

REINSPECTION REPORT

London Borough of Redbridge Reinspection

18 May 2006



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

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 aged over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learnirect** 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
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**).

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.

Grading

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

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

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DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Culture, sport and community learning services is the service area within the London Borough of Redbridge with overall responsibility for the adult and community learning provision. A cabinet member supervises the provision which is scrutinised through the culture, planning and regeneration scrutiny committee. At the time of the previous inspection, Redbridge was in the process of restructuring the services within culture and community learning services. The first phase has been completed. The adult learning service and libraries have been brought together under a community learning and libraries senior manager. Redbridge continues to operate a scheme of delegation with Redbridge Institute of Adult Education (RIAE) to govern, manage and deliver most of its adult and community learning provision. Its governing body operates within instruments and articles of government and a scheme of financial delegation. A lifelong learning co-ordinator, employed by Redbridge Borough Council (the borough council), links with RIAE and maintains an active role in the strategic direction of the adult and community learning provision.

2. RIAE works to ensure a broad range of part-time learning opportunities for adults and places an increasing emphasis on providing opportunities for new learners and those from disadvantaged groups in the local community. Courses take place at RIAE's headquarters, the Gearies Centre in Gants Hill, in the Mildmay Neighbourhood Learning Centre in Loxford, the most economically and socially deprived area in the borough, and in local schools and numerous community-based centres across the borough. RIAE uses Redbridge College to provide complementary adult and community learning services at its site in the east of the borough. This is supported by a collaborative planning and review process. RIAE is a member of the East London Partnership of Adult Education Services, which includes Havering, Barking and Dagenham. Good practice is also shared between the north and east London partnerships.

3. An acting principal, who reports to the governing body, manages RIAE. The acting principal is assisted by a head of curriculum services and two other members of the strategic management team. RIAE has completed some restructuring of management roles and responsibilities, particularly to strengthen curriculum management, quality improvement and the sharing of good practice. Most of the tutors work part time. RIAE provides training courses in 14 areas of learning, but the previous inspection covered seven areas of learning, including information and communications technology (ICT), hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, health and social care, visual and performing arts and media, English and modern foreign languages, foundation programmes and family learning.

4. At the previous inspection in April 2005, English, languages and communications and foundation programmes received inadequate grades. At the time of the reinspection in May 2006 there had been 13,308 enrolments on courses in all 14 areas of learning, amounting to 6,475 learners. This year, RIAE has 723 enrolments on language courses, with 509 learners currently on programme, 393 enrolments on literacy and numeracy courses, with 294 learners on programme, and 160 enrolments on independent living and leisure skills courses, with 120 learners currently on programme. English for speakers of

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other languages provision has 3,201 learners enrolled but is not included in the reinspection as it received a satisfactory contributory grade at the previous inspection.

5. The London Borough of Redbridge is an area of mixed affluence in northeast London, with a diverse population of approximately 250,000 people. It has excellent rail, underground and road links with the centre of London, which is just seven miles away, and Docklands, which is four miles away. The borough is ranked about average overall according to socio-economic indicators. There is, however, wide variation between wards, ranging from the affluent Monkams to one of the poorest in the country, Loxford. Most people travel outside the borough to work. Redbridge's unemployment rate is as low at 3.6 per cent, which is below the London rate of 4.4 per cent and close to the national average of 3.5 per cent. The rates of unemployment within the borough vary from around 1 per cent in Monkams to around 7 per cent in Loxford. Around 37 per cent of the population are from minority ethnic groups, compared with 9.1 per cent of the population nationally. RIAE's annual learner profile for ethnicity exceeds the borough profile, at 45 per cent for 2004-05.

