

INSPECTION REPORT

London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames

26 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.

Pre-inspection analysis

The resources allocated to a cycle 2 inspection are primarily determined by the findings from the previous inspection. Account is also taken of information about achievement and retention obtained from the funding body, and any significant changes in the size or scope of the provision.

Where a provider has received good grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is relatively light. If the provider offers a number of areas of learning, a restricted sample is inspected.

Where a provider has received satisfactory grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is less intensive and it is possible that not all areas of learning are included.

Where there are significant unsatisfactory grades from cycle 1, the intensity of the cycle 2 inspection is broadly the same as cycle 1, and all significant areas of learning are inspected.

Providers that have not previously been inspected will receive a full inspection.

Overall effectiveness

The grades given for areas of learning and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half of the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good training provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

A **satisfactory** provider should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and in at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than one third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

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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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. The local authority of London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames (LBRuT) is funded by London South Learning and Skills Council to provide adult and community learning throughout the borough. The provision is managed within the recently established directorate of education and children's services. Responsibility for the adult and community learning provision lies with the assistant director of community and young people's services. Two members of staff support the assistant director in managing the adult and community learning provision, a community education officer who also works on other community projects within the directorate, and a family learning co-ordinator on a 0.5 contract.

2. LBRuT subcontracts all its provision. The subcontracting arrangements separate family learning from the rest of the provision. The main subcontractor for adult and community learning provision is Richmond Adult Community College (the college). LBRuT also subcontracts adult and community learning provision to Richmond Council for Voluntary Service (the voluntary service) and the Ethnic Minority Advocacy Group (the advocacy group). The family learning provision is subcontracted to a large number of organisations, including schools and statutory and voluntary organisations, and the college.

3. In 2004-05, 6,004 learners enrolled on adult and community learning programmes, of whom 1,006 enrolled on the family learning provision. To date in 2005-06, 4,380 learners have enrolled on adult and community learning programmes, of whom 1,165 have enrolled on family learning provision. During the inspection week, 2,225 learners were enrolled on adult and community learning programmes, of whom 351 were enrolled for the family learning provision. In addition to family learning, the adult and community learning provision covers 11 areas of learning.

4. The college was inspected in January 2006, therefore the part of LBRuT's provision which is subcontracted to the college is not included in this inspection. For the purpose of this inspection, family learning is the only curriculum area with sufficient learners that is not subcontracted to the college. Therefore, it is the only area of learning inspected and graded in this inspection.

5. Richmond-upon-Thames is an affluent area with pockets of relative deprivation. Five priority areas have been identified by LBRuT based on indices of multiple deprivation. Approximately 9 per cent of the population are from minority ethnic groups.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 3

6. **The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory.** LBRuT's leadership and management are satisfactory, as are its arrangements for equality of opportunity and quality improvement. The provision in family learning is also satisfactory.

7. The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process. LBRuT has involved its partners well in the preparation of the self-assessment report. It drew on evidence from the self-assessment reports of the larger providers, and on reviews and informal discussions in the case of smaller providers. All providers were fully consulted about the accuracy and format of the draft report. The structure of the report does not make it clear enough how judgements about each of the key questions relate to family learning and to adult and community learning. The judgements in the self-assessment report largely match those of the inspection, but do not identify some key weaknesses. Inspectors gave a lower grade than that of the report for leadership and management, and the same grade as the report for family learning. The provider's progress against the development plan is good, and has been well monitored by LBRuT.

8. The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements. Recent appointments have been made of a community education officer and a family learning co-ordinator to support the assistant director of community and young people's services. LBRuT has been able to implement the development plan more effectively. LBRuT has also used consultants well in identifying appropriate ways to improve the provision. However, quality improvement arrangements are not yet fully established and data is not used sufficiently in the effective management of the provision.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND-UPON-THAMES:

- improve curriculum planning and co-ordination
- collect and analyse data more effectively to manage the provision
- further develop quality improvement procedures to ensure continuous improvement
- ensure that the provision is targeted at meeting the needs of priority groups
- implement recognising and recording of progress and achievement effectively

GRADES

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

Grades awarded at inspection

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

Family learning			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Adult and community learning</i>		3	
Adult and community learning	351	3	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

9. The inspection took place between 22 and 26 May 2006. Leadership and management, including equality of opportunity and quality improvement, were inspected and graded. That family learning provision which is not subcontracted to the college was inspected and graded. The other areas of learning were not graded as most of the provision was subcontracted to the college.

