

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Adult and Community Learning

Inspection dates		29 April–2 May 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- Learners make good progress and gain valuable skills and knowledge during their courses.
- Learners enjoy their learning; they are highly motivated by their studies and most progress to further study or employment.
- Success rates on non-accredited courses are high.
- Learners produce good standards of work.
- Tutors plan sessions well so that they contain a good variety of teaching and learning activities and ensure that learning is both stimulating and enjoyable.
- Tutors' use of information and learning technology (ILT) promotes the independent learning and study skills of individuals well.
- Tutors plan sessions effectively based on the good assessment of learners' needs.
- The local authority has a good overview of the service, and action taken to plan service development and improve the performance of the service is effective.
- Good progress has been made in addressing weaknesses identified at the last inspection.
- The service meets a broad range of community needs and helps many vulnerable learners make good progress.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Not enough teaching and learning are outstanding.
- Attendance is low at too many sessions.
- Target setting for individual learning is not consistently good.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Improve target setting and recording so that plans for individual learning consistently include targets that are meaningful to learners and enable them all to understand what steps they need to take to make good progress towards achieving their learning goals.
- Ensure that tutors promote the importance of good attendance by following up learners' non-attendance systematically in order to increase the rates of attendance.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding sessions by ensuring all tutors have the opportunities to share good practice of effective teaching, learning and assessment methods and plan sessions that routinely reflect the individual needs of learners.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Outcomes for learners are good. Approximately 80% of courses do not lead to a formal qualification. A large majority of learners complete these courses successfully and gain the skills and knowledge intended for them. However, on the smaller number of courses which lead to recognised qualifications the proportion of learners who are successful requires improvement. Success rates for these learners improved in 2012/13 but were below national rates. Data indicate that this improvement is continuing in 2013/14.
- Learners develop good skills, knowledge and understanding during their studies, including their English and mathematics. They gain confidence in using increasingly complex sentence structures and in applying mathematical concepts to their daily lives.
- Learners enjoy their studies and speak highly of the teaching and support that they receive. They make good progress in their studies, and some make progress that far exceeds their hopes or expectations. On one singing course, for example, the tutor was successful in helping learners to improve their breathing techniques and in making rapid improvements to their intonation and the resonance with which they sang. Within a short space of time, all learners were singing confidently and well, in preparation for their solo performances. On one silver-smithing course a learner produced an exceptionally well finished and decorative tea light. Other learners on the course produced equally good work, of which they were rightly proud.
- Learners gain significantly in confidence and are well motivated to continue studying. They progress well to further education and employment. The majority of learners go on to study further courses within the service, including courses that lead to recognised qualifications. Some gain employment or voluntary work. Others develop the skills and confidence to pursue their interests on a self-employed basis. In some subject areas, such as visual arts, learners produce excellent creative work that exceeds course requirements and meets commercial standards. In millinery, work is promoted for sale at an exclusive London store and one learner gained an internship with a millinery designer this year during her programme.
- Attendance at sessions is too low. The local authority monitors attendance carefully and has tightened its definition of what absence means. It is working closely with its subcontracting partners to improve learners' attendance. Data show that strategies to improve attendance rates are starting to be successful.
- There are no significant patterns or persistent disparities in the performance of different groups. Managers analyse the performance of different groups of learners carefully and take action where concerns are identified. They recognise the need to remain vigilant, and to continue to

take action, in order to establish consistently high performance for all the groups of learners that they serve.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. The majority of learners complete their courses and develop good skills and knowledge that help them progress. Tutors set high expectations for learners and motivate them to succeed and achieve their goals.
- Tutors use their skills, expertise and vocational experience well to plan good, and in some cases outstanding, sessions. These incorporate a good range of teaching and learning activities, such as whole class teaching, group discussions, internet research and practical exercises. As a result, learners develop good knowledge and skills that they apply well during sessions.
- Tutors monitor learners' progress well during sessions by using direct observations of learners' work, exercises and focused questioning to check their understanding and to challenge them. Assessment of learning provides learners with accurate feedback about the quality of their learning. In the minority of less effective sessions not enough use is made of questioning to ensure that all learners have the chance to contribute during group discussions.
- Tutors promote independent learning very effectively. This enables learners to develop their skills to learn outside of the classroom. Learners are highly motivated to learn and are enthusiastic about gaining new knowledge and skills.
- Tutors use a range of effective methods to identify accurately the skills and knowledge of learners. These include discussions with learners, diagnostic assessments and short quizzes. The outcomes from these help tutors to plan sessions that reflect learners' individual needs, interests and abilities.
- The quality and use of individual learning plans are too variable. Consequently, learners are sometimes unclear about the progress they have made and their next steps in learning. Too many plans do not reflect the specific goals that learners have. Records of their progress in relation to their learning goals are often too brief and lack detail. Not enough attention is given to recording what specifically learners need to do to improve.
- The quality of accommodation and resources is generally good. In some areas, such as visual arts, good resources to support learning are available through the virtual learning environment. In other subject areas, individual computer tablets enable learners to carry out internet research and to produce work.
- In many sessions, tutors take good advantage of naturally-occurring opportunities to incorporate English and mathematics into their teaching and learning. In one session, the tutor successfully used an exercise about comparing sofa costs to develop learners' skills in reading, calculating prices and using the internet for research. However, tutors do not always integrate English and mathematics well within other subjects, nor correct learners' errors in grammar and spelling.
- During sessions, tutors make good use of learners' own backgrounds as a rich resource to promote learning about different cultures. The service celebrates diversity well and an atmosphere of mutual respect prevails between tutors and learners.
- The quality of information learners receive prior to joining a course and during induction is generally good. Arrangements to provide learners with information, advice and guidance about progression opportunities at the end of a course are effective in supporting their next steps.