GRADES

grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = inadequate

Grades awarded at previous inspection

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

Information & communications technology			1
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Other contributory areas</i> Adult and community learning	352	1	

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Other contributory areas</i> Adult and community learning	902	3	

Health, social care & public services			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Other contributory areas</i> Adult and community learning	254	2	

Visual & performing arts & media		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Other contributory areas</i> Adult and community learning	1,340	2
English, languages & communications		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Other contributory areas</i> Adult and community learning	914	4
Foundation programmes		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>ESOL</i> Adult and community learning	948	3 3
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i> Adult and community learning	264	4 4
<i>Independent living and leisure skills</i> Adult and community learning	125	4 4
Family learning		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Adult and community learning</i> Adult and community learning	180	3

Grades awarded at reinspection

English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Languages</i> Adult and community learning	509	3 3
Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i> Adult and community learning	294	3 3
<i>Independent living and leisure skills</i> Adult and community learning	120	3 3

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

6. At the previous inspection in April 2005, seven areas of learning were reported on and graded, including ICT, hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, health and social care, visual and performing arts and media, English and modern foreign languages, foundation programmes and family learning. Two areas of learning, English and modern foreign languages, and foundation programmes were found to be inadequate. At reinspection, both areas of learning were found to be satisfactory, with satisfactory contributory grades for literacy and numeracy and independent living and leisure skills. The overall effectiveness grade, the judgement on the provider's capacity to improve and the quality of the self-assessment process, remain unchanged.

Number of inspectors	5
Number of inspection days	21
Number of learners interviewed	73
Number of staff interviewed	41
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	10
Number of visits	5

AREAS OF LEARNING

English, languages & communications

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Languages Adult and community learning	509	3 3

7. There are 509 learners on 32 courses in modern foreign languages. The two British Sign Language and two general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) English courses on offer are not part of the reinspection. Courses include Spanish, French and Italian with progression opportunities in French from beginners to GCSE and AS levels, in Spanish from holiday Spanish to GCSE, AS/A2 levels and Italian from taster Italian to year two. Taster courses in Urdu, Spanish, German, Greek, French and Italian were offered during the autumn term, each one lasting 10 weeks, and 181 learners enrolled. Thirty-four per cent of courses are now accredited. All beginners' classes now have Open College Network (OCN) accreditation. Modern foreign languages provision operates across six teaching centres but most of the courses are held at the main site and at two other venues. Sessions last for two hours and courses range in duration from five to 30 weeks. Just under a third are daytime courses and the remainder are evening provision. Sixteen part-time tutors deliver the provision for between two and 10 hours a week. A part-time manager, supported by a part-time teaching and learning adviser, manages the area. Approximately 20 per cent of the current learners are from minority ethnic groups and 80 per cent are women. One hundred and twelve learners this year are new and 197 are taking accredited courses.

Languages

Strengths

- good development of personal skills and confidence
- good curriculum management
- very effective quality improvement measures

Weaknesses

- poor retention and attendance on some courses
- insufficiently developed processes for assessing individual progress and achievement

Achievement and standards

8. Learners in modern foreign languages courses are developing good personal skills, including social and interpersonal skills such as the ability to work well in pairs and groups and to interact well with tutors. Some learners improve organisational, time management and independent learning skills. Many of the learners have increased their self-confidence and self-esteem since they have been on the courses and they have noted the development of their skills in the progress sheets, which are completed each term. Learners progress well in their chosen language and achieve satisfactory or good levels of

attainment in spoken, written and aural work. Standards of work are satisfactory overall with some good achievement rates on GCSE/AS accredited courses. For 2004-05, there were 100 per cent pass rates in A2 Spanish, GCSE foundation Spanish and French and French intermediate. The grades were good with a high number of A and A* passes. There has been an increase in the number of learners on accredited courses with the introduction of OCN accreditation at level 1 in French, Spanish and Italian. Progress is satisfactory.

9. Poor retention was a weakness at the previous inspection and remains poor. The retention rate for modern foreign languages beginners' courses has improved since the previous inspection by 11 per cent, but it is still low at 68 per cent. Overall, retention is 80 per cent. Measures to improve retention are in place and include improved course description leaflets, an induction programme that emphasises attendance, and rigorous monitoring and follow-up. These measures are beginning to have an effect.

10. During the reinspection, attendance on observed classes was low at 68 per cent. However, there were many notified absences for which learners had good reasons including holidays, funerals, and personal and family illnesses.

