

The Learning Trust (formerly Hackney LEA)

Inspection date

6 June 2008

Inspection number

320893

Contents

Background information	3
Inspection judgements	3
Scope of the inspection.....	3
Description of the provider.....	4
Summary of grades awarded	5
Overall judgement.....	6
Effectiveness of provision	6
Capacity to improve	6
Key strengths	7
Key areas for improvement.....	7
Main findings	8
Achievement and standards	8
Quality of provision.....	8
Leadership and management	9
Equality of opportunity	9
What learners like	12
What learners think could improve.....	12
Sector subject areas.....	13
ICT for users	13
Literacy, numeracy and ESOL	16
Family learning.....	19

Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' monitoring visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Information and communications technology for users
- Literacy numeracy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
- Family learning

In addition to graded areas the inspection incorporated judgements from a number of other sector subject areas.

Description of the provider

1. The Learning Trust (the Trust) is a not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee, responsible for education services in the London Borough of Hackney since August 2002. It is contracted by the London East LSC to provide first steps and personal and community development learning, including family learning and neighbourhood learning, in deprived communities. The Trust subcontracts most of its programmes, working with more than 50 providers and community organisations. The largest is Hackney Community College (HCC) which offers programmes in arts media and publishing (AMP).
2. The head of the adult learning service has day-to-day responsibility for the provision and is supported by 29 staff and five team managers. Around 150 tutors, mainly employed by subcontractors, teach on learning programmes.
3. Hackney is an inner London borough with a population of some 210,000 spread over 19 wards, all of which are in the top 10% nationally in terms of deprivation. Approximately two-thirds of the adult population have qualifications below level 3. Unemployment rates in September 2007 were 10.7% compared with London and national averages of 7.4% and 5.3% respectively. Of the adult population, 41% is made up of non-white and minority ethnic groups compared with 34% in inner London, and 9.1% nationally.
4. In 2007/08 to the date of the inspection, there were 5157 enrolments on 479 courses. In 2006/07, there were 7762 enrolments on 754 courses. Of the 5555 learners recruited in 2006/07, 65% were women, 82% from a minority ethnic background and 92% entitled to concessionary fees.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Sector subject areas

ICT for users	Good: Grade 2
Literacy, numeracy and ESOL	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Family learning	Inadequate: Grade 4

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

5. The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory. Provision is good in ICT for users, satisfactory in literacy, numeracy and ESOL, but inadequate in family learning.
6. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Learners on most programmes **make gains in their confidence in and skills, although those on family learning do not improve their own skills sufficiently**. Retention rates on non-accredited programmes are high. Success rates on programmes leading to accreditation are satisfactory.
7. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Coaching is good in ICT for users. Planning of group learning sessions is effective overall. Planning and review of individual learning are insufficient in ICT and family learning. Accommodation for learning is often poor.
8. Programmes meet the needs and interests of learners well. Programmes are located carefully across the borough to meet the needs of identified groups and local communities. The range of programmes is good overall.
9. Arrangements to guide and support learners are good. The Trust's well established central information advice and guidance (IAG) service has usefully expanded to provide services to learners at community venues. Personal support for learners is good overall.
10. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Leadership and team-working are strong. Clear strategic planning, supported by particularly effective links to a wide range of local organisations and service providers, provides the basis for a significant expansion of the service. The adequacy and suitability of staff and curriculum management are satisfactory. Quality assurance and improvement arrangements are satisfactory for the adult and community learning (ACL), but are inadequate for family learning.
11. Equality of opportunity is good. The Trust works successfully to engage local residents from groups traditionally under-represented in learning.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

12. The Trust has a satisfactory capacity to improve. It has maintained good retention rates on non-accredited programmes over a three year period. Despite a decline in overall success rates between 2005/06 and 2006/07, success rates on programmes leading to accreditation have remained satisfactory and are starting to improve. It has broadly maintained grades from the previous inspection, with improvements to grades for ICT and equality of opportunity, but a lower grade for family learning. It has dealt effectively with some weaknesses, particularly in leadership and management. It has firmly established its quality improvement arrangements, although these need further consolidation and development to be fully effective across all its provision.

13. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. The Trust makes appropriate use of feedback from providers, learners and community partners. Its use of data on key indicators such as retention achievement and attendance is satisfactory and good on equalities. The process is regular and timely. The latest Trust self-assessment report was produced in December 2007. While it appropriately identifies a wide range of strengths and areas for improvement it is insufficiently self-critical in parts. Grades awarded by inspectors were generally lower than those claimed by the service.

Key strengths

- Effective partnership working with community organisations to build capacity
- Strong leadership and team working
- Good progress in developing information advice and guidance services responsive to community need
- Successful action to engage local residents in learning

Key areas for improvement

- Quality of family learning provision
- Accommodation for learning sessions
- Planning and monitoring individual learning
- Consolidation and extension of systems to continually improve provision

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

14. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall, a lower grade than that in the self-assessment report. Learners on literacy numeracy and ESOL programmes make good gains in their confidence and independence. ICT learners are keen and acquire the skills needed to achieve on their courses. Learners on family learning programmes enjoy sessions with their children, but do not improve their own skills sufficiently.
15. Retention rates on non-accredited programmes declined slightly between 2005/06 and 2006/07 but remain good at 90%. Success rates on provision leading to accreditation also declined during this period but are satisfactory at 65%. As yet incomplete data for 2007/08 suggests an upward trend in these rates. The volume of learning leading to accreditation increased significantly to over a quarter of provision in 2006/07. In ICT for users, where accredited learning is well established, success rates are good.
16. Data on overall retention and achievement shows that outcomes for learners from minority ethnic backgrounds are very similar to those of learners as a whole. Retention rates for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities are particularly high. Attendance is satisfactory across the service at 79%.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

17. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, a lower grade than that in the self-assessment report. Coaching is good in ICT for users. The pace and variety of activity is good in literacy numeracy and ESOL sessions. Session planning is effective in both these areas, and in classes observed in areas not graded during this inspection. Records of the Trust's observations of teaching and learning identify teaching as particularly good in AMP. In literacy numeracy and ESOL classes, planning and review of individual learning is appropriate, but is insufficient in ICT for users and family learning. Teaching and learning in family learning are unsatisfactory. Accommodation for learning is often poor.
18. Programmes meet the needs and interests of learners well, as identified in the self-assessment report. Programmes are located carefully across the borough to meet the needs of identified groups and local communities. The Trust offers a good range of creative art programmes mainly provided by Hackney Community College. Teaching assistants' courses are popular. These courses, together with Personal Best programmes for volunteers, meet an important community need. The range of ICT programmes is good, and satisfactory in literacy numeracy and ESOL family learning.
19. Arrangements to guide and support learners are good, as identified in the self-assessment report. The Trust has a well established and effective IAG service based at its headquarters. Since 2007 it made good progress developing and expanding the IAG it offers to provide services to learners at community venues. This outreach team also offer

useful employability training. Personal support for learners is good overall, and particularly effective in the work of the Trust's service for ex-offenders. Learners with mental health difficulties are safe and well supported. Support for learners on family learning programmes is good, and satisfactory in the other areas graded.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

