

MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of Provider: Hampshire County Council
Date of visit: Tuesday 19 June 2007

Context

This visit follows the inspection in February 2006, at which Hampshire LEA (the council) was graded good for leadership and management and satisfactory for equality of opportunity and quality improvement. Provision was judged to be good in leisure, travel and tourism and satisfactory in information and communications technology (ICT), arts, media and publishing, languages, literature and culture, preparation for life and work, and family learning. The council has reduced the number of subcontractors with whom it works since the previous inspection. It has increased its focus on providing learning opportunities for adults with poor literacy, numeracy and language skills and on progression routes to level 2 qualifications. Preparation for life and work and family learning are the two largest sector subject areas.

Achievement and standards

What does the evidence from wider family learning and family learning literacy and numeracy tell us about success rates on accredited courses across the provision?	Significant progress
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The previous inspection report and the most recent self-assessment report contain very few specific judgements on success rates for accredited courses. The council is increasing the amount of accredited provision as part of its ongoing change in strategic direction, and has made significant progress to improve success rates on accredited courses. The council plans to increase the proportion of courses leading to a qualification from 10% in 2006-07, to 20% in 2007-08. Family learning courses currently account for most of the accredited provision. Success rates for accredited wider family learning courses have remained satisfactory at 69% for completed courses in 2006-07 to date, and 60% in 2005-06. Success rates for family literacy, language and numeracy courses, which account for most of the family learning provision, have improved significantly from 5% in 2005-06 to 21% so far in 2006-07. The number of learners who have taken the national adult literacy and numeracy tests has increased significantly from 33 in 2005-06 to 92 to date in 2006-07. A

further 188 learners are enrolled to take the national tests in 2006-07 and the council forecasts an overall success rate of approximately 60% for the full year. Attendance rates have improved, particularly on family learning literacy, language and numeracy courses. Retention rates are very good in all sector subject areas. The overall retention rate for completed courses in 2006-07 to date is 93%.

What evidence is there to support whether success rates for non-accredited courses in any curriculum areas can be reported with confidence in their validity?	Reasonable progress
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The previous inspection report and the most recent self-assessment report do not include any specific judgements on success rates for non-accredited courses, which account for approximately 90% of the provision. Reasonable progress has been made to report success rates accurately for non-accredited courses. In 2006-07 to date, the council is reporting an overall success rate for non-accredited courses of 87%. Success rates vary quite significantly from 82% in preparation for life and work, to 93% in health, public services and care. Tutors record learners' achievements on attendance registers at the end of each course. Achievements only count towards overall success rates when all the learning outcomes identified on learners' individual learning plans have been met. Attendance registers are checked by the council for those subcontractors who enter their data directly on to the management information system. Quality and curriculum development officers carry out monitoring visits at least once a year to all subcontractors to check whether appropriate paperwork is used to record progress and achievement on non-accredited courses. Their reports do not always identify accurately whether individual learning plans and progress reviews are completed in sufficient detail. Subcontractors who report particularly good or poor success rates for non-accredited courses are asked by the council to provide further evidence. The council no longer funds providers who do not demonstrate the capacity to put in place robust and valid systems to record progress and achievement on non-accredited courses.

Quality of provision

What steps have been taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning?	Significant progress
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Significant progress has been made to improve the quality of teaching and learning. At the previous inspection, 11% of the learning sessions observed were inadequate and 41% were satisfactory. In 2005-06, the council carried out very few observations of learning sessions. A clear and robust strategy has now been implemented to improve the system for observing teaching and learning. The council has carried out extensive and thorough lesson observation training for staff. Comprehensive procedures and a detailed handbook have been produced to ensure that lesson

observations are moderated and checked carefully. External consultants have made a particularly useful contribution to the accurate monitoring of observation reports and grades. Subcontractors attend the council's adult and family learning meetings regularly to share best practice in observing lessons and to ensure they are clear about observation procedures and processes. There has been a concerted effort to improve the quality of teaching and learning. The grades given for observed learning sessions to date in 2006-07 demonstrate that the quality of teaching and learning is improving. Where tutors' learning sessions are graded as satisfactory or worse, they are supported well to improve their teaching. The time taken to agree an action plan after carrying out observations for these tutors is sometimes too long.

