

INSPECTION REPORT

Elfrida Rathbone (Camden)

09 December 2002



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based training within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based training for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

Overall judgement

In those cases where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

- more than one third of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas, or
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

SUMMARY

The provider

Elfrida Rathbone (Camden) is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee which operates in Camden, London. Through its Leighton Project it offers training to a small group of young people aged 16 to 25 with moderate learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The company also provides a parents' advocacy service, a support project for vulnerable families, and a youth club. The young people attending the Leighton Project complete a programme which develops their life and work skills, information and communications technology, literacy and numeracy. There are 12 learners attending the project.

Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is inadequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the foundation programmes, leadership and management, quality assurance, and equal opportunities provision at Elfrida Rathbone (Camden) are all unsatisfactory.

GRADES

Leadership and management	4
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	4
Quality assurance	4

Areas of learning	Grade
Foundation programmes	4

KEY STRENGTHS

- comprehensive recent review of the Leighton Project leading to many changes in management practice
- good support for learners
- good achievement of personal and social skills

KEY WEAKNESSES

- inadequate monitoring of the Leighton Project by the management committee
- ineffective management information system
- inadequate quality assurance

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- ineffective management of equal opportunities
- ineffective initial assessment
- weak curriculum planning

THE INSPECTION

1. A team of three inspectors spent a total of 12 days at Elfrida Rathbone (Camden) in December 2002. They interviewed nine learners and observed five teaching sessions. They also observed learners' reviews and attended a team meeting. Inspectors held 21 interviews with the organisation's staff, learners' parents, a partner organisation, a member of the management committee, a volunteer and a consultant working with the project. A range of documentary evidence was examined, including 20 learners' records, 12 portfolios of learners' work, training materials, quality assurance procedures and key documents of the charity. Elfrida Rathbone (Camden) completed its second self-assessment report in August 2002.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Foundation programmes	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	5
Total	0	1	1	2	1	0	0	5
per cent	40.00%		40.00%		20.00%			

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

2. Elfrida Rathbone (Camden) is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. It was established in 1982 and is based in Camden, London. It administers four projects providing a range of educational, recreational and support services for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and vulnerable families. The organisation employs 23 staff, four of them on the Leighton Project. The Leighton Project was set up in 1983 to meet the educational and social needs of young people aged between 16 and 25. It aims to provide learners, who could not easily access other training, with the skills for independent living, enabling them to move into employment, training or further education. The organisation contracts directly with the London Central Learning and Skills Council (LSC). There are 12 learners attending the project. Their training includes activities such as drama, music, personal care, cookery, travel skills, literacy, numeracy, and information and communications technology (ICT). Some learners attend additional ICT sessions at another local training organisation.

3. At the time of the 1991 census, 17.8 per cent of Camden's population was from minority ethnic communities. Approximately 125 languages are spoken in the borough's schools. There are a number of distinct and diverse communities, including one of the largest Bengali communities in London. In May 2002, the unemployment rate in Camden was 2.2 per cent, compared with 3 per cent for England. The proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 50 per cent in Camden and 47.9 per cent nationally.

Adult and Community Learning

4. There are 12 learners with moderate learning difficulties and/or disabilities on Elfrida Rathbone (Camden)'s Leighton Project. They effectively develop personal and social skills, and receive good support from staff. There is good celebration of diversity through the learning sessions. The project is highly valued by learners and their parents. However, the achievement rate for the entry-level essential skills qualification is poor. Initial assessments and individual learning programmes are ineffective. The programme lacks adequate quality assurance. Curriculum planning is weak.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 4

5. Elfrida Rathbone (Camden) is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. The organisation provides four projects, including the Leighton Project. The charity is headed by a director who reports to a management committee which has legal responsibility for the organisation. The director has recently been appointed. She is responsible for presenting the strategic direction and business plan to the board, and ensuring these are carried out effectively. There are 23 full-time and part-time staff, as well as a number of sessional staff and volunteers. The Leighton Project is currently managed by a temporary manager who also teaches on the project. He reports to the director. In addition, there are two part-time teachers and a learning support assistant who report directly to the temporary manager.

