

Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute (The Institute)

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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:

- Visual arts
- Preparation for life and work

Description of the provider

1. Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute (The Institute) was founded in 1909. The Institute is a charitable organisation, governed by a board of trustees referred to as the council. The organisation's senior management comprises the principal, vice principal and five heads of department. The Institute employs approximately 235 staff. Since the previous inspection, The Institute has relocated to East Finchley, with an additional new purpose-designed building for visual arts.
2. The Institute is one of the largest providers of adult and community learning in the London Borough of Barnet. In 2007/08, 5,176 learners enrolled on 13,389 art and creative studies, foreign language, computing, general interest, sport and leisure, skills for life, teacher training and corporate training courses. Approximately 30% of the Institute's income is funded by the North London LSC. The remainder of the courses are funded directly by learners, the London Borough of Barnet or by external projects. The Institute holds a contract with the LSC to deliver courses in preparation for life and work and teacher training. Barnet College subcontracts their visual arts adult and community learning provision to The Institute, and this was included within the inspection. There were 301 visual arts and 299 preparation for life and work learners at the time of inspection. The Institute has recently started a Train to Gain programme. At the time of inspection, there were too few teacher training and Train to Gain learners to inspect these areas.
3. The borough of Barnet has an unemployment rate of 5.3%, slightly lower than the average for London. The local economy is dominated by small- and medium-sized enterprises.

Summary of grades awarded

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

Sector subject areas

Visual arts	Good: Grade 2
Preparation for life and work	Good: Grade 2

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

4. The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory. Achievement and standards are good. Learners' success rates on accredited courses have increased. Retention rates are consistently high. Learners produce work of a high standard and develop good skills.
5. The overall quality of provision is good. Teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory. The quality of visual arts accommodation and resources is outstanding. Most teaching and learning is no better than satisfactory. The setting and monitoring of learners' targets, planning of individual learning and monitoring of learners' progress are all weak. The Institute offers a wide range of courses. Learners receive very effective support, including good pastoral and welfare support. The quality of advice and guidance is good.
6. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The Institute has a clear and appropriate strategic direction, but has insufficiently challenging targets or action plans that allow progress to be monitored. Curriculum management is satisfactory. Quality assurance arrangements are largely effective, although systems for observing teaching and learning are not having a sufficient impact on improvement.
7. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Staff and tutors create a supportive, inclusive and safe learning environment. The Institute works with a wide range of partners. There is insufficient planning of actions to promote equality and diversity. The Institute does not use data sufficiently to monitor the participation, progress or success of different groups.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

8. The Institute demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve. A significant investment in accommodation and resources has greatly improved the quality of the learners' experience. However, this investment has placed the Institute in a weak financial position. The Institute's senior management and Council have written a three year recovery plan to return the Institute to financial stability, the success of which will be a major challenge. The recovery plan is still at too early a stage to demonstrate improvement. The current long-standing principal is retiring in 2008.
9. The Institute has taken effective steps for improvement since the previous inspection. Strengths identified by inspectors at the previous inspection have been maintained. Many weaknesses at the previous inspection relating to poor accommodation have been rectified. The quality of provision in the curriculum areas inspected has improved. Quality assurance procedures now incorporate effective self-assessment. However, management data is not widely available to managers or systematically used for monitoring purposes.

10. The thoroughness and accuracy of the self-assessment process is satisfactory. The self-assessment process involves all staff and incorporates the views of learners well. The judgements are mainly accurate in the sector skills areas inspected. However, the self-assessment of leadership and management was not sufficiently thorough. It did not identify all the areas for improvement found by inspectors and the grades were too high. The Institute has not analysed all areas of its work thoroughly enough and some sections of the report are not sufficiently detailed.

