

# Inspection of Richmond Upon Thames Borough Council

Inspection dates: 12–13 and 24 February 2020

## Overall effectiveness

**Inadequate**

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The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Inadequate</b>
Adult learning programmes	<b>Inadequate</b>
Apprenticeships	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Good

## Information about this provider

Richmond Upon Thames Borough Council provides adult and community learning (ACL) courses and apprenticeships. Managers subcontract the delivery of all the ACL provision to around 20 organisations across the borough. At the time of the inspection, the borough had 217 learners enrolled on a range of ACL programmes, including family learning, employability, functional skills qualifications and well-being courses.

The borough subcontracts its apprenticeship provision to Achieving for Children (AfC). AfC is a community interest company, which also contracts with other local London boroughs. At the time of the inspection, there were 106 apprentices studying a range of apprenticeship standards and frameworks from levels 2 to 5 in subjects including children and young people's workforce, customer service, business administration, and supporting teaching and learning in schools.

## **What is it like to be a learner with this provider?**

Adults have a narrow range of community learning provision available to them. The courses offered do not address local and regional adult learning priorities sufficiently.

Adult learners find that the courses that are offered are beneficial. For example, adults who might otherwise be socially isolated are able to attend leisure-based courses. These courses enable them to meet and interact with others and avoid possible anxiety or depression.

Apprentices acquire the knowledge, skills and behaviours they need to succeed on their programme and most achieve their qualification. They are committed to their studies and participate fully in classroom and workplace learning activities. They receive good support from assessors, who help them grow in self-confidence and make good progress.

Apprentices receive high-quality, impartial careers advice and guidance. This helps them to consider their career options should they choose not to remain with their employer once they have completed the programme. Adult learners, by contrast, do not receive adequate guidance on what options they have on completion of their course.

Adult learners broadly indicate that they feel safe. However, a high proportion are not sure whom they should contact if they have any concerns about issues such as harassment or personal safety.

## **What does the provider do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders and managers run the ACL provision completely separately from the apprenticeship provision. Leadership, management and governance arrangements for the apprenticeship provision, delivered by AfC, are sound. They help to ensure that the quality of the apprenticeship programme is good and that apprentices rightly feel safe. In stark contrast, the leadership, management and governance of the ACL provision are inadequate and safeguarding arrangements are ineffective.

Leaders and governors of the ACL provision do not have a clear curriculum strategy in place for community learning. Much of the ACL provision provides good opportunities for more vulnerable members of the local community. Through subcontracting arrangements, managers have set up classes in the heart of the community. However, neither managers nor the teachers can explain how the courses link to local employment opportunities. Leaders do not consider or promote potential progression routes, for example between ACL employability courses and the apprenticeship programme. Managers and governors do not consider in enough detail London-wide priorities, such as those outlined in the Greater London Authority's skills strategy.

Managers of the ACL provision do not maintain a close overview of the day-to-day management and delivery of the subcontracted provision. They have very limited measures in place to oversee its content, quality or effectiveness. For example, managers are unaware of when subcontractors timetable lessons. They do not monitor attendance closely, which is too low in many lessons. They have limited oversight of the quality of the provision. Managers do not ensure that staff at subcontractors recruit the most suitable learners. They do not check that teachers know enough about why learners are enrolled on courses or identify their long-term aims. Consequently, they do not set learners meaningful targets or monitor and review their progress. As a result, neither subcontractor staff nor managers can confirm in detail what learners achieve from their programme.

Managers of the ACL provision do too little to promote a culture among teachers of continuing professional development. They create few opportunities for managers or teachers from the different subcontractors to share ideas or good practice. Managers do not ensure that subcontractors promote the 'Prevent' duty or British values sufficiently.

Governance arrangements for the ACL provision are ineffective. The board does not have the breadth of expertise it requires to carry out its function effectively. It meets too infrequently and the level and depth of discussions at the meetings are superficial. Members have only limited understanding or oversight of the strategic objectives or quality of the ACL provision. They have not received adequate training on safeguarding, and do not understand their safeguarding responsibilities.