6. The project has a statement of intent for equal opportunities, and its policy is currently being updated. New quality assurance procedures have recently been developed. A curriculum board, consisting of the director, the Leighton Project manager, a trustee and a representative from the local further education college, has recently been set up and has met once. A review of staff development needs has recently taken place. A staff appraisal system is being piloted and staff meetings introduced.

STRENGTHS

- comprehensive recent review of the Leighton Project leading to many changes in management practice
- recent improvements in staff development
- good internal communications

WEAKNESSES

- inadequate monitoring of the Leighton Project by the management committee
- ineffective management information system
- ineffective management of equal opportunities
- inadequate quality assurance
- inadequate self-assessment process

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better communication with parents about learners' goals and progress

7. The operational management of Elfrida Rathbone (Camden) and the Leighton Project has recently changed. Over the past three months a wide ranging review of the project

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has taken place. Managers have produced an organisational business plan for the next five years, and a two-year development plan for the Leighton Project. Targets are set in these documents for fund-raising, recruitment and developing effective training systems. Responsibility for achieving these targets has not been given to individual staff. Some of the Leighton Project's activities have been analysed and turned into formal procedures to aid quality assurance. Since September, a part-time member of staff has been employed to teach literacy and numeracy. A new curriculum board has been established to review how the curriculum is taught, to carry out lesson observations and to assess the quality of teaching and learning. So far, it has only met once. It is too early to evaluate the impact of these changes on the experience of the learners.

8. There have been recent improvements in staff development. An appraisal system is being piloted and is dealing effectively with the formal and informal training needs and concerns of staff. Teaching staff on the Leighton Project have attended short courses on autism, mental illness and essential skills. There is good sharing of information from these training sessions between staff. Training opportunities are extended to the volunteer working on the project. Specialists in specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities have recently observed lessons and advised teaching staff on improving their performance. The management committee has recently allocated funds for staff training, and staff are paid while attending training.

9. Internal communications have improved significantly in recent months. The staff have become more involved in the Leighton Project. Formal staff meetings take place weekly, and there are also informal meetings of the teaching team and the learning support assistant. Staff now produce their own lesson plans and understand the relationship between these and the overall aims of the qualification being taught. However, not all staff fully understand the strategic aims and objectives of the organisation.

10. The management committee's supervision of the Leighton Project is inadequate. The committee has not actively monitored progress towards remedying the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. It has relied on staff for progress reports, although there is no system for confirming their accuracy.

11. The management information system for Elfrida Rathbone (Camden)'s Leighton Project is ineffective. Data on past and present learners are not readily accessible. The records of learners' destinations after they leave the project are inadequate. An external consultant prepares the data needed for the LSC. These are not analysed to identify trends, and there is very little feedback to Elfrida Rathbone (Camden). The organisation cannot use the data to predict what level of funding it will receive from the LSC, and has no way of checking whether the payments received are correct.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 4

12. There is ineffective management of equality of opportunity at the Leighton Project. Elfrida Rathbone (Camden) has a statement of intent that quotes equal opportunities policy objectives and a set of recruitment aims. However, there is no up-to-date policy stating the company's commitment to equality of opportunity for staff and learners.

13. Learners are given a copy of the statement of intent and the policy objectives as part of the student charter. There are no activities to check on or reinforce learners' understanding of the statement or policy objectives. There is no specific policy or procedure setting out staff responsibility for, and no staff training in, equality of opportunity.

14. The Leighton Project's premises are accessible to learners with restricted mobility. Lifts, toilet facilities and learning areas have been adapted to meet the needs of learners. However, there is no adapted classroom furniture or computer equipment. One learner with a visual impairment was unable to take part in some computer-based learning activities observed by inspectors. Some learners spend one afternoon a week at another training organisation. This has premises suitable for learners with mobility problems and offers suitably adapted computer equipment for visually impaired learners.

15. There is good consideration and promotion of diversity during learning sessions. Learners have put together a range of attractive and effective wall displays that explore the religious holidays and customs of group members.