Number of inspectors	4
Number of inspection days	20
Number of learners interviewed	22
Number of staff interviewed	14
Number of subcontractors interviewed	9
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	6

KEY FINDINGS

Achievements and standards

10. **Adults and children make significant gains in confidence through attending family learning courses.** Parents and children who are new to the school community show marked improvements in language skills and an increased ability to communicate within the school environment. On parenting skills courses, parents improve their interaction with their children by clear and thoughtful analyses of their own behaviour patterns. Learners enjoy the programmes and value the opportunity to reflect on their parenting practice.

11. LBRuT has no mechanisms to measure the progress and achievements of adult learners on family learning programmes, but plans to introduce recognising and recording of progress and achievement in the next academic year. Little of the family learning provision is accredited as most of the provision is in wider family learning. LBRuT does not formally measure the retention of learners on programmes, or collect destination data.

The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Family learning	2	3	0	0	5
Total	2	3	0	0	5

12. **Standards of teaching and learning are good in family learning provision.** Tutors use innovative teaching methods to involve learners. For example, one lesson uses an internationally recognised communication programme, for people with communication and learning difficulties, to accompany rhymes and songs to improve the communication skills of parents and children. Lessons are well planned with appropriate differentiation in tasks. Classes are well managed. Tutors use group work skilfully to build learners'

confidence and encourage them to share experiences in a supportive environment. Learners provide effective support for their peers.

13. Additional support arrangements are satisfactory. For example, additional individual support is provided on a parenting course in a deprived neighbourhood. In the learning provision for lone parents, a social worker provides additional support in classes.

14. **The provider's measurement and recording of learners' skills and progress is ineffective.** Initial assessment of learners' skills and abilities is not carried out systematically in provision not subcontracted to the college. Learners' progress reviews are often informal and not recorded effectively. Learning plans are not used consistently. In some cases, where clear learning outcomes have been developed and recorded, these are not shared with the learners. Not enough information, advice and guidance is available to learners to make them aware of progression opportunities. Action to resolve this problem has been identified, but little progress has been made to date.

Leadership and management

15. **LBRuT has introduced successful strategies recently to strengthen the management of the provision.** The appointments of a community education officer and a family learning co-ordinator have improved LBRuT's management of the provision. Good use is made of external consultants to provide specialist input for key areas of development such as the self-assessment process, the collection, analysis and use of data, and family learning. The recent formation of the directorate of education and children's services has enabled LBRuT to identify clear links between family learning provision and other services provided by the directorate. The provider has a clear vision of how these links can be developed effectively to provide a comprehensive service to the community, in particular the identified priority groups.

16. **LBRuT has particularly effective formal communication arrangements** which ensure that the cycle of meetings of the main partnership groups is integrated within a wider cycle of meetings. Informal communications with partners are very effective and much appreciated. Partners feel valued as equal partners in their dealings with LBRuT.

17. **LBRuT has developed effective partnerships in order to widen participation by members of identified priority groups.** The adult and community learning contract with the college includes specific outreach activities in the five most deprived areas of the borough. The voluntary service works with eight voluntary organisations and community groups to provide learning opportunities to groups such as the over-60s and learners with mental health difficulties. The advocacy group provides four courses for minority ethnic groups through its contract with LBRuT. LBRuT participates in local celebrations of the diversity of the community. These events are well attended by members of the local community, and by LBRuT's partners.

