

London Borough of Lambeth

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Community learning
- Family learning

Description of the provider

1. London Borough of Lambeth (LBL) holds contracts with London Central Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide adult and community learning through Lambeth adult learning service, which is located within the directorate of regeneration and housing. All provision offered by LBL is government funded. The head of adult learning reports to the director for regeneration and enterprise within the directorate. The head of adult learning is supported by four managers and a team of nine other staff with responsibilities for quality improvement, contracts, finance and administration, management information and advice and guidance. The mission of LBL in managing this provision is to extend the participation of adults in learning, widen participation, challenge prejudice and stereotyping and celebrate diversity.
2. The only direct delivery provided by the adult learning service is of short, drop-in courses in information and communications technology (ICT). Most provision is subcontracted. Much subcontracted provision is based at local colleges and is not in scope for this inspection. Family learning provision is delivered through the Education Business Partnership (EBP), which is based within the children and young people's services directorate. Some community learning provision is offered through Estate Skills Partnership (ESP) which is located within the regeneration and housing directorate. All other provision is subcontracted to community providers that offer courses at locations across the borough, particularly in community settings.
3. At the time of the inspection, there were 1642 learners, 963 of whom were enrolled on courses subcontracted to Lambeth College, and 12 who were enrolled on provision at Morley College. In addition, 128 learners were enrolled on courses for neighbourhood learning in deprived communities (NLDC) provided by four community providers. The college and NLDC provision were not inspected and graded, but were included in the overall judgements and the main findings of the report.
4. Community learning and family learning were inspected and graded. Community learning programmes had 459 learners enrolled at the time of the inspection and family learning had 80 learners.
5. Approximately 80% of the provision is non-accredited. Over the last three years, the amount of accredited provision has increased, particularly in community learning provision leading to qualifications in ICT and skills for life. In skills for life, non-accredited provision at pre-entry level enables a route into language, literacy and numeracy skills for the most disadvantaged members of the community.

6. LBL serves one of the most deprived boroughs in Britain. Lambeth has a very diverse population with over 140 languages spoken in the community. It has the largest population of the London Central boroughs, with 45% of residents aged 20-39. Currently 38% of the population, 62% of school pupils and 70% of LBL's learners are from minority ethnic groups. The unemployment rate in the borough is 9.4%, significantly higher than the national average of 5.2% and the London average of 7.7%. The unemployment rate of those with the lowest or no qualifications is well above the average for London and the national average.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Sector subject area

Community learning	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Family learning	Good: Grade 2

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

7. The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning, the extent to which programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners, and guidance and support for learners are all satisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The response to equality of opportunity is good as is the response to social inclusion. Provision in community learning is satisfactory. Provision in family learning is good.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

8. LBL has demonstrated satisfactory capacity to improve. Managers have a clear view of what still needs to be done, aided by good self-assessment. The effectiveness of steps taken to improve is satisfactory. Progress in resolving key areas for improvement has been made since the previous inspection and reinspection, including the better implementation of quality assurance systems, self-assessment, the improvement of providers' management skills and more thorough monitoring of equality of opportunity. However, much remains to be done, especially in relation to low success rates, the quality of teaching and learning and under-developed aspects of quality assurance. Overall quality assurance processes are now satisfactory. An annual cycle of activities includes a termly review of providers' performance.
9. The thoroughness and accuracy of the self-assessment report process are good. The process of generating evidence and writing the report is inclusive. Providers carry out self-assessments, based on course reviews, and findings in their reports are moderated at providers' meetings and by the head of adult learning. Inspectors agreed with most of the judgements and grades in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- Good development of learners' skills and confidence on many courses
- Good access to programmes in community locations
- Good support for community providers to improve quality of provision
- Good leadership and close working with providers
- Good promotion and monitoring of equality and diversity
- Successful family learning provision
- Good self-assessment

Key areas for improvement

- Success rates on accredited provision
- Planning of progression routes
- Reviewing and recording of learning
- Use of management information
- Use of quality improvement arrangements to improve teaching and learning

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

10. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Self-assessment accurately identifies the key areas for improvement, and appropriate action is being taken although progress is slow.
11. The skills and confidence of learners are developed well. Many learners are from under-represented groups and are engaged in learning for the first time. Learners' work is generally of a good standard, and is particularly impressive in some programmes for targeted groups in NLDC provision. In family learning, achievements are good and many learners progress to further education or employment.
12. Retention rates on accredited courses are satisfactory and improving, although some community providers still have low retention rates. Success rates on accredited courses, which account for 20% of the provision, are low but improving. In 2004-05 success rates were at 30%, they improved to 53% in 2005-06.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

13. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Inspectors carrying out lesson observations alongside LBL observers generally agreed with their judgements and grading. The proportion of good and outstanding teaching, identified through internal observations is low, at 40% in 2005-06. Insufficient use is made of quality improvement arrangements to improve teaching and learning. Some teaching is good, particularly in family learning. However, too much teaching, particularly in community learning, is planned for whole group learning rather than to meet to individual learners' needs.
14. The approach to meeting the needs and interests of learners is satisfactory. Courses are offered from pre-entry to level 2. Highly effective partnerships provide some innovative programmes to engage people from under-represented groups. LBL works effectively with community and voluntary organisations and to meet the needs of disadvantaged communities. The delivery and location of community and family learning provision are responsive to the needs of learners. LBL has established good partnership working with libraries, prisons and the Probation Service, schools and other directorates in LBL. The range of non-accredited programmes, however, is limited and provision is generally fragmented into discrete programmes with insufficient planning to enable learners to progress. LBL gives insufficient focus to the development of learners' employment skills. However, some courses provided in the community for disadvantaged

groups achieve good progression into further learning and work, and progression from family learning is good. Links with employers are satisfactory.

15. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. LBL provides impartial advice and guidance to prospective learners. Induction arrangements are satisfactory. Initial assessment is used to identify individual support requirements accurately. A good range of specialist equipment for those with learning difficulties and disabilities is provided. Arrangements for providing additional support have improved but remain insufficient. They are effective in family learning where tutors give good individual support and volunteers are used effectively. Arrangements to support learners in personal and social matters are highly effective. Extensive liaison with a wide range of agencies provides support with counselling, health, finance and housing. Arrangements for childcare are satisfactory, but places are limited.
16. Self-assessment is used well to identify areas for improvement and plan appropriate actions to address concerns, although taking of action has been to slow in some areas.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

17. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The adult learning service is regarded by LBL managers as an important part of the work of the borough council. The clear direction of the service, noted at the previous inspection, continues. Strategic planning and development of adult learning and preparation for employment are closely linked with the overall strategies of the borough. Ongoing review and evaluation of the work of the service and its contracting arrangements are appropriately focused.
18. Managers provide good leadership. Clarity of management and sound organisational structures support the service's work. The policy for skills for life is appropriate. The management of literacy, language and numeracy provision and support for learners is satisfactory. Managers are clear about what needs to be done to improve the provision and LBL is making progress in resolving key weaknesses. For example, the framework for quality assurance is now comprehensive, and the process of observing teaching and learning is improved.

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19. The process of self-assessment is thorough and inclusive. The self-assessment report is largely accurate. Self-assessment is used well as a tool for improvement. Providers' management skills have improved. The monitoring of equality of opportunity is thorough. However, there are some outstanding issues. For example, success rates for accredited qualifications have improved, but remain low. Management data is still used insufficiently and learners' achievement and success data is often inaccurate. Some of the processes of quality assurance are not applied consistently or effectively. Arrangements for recognising and recording progress and achievement are poorly implemented.
 20. The management of subcontractors, including their delivery of the curriculum, is satisfactory. Close working with providers is effectively improving their performance, though this is still weak for some. Community providers less experienced in the provision of adult and community learning are helped to develop their management capacity and skills. Curriculum management support provided by LBL is insufficient in some areas.
 21. A new management information system is being introduced. It is not yet used effectively to analyse learners' success and achievement. Data given to inspectors during the inspection was often unreliable.
 22. Quality assurance is satisfactory. Well recorded procedures are in place including an annual cycle of review and assessment and termly reviews of providers' performance. Course review and action-planning is increasingly well executed, but is not completed to a consistent standard by all providers.
 23. Provision for equality of opportunity is good. LBL has worked well since the previous inspection to address weaknesses. Providers are fully included in action-planning for equality and diversity. Data is thoroughly analysed and used to inform planning. The diverse range of the providers encourages participation from under-represented groups. Provision reflects well the diversity of the population of Lambeth. LBL meets its statutory obligations for equality and diversity.
 24. LBL's arrangements for achieving the outcomes of Every Child Matters are satisfactory. There is clear understanding by staff of these outcomes. Courses have been well planned to promote healthy and safe living. The provision gives learners the opportunity to contribute better to the community through improved social and economic well-being.

What learners like

- Improving self-esteem - "I feel better about myself"
- Improving personal effectiveness - gaining confidence, social skills and making friends
- Improving skills for life - being able to use numeracy skills to avoid being overcharged
- The personal support - friendly and supportive staff
- The location of learning - the local venues

What learners think improve:

- The range of programmes - more provision and longer sessions
- The opportunity to progress - more courses to progress in the same location

Sector subject areas

Community learning

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

25. LBL subcontracts much of the provision to community providers. At the time of inspection, 54 part-time courses offered provision from pre-entry to level 2. Of the 459 learners enrolled, 101 were learning English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), 81 were on literacy and numeracy courses, fifty-five were on visual and performing arts courses and 222 were taking ICT classes. Approximately 75% of learners were working towards national qualifications. Learners attend between two and ten hours a week. Thirty-three tutors are supported by two curriculum co-ordinators employed by LBL.

