

# London Borough of Richmond upon Thames

Inspection report

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Name of lead inspector: Andy Harris HMI

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Type of provider: Local authority

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## Information about the provider

1. The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames is a unitary authority in south-west London. It has a skills funding agency contract to provide family learning, including wider family learning, family literacy, language and numeracy programmes, and family learning impact funding aimed particularly at fathers and families at risk. The wider family learning is the largest part of the provision. Programmes are managed by two staff and delivered through a range of partners at a variety of locations throughout the borough, although the main delivery is now linked with five children's centres. Family learning was the main focus of this inspection.
2. In addition, the borough has operated, for 27 years, a not for profit business, called Way to Work. This recruits young people into apprenticeship posts. The main provision is now for business administration apprentices. The programme is managed by five staff at the borough, with additional specialists giving assistance to those with literacy and numeracy needs. The apprenticeship programme is delivered by a subcontractor. This inspection focused on Way to Work's monitoring of subcontractor activities and its recruitment of, and general support for, apprentices.
3. The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames also has funding to help develop the adult learning in the borough. This is partly done through the Richmond Lifelong Learning Partnership. The borough works closely with Richmond Adult and Community College, which is the main provider of adult learning in the borough.
4. The borough is generally considered to be affluent, with earnings above average for London, although there are five pockets of relative disadvantage scattered across the borough. The proportion of the working-age population with National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) level 3 or above is 63%, compared to 55% across London.
5. The following organisation provides training on behalf of the borough:
  - Troy Solutions Ltd.

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	1,137 part-time learners
Employer provision: Apprenticeships	84 apprentices

## Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Grade 3
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2
Subject Areas	Grade
Family learning	2

## Overall effectiveness

6. The London Borough of Richmond upon Thames provides a good service to those on family learning courses. It also manages its apprenticeship programme well, and effectively fulfils its responsibilities for guiding the adult learning provision in the borough.
7. The family learning programme is now an important part of the borough's strategic work. There are good links with partner organisations, ranging from children's centres to art galleries. The many courses that come under the wider family learning programme are interesting, well delivered, provide parents with new skills and confidence and inspire them to progress to other learning. The smaller number of language, literacy and numeracy courses are not so successful; they are not as well planned and delivered.
8. The apprenticeship programmes are successful. The programme has improved to the point where nearly all apprentices get their planned qualification. The programme helps unemployed young people into apprenticeship positions, and then the majority go on to higher qualifications or in to permanent employment. Apprentices receive good levels of support, with particularly useful help being given to those who might struggle with literacy or numeracy qualifications.

9. The management of the wider family learning is good. However, the language, literacy and numeracy programme is not so rigorously monitored. The management of the apprenticeship programme is also good. The borough works very effectively with the subcontractor delivering the apprenticeship programme, even though some formal monitoring of data and target setting needs improving. The borough carries out generally accurate self-assessment of its service and plans improvements well. Improvements do take place. However, over the years, a variety of initiatives at high level and in the routine management of the programme have meant that improvements are not as fully implemented as intended before another change occurs.

## Main findings

- Achievements and standards are good. Learners on wider family learning courses enjoy their classes, gain confidence and new skills, and are motivated to progress to other learning. Apprenticeship success rates are good overall, improving from unsatisfactory to outstanding over a four-year period.
- Progression for Way to Work learners is good. The scheme successfully takes young people not in education, employment or training and, after a rigorous but supportive recruitment process, helps them into apprenticeship posts. Around a third then progress to higher level training and a half into full employment. However, the number of potential apprenticeship vacancies is decreasing.
- Teaching in wider family learning is good, with some very well planned lessons that inspire and fully involve parents. However, the smaller family language literacy and numeracy provision is generally poor, with insufficient general planning and use of individual learning plans, poor quality resources and teaching that does not meet the needs of individual learners.
- Opportunities for learners to gain accreditation of their work are insufficient; this is particularly so in family language, literacy and numeracy programmes.
- Partnership arrangements in family learning are very good. The borough works closely with specialist providers, using their resources and expertise well to deliver a wide range of courses, particularly in wider family learning. The courses take place in convenient and welcoming locations.
- The support for learners' personal needs is good. In family learning mentoring schemes, the use of volunteers and the care provided by tutors and partners all help learners progress. However, aspects of formal advice and guidance are underdeveloped, and staff involved do not have appropriate higher-level qualifications.
- Way to Work staff maintain close and supportive links with their apprentices even when the subcontractor takes over the training.
- On apprenticeship programmes learners who may have literacy or numeracy needs undergo a very detailed assessment process. The results of this process are then used extremely well to guide a series of helpful individual training sessions with specialist tutors. Nearly all these learners then gain the appropriate qualification.