20. Leadership and management are satisfactory, a lower grade than that identified in the self-assessment report. Leadership is strong as at the previous inspection. The Trust's adult and community learning subcommittee, supported well by senior managers with well defined lines of responsibility, monitors the work of the service appropriately. Clear strategic planning is based on good data and particularly effective links to a wide variety of local organisations and service providers. This has provided the basis for a significant expansion of the service in a borough rich in ethnic and social diversity, and extensive deprivation. The service demonstrates a strong team spirit and dedication to tackling the challenges of Hackney.
21. Equality of opportunity is good, as identified in the self-assessment report. The Trust acts successfully to engage local residents from groups traditionally under-represented in learning. The service use data on equality and diversity particularly well when planning its provision, enhanced by its good links with the many community based organisations. It identifies clearly the groups it prioritises, such as those from the Kurdish community, under-achieving and disaffected males and users of local mental health services. The service and its largest provider, HCC, analyse effectively the relative achievement of the particularly diverse mix of learners. Data for 2006/07 shows little variation in performance between groups, but mixed heritage white/Caribbean males achieve some 5% below the norm. The Trust has particularly concentrated on this group in the last year.
22. The Trust's clearly presented race, gender and disability equality schemes were published in 2004 and are currently under revision following consultation with the borough and local partners including schools. The Trust carries out a detailed and thoughtful annual equality impact assessment covering its activities. The assessments suitably contribute to action planning. An equalities officer works effectively with the Trust's minority ethnic achievement team in the development and review of policies. Outcomes have been wide ranging and well targeted with projects supporting refugees, ex-offenders and family learning. Promotion of the Trust's courses is wide ranging, and appropriate.
23. Recruitment policies are satisfactory. The Trust's staff profile largely matches that of learners and the resident community with good representation of minority ethnic groups in management roles. Recruitment policies are currently being reviewed regarding the employment of ex-offenders. Staff training in equality and diversity is satisfactory and includes well attended annual training events for tutors. Trust board members have received, for example, training in child protection.
24. Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. Enhanced criminal records bureau (CRB) checks are carried out on all the services' staff.

Commissioning arrangements place a contractual requirement on providers to conduct their own checks, with appropriately rigorous audit arrangements to ensure compliance. Sound procedures are in place to CRB check learners who come into contact with children and vulnerable adults during work experience. The accountability of roles and responsibilities for safeguarding within the Trust are clearly defined. Useful posters have been placed in all providers clearly and simply setting out learner's rights and responsibilities and identifying the designated manager. Appropriate risk management and assessment procedures are in place. *Every Child Matters* outcomes are satisfactory.

25. The adequacy and suitability of staff is satisfactory. Most tutors hold appropriate teaching qualifications, while a small minority are working towards them. At Hackney Community College the team delivering ACL provision have wide professional experience and are teacher trained. Staff development is suitably planned to meet the needs of the service. Take up is satisfactory. Provider staff benefit from a good range of well received development opportunities and briefings arranged by the service. The Trust's tutor and provider handbooks provide a useful source of information and documentation.
26. The Trust deploys resources with a firm focus on value for money. It effectively draws down a range of targeted funding, in addition to that received from the LSC. The Trust frequently funds providers in particularly deprived areas where access to good quality accommodation is often limited. Too much of the accommodation inspectors saw was, however, of low quality with cramped and sometimes poorly maintained rooms. The quality of equipment is satisfactory. In the best cases learners have access to modern good quality resources, much of which the Trust funds directly. In some cases, however, few specialist resources are available and adults are required to use inappropriate seating.
27. Curriculum management is good in ICT and satisfactory in literacy and numeracy and ESOL, but inadequate in family learning. The Trust produced a suitable strategy for meeting the literacy numeracy and ESOL needs of all its learners in 2005/06 which is due for review.
28. The Trust's use of data is insufficiently detailed to support effective analysis of some aspects of the provision. The service does not have satisfactory arrangements to appropriately capture and review the progress and achievement of learners on accredited courses.
29. The service has worked particularly well since the previous inspection to improve its quality assurance and improvement arrangements during a period in which it has doubled the number of providers with which it contracts. Arrangements are satisfactory for the ACL provision, but are inadequate for family learning. There have been improvements since the previous inspection, notably in ICT and the promotion of equality and diversity. The Trust has maintained satisfactory standards in literacy and numeracy and ESOL. Commissioning arrangements for adult and community provision have been steadily improved and are satisfactory. Regular and timely monitoring is undertaken through an observation of teaching and learning scheme which has expanded considerably since the previous inspection. All ACL tutors have been observed at least once in the last year. Observations undertaken during the inspection largely confirm the accuracy of grades awarded by the Trust, and by HCC. Useful external monitoring and evaluation team meetings are held regularly with ACL providers where their service is subject to satisfactory scrutiny. All ACL providers are required to produce annual self-assessment

reports which contribute to the services own self-assessment. The latest self-assessment report was produced in December 2007 and updated in May 2008 before inspection. The Trust makes appropriate use of feedback from providers, learners and community partners. The report is, however, insufficiently self-critical in parts. Grades awarded by inspectors were generally lower than those claimed by the service.