18. **The family learning curriculum promotes diversity well.** Diversity is celebrated in the wide variety of teaching materials in use, such as dual language books and a range of illustrations from various cultures. Different languages and cultural practices are shared in classes. For example, in one numeracy lesson, a group of parents and children shared counting and greetings in Japanese, Polish and Latvian. Opportunities for learners to celebrate a range of cultures are promoted through local events.

19. **LBRuT has involved its partners particularly well in the self-assessment process.** It has adopted an inclusive and collaborative approach throughout the process. An external consultant also supported the process effectively. The three main providers gave feedback to LBRuT about the quality of its leadership and management. LBRuT used a range of evidence to collate the overall self-assessment report, and gave providers good opportunities to comment on the final draft through the adult and community learning and family learning provider forums. LBRuT produced a self-assessment report, which matched most of the judgements of inspectors, although it did not fully identify the weaknesses in leadership and management.

20. The provider has appropriate arrangements to manage the performance of its staff. Professional development opportunities are clearly linked to individuals' targets. LBRuT has satisfactory financial arrangements and audit mechanisms.

21. Arrangements for identifying and supporting learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs are informal and unsystematic in provision not subcontracted to the college. LBRuT has identified the need to recognise and record progress and achievement in non-accredited provision not subcontracted to the college, and plans to implement appropriate procedures in 2006-07.

22. The self-assessment report has been used well to plan and implement actions for improvement throughout the provision. Progress is reviewed regularly by the community education officer and family learning co-ordinator. Good progress has been made in implementing actions for improvement, with most actions completed by the intended date, or earlier. Progress to implement actions identified in the 2003-04 development plan has been less successful. Although improvements have been made in the collection, analysis and use of data and in providing appropriate advice and guidance, arrangements in these areas are not yet satisfactory.

23. Arrangements to ensure that providers meet contractual arrangements are satisfactory. LBRuT meets termly with each subcontractor to discuss progress. In family learning, a new induction pack includes guidance about key aspects of learning, including initial assessment and advice and guidance. The family learning co-ordinator had begun to introduce a lesson observation programme. These are recent developments and have not yet had an effect on the learners' experience of the programme.

24. **LBRuT does not plan and co-ordinate the curriculum sufficiently.** It does not have an overview of the provision. The provider has not cross-referenced the provision offered by its subcontractors, or fully identified gaps or duplication in the provision. The expansion of family learning has not been planned carefully to meet the needs of identified priority groups. Learners not in learning subcontracted to the college, have little awareness of the progression and accreditation opportunities available to them.

25. **Data is not used sufficiently to monitor and manage the provision.** This was originally identified in the 2003-04 self-assessment report. In order to resolve this issue, LBRuT has entered into a contractual arrangement with the college to provide management information. The collection of data has improved, but the current arrangement with the college is not clear enough in identifying LBRuT's data requirements.

26. Quality improvement procedures are not sufficiently formal or well established. They do not ensure the continuous improvement of LBRuT's provision. Current arrangements do not place enough emphasis on the quality of the learners' experience. The college's quality improvement arrangements are applied to all the courses that it provides for LBRuT. However, LBRuT is not sufficiently clear about the level of detail it requires from the college to assure itself of the quality of its provision.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- successful recent strategies to strengthen the management of provision
- particularly effective communication arrangements
- good partnership work to meet the needs of identified priority groups
- particularly good involvement of partners in the self-assessment process

Weaknesses

- insufficient curriculum planning and co-ordination
- insufficient use of data to manage provision
- insufficiently established quality improvement procedures

Family learning

Adult and community learning

Strengths

- significant gains in confidence for adults and children
- good standards of teaching and learning
- good promotion of diversity through the curriculum

Weaknesses

- ineffective measurement and recording of learners' skills and progress
- inadequate curriculum planning
- insufficiently established quality improvement system

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND-UPON-THAMES:

- 'I like doing things together'
- 'this is helping me to be a better parent'
- 'it's been a fun and interesting learning experience'
- 'this course shows me how to be calm with my child'
- 'we like having a creche available'
- 'it's nice to be involved in things that end up in the community'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND-UPON-THAMES COULD IMPROVE:

