

REINSPECTION REPORT

Elfrida Rathbone (Camden) Reinspection

16 June 2004



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. 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 learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- learning and job preparation programmes 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.

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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. 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 28 staff. There are four staff on the Leighton project, plus a number of sessional teaching staff employed as and when required. 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 10 learners attending the project. Learners complete the Mencap essential skills award. This is an accredited two-year programme which develops learners' life and work skills. Some learners attend additional information and communications technology (ICT) sessions at another local training organisation and fitness training at a local gym. Work placements are introduced to learners in year two of their programme.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Foundation programmes

2. The Elfrida Rathbone (Camden) Leighton project is a community-based project for young people aged 16 to 25 with significant learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The programme runs for up to two years but can be extended to three years in exceptional circumstances. Learners can attend full- or part-time and can join the programme at any time. The range of activities provided includes drama, music, art and crafts, personal care and relationships, cookery and travel skills. The programme develops learners' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Learners work towards a pre-entry level essential skills award.

3. At the time of the inspection there were 10 learners enrolled on the programme, most learners are in their first year, four are in their second year, and one learner has been attending for three years. Forty per cent of learners are women and 70 per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups. Most learners are referred through specialist Connexions personal advisers and the local authority's social services learning disabilities team. The programme is managed by a project manager who works for 21 hours each week. There is a tutor and a learning support project worker who work 27 hours and 21 hours respectively and a work-placement worker who works two days a week. There are eight sessional tutors who teach specific activities. Two subcontractors provide keep fit and ICT activities.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	13
Number of learner interviews	10
Number of staff interviews	17
Number of employer interviews	1
Number of subcontractor interviews	1
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	5
Number of partner/external agency interviews	1
Number of visits	1

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

4. At the previous inspection in December 2002, Elfrida Rathbone (Camden) received unsatisfactory grades in foundation programmes, leadership and management, equality of opportunity and quality assurance. The quality of the provision is now adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the foundation programmes and equality of opportunity are good. Leadership and management and quality assurance at Elfrida Rathbone (Camden) are satisfactory.

GRADES

Grades awarded at previous inspection

grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak

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

Foundation programmes	4

Grades awarded at reinspection

grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak

Leadership and management	3
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	2
Quality assurance	3

Foundation programmes	2
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	2

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

5. **Achievements are good and learners develop good skills.** Of the 12 learners on programme last year, all achieved their qualification. The standard of work in learners' portfolios is good with good photographic evidence of tasks carried out. Particular attention is given to the development of skills. Learners demonstrate good personal, social and independent living skills.

Quality of education and training

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Foundation programmes	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	4
Total	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	4

6. **Considerable attention is given to the planning of activities learners engage in as part of their programmes.** Learners negotiate their learning goals and the activities they want to do to achieve them. Staff carefully match activities to meet the needs and interests of learners.

7. **Good use is made of the community as a resource.** Learners use local shops, recreational provision, museums, parks and other educational providers. However individual learning plans do not accurately reflect the thought and planning of staff to meet learners' needs and extend learners' experiences. Learning plans are not always updated and informed by progress reviews.

Leadership and management

8. **There is well-managed organisational development with good internal communications** of actions and activities to improve the provision. Good progress has been made in implementing their post-inspection action plan.

9. **There is a strong focus on equality and diversity in Leighton project activities and good use of pictorial images to explain policies and procedures to learners.** Learners understand their rights and their responsibilities to others.

10. The quality assurance arrangements have improved since the previous inspection and are now satisfactory. **There is a good teaching observation scheme linked to staff**

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development and appraisal procedures. This has contributed to improved teaching and learning.

11. There is insufficient development of a literacy, numeracy and language strategy.

There are no clear links between learners' initial assessments and specific learning goals for literacy and numeracy development. Informal activity is well integrated with general learning activities, but these are not planned or recorded. Nor do they relate to the specific needs of learners.

12. There is insufficient liaison with work placements. Information is not formally shared and progress systematically reported or linked to learners' primary learning targets.

13. Monitoring of subcontracted provision is poor. Service level agreements have recently been drafted but not yet implemented.