The quality of provision

11. The quality of teaching and learning observed during the reinspection was satisfactory with 50 per cent of the lessons graded good or better. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. In the best classes, tutors are well prepared and create a stimulating and professional, but relaxed learning environment. In these lessons, learning is clearly taking place and learners are making good progress in all four language skills, in the lessons observed and over time. Learners have increased their cultural knowledge and awareness of the countries and regions where the studied foreign language is spoken and are able to add personal examples. Tutors use the target language extensively, pace their lessons well and stimulate and challenge learners. Tutors use a wide variety of activities including games, question and answer, reading, listening comprehension, watching video clips, using newspaper and magazine articles and using internet materials to expand and reinforce learning. The better lesson plans identify differentiated learning to meet a wider range of individual needs, although often only give brief statements. One or two highlight extension activities, but they do not completely detail what these activities are. This is an improvement on the previous inspection.

12. The schemes of work are clear, but many have insufficient detail on assessment methods within lessons for individuals. All learners complete an initial assessment in which they state prior learning or knowledge of languages, both written and spoken, their educational background, whether they have use of a personal computer and their aims. In addition, tutors assess their learners' ability during early sessions. However, the process is insufficiently detailed to plan lessons or to enable progress to be measured. Learners are in general pleased with their progress and comment favourably on the additional support received, such as additional vocabulary or reinforcement of grammar points.

13. Tutors identify additional learning needs quickly and deal with these effectively. For example, in one class a learner who is hard of hearing was immediately provided with a hearing loop. Another learner has received additional time for an external examination. Tutors deal with such requests effectively and sensitively. Many tutors have had disability awareness training and during induction they make learners aware that a wide range of

additional support is available to them.

14. Accommodation is satisfactory or better. At the main site, modern foreign languages courses are taught in a base room with an interactive whiteboard, computers and other resources. The other sites used are satisfactory but do not have ICT facilities. Tutors use a wide range of resources and are beginning to use ICT-based resources in the better lessons. A bank of such resources is available on the staff computer network.

15. The initial information, advice and guidance given to learners is satisfactory. If tutors or learners believe that a change of course is necessary, this is dealt with satisfactorily. Pre-course information has been improved since the previous inspection by the introduction of short descriptive leaflets for each of the courses on offer. However, the expectation that all learners work towards accreditation on beginners' provision is not clear. This has been clarified in the 2006-07 publicity and information materials.

16. There are good progression opportunities in French and Spanish with developing opportunities in Italian. There is a range of taster courses of five to eight weeks' duration in other languages such as Turkish, Greek, Urdu and German. The range is limited at the present time and includes few minority ethnic languages or language work for employers.

17. Enrichment opportunities are good and are appreciated by learners. An advanced French class has pen friends. French and Spanish evenings are held, learners eat out together in French, Spanish and Italian restaurants, there are French musical evenings, Christmas parties and trips abroad.

Leadership and management

18. Since the previous inspection the management of this area has been strengthened by recruiting a part-time curriculum manager and a part-time teaching and learning adviser.

19. Curriculum management is good. The manager and tutors communicate well. Tutors are well supported, which was strength at the previous inspection and continues to be a strong feature. Tutors are kept well informed by e-mail, letter and telephone. Team meetings are regular and well attended. There are plenty of opportunities for staff development and tutors are paid to attend. The team ethos is good.

20. Following the previous inspection, there has been much curriculum development with the introduction of OCN accreditation. This is being well managed by the curriculum manager and teaching and learning adviser. Staff have had intensive development and training in internal verification. Links with other providers are being developed, including pair observations with a local college, OCN and family learning. Enrichment opportunities are increasing. Curriculum management is no longer a weakness.

21. The management of quality improvement is good. There have been major improvements in teaching and learning after an intensive and robust observation process and internal review. These include staff development on curriculum design, lesson planning and differentiated teaching methods to meet the needs of learners. They have been well attended. All problems arising from individual teaching observations have been followed through. The grade profile at the reinspection compares with the internally observed profile and is a marked improvement on the previous inspection and RIAE's internal reviews. Emphasis is placed on consistency of process and paperwork relating to

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course information and lesson planning. Evaluation of courses is regular and problems are actioned. This is no longer a weakness.