16. The Leighton Project does not monitor data for equality of opportunity. There are data on the gender, age and ethnic origin of learners, but no comparison is made between years or to analyse trends in achievement or retention rates. There is no discussion of data at management committee meetings, or with referring bodies and organisations.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

17. Elfrida Rathbone (Camden)'s quality assurance of the activities of the Leighton Project is inadequate. Some formal procedures have recently been written including procedures for recruitment, quality assurance, initial assessment and induction. There is initial guidance on working with other training providers. However, this is new and does not yet include procedures for checking the implementation of the providers' equal opportunities policies.

18. There are gaps in the new quality assurance procedures. There are no procedures for discipline, assessment or internal verification. The new health and safety procedure does not specify the need for individual risk assessments for learners. Although these were carried out for learners who joined the Leighton Project last year, they lack detail. None has been completed for learners who entered the project since September 2002. Elfrida Rathbone (Camden) has a complaints procedure, and there is a separate form for learners on the Leighton Project.

19. No system exists to audit the new procedures, and there is no clear structure for the management of quality assurance. Staff do not fully understand the need to use quality assurance procedures to monitor performance and bring about continuous improvement.

20. Elfrida Rathbone (Camden) has set up a system to seek learners' views at the end of each year. It was used for the first time last year. The feedback was not systematically analysed. There is no formal system for collecting and analysing learners' views during their programme, or for using the results to continually improve the learners' experience. Learners' parents are not involved in the evaluations. Parents interviewed by inspectors had not received detailed information on learners' goals and progress. They did, however, value the informal contact with project staff.

21. Elfrida Rathbone (Camden)'s most recent self-assessment report was written before the recent changes. The self-assessment process was inadequate and managers did not seek or include the views of teaching staff, learners, management committee members or parents. However, inspectors gave similar grades to those awarded in the self-assessment report for the foundation programme, leadership and management and quality assurance. Inspectors identified additional strengths and weaknesses to those in the self-assessment report.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Foundation programmes

Grade 4

22. Elfrida Rathbone (Camden)'s Leighton Project is a community-based project for 16 to 25 year olds with moderate learning difficulties who want to develop their life and work skills. The programme runs for one or two years depending on the learners' goals. Learners can attend full time or part time. The range of activities offered includes drama, music, personal care, cookery and travel skills. The programme also seeks to develop learners' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Learners are working towards an entry level essential skills award, but none has yet achieved it. A temporary project manager, reporting to the director, supervises the project's two part-time tutors and one learning support assistant. The temporary project manager has been in post since August 2002. There are 12 learners on the programme, of whom four are in their first year, seven are in their second year, and one learner is in her fourth year. Most learners are referred through specialist careers officers and the local authority's social services learning disabilities team. The average attendance rate in lessons during the inspection was 60 per cent and the average class size was seven. Some learners travel to the Leighton Project independently. Others rely on local authority transport, access to which sometimes restricts their attendance.

STRENGTHS

- significant improvement in learners' personal and social skills
- good support for learners
- effective displays celebrating diversity and achievement

WEAKNESSES

- ineffective individual learning programmes
- poor learning resources
- ineffective initial assessment
- weak curriculum planning

23. Learners make significant improvements in their personal and social skills during their time on the Leighton Project. Teachers effectively exploit many opportunities to build learners' self-esteem and confidence. Learners gain confidence and achieve their personal targets. They are able to travel more independently and mix with others. One learner has developed cooking skills and can now cook scrambled eggs without assistance. Learners are positive about the skills they gain and feel that they are making progress towards their personal learning goals. Learners' parents take pride in the learners' achievements and confirm how much individual progress has been made.

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Since 2000-01, learners have worked towards an entry level essential skills award. No learner has yet completed the award.

24. There is good support for learners. Learners feel that the Leighton Project is a place where they are able to learn in a secure environment. They value highly the support they receive from teachers and support workers. In most instances there are two teachers and one learning support assistant to each class, allowing a high level of support to individual learners. Teachers accompany learners when they attend ICT sessions at a nearby training provider. This allows learners with additional needs to receive individual support. There is insufficient guidance for learners about progression possibilities. Teachers are uncertain about what opportunities are available and which directions are appropriate for individual learners.