- A new database for recording learner activity is helping with the planning of family learning, although it is only just beginning to have a significant impact. The routine and detailed monitoring of family learning provision is improving, but lacks rigour.
- Way to Work staff have effective, regular links with their subcontractor. The progress of individual learners is very well monitored by Way to Work and the subcontractor. Although the provision is generally improving, Way to Work managers do not set the subcontractor formal targets to help guide improvements in specific aspects.
- The use of funding body data to help the strategic planning in Way to Work is insufficient. Individual learner data are well maintained, and a generally accurate picture of overall performance is available through local systems. However, this does not always exactly match the formal data, which are used by the funding bodies for monitoring and contractual activities.

### What does London Borough of Richmond upon Thames need to do to improve further?

- Develop a delivery strategy for family language, literacy and numeracy programmes that will provide learners with opportunities to achieve appropriate accreditation.
- Make more rigorous use of data and monitoring systems to plan, monitor and evaluate the quality of the provision in family learning. Make better use of learner information, using individual learning plans, to monitor and track the progress and progression of individual learners in family learning.
- Further develop the provision of information, advice and guidance in family learning. Review the benefits of having external accreditation for the guidance services and seek accreditation if appropriate. Examine the current qualifications of staff involved in guidance and, where necessary, arrange for relevant staff development.
- Carry out a detailed annual review of subcontractor performance in Way to Work. Identify precise areas for improvement and set those out in targets agreed with the subcontractor. Review the progress against targets at appropriate intervals in the year.
- Examine Way to Work funding body data at least five times a year, after release of success rate tables. After rectifying any anomalies use the data for target setting, monitoring, and in self-assessment, whilst retaining any appropriate local systems to monitor individual learner progress.
- Increase the number of apprenticeship places available. Review whether the range of programmes being offered should be extended. Move from just repeat business to working with new employers. If appropriate, offer apprenticeships to those in employment. Find and use organisations that can help this process.

## Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

### What learners like:

- interesting courses, that are relevant to their needs, help with relationships with their children and have a mix of challenge and enjoyment
- convenient settings for courses, in environments that are less intimidating than large colleges
- really good child care facilities linked with family learning courses
- the fact that the service responds well to any concerns, or suggestions for improvement
- tutors who can empathise with a learner's situation
- an opportunity to mix and have conversation outside usual social or ethnic groups.

### What learners would like to see improved:

- nothing of significance.

### What partners like:

- effective partnership working, both in family learning and apprenticeship programmes
- clear links with wider borough plans and strategies for improving the future for families, children and young people
- constructive dialogue between providers of adult learning in the borough aimed at improving the overall provision.

### What partners would like to see improved:

- joint efforts to ensure that the newly established children's centres with their family learning courses are known to a wider range of potential beneficiaries.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

10. London Borough of Richmond upon Thames' capacity to make and sustain improvement is satisfactory. While most features of the provision are now good and show recent improvements, some elements have a record of inconsistency.
11. The family learning provision has changed greatly over the years. Current partnerships are good, and the integration of family learning with the borough's new children's centres shows much potential. However, the link with children's centres only properly started in the latter part of 2009 and previous initiatives were routinely overtaken by events. A recently introduced family learning learner database has much potential to help with improvements, but the 2007 monitoring visit noted the same potential on a previous database. The 2006 report commented on the recent appointment of a family learning coordinator and the potential for improvement. After some changes a coordinator has again been introduced, again with the potential for improvements, although the post is not a formally established one at this time. Success rates have improved significantly in Way to Work, but that is still a relatively recent change.
12. Family learning is now much better recognised in the borough's strategies and planning, and is well integrated with developments in appropriate departments. Similarly, Way to Work is linked well with youth services and this offers the opportunities for further improvements. The Richmond Lifelong Learning Partnership offers good strategic guidance.
13. The self-assessment processes in both family learning and Way to Work are satisfactory. However, in Way to Work there is insufficient use of formal data to identify areas for improvement, and lack of formal targets for its sub-contracted provision.

### Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

14. Achievement and standards are good in family learning. Learners in classes develop a good level of motivation to progress on to further learning within the family learning programmes and local college provision. Learners enjoy their classes so much that they travel considerable distances by public transport with their children to attend. They are sufficiently confident to consider the possibilities of future employment. They gain a wide range of skills and knowledge. These skills enable them to better engage with their children, to support them with their school activities or contribute to local community based activities, such as carnivals or exhibitions. Learners are very engaged and participate well in class. The standard of work in some art classes is very good and for some learners, inspirational.
15. Retention rates in family learning are consistently high at 90% and compare favourably with national averages. The provision has expanded, and successfully targets specific hard-to-reach groups identified by staff in children's

centres, schools and health services. Progression on to further learning within the family learning programmes is satisfactory at 21%. Recent initiatives are now in place to track progression on to further training and employment.