What improvements have been made to initial assessment and the planning of individual learning?	Reasonable progress
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Improving initial assessment and the planning of individual learning were identified as key challenges at the previous inspection and were weaknesses in a number of sector subject areas. Reasonable progress has been made to improve initial assessment and the planning of individual learning on many courses. The council has carried out extensive staff training on initial assessment with centre managers and groups of tutors. Some subcontractors have been supported well to improve initial assessment and course planning. The council has started to identify tutors who demonstrate good practice, which can be shared with other staff. Observations of teaching and learning are used effectively to identify improvements in initial assessment and lesson planning. Some tutors do not use learning plans sufficiently well to identify learners' individual aims. The outcomes of initial assessment are not always integrated with lesson planning and schemes of work.

What evidence is there of planning progression routes with partners from entry and level 1 courses to level 2 provision?	Reasonable progress
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The previous inspection report identified particularly effective movement of emphasis to courses, which improve the learning of target groups identified in national and local skills strategies. The council's most recent self-assessment report stated that the provision of a range of learning opportunities aimed at engaging adults with low skills to participate and progress to full level 2 qualifications is an important priority. The council has made reasonable progress to plan progression routes with partners. All subcontractors have to identify possible progression routes as part of their submission to the council for funding. The council provides particularly detailed guidance and clear criteria on progression routes in its funding applications prospectus. Some providers who have not identified appropriate progression routes do not receive funding for their courses. The identification of progression routes in some curriculum areas has been particularly good. Some subcontractors use local partnerships well to develop progression opportunities for learners. In family learning, the council has started to run courses directly where there are no external

progression routes available and to monitor progression rates from wider family learning courses to family literacy, language and numeracy programmes and wider family learning courses at a higher level. Specific courses have been provided alongside some learners' main programmes to help them to progress to further training or to take national literacy and numeracy tests. The council has a number of individual case studies of learners who have progressed successfully to other courses, but does not monitor learners' progression overall in sufficient detail.

Leadership and management

Is better use being made of equality data to improve the provision?	Significant progress
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At the previous inspection, equality data was not used sufficiently by some providers to make improvements to future provision. The council has made significant progress to resolve this weakness. Most subcontractors now have a clear understanding of the importance of using equality data to analyse and improve provision. The council has continued to provide detailed equalities data to providers. The format and layout of the data has been improved so that subcontractors can identify important information and trends more easily. Useful training has been provided for subcontractors on equality and diversity. The use of equalities data has improved and is monitored carefully by the council through the self-assessment process. Subcontractors' self-assessment reports identify clearly where changes have been made to the provision in response to trends in data about local communities. Providers are now required to include a detailed analysis of equalities data in their funding bids.

How well have the self-assessment and development planning processes been used to analyse and improve the quality of provision since the previous inspection?	Reasonable progress
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The self-assessment process was judged to be satisfactory at the previous inspection and reasonable progress has been made to improve the process during the last year. The council has carried out training with subcontractors to improve the writing of self-assessment reports and quality improvement plans. Comprehensive written guidance has been updated to help providers make more accurate judgements. Most subcontractors' individual self-assessment reports are now more succinct and evaluative. Providers' reports and quality improvement plans are checked thoroughly and are used effectively to contribute to the council's overall self-assessment report and quality improvement plan. Action points in the plan are detailed and have clearly identified responsibilities and timescales. Appropriate actions have been taken to improve most aspects of the provision since the previous self-assessment report. The quality improvement plan is updated regularly. Subcontractors' performance targets are monitored through team meetings. Important issues are identified quickly and

resolved appropriately. The identification of risks in subcontractors' performance is used as part of the new provider confidence rating process developed by the council. The most recent self-assessment report does not contain sufficiently detailed judgements in some sector subject areas to support the strengths and weaknesses.