

T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk



17.03.09.

Rosemary Sloman
Head of Adult Learning and Skills
Croydon High Street Centre
217 High Street
Croydon
Surrey CR9 1LJ

Dear Rosemary

Ofsted Good Practice Survey Programme 2008/09

An evaluation of adult progression in learning

Many apologies for not writing to you formally sooner than this. However, there were one or two points I needed to check out with Sarah, and I then had to send the report of my visit for moderation.

I would like to thank you again for your hospitality and co-operation during my visit on the 20th January. I am particularly grateful to you and all your staff for the hard work involved in preparing for the visit and for giving up their time to meet with me. Please pass on my thanks to all those concerned.

The visit provided much useful evidence, which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting for the Adult Progression survey, as well as a wider survey we are carrying out on progression, entitled 'Moving Through The System'. It was very interesting to see both the provision for teaching assistants and for those aiming to work in the Care sector.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made on this one-day visit consisted of interviews with staff and learners and scrutiny of the range of documents you provided.

Overall, the progression rates and arrangements to facilitate adult progression provided by CALAT are good. I agreed to provide a summary of the good practice

seen and to identify some areas for development, and I outline the main findings as bulleted points below. I identified one important area for development.

Key strengths:

- Coherent and accessible progression routes – These enable adults with low self-esteem and few current educational qualifications to move from non-accredited provision into employment or further learning. Courses take place at times and in places that are accessible to people with family commitments.
- A strong focus on the expectations of employers – Learners are encouraged to develop their understanding of the labour market right from the start of their course. Learners on the Level 2 Teaching Assistants course have many opportunities to develop and revise their curriculum vitae and to practise completing job application forms. They visit schools to observe current practice. They undertake simulated job interviews towards the end of the course, with a selection panel drawn from stakeholder organisations. Learners find this very valuable. Learners on the 'Preparing to Work in Care' course undertake four sessions of job search activities at various points during the course. They also undertake supported employment. Each learner has a tutorial with a member of staff which focuses specifically on how to make the most of this experience. Guest speakers from stakeholder organisations and other employing agencies contribute to both courses.
- A high level of responsiveness to the personal and educational needs of learners – Tutors are constantly available in person, by email and by mobile phone to deal with any concerns learners may have about their course or about personal issues that are interfering with learning. Learners find this support invaluable.
- Good development of learners independent learning skills – This was particularly apparent on the Teaching Assistants' courses where the individual learning plans (ILPs) have been carefully designed to promote reflective learning, and are effectively used for this purpose. Learners show a good understanding of the importance of working towards targets and of managing their work to meet deadlines. They carry their independent learning skills on into further learning
- Good links with external stakeholders – CALAT staff have a good knowledge of the local employment market. This enables them to develop provision to meet employers' needs and to gauge the demand for employees with particular types of qualification. Good relationships with schools and care

organisations also enable learners to progress into employment. A job brokerage arrangement with a consortium of schools in Lambeth has been particularly effective.

- Good language and literacy support for learners – CALAT has developed provision specifically to meet the needs of bilingual adults who wish to work in schools. This is of a very good standard. Literacy teaching is embedded into the Preparing to Work in Care course, with some sessions being jointly planned by the vocational and literacy tutors. Where learners are interested in doing so, they work towards and often achieve Skills for Life qualifications at Levels 1 and 2.
- Very good success rates on accredited courses – Success rates for the Level 2 Teaching Assistants course are impressive, with two groups achieving a success rate of 100% in 2007/08 and 92% of learners in one of the bilingual learners groups achieving distinctions on one unit. Success rates for Preparing to Work in Social Care are very good (87% and 88% for different cohorts in 2007/08).
- Good onward progression from some accredited courses – Progression into employment for learners supported by the Lambeth job brokerage scheme is very good (75% in 2007/08). Progression from Preparing to Work in Social Care is also good.

Area for Development

- More systematic use of data to inform the self-assessment and planning processes – data about progression, achievement and success is gathered, but not analysed sufficiently. Staff understand intuitively where progression is good and where there is scope for improvement. But, overall, data is not used sufficiently to identify strengths in the provision, or to identify areas where performance might be improved. For example, there is scope for exploring internal progression rates more fully from this point of view. CALAT has made insufficient progress in this area since its last inspection.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop your adult provision. If there are any points or aspects of the visit you wish to discuss, please contact me. As we will be evaluating the survey, you may be contacted in the future to find out your views. I hope you will contribute to this evaluation.

As I explained in my previous letter, a copy of this letter will be published on the Ofsted Website.

Best wishes.

Yours sincerely

Janet Swinney
Additional inspector