- 'too many cancelled classes'
- 'the class is too long. My child gets tired, so I think it should be shorter'
- 'better publicity to get more people involved'
- 'we want to do further learning but don't know what is available'

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- successful recent strategies to strengthen the management of provision
- particularly effective communication arrangements
- good partnership work to meet the needs of identified priority groups
- particularly good involvement of partners in the self-assessment process

Weaknesses

- insufficient curriculum planning and co-ordination
- insufficient use of data to manage provision
- insufficiently established quality improvement procedures

27. LBRuT has introduced successful strategies recently to strengthen the management of the provision. The appointments of a community education officer and a family learning co-ordinator have improved LBRuT's ability to manage the provision significantly. LBRuT uses external consultants effectively to provide specialist input for key areas of development. Consultants have provided useful reports and recommendations about the self-assessment process, the collection, analysis and use of data, and family learning. Specific reports on meeting the needs of the elderly, and those with learning disabilities have also been commissioned. LBRuT has focused on developing partnerships to widen participation by priority groups of learners. The number of partnerships involved in family learning has increased. The recent restructuring within the provider to form a directorate of education and children's services has enabled LBRuT to identify clear links between the family learning provision and other services provided by the directorate. LBRuT has a clear vision of how these links can be effectively developed to provide a comprehensive service to the community, in particular the identified priority groups.

28. LBRuT has particularly effective formal communications arrangements to ensure that the cycle of meetings of the main partnership groups is integrated within a wider cycle of council meetings. The cycle of meetings of partnership groups includes quarterly meetings of the Richmond Learning Partnership and adult and community learning and family learning provider forums. These groups are chaired by LBRuT. The Richmond Learning Partnership is the key mechanism used by LBRuT to oversee and strategically manage the provision. Informal communications with the partners are very effective and much appreciated. Partners speak very well of the responsiveness of LBRuT's staff in responding to queries, and value being communicated with as equal partners.

29. The provider has appropriate arrangements to manage the performance of its staff. Induction arrangements are thorough, and include a six-month probationary period. The annual appraisal process includes initial objective setting for all staff, followed by a six-month review at which the targets can be revised. Appropriate professional development opportunities are linked clearly with individual staff targets and include attendance at relevant conferences and shadowing and mentoring opportunities. LBRuT

has clear financial arrangements and audit mechanisms.

30. Arrangements for identifying and supporting learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills are informal and unsystematic in provision not subcontracted to the college. LBRuT has identified the need to recognise and record progress and achievement in non-accredited learning. The community education officer and family learning co-ordinator have recently attended appropriate training and are working towards introducing these measures for the next academic year.

31. LBRuT does not plan and co-ordinate the curriculum sufficiently. It does not have an overview of the provision. The provider has not cross-referenced the provision offered by its subcontractors, or identified gaps or duplication in the provision. The provider has no overall publicity and marketing strategy to identify all adult and community learning and family learning provision. The college has its own publicity materials, but links between this provision and that offered by other subcontractors are not clear. Learners not in learning subcontracted to the college, have little awareness of the progression and accreditation opportunities available to them.

32. The expansion of family learning provision has not been planned carefully to meet the needs of identified priority groups. Not all of the provision that is categorised as family learning is currently targeted to meet their needs. LBRuT is aware that a considerable number of needs are still not being met and is devising further strategies to resolve this problem, such as using the extended schools co-ordinators.

33. Data is not used sufficiently to monitor and manage the provision. This was originally identified in the self-assessment report of 2003-04, and was included in the subsequent development plan. In order to resolve this issue, LBRuT has entered into a contractual arrangement with the college to provide management information. The current arrangement is not clear enough to identify the data requirements of LBRuT. Improvements have been made in the collection of data from subcontractors, particularly those that do not use electronic management information systems. However, LBRuT has not specified sufficient appropriate and timely reports to enable it to monitor and manage the provision effectively. For example, LBRuT does not monitor in-year retention rates, or retention and achievement rates at course level.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

34. LBRuT has developed effective partnerships to widen participation by identified priority groups. The provider has a strong commitment to widening participation, particularly in the five areas with multiple indices of deprivation. The core adult and community learning provision subcontracted to the college is not specifically targeted at priority groups. The college is also subcontracted to provide specific outreach activities, primarily in the five most deprived areas of the borough.