Key strengths

- High standard of learners' work and skills development
- Wide range of courses
- Very effective support for learners
- Outstanding accommodation and resources in visual arts

Key areas for improvement

- Weak planning and monitoring of individual learning and progress
- Insufficient good or better teaching and learning
- Insufficient setting and monitoring of measurable targets

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

11. Achievement and standards are good, as identified in the self-assessment report. Learners develop good skills and produce work of a high standard. Visual arts learners gain good technical skills in specialist crafts. Many learners on preparation for life and work courses progress to further training, education or employment. They develop good social, personal and workplace skills. Learners gain confidence in working independently.
12. Success rates on preparation for life and work long courses are high and have improved to 89% in 2006/07. On shorter duration English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses, success rates are low and have declined to 58% in 2006/07. The Institute has not yet established a reliable system for measuring visual arts learners' progress and achievement.
13. Attendance is satisfactory. Retention rates are consistently high, and for visual arts learners are good, at 96% in 2007/08.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

14. The overall quality of provision is good. However, teaching and learning are satisfactory. The Institute has outstanding accommodation and resources for visual arts learners. Visual arts learners receive good individual tuition from knowledgeable and enthusiastic tutors. Preparation for life and work tutors provide a good variety of learning activities and resources. The self-assessment report does not identify that too much teaching is satisfactory and not enough is good or better. Visual arts tutors do not use sufficiently varied approaches to teaching and learning. Some visual arts classes progress at too slow a pace. Group work in preparation for life and work lessons is not always sufficiently well managed. The Institute does not set individual learning targets effectively. In visual arts, initial assessment is not used sufficiently to determine learners' starting points or set appropriate targets. Learners' assessment and progress is not monitored sufficiently.
15. The range of programmes is good and meets learners' needs very well. The Institute has an extensive curriculum with a wide range of subjects and attendance options. The curriculum has been developed well to meet the needs of employers. Course information is attractive and informative. Learners benefit from good enrichment activities, including work experience and external visits. Preparation for life and work learners take additional modules that enhance their employment opportunities.
16. Guidance and support for learners are good. Learners receive good individual, pastoral and welfare support from tutors, as stated in the self-assessment report. Tutors in all curriculum areas make good use of the specialist literacy, numeracy and language expertise in the skills for life department to support learners and learning. Preparation for life and work learners receive very effective academic and practical support through

tutorials. Learners receive good quality advice and guidance, through the good links with the nextstep service.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

17. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff and council members display a very high level of commitment towards maintaining the educational mission and distinctive ethos of The Institute. Council members are highly experienced and offer a broad range of relevant skills. They have played a major role in securing the new accommodation. Although some council members maintain good contact with staff and learners, the overall involvement with curriculum areas is insufficient.
18. Communication between managers and staff is good. Senior managers operate an open-door policy that is appreciated by staff. Staff morale is high. Strong partnerships are in place with a broad range of organisations, including local colleges of further education, universities and schools, community groups and local employers. The Institute also benefits from sponsorship by patrons and fundraising events.
19. The Institute has been effective in improving the quality of the learners' experience. The recent relocation took place with the minimum disruption to learners and no loss in the number of learners enrolling. Achievements and standards have improved and are now good, as reflected in the high standards of learners' work. However, most teaching is no better than satisfactory and systems to evaluate the progress of individual learners are insufficiently thorough.
20. Quality assurance procedures are satisfactory. The Institute has a comprehensive and concise quality assurance framework. Documentation is clearly written and understood by staff. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. The Institute has an appropriate observation of teaching and learning system, but this has not been maintained within visual arts. Observers are well trained and their judgements are moderated. Teachers regard the process as supportive, but insufficient work is carried out to ensure identified weaknesses are rectified. Organised peer observations seldom take place. Teachers have too few opportunities to share good practice. The Institute places a strong emphasis on listening and responding to learners. Managers analyse and take action, where possible, in response to the twice yearly questionnaires, which are completed by learners.
21. Curriculum management is satisfactory. Managers provide good support to staff and teams meet regularly and work well together. However, recording and monitoring of agreed actions is often left as an informal arrangement and is unsystematic. Staff are fully aware of the need to improve the efficiency of The Institute, in particular the minimum number of learners needed to make each course cost-effective. Performance reviews take place every year for all staff. The arrangements for meeting the training needs of staff are effective, but performance targets are not always set or reviewed the following year.
22. Staff have regular opportunities for training, updating specialist skills and extending their teaching expertise. Tutors are well qualified for subjects that they teach, but the

proportion of staff with teaching qualifications is very low, particularly for part-time visual arts tutors.