16. Outcomes for apprentices on the Way to Work programme are good. Three years ago success rates were at an unsatisfactory level but following a number of changes, including the use of different subcontractors, rates have improved significantly. In the previous full year they were above national averages, and three quarters of the way through the current year they are at a very high rate, around 90%. Progression is good. London Borough of Richmond upon Thames' strategy is to offer apprenticeships for those not in employment, education or training. It successfully provides these young people with an initial apprenticeship post. A good proportion, around 50%, then go into full employment, and a third move on to advanced apprenticeships with their initial employer as their role evolves. Around 10% move into further or higher education.

## The quality of provision

Grade 2

17. The quality of family learning provision is good. Teaching and learning are good in wider family learning. Learners display high levels of concentration and fully participate in their learning. Tutors are supportive and encourage very good participation and contributions from learners. In one centre, learners contribute to the planning and resourcing of next year's teaching programme. Tutors make good use of demonstration techniques to show learners what they could achieve and how to practise the activity with their children. There is good reinforcement of language and numbers for parents who wish to work with their children.
18. Wider family learning classes are well planned by experienced and qualified staff using the information provided by learners at an initial meeting. Learners contribute fully to their individual learning plans and identify their learning needs and goals clearly. In an art and education session learners from many different backgrounds used their experiences to contribute to the session and to understand more fully the role of art and play in their children's development.
19. The family language, literacy and numeracy provision, which is currently a small proportion of the overall programme, is poor. Courses are not well planned and do not consider the learning needs of learners. Staff pay insufficient attention is given to differentiation. Learning activities are insufficiently varied and rely heavily on poorly photocopied hand outs. The range of learning materials and resources used is insufficient. The monitoring of learner progress is insufficient. However, a numeracy course for a small number of learners is well planned to meet their needs and learners are being entered for accreditation at the intermediate level.
20. The needs and interest of learners are well met in the wider family learning provision. A good range of classes is available at high quality and specialist



venues across the borough. Staff in partner organisations are highly skilled and experienced, not only in their own specialism but also in engaging both parents and children in learning activities. There have been some recent and successful attempts to engage men in family learning, but levels of participation are still low. The language, literacy and numeracy provision does not offer learners sufficient opportunity to gain formal accreditation; recruitment levels are low and classes are very small.

21. Partnership arrangements are very good in family learning. London Borough of Richmond upon Thames works with an extensive range of skilled and experienced delivery partners in a wide range of sectors, such as youth work, arts and family networks, children's centres and providers of education and health services. Partners contribute very effectively to the marketing and recruitment of the programmes. They often use their own extensive contacts and networks including voluntary and charitable organisations.
22. The pastoral support for learners on family learning courses is good. Parents on a recently developed mentoring scheme receive well-planned initial advice and guidance and continuous personal support to help them deal with personal issues such as debt, poor literacy levels and their children's behaviour. Mentors encourage them to consider taking up employment and further training opportunities. Wider family learning programmes make good use of volunteers to support both parents and children in the classroom. Good personalised crèche arrangements are in place to support learners. However, formal advice and guidance provision is underdeveloped.
23. Way to Work staff monitor individual learners well, and provide good support. Although the subcontractor has responsibility for the main elements of the apprenticeship programme, London Borough of Richmond upon Thames' staff build on a thorough and effective recruitment and induction process to maintain regular and supportive contact with learners. This helps in such things as disciplinary matters, or adjustments in working practices. After an initial screening of all learners, those who may have problems in reaching the appropriate level in key skills undergo an extremely thorough individual assessment. The assessment leads to a particularly detailed and helpful analysis and action plan. The plan guides specialist tutors who support learners with a series of individual lessons in their workplace. Outcomes for these learners are good.

## Leadership and management

Grade 2

24. London Borough of Richmond upon Thames takes the lead on developing the planning for adult learning in the borough, even though it only directly delivers a small proportion of this learning. This responsibility is managed well. It is done to some extent by constructive informal contacts within and beyond the borough authorities, but more particularly through the work of the Richmond Lifelong Learning partnership. This involves other interested parties, notably Richmond Adult Community College. The partnership helps ensure complementary, rather than competitive, provision. Although the partnership's

formal learning plan is still in development. The partnership is rightly working on the significant changes that are due to take place in adult learning in the forthcoming years.