30. Too many aspects of the quality assurance and improvement of family learning are inadequate. Tutors in schools, who may be newly employed by the service, are often not observed until three or four weeks into a course which may only last five weeks. Family learning provision in schools is not vetted by the commissioning team before the courses start. The Trust does not require family learning providers to produce self-assessment reports, although the family learning team does consider feedback from end of course evaluations completed by tutors and learners when producing their annual self-assessment report. Family learning providers are not subject to the level of scrutiny provided by the external monitoring and evaluation team arrangements in ACL. The Trust does not identify inadequacies in family learning courses sufficiently quickly to improve the provision for current learners. The quality of provision has declined since the previous inspection.

What learners like:

- Feeling more confident in the community
- Meeting new people
- Skills they acquire that help in getting a job
- Enthusiastic and patient teachers
- Small classes (six or seven learners)
- Clear teaching focused on individual needs
- The regular homework they are set
- Good learning atmosphere in classes
- Classes that are held near home

What learners think could improve:

- Poor attendance of some learners – disruptive to those who attend regularly
- Amount of childcare available to allow carers to attend classes regularly
- Fees which some have to pay – ‘ESOL should be free’
- Opportunities to use computers in literacy and numeracy classes

Sector subject areas

ICT for users

Good: Grade 2

Context

31. At the time of inspection 228 learners were following ICT courses. Of 51 courses offered in 2007/08, 49 lead to externally accredited outcomes at entry level, level 1 and level 2. The courses, provided by organisations subcontracted to the Trust, are taught by 22 tutors and take place in community venues across Hackney during the day and in the evenings. A co-ordinator employed by the Trust oversees the programmes.

Strengths

- Good achievement
- Good coaching
- Wide range of courses to meet learners' needs
- Effective links with partners to engage learners from priority groups

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient planning and monitoring of individual learning

Achievement and standards

32. Achievement and standards are good. In 2006/07 success rates are high at 81% and rates of achievement and retention are both high at 90%.
33. Learners participate with good engagement and motivation in learning sessions. They are keen to make progress, and gain qualifications, often to improve their employment prospects. The standard of work they produce is appropriate. Learners acquire the ICT skills needed to achieve on their courses. Attendance is satisfactory. Attendance at sessions during the inspection was satisfactory at 81%.

Quality of provision

34. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Coaching is good. Tutors work intensively with learners individually during learning sessions providing them good support to achieve specific tasks. They provide helpful additional explanation and use demonstration effectively to clarify learners' understanding. Tutors provide constructive individual feedback which learners record carefully. In some centres teachers also offer additional help outside learning sessions to enable learners to progress further or catch up with the rest of the group where necessary. They also give learners useful homework tasks which they correct carefully.
35. Group teaching is satisfactory. The better sessions are well planned to meet group goals. Tutors set learners challenging targets to achieve within the session. They use a good

variety of techniques and learning resources including presentation software to teach ICT concepts and terms. Checking of learning is thorough. In too many sessions however, tutors do not plan sufficiently to meet individuals' different learning needs. All learners carry out the same tasks rather than work on tasks adapted to individual preferences and interests. In most sessions learners follow instructional manuals narrowly focused on awarding body requirements.