Visual arts 19+ Learning programmes Community learning	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. As a result, success rates are good and have improved significantly during the last three years. Tutors use their extensive experience, knowledge and skills to plan and deliver challenging courses that meet well the needs of learners who have different abilities and ambitions.
- Tutors demonstrate a high level of subject expertise and knowledge. They use this well in their teaching. They explain and demonstrate clearly new techniques. They use plain English and check learners' understanding frequently. For example, tutors draw simplified diagrams of stitching that are easy for learners to understand, follow and adapt.
- Tutors set and maintain high expectations for learners. They support learners well to develop their creative ideas, to research and experiment during sessions and independently outside of the classroom. Learners starting ceramics courses aim to exhibit work from the start of their courses.
- Tutors' care, support and encouragement help learners rapidly to develop highly proficient technical skills. Tutors set learners challenging goals and the planning of sessions is good. However, in a minority of cases, lesson plans include insufficient information should another tutor have to cover a session in an emergency.
- Tutors ask incisive questions to check learners' understanding of new processes. In watercolour sessions, learners are quickly able to learn to apply paint to dry and wet surfaces to wash and intensify colour effectively. In a ceramics session, learners made a functional cylinder in their first session.
- Tutors provide effective information, advice and guidance to learners. The initial assessment of learners' abilities is good. Learners and tutors use this information to devise challenging targets that support learners' achievement well. Tutors monitor individual progress closely and learners contribute to the clear records that are kept. This is significant for learners on floristry courses with mental health problems. Records are photographic or handwritten and understood well by them. In a minority of cases, targets set are too vague and result in learners not appreciating the progress they are making.
- Resources are good and support well the high quality work that learners produce. Tutors explain clearly the virtual learning environment that contains comprehensive resources which are easily accessible to learners electronically. Tutors make good use of images and metaphors to explain difficult concepts.
- English and mathematics are integrated effectively into sessions. Tutors introduce mathematics when, for example, learners need to calculate materials for their projects. Tutors ensure that schemes of work include good opportunities for learners to develop English. This results in learners improving their confidence and competence in their skills.
- Good attention is paid to the safety of learners in sessions. There are dedicated staff for learners to report to, should they have any safeguarding concerns. Notices identifying these staff and their contact numbers are effectively displayed. However, one venue is difficult to find and to access, particularly for learners with impaired mobility.
- Equality and diversity are promoted effectively. The service recruits a wide range of learners from different ethnic and social backgrounds. Learners with barriers to learning are included well in floristry, and the introduction of a new Word Press course has attracted new male learners.

Foundation English and mathematics

**19+ Learning programmes
Community learning**

Good

- Good teaching, learning and assessment result in learners achieving good outcomes on both accredited and non-accredited courses. They improve their practical, day-to-day use of English and mathematics. Tutors are occupationally well qualified and experienced.

- Tutors and assessors have high expectations of their learners and develop interesting, challenging and relevant schemes of work which they translate into stimulating learning activities. They ensure that learners have a clear understanding that homework and extension activities are required in order to accelerate learning. This results in learners taking responsibility for their own learning through, for example, reading to their children, learning spellings and practising a range of writing tasks.
- Tutors deliver challenging sessions that are relevant to the needs of learners. In one English session, for example, the tutor presented learners with an email from someone who wished to return to her country of origin. The tutor asked learners to list the things she should do in preparation for her departure. This involved paired discussion, recording of findings and using the internet to advise her on how to close her bank account.
- The setting and recording of individual learning targets are inconsistent. Some learners are very well engaged in agreeing their specific learning targets. For example, one tutor presented the learners with a wide range of general learning and subject-specific targets, encouraging them to identify no more than two from each. Each learner was then challenged to justify his or her choice through sensitive questioning. Where learning plans include poorly written individual targets, learners are unable to identify clearly the progress they are making.
- Verbal feedback on learners' achievement and understanding during lessons is frequent, but in some cases fails to identify where individual learners may be having difficulty. In a minority of instances, rapid and enthusiastic group responses prevent less confident individual learners from identifying that they do not understand a concept, resulting in the tutor assuming that all learners understand.
- Written feedback, particularly where learners have attempted extended writing tasks, is good, with clear comments on what has been achieved and what needs to be done to improve. Tutors encourage learners well to reflect on, and record, what they have learned during the session.
- Good initial assessment allows tutors to understand each learner's specific language and numeracy skills and their personal circumstances, and plan learning accordingly. In most instances, learners receive good pre-course information which clearly outlines the requirements of each course and the tutor's expectations. As a result, these learners develop a degree of independence as they understand, and subscribe to, the necessity of consolidating knowledge through homework and related activities.
- Resources, including ILT, are available in sufficient numbers and used very well, both for research and in producing finished articles such as, in one example, a poster advertising the benefits of travel to a country of their choice. In isolated cases, classrooms are too small.
- Tutors promote equality and diversity very well in the classroom. They plan learning activities which encourage discussion of learners' countries of origin and their cultures. Tutors use their experiences to promote learners' understanding of different customs and cultures and develop learners' language skills through comparing these. In sessions, learners from different backgrounds work together cooperatively. Tutors ensure that equality, diversity and safeguarding are routinely covered at induction. As a result, learners are aware of their responsibilities to themselves and to each other to ensure a safe, secure and positive learning environment.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Governance arrangements and the strategic oversight of the service are good. Senior managers and the lead member provide good challenge and support for the service and scrutinise its performance effectively. There is good strategic thinking and action that effectively help plan service development, manage, and improve the performance of the service.
- The service has a good understanding of the needs of local residents. These are met effectively through the subcontracting model which helps the service meet a broad range of needs. The

