production which dealt directly with contemporary disability issues.
- In a minority of cases, ESOL learners make only satisfactory progress. Teachers do not provide enough challenge in lessons and spelling and pronunciation are not checked thoroughly enough.

Managers have identified this in the service self-assessment report and recognise that there is work to be done to continue to raise standards for ESOL learners.

- Inspectors observed safe working practices in classrooms, workshops and community venues throughout the inspection week. Learners' attendance and punctuality are satisfactory. Some learners live in communities of substantial economic and social deprivation and travel considerable distances across the borough to attend their courses.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, which has contributed to good outcomes for learners.
- Teachers have high expectations of learners. They provide good care and support and are responsive to the needs of a diverse and wide range of learners. Learners value the sensitive and purposeful use of volunteers and classroom assistants who support their progress well.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to motivate and inspire learners to achieve their learning goals. Teachers plan a wide range of well-paced and inclusive learning activities to maintain learners' interest and develop their knowledge and skills. Learners participate well, are focused, engaged and enthusiastic and they make good progress. For example, in a lip-reading lesson, learners made good progress recognising mouth shapes for spoken English.
- Learners work productively in groups and pairs, sharing ideas and learning from each other. Family learning teachers successfully develop learners' language and mathematical skills, which the learners then use confidently to help their children learn.
- In a minority of lessons, particularly, but not exclusively, in ESOL, learners make only satisfactory progress. Teachers talk too much, learners are passive and do not make the progress expected of them from their prior attainment. Learners do not always benefit from differentiated activities to meet the full range of their learning needs.
- Teachers make good use of accommodation across a wide range of learning and community venues. In a minority of cases, learning resources are old and not maintained well enough. Many teachers use well-presented written materials, but do not always use ILT and other media to enliven learning and to meet different learning styles.
- Most lesson observation reports accurately identify strengths and areas for development. However, good practice is not always shared and managers do not always use development plans to monitor and track improvements in teaching and learning.
- Initial assessment does not routinely lead to effective target setting. In ICT and digital photography, teachers and learners negotiate specific and measurable group and individual targets. However, in other subjects, learners' targets are too broad and are insufficiently individualised to meet their needs.
- Teachers give encouraging verbal feedback to learners and learners understand their progress. Managers have focused on improving practice in recording learners' progress and standards have improved. However, not all teachers are confident in carrying out individual reviews and practice remains variable.
- In a small number of sessions teachers skilfully link English and mathematics to the subjects being learned and learners' competencies in literacy and numeracy are developed successfully. For example, in ICT, learners confidently develop and use mathematics skills to compare prices of on-line goods. However, teachers do not systematically plan to embed English and mathematics and opportunities are missed to develop these skills in some visual and performing arts courses.

- Information, advice and guidance are satisfactory. Learners benefit from well-structured, tailored and highly effective advice and guidance in wider family learning. However, in other curriculum areas learners have few opportunities to discuss courses before enrolment and not all learners are clear about progression routes.
- Learners have good local access to courses across a variety of community learning venues. Learners feel safe and value the emphasis given to safety within their courses.
- The promotion of equality is good and teachers and learners treat each other with fairness and respect. However, teachers do not always plan relevant activities to increase learners' understanding of diversity. More male learners now participate in wider family learning, but the proportion of men taking ESOL and visual and performing arts provision remains low. This issue is identified in the self-assessment report and managers acknowledge there is work still to be done.