22. There is effective promotion of inclusiveness and equality of opportunity. Provision is available in the daytime and in the evening and is accessible in the three main languages. Tasters are available to encourage more participation. Language lessons include aspects of culture and life in the country where the language is spoken. Additional learning support needs are met.

23. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate. The weakness in teaching identified at the previous inspection has been resolved.

Foundation programmes**Grade 3**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i> Adult and community learning	294	3 3
<i>Independent living and leisure skills</i> Adult and community learning	120	3 3

24. Two hundred and ninety-four learners are enrolled onto 17 literacy classes and 11 numeracy classes. Of these learners, 209 are women and 178 are from a minority ethnic group. All of the learners receive a three-hour initial assessment interview before joining courses. Most of the courses are at the main Gearies centre, with two numeracy classes and one literacy class at Mildmay neighbourhood learning centre, and single literacy classes at Hainault library and Oak Parks High School. There are daytime and evening classes and an annual four-week summer school. Learners are working at a range of levels from entry level 1 to level 1 and pre-GCSE in literacy and numeracy. RIAE offers the certificate in adult literacy and numeracy at entry level and the national adult literacy and numeracy tests at level 1 and 2. Pre-GCSE learners are able to take foundation level GCSE accreditation in mathematics. Learners also work towards internally recognised achievement against core curriculum targets. At the Gearies centre, learners can attend a literacy course which is linked to the development of ICT skills. A curriculum manager is responsible for the provision. There are two teaching and learning advisers, one for literacy and one for numeracy and 15 other tutors working in this area, alongside 15 volunteers. All except the curriculum manager are employed on fractional or part-time contracts.

25. RIAE provides programmes for adults with a wide range of learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities and sensory impairment. Some learners also have mental health difficulties. There are 120 learners enrolled on 27 programmes. Seventeen per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups and 49 per cent are men. All programmes are matched to the adult pre-entry level core curriculum and are internally accredited. Sessions run at four sites, including two social services centres and one personal development centre. All except one session take place during the daytime. Programmes run for between 30 and 40 weeks. A curriculum manager is responsible for the provision supported by a teaching and learning adviser. One full-time tutor has responsibility for programmes at one site and another teaches 16 hours at a different site. Five tutors work for between one and a half and four hours, and four volunteers work for two to four hours each week. There is one learning support assistant working for 12 hours a week. The provider has established partnership arrangements with external organisations such as the Learning Disabilities Partnership, care homes and a personal development centre.

Literacy and numeracy*Strengths*

- good development of personal skills and confidence
- much good teaching
- good, flexible and responsive management of quality improvement

Weaknesses

- narrow range of provision
- insufficiently developed skills for life strategy

Achievement and standards

26. Learners develop their personal skills and confidence effectively. Some learners suggest that their increased confidence has enabled them to apply for jobs that they might not have previously considered. Learners are making good progress in working towards qualifications and in achieving their individual learning plan targets. Achievement of external qualifications is satisfactory and has improved since the previous inspection. In 2004-05, 42.5 per cent of learners achieved external accreditation. A further 13.6 per cent obtained internal accreditation. In 2005-06 this increased to 74.7 per cent.

27. Retention rates for 2005-06 are satisfactory at 71.8 per cent. RIAE monitors retention rates and routinely analyses those that fall below 80 per cent. Since the previous inspection, staff have made a concerted effort to encourage learners to be punctual. None of the learners were late for classes during the reinspection.

