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Ms Karen Bhamra
Service Manager
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Dear Ms Bhamra

Short inspection of Harrow Adult Community and Family Learning Service

Following the short inspection on 27 and 28 September 2017, 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 service was judged to be good in October 2013.

This provider continues to be good.

Learners continue to receive good-quality education. A high proportion achieve their qualifications, course aims and personal goals. They raise their own expectations of what they can achieve, and are well supported to progress to further learning, volunteering or employment. Many develop their personal and social skills well, helping them into employment and improving their confidence and capacity within their families and local communities. Learners very much enjoy their studies and feel safe in their community venues. Their behaviour and attitudes to work are very good. Attendance and punctuality are good.

The service is now in the directorate of regeneration, enterprise and planning, as part of the economic development and enterprise division. This formal link between adult and community learning and employment and enterprise has proved to be a positive change. As a significant strategy to expand provision where it is most needed, especially in parts of harder to reach local communities, the service is contracting more with smaller specialist providers. In order to improve the quality of provision further, managers have reduced the number of its subcontracting partners and have increased the service's own directly delivered provision.

Managers have paid good attention to addressing the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Using increasingly rigorous quality assurance, they have worked well to improve teaching, learning and assessment and outcomes further.

Learners across the range of provision make good progress. At the start of their programmes tutors help them to settle in and to gain confidence, through a variety of well-judged and thoughtfully-led classroom activities. Learners get off to a confident start, get to know their peers and practise new skills.

At the time of the inspection, the first week of learners' courses, tutors ensured that target-setting for learners was quickly underway. Learners had already identified general academic learning targets based on what they would like to achieve during their course.

Tutors increasingly use information learning technology (ILT) well in lessons and create opportunities for learners to engage with technology. For example, learners carry out small research tasks using their smartphones, or record photographs of group and pair work so that they can reflect on their own learning. However, not all learners develop their skills and confidence in digital literacy sufficiently to support higher-level learning or employment opportunities.

Information, advice and guidance for learners are now good. They are supported well at all stages of their courses.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements continue to be effective for your learners. Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have ensured that the service's response to changes in safeguarding, and to national priorities, is timely and effective. This includes meeting the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty. Managers make sure that safeguarding duties are clearly set out in agreements with subcontractors. Implementation by subcontractors is carefully monitored as part of your quality assurance arrangements.

The service's very close work with those other parts of the council responsible for wider safeguarding issues is of particular benefit to learners. This expert knowledge is used well in the best interests of learners. This has been especially evident and valuable with the introduction of the 'Prevent' duty.

The council's 'Prevent' lead officer ensures that the service is up to speed, and held to account, in its implementation of the 'Prevent' duty. Staff and learners have been introduced to the key aspects, including the risks of extremism and radicalisation. Inspectors noted the effective induction of learners during their first week of studies to aspects of safeguarding and British values.

Inspection findings

- Leaders and managers have made good use of the opportunities presented by the relocation of the service within a new directorate. The service has a higher profile

within its local communities. Opportunities for learners have increased and advice and guidance, especially in relation to employment, are now good.

- Learners following accredited and non-accredited programmes largely achieve well. However, achievement is not consistently high. Too many learners are unsuccessful on their accredited courses in functional skills mathematics and on non-accredited courses for ESOL.
- Learners continue to benefit from good-quality teaching, learning and assessment, leading to good standards of work and good progress. Tutors often plan and teach their lessons well, although there are too few examples of innovative approaches to enliven teaching and to maximise learning, including the best use of digital technologies, or to address all learners' individual needs.
- The majority of tutors now plan well for, and integrate effectively, the further development of learners' English and mathematics skills within their main courses of study. However, as managers recognise from their own observations of teaching, more work is required to ensure that all tutors pay sufficient attention to this skills development.
- Leaders and managers have ensured that quality assurance arrangements, newly introduced at the time of the previous inspection, are now very effective in securing improvement. They understand which aspects of the service's work still require improvement and use data well to track and measure performance.
- Leaders and managers ensure that the management and quality assurance of subcontracting partners are good, helping to promote learners' good achievements.

Next steps for the provider

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teaching and learning continue to improve, building fully on the best practice of tutors, to consistently meet the needs of all learners in lessons and to maximise learning through the best use of ILT, and securing consistently good integration of English and mathematics in all lessons
- achievement rates improve in the small minority of poorly performing courses, by fully implementing the improvement plans already in train.

Yours sincerely

David Martin

Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, inspectors were assisted by you, as nominee. We met with your management team, tutors, learners and councillors. Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment, and reviewed learners' work. We reviewed key policies and documents, including those relating to self-assessment, performance and safeguarding. We also considered the views of learners.