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- well-managed organisational development
- good and effective internal communications
- strong focus on equality and diversity in Leighton project activities
- good teaching observation scheme
- good use of images to explain policies and procedures to learners

Weaknesses

- inadequate development of literacy, numeracy and language strategy
- insufficient liaison with work placements
- poor monitoring of subcontracted provision

Foundation programmes

Strengths

- good achievements and development of skills by learners
- carefully chosen activities to meet the needs and interests of learners
- good use of the community as a resource

Weaknesses

- inadequate use of individual learning plans and progress reviews

Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

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.

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- well-managed organisational development
- good and effective internal communications
- strong focus on equality and diversity in Leighton project activities
- good teaching observation scheme
- good use of images to explain policies and procedures to learners

Weaknesses

- inadequate development of literacy, numeracy and language strategy
- insufficient liaison with work placements
- poor monitoring of subcontracted provision

14. Since the previous inspection, Elfrida Rathbone (Camden) has made significant improvements in tackling weaknesses. The process of developing new systems and procedures for the Leighton project has been particularly well managed. There has been a systematic approach to the development of the post-inspection action plan, with staff taking full and effective ownership of their part in the process. An external consultant worked with staff to develop new policies and procedures for all aspects of the learning experience, adopting a consultative and team approach. Staff and learners together devised a set of core values, reflecting carefully learners' views. Staff jointly rewrote their job descriptions in a standardised and complementary format to ensure that roles and responsibilities were clear and did not overlap. They responded positively and quickly to feedback from other staff, consultants and service users for improvements. There are now more rigorous and structured approaches to teaching and learning. The smooth transition when the temporary director covered the director's maternity leave enabled the good development work to continue without losing momentum in bringing about the necessary changes. The work continues uninterrupted now that the director has returned to her post.

15. Internal communications have improved significantly in recent months and are now good and effective. The open and consultative management style ensures that suggestions and issues are discussed and resolved promptly. Team-working is good between full- and part-time staff. Formal minuted 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. There is much sharing of good

practice internally and with the Elfrida Society at Islington. Better individual learning plans and the use of peer observation have improved teaching. External communications are satisfactory. Leighton project staff work well with a number of partners in the community that provide additional training and enrichment activities for the learners. Parents are regularly kept informed of learners' progress.

16. Staff fully understand the strategic aims and objectives of the organisation. The three-year strategic plan has recently been updated to fit in with local, national and LSC priorities and a two-year development plan has been written for the Leighton project. Targets are set in these documents for fundraising, recruitment and developing effective training systems. The development plan is reviewed regularly, and is proceeding as planned, although responsibility for achieving targets has not been given to individual staff. Reports to the management committee are regular, clear and concise, and there is good communication between the director and trustees. The trustees are now more involved in the Leighton project. Trustees visit staff and learners to monitor progress. Two trustees sit on the curriculum board which meets twice a year to review how the curriculum is taught, to carry out lesson observations and to assess the quality of teaching and learning. The board gives useful feedback to the project manager. Trustees have received some training on teambuilding and organisational development, although more is planned for the future.

17. Appraisal and staff development are satisfactory. All staff receive a well-focused annual staff appraisal, reviewing their performance and linking targets and staff development to business needs and to the teaching observation scheme. Performance is reviewed through regular supervision sessions with the line manager. Teaching staff on the Leighton project have attended useful short courses on essential skills and various physical, mental and behavioural barriers to learning such as autism and mental illness. There is good sharing of information from these training sessions between staff. Training opportunities are extended to the volunteer working on the project. Staff are paid while attending training. There has not been enough training on equality and diversity and the core curriculum. Insufficient work takes place to broaden staff expertise through links with other professional bodies or training providers.

18. Management of health and safety is satisfactory. There are clear policies and procedures for risk assessments, monitoring employers and emergency and first aid procedures. Staff have health and safety responsibilities on their job descriptions. Staff are trained in relevant aspects of health and safety and risk assessment and there are two trained first-aiders. A health and safety audit of the premises has recently been carried out and the necessary improvements actioned.

19. Collection of data on enrolments, retention, achievement, ethnicity and gender has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. A system for monitoring punctuality and attendance is now in place. The provider has started using data to target under-represented groups and is adopting a more rigorous approach to attendance monitoring. Destinations are now monitored and there is greater focus on helping learners to achieve independent living through community activities. However, the data system is managed by an external agent, and information is not immediately accessible

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and is sometimes out of date, as reports are only produced quarterly.

