

Wokingham Borough Council

Local authority

Inspection dates		11–13 November 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Requires improvement-3
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Requires improvement-3
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Requires improvement-3

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider requires improvement because:

- not all personal and social development aims are fully identified and progress towards achievement is not recorded sufficiently well for a minority of learners
- the analysis of management information is not sufficient to identify the participation of targeted groups of learners or to monitor the success and achievement of different groups of learners
- the strategy to improve learners' English and mathematics skills is not sufficiently developed to support enhancements to the local offer
- enrolment and pre-course information are not providing enough identification of learners' starting points to enable tutors to plan their sessions to maximise skills development in a minority of courses
- safeguarding arrangements do not yet include an appropriately trained nominated person within the service who has specific responsibility for safeguarding
- self-assessment has not enabled the provision to be accurately evaluated and improvement planning has not taken into account national priorities well enough.

This provider has the following strengths:

- the vast majority of learners achieve the learning aims of the course in non-accredited programmes
- teaching, learning and vocational skills development are good
- individual support for learners is very good, particularly for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- the newly appointed management team has quickly identified improvements required in the service and has taken swift actions to address these
- equality and diversity measures have been appropriately targeted to meet the needs of identified priority groups of learners.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that personal development targets and learning aims are fully identified and that progress towards these targets and aims is fully recorded. Review these records during observations of teaching and learning.
- Make better use of collected management information by analysing numbers of participants against the service's targeted groups of learners; monitor the attendance, success and achievement of these different groups of learners.
- Develop a service strategy for the improvement of English and mathematics skills in conjunction with partners to enhance the current offer within the local community.
- Improve the information tutors have about learners' starting points before courses begin, to include information on previous learning.
- Strengthen safeguarding arrangements for vulnerable adults by ensuring that the service appoints a suitably trained officer to oversee arrangements within the community learning programmes, and ensure that subcontractors' arrangements are sufficiently robust to ensure the safety of the service's adult learners in their care.
- Overhaul self-assessment to produce a report that accurately reflects and evaluates the quality of the provision. Ensure that the report is based on sound data analysis and evidence. Produce a development plan that maintains the areas of identified strength and enables improvement. Ensure that governors frequently review the report and the performance of the service.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Requires improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Most courses offered are designed to meet the needs of adults with few previous qualifications and are not accredited. A small number of learners are enrolled on accredited courses in English, mathematics and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). The large majority of courses are subcontracted and delivered by local partners. ▪ Outcomes for learners require improvement. Success rates on accredited programmes are low and significantly below national rates. This is largely because of poor retention rates. Achievement rates on non-accredited programmes are high, but a minority of learners' personal and social development targets are insufficiently challenging and their progress is not adequately monitored on too many programmes. ▪ Managers and staff have identified priority groups of learners to target those at most disadvantage. However, the performance of under-represented groups receives insufficient analysis. ▪ Learners develop confidence through their learning and improve their social and employability skills well. Learners report that their programmes enable them to work with, and care more effectively for, their children, prepare for employment, improve their well-being and gain increased independence in carrying out daily living activities. ▪ Many learners begin their courses with minimal qualifications and make good progress, particularly on courses designed for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Records of learner progression to further study, employment and voluntary work indicate good progression rates. However, information is not systematically gathered on all programmes. ▪ Attendance and punctuality are generally good, and at the Earley Crescent Resource Centre strategies to follow up absentees are particularly effective. However, there are insufficient 	

strategies in place to follow up reasons for absence at a small number of other centres. Support for learners who are at risk of not completing their programmes is insufficient.

- On programmes designed for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the planned development of English and mathematics in the context of a wide range of activities, including cooking, art, pottery and gardening, is particularly effective. Tutors set the learners challenging targets and many develop very good social, interpersonal and independent learning skills. However, the service has not sufficiently prioritised the development of English and mathematics skills for all learners.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, as reflected in the high levels of achievement on non-accredited courses which form the majority of the provision. The vast majority of learning is classroom based and made up of short courses that meet the learners' range of personal circumstances well.
- Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced and use their knowledge well to plan interesting activities in their learning sessions. A particularly well planned programme to increase parenting skills develops a wide range of skills, including social awareness, overcoming agoraphobia, literacy and numeracy, information technology and oral confidence.
- Tutors and support staff provide very good individual support for learners. Tutors get to know their learners quickly and use this knowledge well to link learning topics with each learner's interests. As a result, learners are attentive, remain on task in the lessons, and feel that they are valued as individuals. Learners contribute to oral discussion well, demonstrating an increasing level of confidence.
- Assessment of learning during sessions is good. Tutors check understanding effectively by sensitive questioning and by scrutiny of, and appropriate praise for, learners' work. However, not all tutors record this well enough in the records of progress and achievement.
- Accommodation and learning resources are good and used well to motivate learners. Resources in the family learning programme are colourful, attractive and can be adapted for use by adults and children. As a result, learners have an increased awareness of the possibilities for their children's learning through play. In practical sessions, such as pottery, there is a good variety of materials for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to demonstrate personal levels of skill, with sensitive support from their carers. As a result, learners show pride in their achievements and maintain good hand and eye coordination.
- Enrolment arrangements do not always provide sufficient opportunity for tutors to identify learners' starting points and prior learning. A small number of learning activities, whilst enjoyable, fail to challenge learners to develop their potential sufficiently rapidly. Sometimes tutors prepare resources without knowing their suitability for the literacy levels of their newly enrolled learners.
- Information, advice and guidance are provided well in community venues and through outreach work. The community development team works particularly effectively in engaging with families in deprived areas. Leaflet drops, house-to-house calls, and local media are used well to raise awareness of learning and development opportunities.
- The service works in conjunction with a recently developed City Deal initiative. This has resulted in good access to information, advice and guidance for a wide range of learners who are seeking work or looking to improve their job prospects. However, pre-course literature, particularly for non-accredited programmes, is too brief. As a result, learners sometimes join a short programme with insufficient knowledge of the programme's demands or the potential progression opportunities.
- A minority of sessions have an insufficient focus on improving each learner's competence in English and mathematics. In the best sessions, ample opportunities are planned and taken to

