

Choices 4 All

Independent learning provider

Inspection dates		5–7 August 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
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 make good progress in the development of their personal, social and independent living skills.
- Very effective support and encouragement meet individual learners' needs well.
- Learners enjoy the broad and interactive variety of learning activities that tutors plan and deliver very well.
- Learners significantly improve their understanding of the importance of learning for their personal lives and future employment prospects and participate well.
- Tutors provide very clear feedback in lessons that gives learners a good understanding of their progress and what they need to do next.
- Leaders and managers are providing very effective leadership to staff who share the same clear values to support learners with learning difficulties.
- Much effective action taken by the new management and staff is successfully improving the quality of teaching and learning and the overall learners' experience which are now good.
- The good promotion of equality, diversity and safeguarding is very effectively ensuring that this group of disadvantaged learners have a good quality and safe learning experience.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Learners' rates of progress towards the achievement of accredited qualifications are too slow.
- Learners do not have a sufficiently broad range of opportunities to develop vocational skills to support their progression into employment.
- Tutors do not plan and review learners' individual targets effectively enough.
- Managers do not collect and use data to track learners' progress in skills development and gaining qualifications sufficiently well.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Develop better systems to track learners' progress in skills development and towards gaining their qualifications. Use these more effectively to ensure learners achieve in the planned timescale.
- Develop more effective links with a broader range of employers to increase opportunities for learners to develop their vocational skills in good quality work-experience placements.
- Ensure all teachers identify learners' personal targets and skills development needs in individual learning plans, and review these more effectively at regular progress reviews.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Outcomes for learners require improvement. Although most learners remain on their programme until their planned end date, and a small minority do progress on to higher-level qualifications, most fail to make fast enough progress in completing their qualifications. The improvements made in teaching and learning are now beginning to improve the rate of progress of current learners. Historically, those who completed their foundation-learning programme achieved well in their mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) functional skills examinations, as well as their employability certificate. However, too few achieved their English functional skills qualification. ▪ Learners make good progress in the development of their personal and social skills, significantly improving their communication and teamwork skills. They become more confident and show good levels of motivation to progress. Learners enjoy their time with Choices 4 All (Choices), feel very safe and improve their understanding of appropriate behaviour, the standard of which is very good. Attendance at lessons is good. ▪ Learners make good progress in developing some key independent living skills, such as cooking and using washing and drying machines at the provider's premises, as well as learning to travel alone. A minority of learners are further developing their catering skills through participation in a commercial catering operation, where over the last 12 months a buffet service has been provided to five local employers. These learners also achieve an industry recognised food safety certificate. ▪ There has been an improvement in the use of work experience placements since the last inspection, and most learners successfully complete a short work taster that improves their understanding of the world of work. However, too few learners attend work placements on a more regular basis to develop practical job skills and knowledge of work, and the range of available work placements is too narrow. The few who do attend placements regularly do not receive an effective record and review of their progress. ▪ Learners learn more about the importance of a curriculum vitae and how to complete job applications and prepare for interviews, but overall do not yet demonstrate sufficient progress in their job search skills. ▪ Learners consistently make good progress in the development of mathematics and ICT skills. At the previous inspection, progress in English was insufficient, but current learners now make good progress in their skills development. Learners have a good understanding of the importance of these skills for their future jobs, as well as in their personal lives. ▪ Progression by learners to employment or further education is good. Of the eleven learners who have left in the last three years, six have gone on to further education or higher-level qualifications, with a further three gaining employment. 	

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, focusing well on meeting the social, emotional and learning needs of learners, and resulting in the good development of their personal and social skills. However, recent improvements are not yet fully impacting upon the progress that learners make towards the achievement of their accredited qualifications and vocational skills, which still requires further improvement.
- Since the previous inspection, new staff are now in place and delivering good quality classroom teaching. Staff care about learners and support them very well; learners show good motivation to learn and to make progress in their personal lives and employment prospects. Attendance and punctuality are good. Tutors monitor punctuality closely and advise learners of the importance of good time keeping, both for study and in the workplace. Regular counselling sessions are available and help learners to address any personal issues.
- Tutors have high expectations of what learners can achieve in their lives and encourage learners very well to improve their skills. They use a range of well-planned practical learning activities which promote the skill development and skill reinforcement of individual learners. For example, in the training kitchen, learners improve their understanding of methods to measure and weigh ingredients, as well as practising counting and checking correct numbers of plates for serving the meals they prepare. Tutors give good attention to safety in the classroom, for example by encouraging learners to take individual responsibility when using scissors and sharing equipment.
- Tutors encourage learners to work independently when possible and create good opportunities to give choice to learners. For example, during daily tutorial group sessions, learners use their personal resource box and choose the activity they will work on in the session. Tutors give clear explanations of the learning activities to learners, but do not always link these to individual learning plans.
- Tutors are well qualified and use their good experience and knowledge to plan lessons that are interesting and enjoyable. They make good use of the wide variety of modern and good quality resources. The training kitchen is particularly well equipped and other areas for learners are comfortable and used for both social and learning activities. Learners receive clear feedback during classes from tutors to recognise their achievement, to support their understanding of their progress towards their learning goals and confirm what they need to do to improve. For example, in an ICT session a learner gained new skills to include images on a poster based on successful feedback and was encouraged to extend this skill to illustrate the next activity.
- Initial assessment identifies individual learning challenges and needs effectively. New individual learning plans and reviews are in place, but tutors do not use these consistently well enough to record learners' personal targets and progress and review them in a timely and effective way. Learners are confident that they are improving their skills and understanding through teaching, assignment work and other activities, and do have a good understanding of what they need to do to improve further. Tutors' verbal feedback is good. However, tutors do not provide sufficient written feedback so that learners and other staff can monitor the progress that learners make.
- Assessment of English and mathematics skills identifies support and development needs accurately. A speech and language therapist provides further very detailed assessment with clear recommendations to inform the development of speaking and listening skills. Tutors use an effective range of different strategies based on results of initial assessment to improve the English, mathematics and language skills of different groups of learners. For example, learners improve their skills in using capital letters and full stops to start and finish sentences.
- Learners benefit from good initial advice and guidance to identify their individual aims and develop a timetable to meet their needs. Short work placements are useful in helping learners understand the world of work, and job club sessions are effective in preparing those learners going on more regular work placements. However, information and advice for progression into more sustainable employment are not yet sufficiently incorporated into the learning programme.