By contrast, managers of the apprenticeship programme build valuable and positive relationships with employers. Apprentices have good working relationships with their employers. Assessors set clear expectations of apprentices and employers at the beginning of the programme. They carefully assess the knowledge and experience apprentices have at the start of the programme. They use this information to place apprentices on the most appropriate programme to meet their intended goals. Assessors provide helpful verbal and written feedback to apprentices. This helps apprentices learn from any mistakes they make, so that they can improve the standard of their work.

Assessors skilfully adapt the structure and timing of each part of the apprenticeship programme so that it meets the apprentices' needs. They link effectively with employers. This helps to ensure that assessors and tutors deliver new knowledge and skills at a time when the apprentice can practise and deploy their new skills in a work setting.

Assessors provide valuable additional support, for example for those learners with mental health concerns or restricted mobility. Assessors work closely with employers and the apprentices to help widen participation and ensure that no learner is at a disadvantage. As a result, all learners have the same opportunity to achieve.

Assessors provide good pastoral support and help apprentices develop their wider life skills. For example, assessors help apprentices develop personal budget planning skills, so that they can survive comfortably on an apprenticeship salary.

Many apprentices who have completed their final assessment have achieved well. As a result, most either stay with their existing employer or successfully progress to an appropriate alternative employer.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are ineffective.

Managers of the ACL provision do not ensure that subcontractors fulfil their contractual requirements in relation to safeguarding learners. For example, managers cannot confirm that subcontractors carry out suitable pre-employment checks on teachers to help assure the safety and welfare of learners. They cannot confirm whether staff at the subcontractors have received suitable training on safeguarding or the 'Prevent' agenda. They do not check what actions subcontractors take to make learners aware of the risks associated with extremism and radicalisation.

In contrast, leaders, managers and governors of the apprenticeship programme take appropriate steps to safeguard the welfare of apprentices. For example, they carry out suitable pre-employment checks of staff. They liaise with employers to raise apprentices' awareness of suitable health and safety practice in the workplace. They ensure that learners are aware of how to keep themselves safe online.

## **What does the provider need to do to improve?**

- Senior leaders should thoroughly review and update safeguarding arrangements. They should provide suitable training to staff and governors, so that they understand their safeguarding responsibilities and can implement an appropriate approach to safeguarding.
- Senior leaders within the local authority should carry out a review of the leadership and management arrangements of the apprenticeship and ACL provision. Managers should:
  - draw up a clear strategy for adult provision across the borough, to help address local, regional and London-wide priorities, and target those members of the community who will benefit most from the provision
  - intensify the focus on the quality of education delivered by the subcontractors
  - consider strategies for developing good practice among teachers and promoting opportunities for the professional development of staff
  - introduce effective and timely contract management processes to monitor the performance of subcontractors

- review and identify potential progression opportunities for learners from employability programmes to apprenticeships or employment, and increase the level of advice and guidance they receive about their possible next steps.
- ACL managers should work with teachers to:
  - devise strategies to improve and track attendance rates in lessons
  - introduce a more thorough process for identifying learners’ aspirations and abilities, so they can place them on the most appropriate course
  - assess learners’ starting points more effectively and ensure that they track and monitor learners’ progress.

## Provider details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	53144
<b>Address</b>	Civic Centre 44 York Street London TW1 3BZ
<b>Contact number</b>	0208 891 7562
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.richmond.gov.uk">www.richmond.gov.uk</a>
<b>Manager</b>	Chantelle Daniel
<b>Provider type</b>	Local authority
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 January 2016
<b>Main subcontractors</b>	Achieving for Children Action Attainment Citizens' Advice Dance West London Wildlife Trust Richmond Community Volunteer Service

## Information about this inspection

The inspection team was assisted by the head of employment and skills, as nominee for the ACL provision, and the Way2Work apprenticeship manager, as nominee for apprenticeship provision. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment reports and development plans. The inspection was carried out using the [further education and skills inspection handbook](#) and took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors collected a wide range of evidence to inform judgements including observing learning sessions, scrutinising learners' work, seeking the views of learners, staff and other stakeholders, and examining the provider's documentation and records.

## Inspection team

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