The quality of provision

28. Teaching in literacy and numeracy classes is good. Seventy-five per cent of lessons observed were graded good or better, with no unsatisfactory teaching. This is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection, when teaching was a weakness. Learners participate in and enjoy a wide range of learning activities in well-paced sessions. Many tutors make effective use of electronic whiteboards to illustrate learning activities. For example, in one numeracy session the tutor displayed an internet weather site so that learners could calculate mean and median rain falls. Learners routinely make good use of ICT to support their learning. Tutors give clear explanations and are careful to check that learners understand the explanations and activities. Tutors plan sessions well, allowing for the different needs of learners and for the deployment of volunteers, where appropriate. Most tutors evaluate each session thoroughly. Tutors and learners negotiate targets in individual learning plans that are sufficiently detailed and relevant to learners' needs. Learners understand these targets, even if they are not able to read them with ease. Most tutors record learners' progress accurately and regularly.

29. Initial assessment is satisfactory. Learners complete initial assessments before joining their course and then go on to complete elements of diagnostic assessment in the early stages of their programme. They also complete questionnaires that identify their learning styles. Tutors use the results of initial assessment to negotiate targets with learners.

30. RIAE meets the additional support needs of learners within literacy and numeracy classes to a satisfactory standard. Suitable arrangements are in place to identify and support learners who have additional support needs. Learning support staff are available to help learners who have dyslexia.

31. The provision of information and advice to learners is satisfactory. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. Arrangements for advice workers to visit classes, including those taking place in the evenings and in community venues, are now adequate.

Learners are aware of the services offered by the advice centre and some have made appointments and have received useful advice on progression opportunities and, in some cases, on writing a curriculum vitae.

32. The range of literacy and numeracy provision is narrow. Very few programmes are linked to learners' vocational or leisure needs or interests. Although RIAE has developed new links with partners, such as the library service, courses are located in only a small number of venues throughout the borough. The number of learners enrolled on literacy and numeracy programmes is small for a borough of this size.

Leadership and management

33. Management of quality improvement is good and is flexible and responsive. RIAE has made good progress in meeting the targets set in a detailed and thorough post-inspection action plan. The system for observing teaching and learning in particular has improved significantly. Observers' comments on the teaching and learning process are sufficiently detailed and evaluative. Observers agree action points with tutors. The curriculum manager monitors tutors' progress in implementing agreed actions. The findings from observations are used to plan staff development programmes and to develop the self-assessment review. Teaching and learning advisers support and mentor tutors who are working to improve aspects of their practice. A new peer observation scheme offers tutors the opportunity to share good practice. The curriculum manager routinely monitors and analyses trends in retention and achievement data. Systems for monitoring individual learning plans and session plans are now in place. Staff and managers participate in a comprehensive continuous professional development programme. Managers have made considerable improvements in the quality of the learning environment and in resources. Curriculum management was a weakness at the previous inspection.

34. Staff communicate well with managers and with each other. They share good practice during regular staff meetings. Tutors receive regular e-mails and relevant written information. The management of the internal verification process for internal and external accreditation is detailed and thorough.

35. The skills for life strategy is insufficiently developed. Skills for life is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. RIAE does not develop targets for widening participation based on a community needs analysis. The current skills for life strategy contains targets for quality improvement rather than those for the further development of the service in meeting community needs. Tutors do not share a sense of the RIAE's strategic direction in relation to skills for life.

Independent living and leisure skills

Strengths

- good accommodation on all sites
- good internal and external communication
- well-focused and very effective quality improvements

Weaknesses

- weak initial assessment
- inadequate focus on individual needs for some learners

Achievement and standards

36. Learners appreciate their acquisition of skills which can be put to use in areas such as learning how to handle money. Learners' portfolios show that most are achieving small targets or maintaining skills. Most of these achievements relate to listening and speaking skills, but a few learners are progressing with improved writing, reading and numeracy skills. Retention rates continue to be satisfactory despite there being a slight decline in retention from 89 per cent in 2004-05 to 87 per cent in the last contract year. Attendance continues to be satisfactory.