25. Learners are encouraged to recognise the needs and feelings of other learners and work effectively together, providing mutual support and positive feedback. They produce good-quality, effective wall displays that celebrate their activities and achievements and reinforce codes of classroom behaviour. These are effectively used to improve learners' awareness of equal opportunities and the social and ethnic diversity in the group. Teaching is satisfactory. Teaching methods encourage learners to make their own decisions and take responsibility for their own learning. Teachers are aware of their learners' individual needs, and show sensitivity when managing groups and individuals. Some lessons are well planned and maintain high levels of involvement from learners. However, others do not leave enough time at the end for learners to reflect on their activities. Some learners are insufficiently stretched during sessions and become bored and distracted.

26. Learners' individual learning plans are not used effectively. The long-term targets set are vague, over-generalised and of little help to the learner. Some short-term targets are unspecific and only give termly timescales. There is insufficient detail to influence learners' learning activities. Individual learning plans are not updated during or after teaching sessions. Learners have a separate individual learning plan for their literacy and numeracy needs. These do not always provide clear, realistic, achievable and time-constrained targets. The learners' overall individual learning plan and their literacy and numeracy learning plan are not linked together effectively.

27. The Leighton Project shares a new building with three other Elfrida Rathbone (Camden) projects and with other voluntary organisations. Learners can use two base rooms, a large activities room, a computer room and a kitchen. The computer room contains four computers with appropriate software, and an additional staffroom computer is also available. Two computers have Internet access. Learners can use ICT as part of their curriculum at any time, but only in small groups. There is provision for learners to use the facilities of another training provider for one afternoon a week, and specialist equipment is available there for learners with visual disabilities. Teaching accommodation at Elfrida Rathbone (Camden) is pleasant, and accessible for learners using wheelchairs. However, the learning resources are poor. There are no learning resources to support vocational activities. Literacy and numeracy resources have

recently been purchased but have yet to have any impact on learning. Elfrida Rathbone (Camden) does not have its own library to support independent learning, although there is an arrangement for the local authority mobile library service to call weekly. There is no enlarged computer screen available for learners with visual impairments. All teaching staff have teaching qualifications, but none has a specialist qualification for teaching learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, or for teaching literacy and numeracy. One member of staff has an initial qualification for teaching literacy.

28. Initial assessment of learners' existing skills and competence is ineffective. All learners have an initial assessment that includes an evaluation of their literacy, numeracy and personal skills. There is no assessment for ICT skills. Although milestones are set, these do not always include detailed enough short-term targets. Learners' personal skills are evaluated using a questionnaire. No evidence is required to back up the responses. The results of the initial assessments are not adequately linked to create clear individual action plans for learners, or to help plan teaching sessions. Learners' progress is reviewed termly. This is not often enough to give learners adequate feedback on their progress. Learners are not given regular individual feedback by their tutors.

29. Elfrida Rathbone (Camden)'s curriculum planning is weak and does not take account of the initial assessment process or learners' individual learning plans. All learners follow the same curriculum irrespective of their interests and future aspirations. First-year and second-year programmes have the same content. There is insufficient differentiation in learning activities and materials. There is no opportunity for learners to experience tasters in vocational areas that may be of interest to them. There is very little provision for work experience. Although the programme emphasises the importance of employment skills, only one of the current learners has been successfully placed for a period of work experience. Plans have been made for all second-year learners to have work experience but these have yet to have any impact.

30. Tutors have little awareness of curriculum and assessment requirements. Although learners have been working towards a qualification since 2000-01, staff training on the structure and assessment requirements of the qualification only took place in November 2002. Learners are registered for the qualification, but the internal verification procedures required by the awarding body have not been implemented. The programme has not been managed effectively and there have been lengthy delays in arranging moderation visits from the awarding body.

31. Learners enjoy their time at the Leighton Project. They are enthusiastic about the learning activities and appreciative of the efforts made by their tutors. They get on well with their tutors and feel safe from bullying and discrimination. All feel that they can do more for themselves than when they started, particularly cooking, travelling, and talking to and mixing with others. Some feel that they are ready to move on to new learning opportunities.