25. The leadership and management of family learning programmes and the Way to Work programmes are good overall. In family learning internal communication is good, as is that with partner organisations and providers. Courses provided by partner organisations are regularly monitored for performance and compliance purposes. London Borough of Richmond upon Thames organises regular partner meetings, but good practice is not shared sufficiently among providers.
26. The monitoring of the family language, literacy and numeracy programmes lacks rigour. No strategies are in place to increase the under recruitment of learners and increase class sizes. Staff do not have sufficient expertise to evaluate the quality of course and lesson planning to meet the needs of learners or meet the requirements of family learning programmes. The observation of the teaching and learning process is insufficiently robust. Staff receive feedback but there is insufficient monitoring of subsequent improvement planning.
27. London Borough of Richmond upon Thames has recently acquired a new database which is used in family learning to record learner evidence and monitor the performance and quality of its family learning programmes. It is starting to have an impact on strategic planning, but it is too early to evaluate the impact of its use on detailed programme planning or on the quality improvement processes.
28. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. London Borough of Richmond upon Thames specifically targets hard to reach groups such as parents of children on at risk registers. The successful completion of courses helps these parents and their families improve their situation. London Borough of Richmond upon Thames inspires learners to extend their personal experiences through exposure to stimulating activities and environments outside their normal social and ethnic surroundings. Tutors successfully encourage learners to produce work in which they display their cultural or religious identities. The borough has appropriate policies and procedures that cover all legislative requirements. Staff are well aware of the requirements of these policies. Their treatment of learners shows respect, and a desire to help them improve their situation where appropriate. In Way to Work the successful programme is helping young people from a wide variety of backgrounds to improve their prospects. Data analysis of performance of various groups is not carried out in a rigorous and routine way. However, inspectors could not identify any significant variations in performance.
29. The promotion of safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults is good in both Way to Work and family learning. London Borough of Richmond upon Thames actively encourages parents to attend a range of courses, some externally accredited, which effectively reinforce aspects of child safety, for example paediatric first aid. On many other courses objectives, or general discussions,

help parents understand safety issues or potential dangers. London Borough of Richmond upon Thames has created a culture where staff, including those in partner organisations, are generally well trained in safeguarding and are aware of policies and procedures. New part-time staff, directly recruited by London Borough of Richmond upon Thames, are offered safeguarding training and most take it up, but there is no significant effort to ensure that all are fully trained. The borough meets necessary legislative requirements, specifically with respect to Criminal Records Bureau checks.

30. The self-assessment processes in family learning and Way to Work are satisfactory. There is good involvement of partners, and some analysis of learners' views. The reports are detailed and identify a wide range of strengths, and some areas for improvement. Both reports lead to improvement plans, although in Way to Work monitoring of the plan is not a significant feature of routine work. The main grades, apart from capacity to improve, are the same as those identified on inspection, but inspectors identified several areas for improvement not recognised in the development plan.
31. In Way to Work there is insufficient understanding and use of published funding body success data. Internal records quite reasonably concentrate on the relatively small number of individual learners, and this is helping to maintain good success rates. However, the funding body data, which can impact on formal performance monitoring, reflect issues such as learners who left some time ago but whose records are impacting on current data. Managers do not examine these data regularly, correct them if necessary, or use them for formal self-assessment.
32. The monitoring of subcontractor provision in Way to Work is very effective. Along with very regular and constructive informal contacts, there are productive monthly management meetings, a helpful exchange of records of assessments and reviews, and meetings between specialists. The performance of individual learners is particularly well monitored and a culture of continuous improvement is encouraged. However, London Borough of Richmond upon Thames does not set its subcontractor detailed formal targets to help managers judge whether specific improvements are taking place in such things as timely success rates.
33. Action to improve, or even maintain, the number of apprenticeship places offered by Way to Work is insufficient. There are more potential applicants than there are places, and the number of places offered has reduced over the past year. Way to Work has links with employers that it has nurtured over a period time. However, few new employers are added to the existing group. Programmes offered have reduced over the years. In some cases this has been appropriate and has helped with improvements in success rates, but there has been little recent formal review of which programmes might be successful in the Richmond area.

## Information about the inspection

34. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the provider's head of children's workforce development, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC), the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
35. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the provider. They also observed learning sessions.

**Record of Main Findings (RMF)**  
**London Borough of Richmond upon Thames**  
 Learning types: 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	19+ Learner responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners Full-time learners Part-time learners	241	187
Overall effectiveness	2	2
Capacity to improve	3	
Outcomes for learners	2	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2	
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2	
How well do learners progress?	2	
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	3	
How safe do learners feel?	2	
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	2	
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	2	
Quality of provision	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2	
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	3	
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2	
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2	
Leadership and management	2	2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	3	
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	2	
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2	
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2	
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2	
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3	
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2	

\*where applicable to the type of provision

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