Visual and performing arts

Good

Community learning

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, reflected in the good outcomes for most learners.
- Learners make good, articulate contributions and are motivated to participate by inspirational learning tasks. Teachers provide highly responsive support for the needs of the wide range of learners. Learners develop the confidence to work independently and are focused, industrious and use their time effectively.
- Learners design and produce well-crafted artefacts in ceramics, sewing, visual arts and jewellery programmes. In the best sessions, they make sample pieces, draft original designs and annotate their work effectively. Staff consistently support learners to complete detailed and accurate hand sewing, surface decoration on ceramics and attractive objects in jewellery making.
- Teachers successfully develop learners' wider employment skills and motivate them to explore social enterprise, small businesses and to enter exhibitions and competitions. Learners with learning disabilities develop important social skills and gain therapeutic benefits.
- Learners learn through a good mix of activities including peer collaboration, demonstration, producing test pieces, sketchbook development and research. However, in a minority of lessons, the teachers talk for too long, the learners are passive and teachers do not use questions effectively to help learners explain their understanding.
- Many teachers are professional creative practitioners with up-to-date industry knowledge. Learners safely use specialist equipment with confidence and precision across the arts programmes. Learners articulate the stages of design and production effectively and demonstrate diligent practising and refining of skills.
- In lessons, teachers do not make enough use of learning technologies to promote research or to record learners' progress. However, in a local organisation working with mental health groups, the learners explored the digital potential of film, image and technical processes associated with art photography and lighting and camera skills.
- Teachers provide careful verbal feedback on project development, but this is not always recorded. Formal assessment of learner progress is variable and some learners are unsure of the actions they need to pursue to improve their skills and knowledge.
- In the better sessions, teachers develop technical language and glossaries and ask learners to prepare estimates and budgets. In one session, learners were challenged effectively to make calculations converting measurements on sewing programmes. However, teachers do not always plan to enable learners to practise and apply English and mathematics in relevant contexts.

- Few learners receive thorough pre-course advice from teachers. In an artist-led partnership project, teachers promote progression onto further learning effectively for learners who use mental health services. While some teachers provide good information on progression routes, this is not shared through curriculum-wide progression planning.
- Learning sessions are inclusive and teachers value learners' viewpoints. In one session, learners made good progress because the tutor explicitly promoted diversity by encouraging discussion on art in different societies, its power and value and how it is bought and consumed. However, teachers do not make enough use of methods to encourage learners to explore cultural diversity.

Family learning

Community learning

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, reflecting good outcomes for learners which include increased confidence to support their children's learning and the development of their own English and mathematics skills. The few learners on accredited courses achieve well. Teachers have high expectations of learners, supporting and encouraging them very effectively.
- Enthusiastic and experienced teachers plan lessons thoroughly to include a wide range of interesting and challenging activities. In one lesson, parents learnt how children are taught writing skills by undertaking unfamiliar hand-eye coordination exercises. By reflecting on their own progress, they came to appreciate some of the difficulties facing their children and how best to support them.
- The great majority of teachers use questioning skilfully to check understanding and reinforce learning. Parents make good progress understanding the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum in sessions jointly taught by school teachers and service staff. Headteachers state that such understanding leads to better parental support for the children and significant improvements in their achievements.
- In wider family learning courses, teachers provide well-designed and stimulating resources. In the Share a Story course, learners created stories themselves and presented them in the primary school to the great delight of the schoolchildren. However, learners make limited use of ILT to enrich their learning.
- Learners receive encouraging and positive verbal feedback in classes. They receive good guidance to support their development and written work is often marked immediately. Initial assessment of learners' skills adequately informs teachers of individual needs. However, teachers do not always use this knowledge when drawing up learners' progress plans. Learning goals are frequently too broad to enable the accurate measurement and recording of progress.
- Learners make good progress in developing their English and mathematics skills. Teachers successfully integrate speaking and listening skills development into all teaching and learning. For example, in a mathematics class the learners and their children fruitfully explored the concepts of perimeter and area.
- Learners receive good individual advice and guidance on progression. They enjoy specific job search workshops, which include training on curriculum vitae writing, interview techniques and writing applications. Within wider family learning, all learners benefit from excellent initial guidance from appropriately qualified members of staff. Following completion of wider family learning courses, most learners progress to further studies. However, learners on English and mathematics courses receive insufficient advice and guidance.
- Teachers promote equality and diversity satisfactorily. Courses have been successfully designed to meet the specific needs of under-represented groups, for example Dad's Club. Learners are