35. LBRuT subcontracts with the voluntary service through its grassroots programme to meet the needs of specific priority groups. Through this arrangement eight voluntary organisations and community groups provide learning opportunities for groups such as the over-60s, and learners with mental health problems. In total, 190 learners participated in this provision in 2004-05. The voluntary service also works in partnership with a community group in one of the most deprived neighbourhoods.

36. A subcontracted arrangement with the advocacy group provides four courses for learners from minority ethnic groups. In 2004-05, 40 learners participated in this provision, and this increased to 60 learners in 2005-06.

37. Family learning provision is mainly targeted at learners from priority groups such as families from minority ethnic groups and families with children with special needs. LBRuT is working towards developing the provision further through neighbourhood learning centres and extended schools clusters. Local area plans are being commissioned to develop a greater appreciation of local needs. LBRuT helps to promote diversity in the community through its involvement in local events, such as a community celebration party which attracted participants from over 30 cultural backgrounds. The event was well attended by many of LBRuT's partners.

38. LBRuT produces appropriate data on enrolments by age, disability, ethnic background and gender. However, a significant number of the learners who enrolled in 2004-05 did not provide information about disability or ethnic background. Improvements in data collection have been introduced for 2005-06. Despite being incomplete, the available data clearly indicates that LBRuT has widened the participation of minority ethnic groups. Over 20 per cent of learners in 2004-05 came from the minority ethnic groups which comprise 9 per cent of the local population. LBRuT does not use data to identify the relative achievement rates of different groups.

39. The provider has a comprehensive equality and diversity policy, strategy and action plan. It meets the requirements of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Risk assessment of the accessibility and suitability of accommodation has been carried out in order to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Most of the accommodation is now fully accessible to people with restricted mobility, and appropriate arrangements are made to transfer courses to accessible premises should the need be identified. The provider gives high priority to equality impact needs assessments for all aspects of the provision. Reports have been commissioned about the provision for the over-60s and adults with disabilities.

40. LBRuT's contractual agreements with subcontractors include the requirement to comply with LBRuT's equality and diversity strategy. However, this is not closely monitored. The provider and the college have good arrangements for staff development which relate to equality and diversity issues. LBRuT does not monitor the relevant staff development arrangements of its subcontractors.

41. The college has appropriate arrangements to promote equality of opportunity to its learners. The promotion of equality of opportunity to learners in the rest of the provision is largely informal. In order to resolve this situation, LBRuT has drafted a statement of learner entitlement. The provider recognises the need to adapt the document to ensure that it is easily understood by learners. LBRuT plans to introduce the learner statement to the family learning provision for the next academic year.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 3

42. LBRuT has involved partners particularly well in the self-assessment process. It adopted an inclusive and collaborative approach throughout the process. An external consultant supported the process by drawing up guidance to providers about writing self-assessment reports and using a variety of approaches to gather evidence. Smaller providers were

asked to contribute their views through discussions. Other providers, including the college, the voluntary service and the advocacy group submitted their own self-assessment reports. LBRuT also drew on evidence from an external evaluation of family learning, and from discussions at provider review meetings. The three main providers gave feedback to LBRuT about the quality of its leadership and management through a structured questionnaire. LBRuT used this range of evidence to collate the self-assessment report, and then gave subcontracted providers good opportunities to comment on the final draft through the adult and community learning and family learning provider forums. LBRuT's self-assessment report identified many of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors, but did not identify some of the weaknesses in leadership and management. This was the provider's second self-assessment report.