36. Resources are satisfactory. Computer hardware and software are up-to-date. Sufficient computers are available for learners to work individually. Most centres have data projectors or interactive boards which tutors use routinely. However, in some centres accommodation is poor. Rooms are poorly maintained and ventilated and wall displays do not consistently contain relevant information, such as reminders on computer use and health and safety.
37. Planning and monitoring of individual learning are insufficient. The Trust uses initial assessment effectively to place learners on suitable courses. Learners have individual learning plans but these list only generic aims usually selected from a list of group goals taken from the syllabus of the qualification they work towards. Tutors do not use outcomes of diagnostic assessments effectively to identify appropriate targets for individuals. Targets recorded on individual learning plans are not sufficiently specific or measurable. Reviews of learners' progress take place but records are too general to adequately guide learners in what they need to do to improve their skills. Too many courses rely on learners sitting mock exams to find out if they have made progress. Planning for individual learning is identified as an area for improvement in the Trust's self-assessment report.
38. The range of provision is good. A wide range of courses meets the needs of learners well. Most lead to external accreditation. Most centres offer courses at different levels to facilitate progression. Courses of different lengths and intensity cater well for learners' circumstances. Courses take place at convenient locations across the borough.
39. Support for learners is satisfactory. Learners receive an appropriate induction at the beginning of their course which includes suitable coverage of health and safety, complaints procedures and equality and diversity. Tutors routinely refer learners for literacy, numeracy or ESOL support, as appropriate, within Trust provision. Some centres provide childcare for learners while they attend courses, a facility highly appreciated. Specialist Trust advisors make regular scheduled visits to centres to offer useful information advice and guidance on progression to other courses, and help with job-seeking skills.

Leadership and management

40. Leadership and management are good. Links with partners to engage learners from groups traditionally under-represented in learning are good. The trust works closely with local community organisations, subcontracting provision carefully to ensure recruitment from priority groups in areas of particular deprivation. Arrangements for commissioning provision are well established and include effective support for new providers to develop capacity. This includes help with purchasing equipment and staff training. Measures to identify the need for programmes are sound. They include learner surveys, taster courses during adult learners' week and consideration of requests from community organisations.
41. Communication with partner organisations is good. Tutors employed by the subcontractors attend regular Trust meetings where they receive useful information and share good practice. Tutors are appropriately qualified or working towards a teaching qualification. Monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning is regular. The Trust observes each tutor teaching at least once a year. Judgements in records of observations are generally appropriate.
42. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. Partners' individual self-assessment reports contribute usefully to the main ICT report, but outcomes are not shared systematically with tutors. The use of data is satisfactory. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate. Inspectors agreed with the overall judgement that ICT provision is good.
43. Arrangements to promote equality of opportunity are satisfactory. Engagement of learners from priority groups is good. The range of adaptive technology available, for example, induction loops, is narrow. Some courses take place in rooms with poor access for learners with mobility difficulties.

Literacy, numeracy and ESOL

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

44. The Trust provides 98 courses in literacy, numeracy and ESOL. All lead to external accreditation, apart from four outreach pilot courses. At the time of the inspection 746 learners followed programmes. In 2006/07, 754 ESOL learners, 423 literacy and 270 numeracy learners followed programmes. Two thirds of numeracy, three quarters of literacy and nearly all ESOL classes led to external accreditation in 2006/07. Literacy, numeracy and ESOL form part of the skills for life curriculum area managed by the Quality Manager. Full-time curriculum co-ordinators are responsible for literacy and ESOL, and a part-time co-ordinator for numeracy. A total of 40 sessional tutors teach within the three curriculum areas. Courses take place in venues across the Borough. They include schools, community centres, shops, commercial premises, places of worship and children's centres.

Strengths

- Good gains in confidence and independence
- Effective strategies to engage local residents in learning

Areas for improvement

- Poor attendance at ESOL classes
- Some poor accommodation

Achievement and standards

45. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Learners make good gains in confidence and independence. They enjoy their learning and they identify clearly how their involvement in community life has improved, for example, more able to talk to their children's teachers and improved employability skills. Newly acquired skills enabled a learner in an entry level literacy class to make a doctor's appointment without help for the first time. A numeracy learner who started at entry level completed a level 2 course, enabling progression to a teaching assistants' programme. Standards of learners' work in observed sessions are good.

46. For learners who complete their programmes, achievement in national tests is good. In 2006/07, 87% of literacy and numeracy and 85% of ESOL completers who sat national tests were successful. Retention on literacy and numeracy courses was satisfactory at 85% and 80% respectively, but low on ESOL programmes at 70%. Data on retention and achievement for 2007/08 are not yet complete, but show an improving trend.