Strengths

- Good development of learners' skills and confidence on many courses
- Good access to programmes in community locations
- Good support for community providers to improve quality of provision

Areas for improvement

- Poor achievement of qualifications
- Insufficient planning for individuals' progress
- Weak reviewing and recording of learning

Achievement and standards

26. The development of learners' skills and confidence on many courses is good. The programmes provide many learners with a good re-introduction to learning. Many learners quickly develop useful computing skills required at work, or to help them gain a job or catch up with their children. Learners on ESOL programmes pick up useful vocabulary and phrases and develop listening skills well. Learners on literacy and numeracy courses develop useful practical skills that they had previously failed to grasp. Learners on most courses provide good peer support in lessons and become more effective in their daily lives. Many of the targets set for individual learners on non-accredited programmes are not measurable or sufficiently challenging.

27. Retention rates at many centres have improved significantly and are now satisfactory. Attendance rates have improved since 2004-05 and are satisfactory. However, learners' progression is not effectively monitored.

28. Achievement of qualifications is poor. Few learners successfully complete qualifications, particularly in skills for life. In 2006-07, success rates are well below 50% on many completed courses. Success rates in ICT are satisfactory, especially where learners achieve modules or units of qualifications. However, many of these learners would prefer to have the opportunity to complete the full qualification.

Quality of provision

29. The range of provision is satisfactory. Learners have good access to programmes in community locations. LBL focuses well on developing provision in deprived communities to attract disadvantaged learners. Courses are provided at key sites, such as housing estates, at times compatible with learners' employment and domestic commitments. Most programmes recruit well. Innovative provision includes a course that combines the development of literacy with music technology projects. However, much of the provision is comprised of discrete literacy, numeracy, ESOL and ICT programmes. Few programmes help learners develop a sufficient range of employability skills.
30. Resources are satisfactory. Some learning environments are good, but some classrooms are too small. Most of the ICT equipment is at industry standards, although the software used at some venues is out of date. Some tutors have developed good visual learning aids, but many tutors rely too much on using paper-based materials which have little relevance to earners' everyday lives. ICT is used well in literacy and numeracy, but is insufficiently used in ESOL provision.
31. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Tutors and staff are very supportive and welcoming. Learners receive a useful induction and gain an appropriate awareness of safe working practices. Arrangements for initial assessment are satisfactory. Learners receive satisfactory guidance to help them select courses, but some learners do not receive sufficient guidance in planning progression routes.
32. Overall teaching and learning are inadequate. Although some teaching is good, where teaching is planned for whole group sessions there is often insufficient planning to fully support individual progress. Many tutors do not use information collected at interview or in initial assessments effectively to plan learning. Many tutors do not use an adequate range of approaches to meet the different needs of learners, especially in classes with learners working at different levels or with learners preferring widely different approaches to learning. Too much teaching is based on following the requirements of accreditation or pre-set schemes of work. Many learning activities are not set in contexts meaningful to the learners. However, in the best classes, tutors use a good range of teaching strategies and learning activities effectively. Course content supports the outcomes for Every Child Matters. For example, young offenders recruited onto courses are being enabled to progress into further learning.

33. The recording and reviewing of learning is weak. Although some tutors make good use of individual learning plans to record learners' goals and review their progress effectively, many targets set for learners' are not measurable and are not used adequately to plan or assess learning. Many tutors are not routinely using LBL's systems to review and record learners' progress. Assessments on some courses are primarily linked to accreditation schemes and learners do not get sufficient feedback on their progress towards their individual goals. Staff training events to develop these skills are poorly attended.

Leadership and management

34. Managers work well with community providers to improve the quality of provision. Many aspects of provision, such as attendance, are monitored effectively. Retention rates have improved at most centres. Managers make good use of monthly network meetings to share good practice to improve and develop provision. The monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning has improved, but the process is slow in raising standards. Self-assessment has been developed well. Inspectors' findings match most of the judgements in the recent self-assessment report.

35. LBL's strategy to place learning centres where they are most needed is particularly effective in enabling disadvantaged learners to access programmes. Close proximity of centres to learners is a vital factor in maintaining satisfactory recruitment and attendance.

36. Equality of opportunity is promoted well in community learning. Providers receive good support to develop and implement equal opportunities policies. Good use is made of funding to make facilities more accessible and to purchase specialist equipment for those with learning difficulties and disabilities. A few tutors promote diversity very effectively in learning sessions.