23. The procedures for safeguarding vulnerable learners meet current government requirements. Staff and tutors who have contact with vulnerable adults are routinely vetted. Record keeping of these checks is thorough.
24. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Learners with literacy, numeracy and language support needs have good access to specialist support. Learners receive good quality support that enables them to participate in learning. The Institute provides a sufficient range of adaptive equipment and technology for staff and learners. Preparation for life and work tutors have had recent equality of opportunity training. However, most visual arts tutors and council members have not. Learners have a satisfactory awareness of equality of opportunity. The Institute has diversified the curriculum well to meet the needs of the local community, including employers. Programmes have been successfully introduced to encourage specific age groups into learning. The Institute has focused some marketing at specific ethnic groups, and uses diverse images in its publicity. However, it does not currently have an action or development plan for equality and diversity. Data is available, but not routinely used by senior managers or the council to monitor participation or performance by different groups. The proportion of men and black and minority ethnic learners participating in courses at the Institute has not changed significantly over the last two years. The Institute has recently produced a race and disability equality scheme. It is too early to assess the impact of this. The Institute's equality of opportunity policy has not been recently updated to reflect changes in legislation.
25. The Institute has faced an uncertain time in recent years, particularly in securing new accommodation. It now has a large financial deficit and the substantial financial reserve previously held is depleted. Senior managers and council members fully recognise these severe financial pressures and have produced three-year development and recovery plans which set a clear and appropriate strategic direction. This includes the development of the curriculum to increase income while reducing overall expenditure. However, the objectives are not sufficiently challenging given the huge task ahead. These plans, and indeed other strategic and management documents, do not have supporting action plans with specific and measurable targets. Senior managers and council members cannot easily monitor The Institute's progress towards achieving financial stability.

What learners like:

- Creative and pleasant environment
- ‘Hard working, dedicated and wonderful tutors’
- Helpful administrators and welcoming atmosphere
- Making good progress at the Institute
- Additional classes, like financial management
- ‘Doing what I love and learning to do it better’

What learners think could improve:

- Pace in some learning sessions – too slow
- ‘Larger classrooms for ESOL’
- ‘ESOL classes spread more across the week’
- Time available for beginners in mixed classes

Sector subject areas

Visual arts

Good: Grade 2

Context

26. The Institute offers 2 and 3 dimensional courses in sculpture, life drawing, ceramics, carving in stone and wood, jewellery, book binding, and silk painting. All courses are non-accredited. In 2006/07, 1412 learners enrolled on 121 classes in visual arts. The Institute currently has 908 visual arts learners enrolled in 103 classes, with 301 being funded by the LSC. The Institute's LSC funded visual arts learners are over 62 years of age and residents of Barnet. The provision is subcontracted to The Institute by Barnet College. Of the total visual arts learners, 84% are women and 12% are from black and minority ethnic groups. Most courses run for two and a half hours in the daytime or evening over ten weeks, as well as summer schools. The Institute also offers shorter courses including 1 day taster courses. The visual arts department has a head of department, one full-time tutor and 33 part-time tutors, with four assistant tutors and six part-time technicians.

Strengths

- High standard of learners' work
- Good retention rates
- Good individual tuition and support for learners
- Outstanding specialist accommodation and resources
- Exceptionally wide range of courses

Areas for improvement

- Insufficiently varied approaches to teaching and learning
- Insufficient monitoring of assessment and progress

Achievement and standards

27. Achievements and standards are good. Learners demonstrate a high standard of work in all craft classes. Learners gain good technical skills in specialist crafts such as stone carving, ceramics, bookbinding, printing and sculpture. They use a variety of media to good effect. Learners are well motivated to succeed and often complete work outside their classes to practice and develop their skills. Learners, some of whom are beginners, are skilled in producing large scale work. They successfully experiment with different methods and colours. Learners enjoy the social interaction of classes. Attendance is generally satisfactory, although it was low during the week of inspection. Retention rates are consistently high, at 96% in 2007/08. The Institute does not yet have reliable systems for judging success rates on visual arts programmes, which are all non-accredited.