increase literacy through tactile resources, such as lettered dice, and numeracy through improving learners' ability to balance household income and expenditure. However, on a minority of occasions, staff do not adequately confirm learners' understanding of specialist terminology and promote the importance of a wide vocabulary.

- Staff promote equality of opportunity particularly effectively. They work well to remove perceived barriers to learning. Resources are clearly presented and visually appealing. Where staff have accurately identified their learners' abilities and interests, there are good individualised learning outcomes and support is responsive to learners' personal needs. Learners feel valued and work cooperatively and with respect for each other. Tutors acknowledge the diversity within their groups through materials and in teaching. In first aid, the tutor effectively ensured that assessment was adapted for learners with a disability.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Recently appointed senior leaders and managers thoroughly reviewed the provision for its effectiveness and responsiveness to local and national priorities. The team has successfully identified, in conjunction with its partners and the local education partnership, the local priorities for the service. The current strategic plan is good, and positions the service to meet local needs.
- Managers recognise that the observation of teaching and learning process was not sufficiently improving the quality of provision across all of the service, particularly in the recording of progress and achievement; although, for a few of the subcontractors this was being done well. The newly appointed senior managers have taken decisive action to address quickly this area for improvement.
- While managers have set priorities for the provision to meet local communities' and employers' needs, its contract and performance management does not yet assess carefully whether the direct or subcontracted delivery is meeting these priorities. For instance, learners who are not from a priority group enrol on courses and, in many instances, find the courses insufficiently challenging. The provider has recognised this area for improvement and is making appropriate changes to enable a much-improved future offer and self-assessment report.
- Managers have not yet sufficiently implemented the strategy to improve English and mathematics skills within the service's community learning offer. The numbers of discrete literacy and numeracy programmes has increased during the past two years and these will be further extended in the coming year. However, this offer is not yet fully coordinated in conjunction with partners and other provision offered locally.
- Governance of the service has improved following a recent review, and now provides good levels of oversight. Senior managers recognise that the previous arrangements were not strong enough. Governance is now predominantly achieved through close working between the director for the service, a scrutiny committee, and an elected member. These new arrangements enable staff responsible for governance to be better informed, provide appropriate challenge and give support to the provision.
- Promotion of equality and diversity is good. Provision targets residents who are at most disadvantage within the community; community development officers' outreach work is good and effective at engaging learners traditionally unrepresented in adult learning. Tutors use learning activities well to encourage the understanding of equality and diversity through learning. Learners from minority ethnic groups and learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well represented within programmes.
- The service meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding vulnerable adults. However, safeguarding arrangements in the community learning service, in particular training and quality assurance, require improvement. The service has good access to advanced safeguarding practitioners with specific responsibility for the prevention of bullying and harassment and investigation of referrals. During contract monitoring visits, managers routinely check that

subcontractors appropriately check staff for their suitability to work with vulnerable adults. However, managers have not appointed a suitably trained officer with specific responsibility for safeguarding within the community learning service or checked that all subcontractors have a suitably trained staff member to ensure that referrals are made and monitored appropriately.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Wokingham Borough Council

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	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Outcomes for learners	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Community development	3

Provider details

Type of provider	Local authority							
Age range of learners	19+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	1,025							
Director	Ms J Ramsden							
Date of previous inspection	November 2010							
Website address	www.wokingham.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+
	-	29	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Full-time	-							
Part-time	29							
Number of community learners	206							
Number of employability learners	-							
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"> ■ Bracknell and Wokingham College of Further Education ■ Earley Crescent Resource Centre ■ Norwood 							

Contextual information

The management and governance of the community learning service of Wokingham Borough Council was restructured in July 2014 and changed directorate. It is now positioned within the children's service division. Most of the provision is delivered on a subcontracted basis, although the service has reduced the number of subcontractors since the previous inspection. Courses are offered in the most deprived areas of the borough and in a range of community settings.

The Borough of Wokingham has low unemployment and the educational achievement of adults is higher than that of the south east or nationally. Around 16% of the borough's population is from a minority ethnic group.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Maxine Mayer HMI
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One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by the interim assistant director 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, 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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