The quality of provision

37. Teaching is now satisfactory and has improved since the previous inspection. Of the seven lessons observed, six were satisfactory or better and four were good. One lesson was inadequate. Learning sessions are well recorded. There are detailed schemes of work, detailed session plans and registers are accurately and routinely maintained. However, some sessions are uninspiring and much of the activity is based on whole-class tasks with insufficient differentiation in individual objectives, resources or outcomes. Learners' portfolios support the judgement that activity is insufficiently individualised. There is a reliance on learners completing worksheets which do not deal with specific development needs. In the best sessions, however, learners are stimulated, enthusiastic and responsive. These sessions show clearly individualised learning, and assessment and objectives are relevant to the learners' interests.

38. Teaching sites provide good accommodation for sessions. Rooms are easily accessible and are of a good size. They are well maintained, light and airy, and storage facilities are available at all sites. Learners' work is displayed on walls and notice boards. ICT resources have been enhanced in the form of interactive whiteboards and more computers with internet access. Learners speak positively about how they enjoy this facility and some tutors are using ICT very effectively to stimulate learning. Not all tutors, however, are sufficiently competent in the use of ICT for effective learning to take place through this medium.

39. Programmes meet learners' needs. Since the previous inspection, session timings have been altered to better accommodate learners' circumstances. RIAE is working to further widen the curriculum by offering a greater range of shorter modular courses. Accreditation to run an externally validated programme that is designed to develop learners' life skills has recently been obtained.

40. Guidance and pastoral support are satisfactory. There has been additional investment in support tutors, and learners are able to receive individual help when required. Tutors know their learners well and have a good rapport with them. Tutors deal effectively and promptly with the learners' perceived and real problems. They spend long periods of their own time completing paperwork so that they can spend more time with the learners. An effective volunteer recruitment and training initiative has been established. Some

timetables have been altered in the light of feedback. Insufficient learning support was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection but this has now been resolved.

41. The initial assessment process is weak. There is no system to ensure that staff routinely assess the potential value of experiences that learners bring to the programme. Little formalised assessment takes place of social or personal development needs on entry to the programme. There is little or no exploration of learners' aims in life. This weakness was identified at the previous inspection and has not been adequately dealt with.

42. There is an inadequate focus on individual learners' needs in some cases. Learning plans vary in quality. The weaker plans do not show clear, individual targets. There is insufficient identification of the need for individual support. Learning materials are, in some cases, generic and not relevant to the learners' needs. This weakness from the previous inspection has not been completely resolved.

Leadership and management

43. There has been extensive action to deal with weaknesses from the previous inspection and improvement is evident. There has been well-planned staff development on topics such as ensuring variety in teaching styles and in target-setting. Curriculum area meetings focus on the learners' experience. Session observations are carried out, feedback is detailed and improvement actions are planned and recorded. The curriculum manager shares good practice guidelines from external sources, including those from an external programme on better teaching. She also monitors the quality of learner plans and there has been significant improvement. The overall standard of teaching is no longer inadequate, which it was identified to be at the previous inspection.

44. External and internal communication is good. The establishment of partnerships with external organisations has widened participation and has made work experience available for some learners. Through a local charity and the Learning Disability Partnership, RIAE will offer an information, advice and guidance service which is timed to start during the forthcoming learning disabilities week.

45. Among tutors there is a sense of effective teamwork which benefits learners. Meetings are regular, frequent, comprehensive and well minuted. Internal memos are used to good effect. The memos are encouraging in tone and frequently contain hints and tips relating to improving practice and to additional resources. Staff speak positively of an ethos of support at all levels of the organisation.

46. Overall, the suitability of staff continues to be satisfactory as identified at the previous inspection. All staff have a teaching qualification, although several have little prior experience of the needs of learners with learning difficulties. There is insufficient checking of the suitability of learner-focused materials and, on occasion, resources are used which are inappropriate to the learners' ability level.

47. Tutors promote equality through using everyday topics to extend learners' understanding of diversity. RIAE makes good use of individual learners' experiences of different cultures, particularly when these arise naturally as part of discussions. There is a general ethos that learners are valued, irrespective of their learning difficulty, disability, gender or ethnicity.

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48. The self-assessment report accurately identified the quality of the provision. It gave a full commentary on the effectiveness of the actions taken to deal with the weaknesses from the previous inspection.