courses on offer reflect well the ambition of the local authority. The service helps many vulnerable learners make good progress through well-considered bespoke programmes with, for example, those experiencing difficulties with their mental health, and older learners.

- The service has made good progress in addressing weaknesses since the last inspection. Processes to observe teaching, learning and assessment have been strengthened, and success rates have improved and been maintained at a good level.
- Managers use data and information to monitor performance, and identify and tackle weaknesses well. This helps the service and subcontractors swiftly identify areas of underperformance and develop strategies to tackle any dips in performance.
- Managers provide good training and support for subcontractors, for example in undertaking observations of teaching, learning and assessment. The service strikes a good balance between ensuring contractors are meeting the necessary standards expected and supporting their improvement. The service is working effectively to build the capacity of providers to deliver good quality courses to the community.
- The well-designed system for monitoring and improving the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is accurate. Managers have a good understanding of the areas needing improvement in teaching, learning and assessment, and of their overall quality. In lessons jointly observed with inspectors, the service's observers provided accurate analyses of their strengths and areas for improvement. However, observers do not always record these effectively on observation reports. This inhibits the ability of managers to make further improvements.
- Self-assessment is accurate, robust and suitably self-critical. A good range of information is used to develop the self-assessment report and this is moderated to good effect. Service managers know well the strengths and weaknesses of provision. Quality improvement planning is effective and routine reviews of the performance of subcontractors are, in the main, comprehensive.
- Good collaborative work with a wide range of partners, both in and outside of the local authority, enhances the capacity of the service to meet a wide range of needs, draw on a broad base of expertise and increase the service's ability to engage a wide variety of learners.
- The service promotes equality and diversity effectively. A good range of local venues promotes access to adult learning effectively. Over half of all learners who participate are from the most deprived wards in the area.
- The provider meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. The commissioning process ensures that subcontractors have in place the necessary measures to ensure that learners are safe, including, for example, safe recruitment and selection procedures. The service regularly reviews safeguarding arrangements with subcontractors, but these are not recorded in sufficient detail. Managers are bringing greater rigour to the routine recording and reporting of safeguarding matters.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	14-16 part-time provision	14-16 full-time provision	16-19 study programmes	Traineeships	19+ learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Employability	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
Outcomes for learners	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Visual arts	2
Foundation English and mathematics	2

Provider details

Type of provider	Local authority							
Age range of learners	19+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	3381							
Principal/CEO	Mr G Hart							
Date of previous inspection	June 2012							
Website address	www.rbkc.gov.uk							
Provider information at the time of the inspection								
Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	2	2736	-	-	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Full-time	-							
Part-time	2,738							
Number of community learners	2,408							
Number of employability learners	474							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Kensington and Chelsea College ■ Westway Development Trust ■ Clement James Centre ■ Open Age ■ SMART ■ Nova New Opportunities 							

Contextual information

The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Adult Learning Service is part of the Policy and Partnerships Unit within the council's Corporate Services department. The service directly provides courses at a wide variety of venues across the area, with the majority of provision delivered through six subcontractors. The borough is one of significant demographic contrasts and includes some of the wealthiest neighbourhoods in the country as well as some of the most deprived. Around a third of households has an income of less than £20,000 and a similar proportion has an income in excess of £100,000. The borough has less unemployment than other areas of London at 2.1% compared to 2.9% London-wide. Deprivation is concentrated in four wards to the north and two in the south of the borough, with a more mixed picture alongside the western boundary. Approximately a third of residents comes from a minority ethnic group, the largest of which is Black British.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Jon Bowman HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the service's adult and community learning manager as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all relevant provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

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