Quality of provision

28. The quality of provision is good. Learners receive good individual tuition and support. Tutors are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. Most are professional artists with regular exhibitions. Tutors work effectively with learners on their individual tasks, and check their progress carefully. Encouragement is offered and corrections dealt with appropriately. Tutors are supportive and enable learners to improve and begin to work independently. Learners are actively engaged and focused on their studies. They are keen and enthusiastic, and ask questions to clarify their understanding. Learners work well together and learn from each other. Tutors organise regular visits to artists, galleries and museums, developing learners' knowledge and understanding of art.
29. The purpose built arts centre has excellent facilities, with outstanding specialist accommodation and resources. The studios are light, airy and well ventilated with professional standard modern facilities. The specialist resources greatly assist learners to produce high standards of work. The visual arts centre is easily accessible for learners with mobility difficulties. Ceramics learners have good access to an open studio, supervised by a technician, outside of formal class times.
30. In some classes tutors do not use enough varied approaches to teaching and learning. Some classes do not have sufficiently specific learning outcomes to support the planning of learning or activities. Tutors use a very narrow range of teaching strategies. Learners' progress on the course is not always planned or structured. The pace of some classes is too slow. Some tutors do not question learners sufficiently to check understanding.
31. Assessment and progress are not monitored sufficiently. Initial assessment is used inconsistently and the results are not used effectively to plan learning. Tutors and learners cannot easily measure progress, as there is often no clear starting point and no learning goal. The Institute has developed systems and paperwork, which are used in most classes, but these are not yet used reliably to measure or record achievement. Some tutors gather photographic evidence of learners' progress, but learners' creative work is not always recorded imaginatively.
32. Courses meet the needs of learners very well. An exceptionally wide range of courses is offered, with a full range of art and craft classes at all times of the year, in the day as well as evening. The Institute also offers a good range of summer schools, taster courses, classes specifically for beginners and courses for children. Course descriptions, marketing leaflets and the website are attractive and informative with accurate information which is easily understood.
33. Support and guidance are good. Learners receive good practical help from tutors and technicians. Arrangements for supporting literacy, numeracy and language needs are satisfactory. Individual tutors provide useful course specific guidance for learners. The self-assessment report accurately recognises that some students have insufficient guidance to support their personal development beyond the subject they are currently studying.

Leadership and management

34. Curriculum management is satisfactory. The move to the new site has been well managed, and staff morale is high. The manager and tutors have a clear focus on

improvement and providing a good quality learning experience. Communication between the manager and tutors is clear, purposeful and good. However, minutes of meetings do not always indicate who is responsible for the actions planned. The self-assessment report identifies that not enough observations of teaching and learning are carried out. There were none at all in 2006/07, and only a small number in 2007/08. Tutors do not always receive prompt feedback following an observation of their teaching. Tutors are not set enough targets for improvement in areas such as personal development, teacher or subject specific training. Low numbers of teaching staff have teaching qualifications, and there is little sharing of good practice. Tutors have received training in using initial assessment and recognising and recording learners' progress and achievement, but this has yet to have sufficient impact. Self-assessment is an inclusive process and the report for visual arts was generally accurate. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Although learners' individual needs are sensitively recognised in lesson plans, there is insufficient mention of diversity issues.

Preparation for life and work

Good: Grade 2

Context

35. The Institute offers courses in literacy and numeracy, ESOL and for learners with mild or moderate learning difficulties and/or disabilities. All LSC funded courses are run on the main site during the day and evenings, apart from one numeracy course for teaching assistants, which is provided at a local school. Programmes are offered from entry level 1 to level 2 and all lead to nationally recognised qualifications. Most learners attend for 2 semesters of 16 or 18 weeks. In 2006/07, 295 learners enrolled on preparation for life and work programmes. There are currently 272 learners enrolled on 16 ESOL classes and 27 learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enrolled on 4 foundation courses. Seventy-five % of learners are women and a high proportion of learners are from Eastern Europe, Africa or Asia. The skills for life department has a head of department, one subject head, one vocational manager, five full-time tutors and 13 part-time tutors, with two learning support assistants.

Strengths

- Good skills development
- Good variety of learning activities and resources
- Good development of the curriculum
- Very effective support for learners

Areas for improvement

- Poor management of group work in some learning sessions
- Insufficient action planning to promote improvement

Achievement and standards

36. Achievement and standards are good. Learners develop good skills. Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities work confidently on art and digital photography projects. They improve their communication and computer skills. Role-play is used to good effect to prepare learners with learning difficulties and disabilities to participate in events. Learners on ESOL courses build their language, literacy and study skills well and improve their fluency and vocabulary. Learners gain confidence in working independently.
37. The standard of learners' work in most lessons is good. Many ESOL learners progress to higher level language courses, further education and training, university or employment. Some learners with disabilities or learning difficulties make good progress towards independence, for example, by taking part-time jobs or going on work experience placements.
38. Success rates on long courses, which account for around two thirds of learners, are good and have steadily improved to 89% in 2006/07. Approximately a third of ESOL learners

leave after one semester to take up employment or for personal reasons and do not always achieve their full qualification aim. Overall success rates for these learners on short courses have declined to 58% in 2006/07, and are low. Attendance rates are generally good, and were satisfactory during the week of inspection.