47. Attendance at ESOL sessions is poor. During the week of inspection attendance was 68%. In 2006/07 the attendance level was 72 %. Poor attendance at ESOL sessions has persisted since the previous inspection and strategies to improve attendance have not been effective.

Quality of provision

48. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory and schemes of work are detailed. Session planning is appropriate and generally includes specific consideration of individual learners' differing needs. Learners participate in a satisfactory range of activities during learning sessions, working in groups, pairs and individually to develop and practice skills. The pace and variety of sessions are good.
49. The planning and review of individual learning is satisfactory. All learners have individual learning plans. Target-setting is satisfactory and targets in individual learning plans appropriately reflect national standards and curricula and are generally expressed in language accessible to learners. However, they rarely include personal or social targets specific to the individual. Tutors and learners contribute appropriately to termly reviews of individual progress. ESOL tutors and learners also revise targets at other times when necessary. Tutors regularly assess the homework which forms an integral part of ESOL courses.
50. Tutors rely too heavily on the use of paper-based resources in learning sessions. Although they use ICT facilities when they are available, some tutors lack the skills to use them well. The use of ICT in ESOL classes is poorly developed.
51. Some accommodation is poor. Classrooms are often poorly maintained and ventilated. Decoration and display are often poor. Some have insufficient seating for the number of learners enrolled. In one school venue, learners, including pregnant women, were provided with chairs designed for use by primary school children.
52. The extent to which programmes meet the needs and interests of learners is satisfactory. Courses run at a good range of venues across the borough, convenient for learners to attend. In the current year, almost all lead to external accreditation. The range of levels is appropriate. Courses offered cover all levels between entry 1 and level 2 and include a strong emphasis on employability.
53. Support for learners is satisfactory. All learners receive a suitable initial assessment of their literacy numeracy and/or ESOL levels to help place them on an appropriate course. However, in a minority of cases, learners are not placed on courses most appropriate to their needs. Tutors provide learners with good informal support. Some resources for visually impaired learners, such as hearing loops and software packages, are available. Where learners have additional learning needs identified at initial interview, the Trust refers them to other providers where appropriate support is available.

Leadership and management

54. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good. The service has developed successful strategies to engage local residents from communities and backgrounds traditionally under-represented in learning, and effectively provides programmes to meeting local community needs. The Trust works closely with organisations catering for specific nationalities or ethnic communities and provides classes at locations accessible to learners from these communities. It uses pilot programmes effectively, such as a recent venture with a centre for the traveller

community, to build the confidence and expertise of staff on which to base future programmes. Tutors have a good understanding of the different cultural, ethnic and religious backgrounds of their learners.

55. Managers at curriculum level have a strong sense of purpose and clear strategy to develop provision. Support for staff is good. Staff are well qualified. Staff training and development is well planned and monitored.
56. Quality assurance processes are satisfactory. Judgements recorded following observations of teaching and learning are sound. A recently introduced peer mentoring scheme helps the sharing of good practice. The Trust has yet to develop a successful strategy to improve the quality of classroom accommodation. Judgements in the self-assessment report are broadly accurate.

Family learning

Inadequate: Grade 4

Context

57. At the time of inspection 146 learners attend 16 family learning courses. One course leads to an externally accredited outcome. The Trust subcontracts provision to schools and local community organisations across the borough. In 20007/08, 555 learners attended 35 family literacy numeracy and ESOL family learning programmes (FLLN), and 38 wider family learning programmes (WFL). Fifteen courses are new pilot developments. Of the learners, 51% are from minority ethnic groups and 14% are men.

Strengths

- Good use of partnerships to meet community needs
- good support in learning sessions to engage new learners

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient development of learners' skills
- Unsatisfactory teaching and learning
- Insufficient assessment, monitoring and recording of learners' progress
- Poor accommodation in schools
- Inadequate action to improve the provision

Achievement and standards

58. Achievement and standards are inadequate. Learners do not improve their own skills sufficiently. They do not systematically develop their skills in areas such as independent learning, evaluation or literacy and numeracy. They do not work towards challenging targets for their own learning. Improvements tutors identify in some learners' interaction with their children are not specifically planned for or further developed.