encouraged to respect differences. Learning resources accurately reflect the diverse nature of the local communities.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The Adult Community and Family Learning Service plays a vital role in promoting learning opportunities for adults and families in Harrow. The service's work is highly valued by the local council, which has a strong strategic vision for community learning to meet the needs of its local communities. The work and priorities of the service are fully aligned with the council's key objectives, and the well-founded community learning strategy provides a clear basis for its current and future developments
- Good management skilfully translates the mission into practical learning opportunities. Managers' clarity of vision and purpose, and good awareness of Harrow's diverse local communities, provide a positive context for the successful expansion of the provision during a time of significant reductions in funding for community learning.
- The service meets the needs of learners, and prospective learners well. It carries out valuable exercises to map the range and extent of educational provision in the borough, providing sound evidence on which to base course development. Male learners are under-represented overall.
- Managers work very effectively with a wide range of other organisations and projects to promote adult training and learning across the borough. The working arrangements with the two local general further education colleges are particularly positive in providing a focus for widening the participation of learners.
- The service increasingly provides its courses through partners. New and rigorous commissioning arrangements this year have significantly expanded the number of partners, promoting the best use of resources, with reducing external funding. The service's impact within local communities has significantly increased as a result. The two local colleges are now complemented by 11 other partners, representing the voluntary, charity, private and public sectors.
- Service managers provide good support for partners. They have been well prepared for their roles, through briefings and staff development, and have access to useful on-line help and information. Partners are positive about the cooperative and consultative approach they receive from the service.
- Current quality assurance arrangements are good. With more partners and more slender central resources, the management of the curriculum has become more complex. Managers understand this, and have introduced even greater rigour to the quality assurance and monitoring framework to gain greater certainty of the quality of provision; however, at this early stage of change, these arrangements are not yet fully operational.
- The service's self-assessment report is evaluative and contains judgements with which inspectors agree. However, the consistency and rigour of judgements from partners require improvement, as service managers identify. Partners and managers make much better use of data to support judgements than previously.
- Managers monitor teachers' performance through a comprehensive scheme of observations of teaching, learning and assessment. Inspectors largely agreed with the grades and judgements of the service's observers. However, action planning for their improvement, based upon the outcomes of observations, is underdeveloped. The impact of work to improve the accurate measurement and recording of learners' progress is insufficient.
- The provider meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Service managers and partners use thorough and comprehensive arrangements to ensure the safety of the learners. Safeguarding for family learning provision is particularly rigorous. Managers carry out, and

record centrally, checks on all staff, including partners and for volunteers. All staff have completed safeguarding training and learners receive safeguarding information when they enrol.

- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Disadvantaged and vulnerable learners successfully enrol onto learning. A good range of learning opportunities, conveniently located, improves their life chances, and promotes good social and educational inclusion. Service staff are particularly successful in helping to promote employment opportunities for learners with a difficulty and/or disability. All key policies and measures are in place, within the secure structure of the borough's policies and procedures.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

London Borough of London

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

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Visual arts	2
Performing arts	2
Family learning	2

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: 5685								
Principal/CEO	Mr Michael Lockwood								
Date of previous inspection	October 2007								
Website address	Harrow.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	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Part-time	-	1,211	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total				
	-		-		-				
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher				
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+			
	-	-	-	-	-	-			
Number of community learners	1161								
Number of employability learners	50								
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"> ■ Harrow college ■ Stanmore College ■ Mind in Harrow ■ North London ITEC ■ Holy Trinity Church ■ Antiracist Alliance Trust ■ African Cultural Association ■ Neomari Beadcraft Training Services ■ MI Dance 								

Contextual information

The service provides adult, community and family learning for the London Borough of Harrow. Collaboration with an increasing number of education and training providers means that a substantial proportion of the service's programmes are taught in local colleges, schools, training providers and charities by the subcontractors themselves. Around a quarter of all courses are taught directly by service employees.

Harrow is a fast growing borough of around 250,000 inhabitants. It is home to the largest Indian heritage community in London, second only to Leicester. Around 70% of the population of Harrow are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Black African, notably Somali, and recently Afghan communities have grown in numbers. Access to English skills is therefore an important local priority, particularly at entry level. The borough is rated amongst the top eight most affluent in London. However, it is a borough of considerable contrasts and a number of wards, such as Roxbourne and Wealdstone, have high indices of multiple deprivation.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Alex Falconer HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the service 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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