32. Learners' parents are highly supportive of the Leighton Project. They value the commitment of tutors. They are confident that their young people are learning in a

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secure and caring environment, and recognise the progress that they are making in social and personal skills. They would value more information about the learning and progress of their young people so that they could help them at home. They take pride in their young people's achievements and would like to see the weekly timetable extended from four to five days.

Good Practice

A music workshop was provided by a professional percussion ensemble, to prepare learners for a musical performance. This resource was provided by a charity working to make musical therapy available to people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The workshop was enthusiastically received by learners of all abilities, and the learning was incorporated into their qualification.

Language of the Adult and Community Learning

Terminology varies across the range of education and training settings covered by the *Common Inspection Framework*. The table below indicates the terms appropriate to Adult and Community Learning

Single term used in the framework	Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning	
Provider	Provider	Any organisation providing opportunities for adults to meet personal or collective goals through the experience of learning. Providers include local authorities, specialist designated institutions, voluntary and community sector organisations, regeneration partnerships and further education colleges
Learner	Learner	Includes those learning by participating in community projects, as well as those on courses. Learning, however, will be planned, with intended outcomes.
Teacher / trainer	Tutor	Person teaching adult learners or guiding or facilitating their learning.
	Mentor	Person providing individual, additional support, guidance and advice to learners to help them achieve their learning goals.
Learning goals	Main learning goals	Intended gains in skills, knowledge or understanding. Gains may be reflected in the achievement of nationally recognised qualifications. Or they may be reflected in the ability of learners to apply learning in contexts outside the learning situation, e.g. in the family, community, or workplace. Learners' main goal/s should be recorded on an individual or, in some cases, group learning plan. Plans should be revised as progress is made and new goals emerge.
	Secondary learning goals	These may include planned-for gains in self-confidence, and inter-personal skills. These should also be included in learning plans where appropriate.
Personal and learning skills	Personal and learning skills	These include being able to study independently, willingness to collaborate with others, and readiness to take up another opportunity for education or training.

Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

	Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning
Unanticipated, or unintended learning outcome	Adults often experience unanticipated gains as a result of being involved in learning. These include improved self-esteem, greater self-confidence and a growing sense of belonging to a community. Gains of this kind should be acknowledged and recorded in any record of achievement.
Subject-based programme	A programme organised around a body of knowledge, e.g. the structure and usage of the French language or ceramic glazing techniques. Students could be expected to progress from one aspect of the subject to another, to grasp increasingly complex concepts or analyses or to develop greater levels of skill or to apply skills to a new area of work.
Issue-based programme	A programme that is based on the concerns, interests and aspirations of particular groups, for example members of a Sikh Gurdwara wanting to address inter-faith relations in their town, or parents worried about the incidence of drug abuse in their locality. Issue-based learning tends to be associated with geographically defined communities, but the increasing use of electronic means of communication means that this need no longer be the case. Progress is defined in terms of the group's increasing ability to analyse its situation, to access new information and skills which will help it resolve its difficulties and generate solutions and its growing confidence in dealing with others to implement those solutions.
Outreach provision	Provision established in a community setting in addition to provision made at an organisation's main site(s). Outreach programmes may be similar to courses at the main site(s) or be designed to meet the specific requirements of that community.
Neighbourhood-based work	The provider's staff have a long-term presence in a local community with a specific remit to understand the concerns of the local residents and develop learning activities to meet local needs and interests.
Community regeneration	The process of improving the quality of life in communities by investing in their infrastructure and facilities, creating opportunities for training and employment and tackling poor health and educational under-achievement. Community regeneration requires the active participation of local residents in decision-making. Changes and improvements are often achieved either directly or indirectly as a result of the adult learning activities which arise from this.

Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning	
Community capacity building	The process of enabling local people to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to take advantage of opportunities for employment, training and further education and to become selfmanaging, sustainable communities.
Active citizenship	The process whereby people recognise the power they have to improve the quality of life for others and make a conscious effort to do so: the process whereby people recognise the power of organisations and institutions to act in the interests of the common good and exercise their influence to ensure that they do so. Adult learning contributes to active citizenship.