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18 July 2016

Ms Jennie Lavis  
Head of Adult and Community Learning Service  
5 Pancras Square  
Camden  
London  
N1C 4AG

Dear Ms Lavis

### **Short inspection of Camden Adult and Community Learning Service**

Following the short inspection on 8 and 9 June 2016, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since the provider was judged to be good in May 2011.

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

Leaders and managers have maintained the strengths identified at the previous inspection and ensured that the majority of the main areas for improvement have been effectively resolved. Learners continue to achieve good outcomes. A high proportion of learners complete their courses successfully and develop skills and knowledge that help them achieve their goals. Many improve their self-confidence and develop a thirst for learning. Parents gain confidence in supporting their children's schoolwork. Learners are effectively supported to develop their English, mathematical and digital skills, which improves their life chances well.

Senior leaders have a clear vision for adult learning. The courses taught and adults worked with reflect well the local authority's priorities for local residents, such as supporting maternal employment and the educational achievement of White British children. Senior leaders are involved well in scrutinising the performance of the service and have good, detailed knowledge of its strengths and areas for further improvement. They hold managers to account effectively. This and the effective action taken by managers have maintained a good standard of provision since the previous inspection five years ago.

Managers have developed a thoughtful and purposeful culture where they secure timely improvements through close working with a wide range of partners and subcontracted providers. Managers closely monitor the performance of subcontracted providers and use data effectively to identify any areas of underperformance. Typically, the relationship between managers and partners is

both challenging and supportive. Managers use their expertise well to help smaller, community-based providers meet the high standards they require.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team ensures that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and effective action is taken to safeguard learners. When selecting new staff or volunteers, managers employ safe recruitment and selection practices and ensure that all pre-employment checks on candidates' suitability are undertaken. Managers are working effectively to implement arrangements to prevent radicalisation and extremism and to promote British values. The awareness of learners has been raised by, for example, including these topics in learners' induction onto courses. Tutors create learning environments that help learners develop a better understanding of people from cultures and backgrounds that are different from their own. When learners need additional support to protect their welfare, managers and tutors act promptly and effectively to do so. Learners feel safe where they attend courses.

Managers understand the importance of thorough risk assessments prior to developing new provision with more vulnerable learners and put in place actions to ensure that new programmes are embarked on safely. Managers maintain a record of safeguarding incidents, and safeguarding practice is regularly reviewed when they monitor the performance of subcontracted providers. However, on the central record of safeguarding concerns, managers do not fully capture those incidents that occur in partner organisations. This inhibits their ability to identify common themes that may need resolving through, for example, staff training and development activities.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders and managers are successful in implementing strategies that engage new learners, including those who experience disadvantage and are furthest away from employment. Managers have highly effective relationships with a wide range of partners. This ensures that provision is coordinated well between providers, and that hard-to-reach groups such as female ex-offenders and those who suffer poor mental health participate in learning. A high proportion of learners are new to learning each year and managers consistently recruit a high proportion of learners from the most disadvantaged areas of the borough. However, managers' analysis of how well specific target groups participate in, and benefit from, learning is more limited. For example, the proportions of key groups who participate in learning such as those with mental ill-health are not monitored sufficiently well. This inhibits managers from gaining a more detailed understanding of how successful aspects of their strategies are.

- At the previous inspection, teaching and learning were judged to be satisfactory. Managers take effective action to assure the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Observations of teaching, learning and assessment undertaken by managers are thorough and accurate. During joint lesson observations undertaken with inspectors, managers accurately identified the strengths and areas for improvement in teaching, learning and assessment. They analyse well the findings from observations of teaching, learning and assessment and use these effectively to support the professional development of tutors. Where subcontracted partners undertake their own observations, these are scrutinised at monitoring meetings and areas for concern are dealt with effectively. As a result, learners benefit from improved teaching.
- Tutors use initial assessments of learners' abilities well to plan learning. Tutors use clear targets to inform their teaching and ensure that learners develop their skills and knowledge effectively. Tutors support learners well to develop a good range of skills in addition to the main topic of their course. English and mathematical skills are integrated well in sessions. For example, learners develop measurement and calculation skills in sewing classes, and poetry learners develop their presentation skills well.
- During the previous academic year, managers identified that outcomes for learners on courses supporting adults in developing their basic skills had declined. As a result, managers recommissioned provision so that outcomes for learners improved. This strategy is proving successful. The provider's data shows improvements in the proportion of learners who complete courses, and their achievement and pass rates. Managers use robust processes to monitor the effectiveness of courses. Termly monitoring meetings with subcontracted providers ensure a detailed overview of the quality of the delivery and the progress being made against targets.
- At the previous inspection, managers did not use data on the next steps that learners make once they have completed courses sufficiently to analyse the performance of the service. Managers have made reasonable progress in tackling this area for improvement but they have more to do. Where data and information are available, they show that most learners choose, or intend, to study further, enter employment or take up volunteering opportunities. Managers have developed a wide range of criteria to assess where learners go once they have completed their course. These include learners moving into employment, further learning and training; other measures capture the personal gains that learners make. However, these are not yet collated across the service so that they can be used to inform curriculum planning further.
- At the previous inspection, the use of learners' views to support the development of provision was identified as an area for improvement. Managers and tutors are highly responsive to learners' suggestions for improvements in provision and use a wide range of mechanisms to gather feedback from learners. This had led to improvements in the structure of a number of courses so that they better meet the needs and circumstances of learners. For example, managers have changed crèche opening times to enable learners to settle their children and get to their session on time.

- Feedback from learners has led to a significant investment in the information and communication technology available to them. Learners and volunteers have initiated and led the development of a website to be launched shortly to enable learners to work independently outside sessions and extend their learning.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the breadth of information gathered by managers on safeguarding incidents is comprehensive, so that they can better identify and analyse trends to inform planning and the training of staff
- data is collected on the participation and outcomes of key target groups, to help review and plan provision
- the progression of learners is more comprehensively captured, so that the impact of the provision on learners can be fully assessed.

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

Yours sincerely

Jon Bowman HMI

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two Ofsted Inspectors were assisted by the service manager for Camden Adult Community Learning Service, as nominee. We met with you, senior leaders, managers, tutors and learners. We carried out lesson observations, and took account of the most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. We used group and individual interviews and telephone calls to gather the views of learners and staff. We scrutinised data and information on the performance of the service, and reviewed schemes of work, lesson plans, key policy documents and records of safeguarding concerns.