- Managers and staff provide a very caring and highly supportive environment for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, and promote equality and diversity well. For example, in a class activity about measuring time, learners contributed information about the cultural festivals they celebrate in specific months during the year. Learners and staff celebrate success well, with good parent and carer involvement.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The effectiveness of leadership and management is good. Leaders, managers and staff share a strong commitment to support learners with learning difficulties, with much effective action taken to improve the quality of the learners' experience. Since the previous inspection a new organisational structure has been successfully introduced, with a new senior manager and new teaching staff, which is resulting in good quality teaching, learning and assessment and an enjoyable learner experience. Investment in resources has successfully improved the quality of learning, such as the new tables, screen and projector and the good quality catering and household equipment in the kitchen. Further plans are well advanced to increase floor space, to enable more learning opportunities, increase the intake of learners, and improve the somewhat limited space for learning that currently exists.
- The board of trustees takes a close interest in the learning programmes, as well as providing effective challenge and support to the new senior manager. The board has good oversight of the provision and receives regular reports which members use well to monitor performance. Board members have a good variety of expertise and are proactive in supporting teaching staff through their own lesson observations.
- Internal communications have significantly improved and are now good. Trustees and staff work well together, and frequent meetings provide an effective forum to share information.
- Links with a wide range of partners are good, including various local authorities; these result in recruitment of learners from a wider area. Links with parents and carers are good, for example the effective use of a recent open day to share and gain feedback. However, links with employers are not yet sufficiently effective to provide a broad enough range of work experience opportunities for learners.
- Performance management is effective. Targets for managers are regularly reviewed by the board, and staff targets are being more closely monitored and reviewed at the six-weekly staff supervision meetings. Actions are clear and completion dates set and are having a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning which are now good.
- Lesson observations are improving classroom-based learning, which is now good. The reporting is accurate and provides good detail, with clear judgements and action planning. Additional informal observations and the use of peer observations also provide useful feedback for staff. However, the observation process does not yet cover other activities such as job-search learning and reviews of progress.
- Managers rely heavily on their own information systems, which they use well to monitor performance. However, insufficient action has taken place to understand the differences between this and funding agency data. Managers are in the process of developing a more effective tracking system to monitor how well learners are progressing in their skills development and achievement of qualifications.
- Curriculum management is good. Timetables are structured well to take into account the differing needs and abilities of learners. Learners benefit from a good variety of optional units for the employability qualifications.
- Self-assessment involves all staff well and the judgements that managers make about strengths and areas for improvement are broadly accurate. The quality improvement plan has good detail. Managers regularly review progress towards targets and achieve the majority of objectives in a timely manner. However, action to address a few improvements, such as the use of individual learning plans and progress reviews, has been too slow.

- The use of feedback from learners is good. Learners meet on a monthly basis to discuss their experience and identify any areas for improvements, including offering suggestions for external trips. Their feedback has resulted in a comfortable rest area being established for them.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good, with a strong ethos to support learners with learning difficulties throughout the organisation. Effective action has been successful in better promoting aspects of diversity in lessons; the kitchen is providing a more varied menu to meet differing cultural needs. Standards of learners' behaviour are very good, with a good level of mutual respect evident between learners and staff. Staff have regular update training and a previous gender achievement gap has been closed.
- All of the learners have learning difficulties and safeguarding them is a strong focus for all staff. Managers meet their statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Learners improve their understanding with the help of an easy-to-read policy available on the notice board, along with advice for online safety. Compliance with appropriate checks and training is good. Staff continually reinforce messages to learners about appropriate behaviour, clearly taking into account their individual learning difficulties. Staff are all trained in basic first aid, how to deal with epilepsy and fire safety. Staff have a good understanding of reporting requirements, and all incidents are carefully logged and reported to relevant external agencies. Staff carry out an appropriate check of work placement health and safety practice, but do not always sufficiently check employers' understanding of safeguarding requirements.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Choices 4 All

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	-
Outcomes for learners	3	-	-	-	-	3	-	3	-
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
Employability training	2

Provider details

Type of provider	Independent learning provider							
Age range of learners	19+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 24							
	Part-time: 0							
Principal/CEO	Rachel Chronnell							
Date of previous inspection	August 2012							
Website address	www.choices4all.co.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	-	24	-	-	-	-	-	-
Part-time	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
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+	16-18	19+
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Full-time	N/A							
Part-time	N/A							
Number of community learners	N/A							
Number of employability learners	24							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	None							

Contextual information

Established in 1997, Choices is a specialist work-based learning provider based in Harrow in West London. The provider is funded and supported by the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and local authorities. EFA learners have a range of learning disabilities, many with a range of other disabilities, and are aged between 19 and 25 years. Learners can join the programme at any time of the year. The focus of the training is on independent living skills, employability skills and training for life.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Gary Adkins

One lead inspector and one additional inspector, assisted by the Chief Executive Officer 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 relevant 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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