

## MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Name of Provider: London Borough of Islington  
Date of visit: 30 January 2008

### Context

This monitoring visit follows the inspection in October 2006 at which the London Borough of Islington was graded as satisfactory for leadership and management overall, satisfactory for its quality improvement arrangements and good for equality of opportunity. Provision was good in preparation for life and work and satisfactory for family learning. The London Borough of Islington still holds a contract with the London Central Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide adult and community learning. The provision offer has not changed since the previous inspection.

### Achievement and standards

What strategies are in place to produce accurate achievement data for non accredited courses?	Reasonable progress
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The previous inspection report judged that family learning ineffectively assessed, monitored and recorded learners' progress. The borough identified in the 2006/07 self-assessment report that recognising and recording progress and achievement was inconsistent. The post inspection action plan emphasised pertinent quality improvement targets for all provision to improve this aspect. Reasonable progress has been made in implementing better strategies for recording and recognising achievement across all non accredited provision. Tutors have better ownership of the process. Managers evaluate the success of implementation through moderation. Closer attention is paid to implementation in observation of teaching and learning. A management information system which will collate and provide success rate data is recently implemented. However, it is too early to judge the impact of the quality regarding how tutors recognise and record progress and achievement on success rate data for non accredited courses.

At the previous inspection retention rates and achievements on accredited courses were judged to be good. Provider data shows this has been maintained.

## Quality of provision

What progress has the borough made in developing the support for literacy, numeracy and language skills?	Reasonable progress
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The borough has made reasonable progress in developing support for literacy, numeracy and language skills. Managers have been successful in promoting the importance of skills for life, particularly to tutors of courses where this may not be the key focus. A series of staff training workshops has provided support to tutors in appreciating how developing learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills can be included in lesson planning and delivery. A full time co-ordinator joined the service in September 2007 with a key responsibility to implement literacy, numeracy and language skills in all teaching and learning. A pilot project which integrates literacy, numeracy and language skills with information and communication technology teaching has been developed well for the beginners' courses. The project is due to be launched in February 2008. Observations of teaching and learning now include evaluations of how well the tutor responds to learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs. There is better and more consistent use of initial assessment by tutors to support learning. This has led to improvements in the identification of appropriate support arrangements for individual learners.

What strategies are in place to improve the focus in meeting individual needs in the classroom?	Reasonable progress
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The borough has clearly identified the range of issues which need to be tackled to improve the quality of support for learners' individual needs, and is making reasonable progress. Progress has been made in improving initial assessment and the focus on tutors' better meeting individual needs in the classroom and in individual learning planning. The post inspection action plan while not explicit includes a number of key actions such as recording and recognising progress and achievement to better meet individual needs in the classroom. Observations of teaching pay better attention to how tutors teach learners with different needs. Reasonable progress is made in identifying and responding to the specific needs of ESOL learners, including improved schemes of work, lesson plans, and the introduction of learner diaries. The staff development programme now includes a number of sessions in promoting awareness of strategies to meet individual learner needs. However, improvements are not yet consistent across the service. For example, good and poor practice exists in the effective use of individual learning plans and in the quality of initial assessment.

What progress has been made in improving the quality of the teaching and learning scheme?	Significant progress
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At the previous inspection inspectors judged that arrangements to improve the quality of teaching and learning were ineffective. The borough has made significant progress in improving the observation of teaching and learning scheme. The post inspection action plan identified a number of key targets for improving the schemes effectiveness. Now, full time staff fully understand the scheme and note the benefits of the moderation process in identifying good practice and assuring the quality of observations. Part time tutors are supportive of observations and note the difference in approach and greater emphasis on teaching and learning in observation feedback. All tutors and managers understand the appeals process. Nearly all observers have received teaching and observation training. At the end of 2006/07 33% of tutors were observed in the final term using a new system. The target identified in the inspection action plan for 2007/08 is 100%, and 33% of tutors have already been observed this year. The current observation of teaching and learning profile in the 2006/07 self-assessment report shows a greater proportion of inadequate teaching compared with the one available at the previous inspection and a greater spread of grades and some outstanding grades. Compared with previous observation records the quality of information is significantly improved and does focus more skilfully on teaching and learning. The observers records indicate the borough are implementing the scheme in a more systematic and knowledgeable way. However, records do not contain much on the standards of learners work and insufficient attention is paid in some to what are the salient key strengths and areas for improvement which are impacting on learning.

What strategies are in place to share good practice in teaching and learning?	Reasonable progress
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The borough has made reasonable progress in devising and implementing strategies to share good practice in teaching and learning. Much of the implementation has taken place within the past 6 months. The council has increased the opportunities and provision for sharing good practice between tutors using a structured and formal approach. A new 6 monthly staff development booklet was introduced in September 2007 and the number and range of staff training and development activities has expanded significantly. Attendance at staff development sessions has improved, with positive feedback from many attendees. Part time tutors are now paid to attend mandatory training. Full service meetings were introduced from July 2007 and routinely include activities to share good practice. Since September 2007, three in-service training days each year have been introduced. A series of workshops in ESOL is successfully bringing staff together to share good practice and improve the provision. Observation of teaching and learning moderation meetings are used well to share good practice and discuss teaching and learning.

Although there is a plan to introduce a service-wide internet-based system for storing and sharing good practice, for use by all staff, this is in a very early stage of development. Too few staff have easy access to the current computer network-based and hard copy libraries.

## Leadership and management

Has the self-assessment process been maintained and post inspection action planning been implemented?	Reasonable progress
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Inspectors had a high degree of confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process at the previous inspection. The self-assessment process has been maintained and the borough has made reasonable progress in implementing the post inspection action plan. The self-assessment process and report are thorough and identify well the key aspects of provision that are strengths and areas for improvement. The post inspection action plan is being systematically implemented and key challenges, both identified at the inspection and by the provider, are being tackled. The post inspection action plan includes well chosen key challenges for 2007/08 and the targets are sufficiently challenging. The 2006/07 self-assessment report is useful to plan improvements and links well to quality improvement planning. The report does not sufficiently provide clear links on the progress of the targets from the previous quality improvement plan although progress on these targets is contained in the report.

