

MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of Provider: Kingston upon Thames LEA
Date of visit: 11 July 2007

Context

The Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames (RBK) offers adult and community learning through Kingston Adult Education (KAE). This monitoring visit follows the inspection in December 2004 at which KAE was graded as satisfactory for leadership and management and for its arrangements for equality of opportunity. Quality assurance was judged to be unsatisfactory. Health and social care, visual and performing arts, information and communication technology (ICT), English languages and communications and foundation programmes were judged to be satisfactory or better. Hospitality, sport and leisure and travel and family learning were judged satisfactory when reinspected in February 2006.

Achievement and standards

Has KAE maintained high overall retention and achievement rates?	Reasonable progress
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At the inspection in 2004, and the reinspection in 2006, inspectors judged retention and achievement rates to be high in most sector subject areas. This applied particularly to ICT, retail and commercial enterprise, health, public services and care, leisure, travel and tourism, and preparation for life and work. Data supplied by KAE indicates that reasonable progress is being made in maintaining high achievement and retention rates. Overall retention and achievement rates for non-accredited and accredited short and long courses are comparable to those at the previous inspection. KAE's data indicates that success rates for all courses have improved slightly between 2004-05 and 2005-06. For example, overall accredited short course success rates, at 79%, are up by 2%. However, long non-accredited course success rates have remained the same at 82%.

Quality of education and training

What progress has been made in the planning and monitoring of goals for learners?	Significant progress
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In 2004 inspectors identified weaknesses in most areas of learning in assessment, planning and monitoring to meet individual learners' needs. KAE has made significant

progress in resolving these weaknesses. Since the inspection, considerable time has been spent reviewing and developing individual learning plan paperwork. It now meets the needs of particular groups of learners. In childcare, the new individual learning plan includes sections for setting individual learning goals and recording learners' progress. The plans are updated each week and are a useful tool for setting and monitoring targets. Staff are now better able to define individual targets that are achievable and measurable. In English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programmes, learners are now more involved in initially assessing their current knowledge and setting their own learning targets. Initial assessment on ICT programmes has also been improved and tutors have better information about learners' prior knowledge and skills. Staff confidence in recognising and recording progress and achievement is increasing.

Leadership and management

Have the mechanisms for sharing good practice improved?	Significant progress
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At the previous full inspection inspectors identified the weakness of insufficient sharing of good practice across and within curriculum areas. KAE has made significant progress in highlighting the purpose and importance of sharing good practice. Managers set clear direction and ensure that good practice is used to improve the quality of teaching and learning. For example, workshops are held where tutors can bring their teaching and learning ideas to share with others, new tutors are mentored, and DVDs are available for learners to take home to learn correct movement and techniques. Exemplars of course reviews provide a useful guide for course managers to assess the quality of their curriculum area. Course reviews and lesson observations are also used to identify good practice.

What progress has been made in developing the system for lesson observations?	Significant progress
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At the previous full inspection, the lesson observation scheme was not adequate as a means of effectively raising standards. The feedback related mainly to teaching and paperwork. The observation scheme did not focus sufficiently on learners' individual needs, attainment or progress. Since the previous inspection, KAE has made significant progress in reviewing and improving the paperwork used to record observations of teaching and learning. The new paperwork directs the observer to make judgements on learning. Observers are effectively implementing these new aspects. An annual moderation meeting takes place at which grades, qualitative information and judgements are discussed and compared. KAE decided not to disclose lesson grades to the tutors to emphasise the developmental aspects of the process. Much thought has been given to making the best use of the information from observations to identify themes for staff development, to contribute to self-assessment, to increase managers' knowledge of the curriculum, to identify teachers' particular skills, and to collect learner feedback.

Has the self-assessment process, and report and quality improvement planning, improved?	Significant progress
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In 2004, inspectors judged the self-assessment process to be mostly consultative and the report to be insufficiently critical or evaluative. The current self-assessment process and report are more consultative and evaluative. The report is clear and well structured. The systems for course reviews, tutor self-evaluation and learner evaluation are now much more effective. Course reviews are more useful as quality improvement tools. The quality improvement plan links well to the self-assessment report. The system for collecting and collating information has improved and the report contains a range of pertinent data and information, such as a useful analysis of participation and success rates by different minority ethnic groups.