43. The self-assessment report has been used well to plan and implement action for improvement throughout the provision. Progress is reviewed regularly by the community education officer and the family learning co-ordinator. The provider has made good progress in implementing the actions for improvement, with most actions completed by the intended date. Small improvements were made following the 2003-04 action plan, in the collection, analysis and use of data, the development of a more extensive network of information, advice and guidance services, and the systematic use of health and safety risk assessments. However, actions taken have not been effective enough to raise the first two of these areas to a satisfactory level.

44. The provider's arrangements to ensure that subcontractors meet their contractual obligations are satisfactory. Progress against target numbers is well monitored by the community education officer and reported to the quarterly provider forum meetings. To improve this process, LBRuT has used an external consultant to provide additional guidance about data requirements. LBRuT meets termly with each subcontractor to discuss their progress.

45. Significant steps have been taken recently to improve the way the quality of provision is evaluated and improved. The new family learning co-ordinator has carried out a series of visits to individual providers to discuss the overall quality of provision. A new induction pack for providers includes guidance about key aspects of learning, including initial assessment and advice and guidance. In addition, the family learning co-ordinator has begun to introduce a lesson observation programme. These are recent developments, however, and have not had time to make an impact on the learners' experience. Some good practice is evident in the evaluation of the quality of provision at individual provider level. For example, family learning tutors evaluate their learning sessions and collect learners' views. Some tutors are developing alternative approaches in order to improve the quality of responses, such as the use of video to record learners' initial expectations and end-of-term views about the family learning course. However, the information gathered through these evaluations is not used systematically as part of the review process.

46. Quality improvement procedures are not formal enough or established sufficiently to ensure the continuous improvement of LBRuT's provision. There are good opportunities to report on and discuss the provision through the provider forum and stakeholder meetings, but the current arrangements for quality improvement are not clearly documented. Not enough emphasis is given to the quality of the learners' experience. Little use is made of quantitative data at individual programme or course level. Information such as tutors' or learners' feedback is not analysed sufficiently as part of a regular and structured course

LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND-UPON-THAMES

review process. The college's quality improvement arrangements are applied to all courses that they deliver for LBRuT. However, LBRuT is not sufficiently clear about the level of detail it requires from the college to assure itself of the quality of its provision.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Family learning

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning Adult and community learning	351	3 3

47. LBRuT provides its family learning programmes through 25 contracts with local community, statutory and voluntary providers. In 2004-05, 821 adult learners attended wider family learning programmes and 185 adult learners attended family literacy, language and numeracy courses (FLLN). To date in 2005-06 there have been 1,004 learners on wider family learning programmes and 161 learners on FLLN courses. Courses cover a range of areas, including English as an additional language, family language provision, family arts programmes, family information and communications technology, and parenting programmes. Courses are provided in the college and in infant, junior and secondary schools, and through libraries and arts organisations, within community groups and family support organisations. At the time of the inspection, 218 learners were attending wider family learning programmes and 133 were attending FLLN courses. One hundred and nine of the learners in wider family learning were on courses not provided by the college, as were 38 of the learners on FLLN courses.

48. A family learning co-ordinator is appointed to a 0.5 contract. This co-ordinator reports to the assistant director of community and young people's services. The family learning co-ordinator has been in post since January 2006.

Adult and community learning

Strengths

- significant gains in confidence for adults and children
- good standards of teaching and learning
- good promotion of diversity through the curriculum

Weaknesses

- ineffective measurement and recording of learners' skills and progress
- inadequate curriculum planning
- insufficiently established quality improvement system

Achievement and standards

49. Children and adults make significant gains in confidence by attending family learning courses. In most schools, children's achievements are monitored and recorded well. Tutors report improvements in social interaction in the wider classroom setting. Parents and children who are new to the school community show marked improvement in language skills and an increased ability to communicate within the school environment.

On parenting skills courses, parents improve their interaction with their children by clear and thoughtful analyses of their own behaviour patterns which affect their children's behaviour.

50. On arts-based family learning programmes, parents and children produce effective and thoughtful art work. For example, a recent programme entitled 'every drawing matters' has enabled children and parents to understand the changing structures of the local authority and the importance of the Every Child Matters themes, such as staying healthy. An exhibition of learners' work is to go on tour throughout the borough. This uses family learning as an effective method of sharing information about complex national and local policy changes.