59. Learners enjoy sessions, playing and having fun alongside their children in relaxed, welcoming circumstances. Some gain confidence in helping their children learn. Some become more involved in school activities to support their children.

60. Retention rates declined from 96% in 2004/5 to 88% in 2006/07 but remain satisfactory. Attendance at observed sessions was unsatisfactory at 58%. However, attendance rates in the autumn and spring terms are satisfactory at 86% and 84% respectively and have improved from around 75% in 2005/06.

Quality of provision

61. The quality of provision is inadequate. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Too many classroom sessions are poorly planned. On many courses the planning for development of adult skills is inadequate. Tutors set general group goals that are often not sufficiently specific, lack timescales for completion and mostly concern the skills development of children. Teaching does not sufficiently emphasise improving learners' skills. Learners are often unaware that this is a course aim. In some sessions, learners who speak English as an additional language rely heavily on translators and teachers incorporate insufficient opportunities for them to improve their spoken English.
62. The assessment, monitoring and recording of learners' progress is insufficient. Tutors do not identify learners' expectations or assess their skill levels effectively, and arrangements to monitor learners' progress and achievements are poor. They rarely encourage learners to use individual learning plans to monitor and record their own progress and self-set new goals for learning. Some tutors lack expertise and confidence in setting individual goals for learners' skills development. Their evaluations of children's learning rarely include a contribution from learners, and evaluations focus narrowly on how well children complete activities.
63. Accommodation for family learning in many schools is poor. Most rooms are too small with insufficient seating for the number of adults and children attending. Only chairs designed for use by children are available to adults. In one schools, learning is interrupted by the use of the classroom as a passage way to other parts the establishment. In one music session, poor acoustics hindered discussion.
64. The extent to which programmes and activities meet the needs of learners is satisfactory. The Trust offers suitable range of programmes in FLNN and WFL. Courses offered outside term time are popular. Provision is carefully located in schools and community venues to provide good access and to meet local needs.
65. Guidance and support for learners are good. Learners receive good support and encouragement from translators, crèche workers, teaching assistants and parent school liaison officers to take the first steps back into learning. They receive appropriate advice on queries concerning Every Child Matters outcomes. Information, advice and guidance workers attend some learning sessions and routinely inform learners of wider learning opportunities. However, tutors rarely incorporate support workers into the lesson planning process. Sometimes support workers do not focus sufficiently on the learners most in need.

Leadership and management

66. Overall leadership and management are inadequate. The Trust, however, uses partnerships well to meet community needs. It has strong links with a good range of community providers in areas of social deprivation, some of which cater for specific minority ethnic communities. Community providers develop innovative workshops and short taster courses effectively to attract new learners. The learning trust meets its targets for engaging local residents from priority groups in learning well.
67. Staff are well qualified teachers of adults and children. Some have ESOL, literacy or numeracy teaching qualifications. The Trust offers useful support to tutors in provider organisations to gain adult teaching qualifications. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory for learners and staff. Safeguarding arrangements are thorough.
68. The Trust's comprehensive handbook for family learning subcontractors offers clear guidelines for providing programmes effectively. However, not all providers and tutors take advantage of the well prepared induction training or comply with good practice guidelines.
69. Action to improve the quality of provision is inadequate. Trust staff often identify accurately areas for improvement, but are slow to implement remedial actions. Targets and timescales for improvement are not sufficiently specific and they do not lead to timely outcomes. For example progress in developing a range of accredited courses has been slow and there are no firm dates for their introduction. Areas for development identified at the previous inspection still remain.
70. The implementation of quality improvement processes is weak. Data is insufficiently analysed to help identify priorities for improvements in the provision of programmes. The process to recognise and record learners' progress and achievement is ineffective. The observation of teaching and learning process is insufficiently thorough. Judgements on sessions are broadly accurate but they do not concentrate sufficiently on adult learning.
71. The self-assessment report does not fully identify the areas for improvement found by inspectors. The inspection grade for family learning is lower than the grade in the self-assessment report.