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Ms Gill Meyne  
Community Learning Consultant  
Brighton and Hove City Council  
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Dear Ms Meyne

### **Short inspection of Brighton and Hove City Council**

Following my visit on 13–14 January 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in February 2010.

#### **This provider continues to be good.**

Since the previous inspection, Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC)'s provision has changed significantly. You have reviewed and changed the curriculum to enable the most disaffected adults to participate in learning, against a backdrop of reduced funding and a much smaller team of managers and tutors. Through the outstanding partnerships noted at the previous inspection, you now offer more courses taught collaboratively with specialist organisations and professionals. This year, senior leaders gave responsibility for managing the curriculum, teaching staff and safeguarding to a partner provider: the Friends Centre. This has increased your capacity to run joint tutor training events and to offer learners a wider range of courses across both organisations, and brought financial benefits through sharing back-office functions, such as those for information technology and collecting fees.

You have taken successful action to address almost all the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. You strengthened the initial advice and guidance given by tutors and the outreach worker. They now ensure that individual learners' needs are met fully within lessons. Learners participate enthusiastically in lessons and satisfaction rates are exceptionally high. You introduced away-days to involve tutors more in self-assessment and reviewing progress towards actions in the development plan. Arrangements for managing tutors' performance and observing their teaching have been enhanced since September 2015 but it is too early to judge

their effectiveness. Managers have not yet linked tutors' areas for improvement identified during lesson observations with staff training plans, which was an area for improvement at the previous inspection.

Learners continue to achieve well, and for learners with disabilities and/or learning difficulties this is outstanding. Learners make good progress in achieving their learning and personal development goals. They become confident and positive about learning, with the majority progressing onto further courses with BHCC. You are in the early stages of gathering data about learners' destinations after they finish their studies.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and managers ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and take effective action to safeguard learners. They collaborate productively with partners, such as schools and children's centres, to identify vulnerable learners and ensure their safety and well-being. They carry out suitable risk assessments of learning venues. Leaders and managers share expertise and policies productively with the Friends Centre. Tutors and staff received recent safeguarding training which included their responsibilities under the 'Prevent' duty. They know what to do if they have concerns about learners or their children. However, tutors do not promote the dangers of radicalisation and extremism sufficiently during lessons or with learners.

### **Inspection findings**

- Managers have a clear strategy and rationale for the curriculum. The many short-duration taster courses on offer provide good progression routes onto family learning and 'moving on' courses. A very high, and increasing, proportion of adults with few or no qualifications and/or those on a low income enrol on BHCC courses.
- Managers plan courses exceptionally well and, where possible, eliminate potential barriers to learners' participation. Learners can access courses across a wide range of convenient community venues, many of which offer free crèche facilities. Managers listen to learners' and partners' feedback carefully when planning courses, locations, subjects, and start and finish times.
- Partnership working continues to be outstanding. Managers collaborate productively with external organisations to tailor courses that improve learners' opportunities for employment and volunteering. This has helped a group of homeless learners to gain food hygiene qualifications so they can volunteer in a community kitchen.
- Senior leaders and managers judge the effectiveness of the provision thoroughly and know what needs to improve. They have ambitious plans for improvement and the significant changes made this year were introduced smoothly. Managers and tutors review frequently whether their improvement actions are effective, taking alternative steps where needed.

- When observing tutors teaching lessons, managers do not identify sufficiently the areas requiring improvement. This impedes their ability to focus tutor training on the less effective aspects of teaching. Not all observers take sufficient account of learners' attendance or progress when judging the quality of lessons.
- Tutors plan lessons very effectively. They use a wide variety of interesting learning activities to involve learners fully within lessons. Learners are enthusiastic about learning and make good progress.
- Family learning tutors use the results of initial discussions with learners well to identify appropriate topics and learning goals. This helps parents develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to support their own children's development.
- Tutors do not always record the results of learners' English and mathematics diagnostic assessments or use these to develop individual learning targets. Learners are not always clear about the progress they are making in English and mathematics because tutors rarely record this.
- Learners receive good advice and guidance, particularly on longer courses. This helps them to identify clear progression and career opportunities. The majority of learners progress from introductory courses onto family learning, English and mathematics, and/or additional short courses.
- Learners' achievement is good. The vast majority of learners achieve their course and personal goals successfully. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve outstandingly. Almost all learners make good, or better, progress based on their starting points. However, managers do not gather and analyse data about the majority of learners' destinations after they finish their learning with BHCC.
- Achievement by the few learners who take English functional skills courses requires improvement. Too many learners make slow progress, leave their course before it finishes or do not attend regularly. Managers have not taken sufficiently effective or swift action to rectify this.

### **Next steps for the provider**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- managers agree challenging and precise development points with tutors following their observations of lessons to further improve the quality of teaching and learning, and to eliminate underperformance
- managers gather data about learners' destinations more systematically so that they can judge the success, suitability and impact of the courses offered
- managers review the structure and content of the English functional skills course and take more informed and swift action to improve learners' attendance, progress and achievement
- tutors incorporate the risks of extremism and radicalisation more overtly within lessons to raise learners' awareness of, and ability to protect themselves from, these risks.

I am copying this letter to the Skills Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Janet Rodgers  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Ofsted Inspector assisted by you, the Community Learning Consultant, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors met with managers, staff, partners and learners and looked at past and current work. They observed lessons. Inspectors reviewed key documents including those related to self-assessment, quality improvement plans, learners' achievements and safeguarding.