20. Management of resources is satisfactory. Financial management is good and budgets devolved to project managers are monitored closely and regular financial reports identify any variance in spending compared with budget. Learners have good access to a wide range of learning resources appropriate to their needs. ICT equipment and software caters for learners with audio and visual impairments. Staff have appropriate experience and there is a high ratio of staff to learners. Good use is made of volunteers to augment support for learners, although there are not enough male volunteers. Good use of external funding has enabled the appointment of additional project staff to promote and market the service and to increase work-experience placements. External sponsors enhance learners' experience by providing finance for trips in the community. Accommodation is adequate for the needs of learners and there is good access for learners with mobility difficulties.

21. There is inadequate development of a literacy, numeracy and language strategy. Initial assessment is satisfactory and there is good use of a comprehensive range of assessment tools. Periodic progress reviews do not record learners' progress in literacy and numeracy. Although literacy and numeracy are integrated well into the essential skills curriculum, there are no links made with the adult pre-entry national curriculum. No staff have received training in the core curriculum, although this is planned.

22. There is insufficient liaison with work-placement providers. Although checks are made before a work placement on health and safety and equal opportunities, employers are not given sufficient information about the degree of support learners will need in the placement. Employers are made aware of learners' physical disabilities, but attitudinal, mental or behavioural barriers are often only identified during the work placement. The workplace supervisor finds it difficult to support the learner adequately. Learners on work placements are visited, and there is contact by telephone between Leighton project staff and the employer. Progress reviews are carried out in the workplace, but do not focus on the individual learning targets. There is no mentoring or buddy system in place for the learners. There are not enough work placements and not all learners had work placements in 2002-03, slowing down their progress towards independent living and working. The provider has identified this weakness and is currently developing new systems to rectify it.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

23. There has been good progress made on the management of equality of opportunity since the previous inspection and there is a strong focus overall on equality and diversity in the Leighton project activities. There is an equal opportunities statement for clients and learners which had been updated just before reinspection. All learners have a copy. The statement is written well and has good use of illustrations and images to help learners who have reading difficulties. Learners are able to explain their understanding of equality of opportunity. The equal opportunities policy applies to all the provider's work and has recently been updated. It includes references to legislation, including the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. It also

explains how different projects run by the provider will enable equality of opportunity. A wall display featuring behaviour and attitudes clearly sets out the expected code of conduct for learners. A handout version is also available. The text is very positive about what learners can do rather than a set of rules stating what they can't do. The core values of the Leighton project were written by staff and learners together. The complaints procedures for learners are simple and clear. A flow diagram has been developed for learners, with useful photographs of staff and management members to help them identify the right person to talk to if they have a complaint. The learners' weekly timetable also uses images to give clues to learners about the activities that are offered and when they take place. This not only helps to remind learners of activities, but also aids the development of literacy, linking pictures and words.

24. The classroom observation policy, procedures and records refer effectively to equality of opportunity. References are made to the teachers' ability to ensure equality of opportunity and social inclusion, and comments are made by the observer. Staff recruitment and advertising reflects the position of the provider in relation to equality of opportunity and all staff recruitment advertising includes a strap-line making clear its commitment to equal opportunities. Job descriptions state a requirement to adhere to the policies and procedures. Staff are aware of their responsibilities and have a good understanding of the issues. However, there has been no recent training for staff on equality and diversity, with the exception of issues to do with working with people with specific disabilities, such as mental ill health and Asperger's Syndrome. Whole staff training on equality of opportunity and diversity is being planned.

25. The Leighton project's premises are accessible to learners with mobility difficulties. Lifts, toilet facilities and learning areas have been adapted to meet the needs of a wide range of learners. An access audit was completed in September 2003. Some progress has been made to provide adapted classroom furniture as identified at the previous inspection and height adjustable chairs are available. Some computer equipment and software has been purchased to enable learners with visual impairment or other communication difficulties to access ICT. Newly acquired initial assessment software is being checked for equality of opportunity and adapted for Leighton project learners, and includes the production of large print text and the inclusion of culturally sensitive content. Some learners spend one afternoon a week at another training organisation for ICT activities. This provider has premises suitable for learners with mobility difficulties and offers suitably adapted computer equipment for visually impaired learners. A crèche facility is available on site.