Quality of provision

39. The overall quality of provision is good. However, teaching and learning are no more than satisfactory. In the better learning sessions, tutors plan well to meet individual learning needs and goals. Tutors plan a good variety of learning activities and use work-related resources to create a stimulating learning environment and meet individual learner's needs. Learners are challenged effectively and tutors have high expectations. They make good use of questioning techniques to develop learners' independent learning skills. ESOL tutors place good emphasis on correct pronunciation and homework is set and marked regularly.
40. Some tutors do not manage group work sufficiently well. They use overly complex language to introduce activities. Learners do not always understand the purpose of group activities and are often dependant on extra support from the tutor before they can progress. Often tutors fail to fully monitor the extent to which learners are involved in working on the tasks.
41. Individual learning plans are used effectively to monitor and record ESOL learners' progress. In some cases learners are not involved sufficiently in setting clear targets for progress. Tutors have developed an easy to use short term action plan for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. However, these learners are not sufficiently aware of their long or medium term goals, and these are not recorded on individual learning plans.
42. The curriculum is well developed to meet the diverse needs of learners. The department has designed a good range of courses with differing outcomes that provide good progression routes to further educational and employment. There are good opportunities for learners to enhance their progression by taking additional modules. Tutors have good links with employers and a range of agencies to help learners find work experience and employment.
43. Support for learners is good. Tutors provide very effective academic support through individual tutorials, where progress is evaluated and clear feedback given. Learners have good access to financial, pastoral and welfare support as well as informal advice and guidance from tutors. They receive good quality employment and training advice through The Institute's good links with the nextstep guidance service. Information is available in easily read formats and translated into a variety of languages.

Leadership and management

44. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Tutors are well qualified and experienced. Staff attend weekly staff meetings where they have good opportunities to discuss curriculum issues and the needs of individual learners. Learners' views are listened to and acted upon. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Learners receive appropriate information at induction about their rights and responsibilities through a good range of games and activities. Tutors develop this understanding effectively in tutorials. The

standard of accommodation is satisfactory, although some ESOL classrooms are too small for the numbers of learners. Tutors pay good attention to health and safety, particularly in ensuring vulnerable adults use computers safely. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate. Tutors are well involved in the self-assessment process. However, the report does not include sufficient assessment of the quality of teaching and learning.

45. Quality assurance arrangements are generally satisfactory, but plans for improving the provision are informal and the necessary actions are often not agreed or recorded. Systems for monitoring the success of improvements are not rigorous enough. The observation of teaching and learning is thorough and appropriately identifies strengths and areas for development. However, few measurable targets are set or monitored. Managers do not sufficiently or routinely use retention, achievement and success rate data to set targets or monitor improvement.

Annex

Learners' achievements

ACL Pilot - Data Tables

Learners' achievements in accredited FE funded provision

Table 1

Success rates on accredited entry and level 1 qualifications, by length, expected end year and age.

2003 to 2006, compared with the national rates for GFE colleges.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	19+			
		Starts – Transfers	Provider/College Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 Long	03/04	613	70.1	59.2	10.9
	04/05	551	76.0	62.1	14.0
	05/06	168	85.7	65.4	20.3
	06/07*	158	89%	N/A	
Short	03/04	117	82.1	75.0	7.0
	04/05	132	87.9	76.6	11.3
	05/06	128	63.3	79.2	-15.9
	06/07*	82	58%	N/A	

* ACL data (use where complete, validated and produced using proprietary software)

Table 2

Success rates on accredited level 2 qualifications, by length, expected end year and age.

2003 to 2006, compared with the national rates for GFE colleges.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	19+			
		Starts – Transfers	Provider/College Rate	National Rate	Diff
2 Long	03/04	71	63.4	53.7	9.7
	04/05	132	89.4	60.2	29.2
	05/06	1	100.0	65.9	34.1
	06/07*	0		N/A	
Short	03/04	26	80.8	69.9	10.9
	04/05	10	90.0	76.4	13.6
	05/06	1	100.0	80.7	19.3
	06/07*	0		N/A	

* ACL data (use where complete, validated and produced using proprietary software)