51. Learners enjoy the programmes and value the opportunities to reflect upon their own parenting practice. However, there are currently no mechanisms to measure the progress or achievements of adult learners on family learning programmes. Recognising and recording of progress and achievement has not been introduced, but there are plans to introduce it for 2006-07. Most of the provision is not accredited as it is in wider family learning. LBRuT does not formally measure learners' retention rates on courses, or collect destination data.

The quality of provision

52. Standards of teaching and learning are good. In most of the lessons observed by inspectors, innovative teaching methods are used to involve learners. For example, one lesson used an internationally recognised communication programme to accompany rhymes and songs to improve the communication skills of parents and children. In another lesson, toys and puppets were used creatively to reinforce language teaching. Lessons are well planned, with appropriate differentiation in tasks. Classes are managed well, particularly those with young children participating. Tutors use group work skilfully to encourage frank and open discussions. In these lessons, experiences are shared in a safe and supportive environment, and the process increases the confidence of the learners. Humour is used appropriately to introduce difficult concepts. Learners provide effective peer support. Lessons take place in a relaxed atmosphere which is conducive to learning.

53. Additional support arrangements are appropriate. For example, additional individual support is provided for learners on one parenting course in a deprived neighbourhood. A social worker provides additional support in the provision for lone parents.

54. The measurement and recording of learners' skills and progress is ineffective. LBRuT does not carry out systematic initial assessments of learners' existing skills and abilities. Learners' progress is not formally measured or monitored. Learners' progress reviews are often informal and are not recorded effectively. The provider's approach to the use of individual learning plans is inconsistent. In some cases, where clear learning outcomes have been developed and recorded, these are not shared with the learners. LBRuT plans to resolve some of these issues in the next academic year by recognising and recording progress and achievement. Learners do not receive sufficient information, advice and guidance about appropriate progression opportunities. Actions necessary to resolve this problem have been identified, but little progress has been made to date.

Leadership and management

55. Diversity is well promoted throughout the curriculum. Literacy activities carried out at home are integrated with the teaching and add to the experiences of the learners. Diversity is promoted in the wide variety of teaching materials in use, such as dual language books, and a range of illustrations from various cultures. Different languages and cultural practices are shared in groups. In one session, a group of parents and children shared counting and greetings in languages which included Japanese, Polish and Latvian. Opportunities for learners to experience a range of cultures are promoted through local events.

56. Curriculum planning is inadequate. There is no clear overview of the family learning curriculum or of progression routes, either within family learning courses or to other courses. LBRuT does not monitor cancelled courses to identify why they did not recruit. To date, the curriculum offer has been based upon LBRuT's development of partnership arrangements. The development of subcontracting arrangements throughout the borough has not always fitted in with the provider's objectives of meeting the needs of priority groups. Not all of the provision currently on offer is relevant to priority groups. LBRuT is currently cross-referencing the provision by location and by curriculum area, in order to begin the process of developing a coherent curriculum framework. The recently produced three-year development plan contains an outline family learning strategy. This has not been fully implemented yet. Currently, few learners have the opportunity to gain accreditation for their new skills in areas such as literacy and numeracy, and English as an additional language. Progression routes for learners to continue into further learning are not clear. Signposting to other learning opportunities is haphazard.

57. Quality improvement procedures are not well established. Data is not used adequately in planning the provision, to monitor subcontractors' progress against targets, or to ensure appropriate progression opportunities. Data is not collected in a timely manner to enable the yearly retention of learners to be analysed. Data is not used to improve the quality of the learners' experience. Not enough action is taken to resolve poor recruitment to courses, and the cancellation of classes is not monitored effectively to ensure that resources are redirected rapidly. The provider, through its own self-assessment processes, has recognised this weakness, and has recently established new guidelines to improve the quality of provision. A provider's information pack, with examples of completed quality assurance paperwork, has been produced for the next academic year. These new initiatives have not had any effect on the learners' experience as yet.