26. There is careful consideration and promotion of diversity during learning sessions. Attention is paid to the cultural heritage of learners and maps and flags are displayed locating learners' families' countries of origin. Positive images of men and women from minority ethnic groups and people with disabilities are displayed around the building. Learners' work is attractively displayed and is used as a record of achievement. Celebration of success is shared with all users of the provider's building. The curriculum covers very important subjects affecting the learners' lives such as sexuality and discrimination. These subjects are dealt with appropriately.

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27. The Leighton project has improved the collection of data on equality of opportunity since the previous inspection. The project now collects data on the gender, age and ethnicity of learners. This is collated and analysed to identify trends in retention and achievement and inform recruitment. The information is now routinely shared with management members at trustee meetings.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

28. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection and the quality assurance policies and procedures are now satisfactory. They have been further developed and recently updated. This has included the streamlining and further development of the internal verification procedures, including the sampling of assessment practice, a weakness identified at the previous inspection. Action points highlighted by the external verifier have been appropriately rectified. All policies and procedures are subject to annual review. In addition, there is internal auditing of key processes. There is an internal audit of the provider as a whole and of the Leighton project, through self-assessment, which feeds into the wider organisational audit. The Leighton project manager is responsible for overseeing the quality assurance process.

29. There is a good teaching observation scheme with policies and procedures clearly linked to improvement. At the previous inspection 20 per cent of lessons observed were unsatisfactory and only 40 per cent were graded good or better. At reinspection the grade profile for lesson observations has greatly improved and there were no unsatisfactory lessons observed and 75 per cent were graded good or better. The teaching observation scheme is appropriately critical. Current records include an action plan for staff following observation of teaching and a feedback form to enable effective evaluation of the process. Any grievance or disagreement with the observation record can be logged and followed up. Staff understand the process. Appraisal records are clear and involve staff and managers making a contribution to appraisal. A recent skills audit identified strengths in the current staff roles and other skills that they bring to their jobs. This has led to one member of staff, who is an experienced yoga enthusiast, offering a meditation and relaxation session for learners at the beginning of the day. Issues identified by staff are acted upon and changes made to the curriculum; for example, a request for more external speakers and tutors to add to the learner experience was promptly dealt with.

30. Satisfactory feedback mechanisms have been developed to collect the views of learners, staff and carers, including annual feedback questionnaires and social events to encourage participation and consultation with all parties. These have been used to inform the self-assessment process. The provider's self-assessment process has improved since the previous inspection and relates to the key questions in the 'Common Inspection Framework'. However, some statements judged as strengths in the most recent report are no more than normal practice. The process has become more inclusive and findings are presented to the board of trustees for their input and agreement.

31. There is guidance on working with other training providers and newly developed

service level agreements. These cover all aspects of the Leighton project's expectations of the service and clearly states roles and responsibilities of both parties. These are very new and have yet to be implemented. Currently there is insufficient formal monitoring of partner organisations' activities with Leighton project learners. No links are made between the subcontractors' activity and learners' individual goals. Although individual learning plans are shared with partner organisations, they are not updated to take account of progress made while learners are using subcontracted provision. Reports are sought and obtained from the fitness provider. However, the ICT training provider does not systematically formally report on learner progress. Informal feedback is given and there is good contact between project staff and subcontractors.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Foundation programmes

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	10	2

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- good achievements and development of skills by learners
- carefully chosen activities to meet the needs and interests of learners
- good use of the community as a resource

Weaknesses

- inadequate use of individual learning plans and progress reviews

Achievement and standards

32. Learners with significant learning difficulties and/or disabilities have good achievements. In 2002-03 all learners on programme achieved the essential skills award. Learners' work is a of good standard and there is extensive photographic evidence of what activities have been carried out and achieved in the learners' portfolios. There is good development of skills that learners need to acquire to become more independent, such as travelling short distances without assistance or supervision. Learners are assisted to make choices on what they are going to do and where they are going. Learners are able to extend and build new skills through participating in a variety of everyday life situations such as visiting places of interest in and around the community. For example, learners planned and arranged a picnic that included a visit to a place of historical interest. Learners were able to practise their daily living skills such as estimating and comparing the cost of food when choosing items for their picnic. During the journey learners were able to take responsibility for their own bus pass. One learner who had previously travelled by arranged transport progressed to travelling unescorted using two buses to reach the Leighton project premises. Another learner was sufficiently confident to continue the journey home on the bus without the other learners and tutor.

