

Wandsworth London Borough Council

Monitoring visit report

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

This is the third re-inspection monitoring visit to Wandsworth London Borough Council following the publication of the inspection report on 19 January 2015, which found the provider to be inadequate overall.

Themes

What progress is the council making to improve the effectiveness of oversight provided by elected members on the performance of the service? Reasonable progress

Elected members, senior officers and managers are working well together to address poor performance. They continue to maintain an effective focus on the performance of subcontracted providers. As a result, the council has decommissioned a further three providers who have failed to deliver good-quality provision for learners.

The lifelong learning task group provide good oversight of the service and hold managers to account well for the implementation of the post-inspection action plan. They have a good understanding of the progress that managers are making in securing improvements in the service. The chair and members of the group provide effective challenge to managers on, for example, the quality of data and information that they present to the group.

Elected members and senior officers are developing provision to better meet the needs of local residents and ensure that the strategic priorities of the local authority are met. Managers are promoting apprenticeships to young people identified by schools as at risk of becoming disengaged from education. A new family learning offer is being developed for learners attending children's centres to ensure that the curriculum is more closely aligned to learners' needs. Managers are targeting more disadvantaged learners and there are a greater number of apprenticeship vacancies available to local people. However, these developments are at the relatively early stages of implementation and as yet there is limited direct impact on learners.

What progress is the council making to improve the monitoring of the performance of teachers? Reasonable progress

Managers have strengthened performance management arrangements for teachers. Observers routinely discuss what they have observed and this ensures a more consistent approach to judging the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

Managers identify more accurately the strengths and areas for improvement in teaching and have developed a comprehensive training and development plan for the teachers. Teachers benefit well from these good-quality training and development opportunities. They develop their confidence and expertise in planning lessons and in integrating English and mathematics into their teaching.

Managers check how well teachers use what they have learned through their observations of teaching and through sampling lesson and progress review documentation. Managers have increased the number of observations of teaching, learning and assessment they undertake; almost all teachers were observed in 2014/15. Managers have begun to work with subcontracted providers to increase their capacity to observe their own tutors.

The quality of what managers write in their observation reports and records of performance management meetings varies too much. The majority of written reports are very thorough and identify clearly what needs to improve; actions taken are diligently followed up by managers. However, in a minority of observation reports seen during the re-inspection visit the areas for improvement in teaching were not recorded clearly enough and the recording of discussions of performance management meetings did not contain sufficient detail. This makes it difficult for managers to track whether the identified areas for improvement have been addressed.

What progress is the council making to the proportion of learners who achieve qualifications in English, mathematics and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)? **Reasonable progress**

Managers are building the capacity of apprenticeship staff well. All staff have had functional skills training that has increased their confidence to teach English and mathematics and embed these into learning and assessment sessions.

Managers regularly check how well staff plan for, and teach, English and mathematics through observations and reviewing session plans. Staff now have more frequent opportunities to share ideas and best practice in teaching English and mathematics. They discuss this routinely during team meetings and peer review groups. A new dedicated lead tutor for functional skills has very recently been appointed to assure the quality of teaching and learning in English, mathematics and ESOL and to provide tutors with support.

Managers maintain a comprehensive analysis of strengths and areas for improvement for each tutor and subcontracted provider which they use to plan improvements in English, mathematics and ESOL. They follow this up through observations and monthly meetings that ensure suitable actions for improvement are taken.

Local data show that the proportion of learners being entered for accreditation in English, mathematics and ESOL is increasing. Around seven out of 10 learners who take functional skills qualifications in English and mathematics achieve well and a high proportion of ESOL learners successfully complete their qualification. The progression of learners on ESOL, English and mathematics courses to higher-level courses is much improved, with around 65% progressing to courses internally.

What progress is the council making to improve the proportion of apprentices who successfully complete their programmes within the planned time?

Reasonable progress

Since the previous monitoring visit managers have continued to monitor the performance of subcontracted providers closely. Managers have strengthened arrangements for monitoring the progress of individual learners at each provider. Managers routinely discuss with staff and subcontracted providers those learners at risk of not completing their training on time. They offer good support to providers that ensures learners get the help they need. As a result, the proportion of learners who complete their apprenticeship on time has increased.

Managers have reviewed and strengthened the initial advice and guidance that learners receive. Potential apprentices complete activities and attend an interview that helps staff better match them to qualifications and employers. As a result, fewer apprentices withdraw from their programme and retention rates have improved.

Managers have recently begun to observe initial advice and guidance sessions. This helps them to support new staff and identify future training needs. However, managers do not yet record the results of these observations or actions for improvement to enable their achievement to be monitored.

What progress is the council making to improve how managers and subcontractors gain an accurate picture of the progress and achievement of learners on courses that do not lead to qualifications?

Reasonable progress

Regular and detailed monitoring of the work of subcontracted providers is giving managers a much better indication of the quality of provision. This and information gathered from observations of teaching, learning and assessment are helping managers and subcontracted providers to take action to improve front-line practice.

Inspectors sampled a small number of learning plans from a few courses. In the majority of cases learners' targets were specific to individual learners and reflected their goals and aspirations well. Most targets identify well the specific skills that learners are seeking to acquire. In a minority of cases targets are not sufficiently clear or measurable. In these instances it is difficult for managers to judge securely the extent to which learners are achieving their personal goals.

What progress is the council making in collecting information about learners' destinations on completion of their course?

Reasonable progress

Managers have strengthened arrangements for tracking how well learners progress onto other courses and into employment. Subcontracted providers are now required to track learners' destinations at three, six and nine months once they have completed their course. This improvement is in the early stages of implementation and it is too soon to judge its effectiveness.

Managers are collecting data on the destinations of learners from the different types of provision once they have completed their courses. The proportion of learners whose destinations are known has improved to approximately 60% of those who left in the previous academic year. Data show that overall around 57% of learners progressed to employment or full- and part-time education. Where learners have not progressed into further learning or employment, staff offer additional information, advice and guidance on their next steps.

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