Family learning

Good: Grade 2

Context

37. Family learning provision is managed and co-ordinated by the Education Business Partnership (EBP) which is located within the directorate of children and young people's services of LBL. At the time of the inspection, 80 learners were enrolled. Provision is predominantly family language, literacy and numeracy (FLLN) courses with a small wider family learning provision. Courses vary from two hours to twelve weeks and are delivered mainly in primary schools and community centres across the borough. A high proportion of learners are from minority ethnic groups.

Strengths

- Good achievement of learners' personal goals
- Good progression
- Good teaching and learning
- Good range of courses to meet learner needs
- Good leadership and management of provision

Areas for improvement

- Inconsistent recording of learners' progress and achievement

Achievement and standards

38. Achievement and standards are good. Achievement of learners' personal goals is good. Learners gain confidence and develop good personal skills. Learners, many of whom are new arrivals to the country, gain the confidence and skills necessary to enhance their own and their children's learning. Increased confidence has enabled some learners to re-enter learning and to take a more active part in their own children's schooling. Returning to learning is having a positive impact on family life through shared activities. One learner, with poor English skills, received good support that enabled her and her family to adjust to a new environment and schooling. Teachers in schools reported an increase in self-esteem and achievement of children of learners on family learning programmes. Head teachers of schools with family learning courses identified marked improvements in pupils' speaking and listening skills.

39. Good opportunities for accreditation are available for learners who wish to enter for national literacy, numeracy and ICT tests. In 2005-06, 53 learners, many of whom were being recent arrivals to the country, achieved a range of credits.
40. Learners make good progression on the family learning programmes. Many learners progress into employment or further learning. Some now work as learning assistants or tutors and one is employed as a manager by EBP. Several learners have progressed to higher education.

Quality of provision

41. Teaching and learning are good. All sessions observed during the inspection were judged to be good. Lessons are well planned and include a variety of stimulating and fun activities that engage and motivate learners. Learners develop positive attitudes to their own learning and that of their children. Tutors are enthusiastic and well prepared and they bring a variety of contextual experience to their lessons. Learners are encouraged to reflect on their own and their children's learning and to continue activities at home. In all sessions observed, the teaching materials used, particularly hand-outs, were clear, relevant and informative.
42. A good range of courses meets learners' needs. Courses range from short taster courses to longer FLLN and wider family learning courses. The courses are delivered in a range of suitable locations including primary and nursery schools and community centres on housing estates. Programmes are targeted at new learners and those who would not normally access more traditional provision at formal educational venues. The family learning team evaluate and review the provision offered to seek new ways of accessing hard to reach learners.
43. Guidance and support are good. While on the course, learners are given good advice on progression opportunities by tutors supplemented by talks by guest speakers. Visits to local colleges and careers guidance centres are also arranged. Learners with specific needs are given progression advice, for example on suitable ESOL courses in the area. Tutors give good individual support to learners and there are many examples of tutors helping new learners negotiate the complex demands of arriving in a new learning environment. The arrangements for additional language, literacy and numeracy support are not coherent across the provision. In some centres, tutors are unsure of the support available to learners with more complex needs. However, some centres refer learners requiring specialist support to external agencies.

44. Recording and measuring learners' progress and achievement are inconsistent. Learners' progress is not sufficiently measured and recorded on some courses. The use of individual learning plans across the provision is not consistent. Some are used as an effective aid to learning and others are incomplete or include brief uninformative comments. The use of initial assessment of learners is not coherent across the provision. On some courses it is not used to produce effective individual learning plans. LBL recognises the deficiencies in recording and monitoring of learners' progress and steps are being taken to improve the procedures.

Leadership and management

45. Leadership and management of the provision are good. Termly team meetings are well attended by tutors. Programme issues are discussed, for example, initial assessment, dyslexia awareness, family numeracy and recruitment, as well as reviewing the strengths and weaknesses of current courses. These meetings provide an opportunity to share good practice across the provision. Opportunities for staff development are good. Tutors and learning support assistants are encouraged to undertake further professional training.
46. Equality of opportunity is well promoted with effective strategies to attract under-represented groups. Staff are sensitive to the diverse needs of learners in the local communities. Family learning supports the outcomes of Every Child Matters and contributes well to integrating learners and their children into the community.
47. The self-assessment process is well developed. Inspection findings match most of the judgements made in the recent self-assessment report. LBL's programme of observation of teaching and learning includes annual observation of all tutors with helpful feedback to aid improvement. However, some accommodation is too small and it contains furniture unsuitable for use by adults. Some equipment resources are inadequate to meet teaching needs. During a literacy session using a laptop computer the tutor had no projector screen and it was difficult for learners to see the demonstration.