Quality of education and training

33. Teaching is good. During the inspection 75 per cent of teaching and learning was good or better. Sessions are well planned and prepared to ensure that they provide a range of practical activities that engage learners and motivate them to participate. There are carefully chosen activities to meet individual learners' needs and interests. Learners

are encouraged to express themselves and explain why they are carrying out an activity. Most learners are able to identify how well they are doing. Some learners identify what mistakes they have made and what they can do to improve. For example, one learner was able to comment about ironing clothes when the iron was too hot for different types of materials. The course is well designed for adults with significant learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Learning activities are focused on practical tasks and involve the individual learner in using the skills for everyday life and becoming more independent in making choices. For example, in choosing journeys and visits, learners are encouraged to make recommendations from their own experiences and evaluations of the benefits of the visit. There is good use of help and assistance by a learning support worker to allow all learners to participate in the practical activities and journeys in and around the community. Learners who may have mobility difficulties fully participate in the travelling and leisure activities.

34. There is effective use of the community as a learning resource. Learners have plenty of opportunities to broaden their daily life experiences and enhance personal and social development through the use of facilities in the community. Tutors use a variety of community resources to integrate practical activities with literacy, numeracy and language skills. For example, in planning a journey a learner had to purchase a bus pass in a local newsagent while other members of the general public were waiting in the queue. The learner was assisted by the newsagent and the tutor to calculate the cost, give the appropriate coins and receive change. The learner used the appropriate language skills and behaviours during the transaction and interaction with members of the general public.

35. Learning resources are satisfactory. This was a weakness in the previous inspection and has been rectified. The accommodation provides an attractive learning environment, which has been created with displays of learners' achievements. Photographs of learners' individual activities are used with simple written explanations identifying the purpose and outcomes of the activity. These act as a reminder to the learner and provide a record and evidence of the learners' progress in achieving individual learning goals. Staff have satisfactory experience in the tutoring and support of learners and staff have attended training events on good practice to assist learners with challenging behaviours and communication needs.

36. Initial and continuous assessment are satisfactory. This was a weakness in the previous inspection and has been rectified. A range of formal and informal assessment tools are used including information from previous learning, such as records of achievement from the school and assessments from a learner's key worker. There are computer and practical skills assessments and, where relevant, formal assessments in literacy and numeracy. The outcomes of the assessments are used to identify individual learning goals. Learners can be referred to specialist external agencies for diagnostic assessment.

37. Learners receive satisfactory support. There are planned exit interview summaries that provide information on the learners' experiences and achievements at the Leighton project. Learners receive satisfactory information, advice and guidance to enable them

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to make informed choices about future opportunities in consultation with parents and care workers.

38. There is inadequate use of individual learning plans and reviews of progress. Some sessions focus on the activity and fail to identify the individual learning goals to be met in carrying out the activity. For example, in one session the exercises in healthy living were not linked to individual learning goals such as following instructions, behaving appropriately, and following and varying routines. Reviews of progress take place infrequently, for instance, at the end of each term. Reviews are not sufficiently effective in identifying the progress that a learner has made in achieving individual learning goals. Priorities for learning are not systematically and regularly reviewed and revised. Currently the adult pre-entry curriculum in literacy and numeracy is not used in conjunction with the essential skills award framework where relevant to the learner.

Leadership and management

39. The curriculum management of the essential skills programme is satisfactory. There are weekly meetings between the project manager, the tutor in charge, the work-placement worker and learning support worker. Sessional tutors and key workers will attend if specific issues are on the agenda. There are agenda items covering training events and feedback from management meetings. Minutes of meetings are kept. However, insufficient time is devoted to discussions on good practice in teaching and learning, learners' achievements and progress, unless specific issues arise. Currently there are no formal meetings of tutors that are specifically concerned with curriculum matters and learners' progress. Staff communicate effectively, and much of this communication is informal. Internal verification is satisfactory and this has improved since the previous inspection; comments from the external moderator are followed up and improvements made.