

Hounslow London Borough Council

Local authority

Inspection dates		1–5 December 2014
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
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:

- a high proportion of learners achieve their qualifications, course aims and their personal goals
- learners gain good skills and knowledge on most courses
- learners produce high standards of work on vocational and community learning courses
- tutors' high expectations and skilful teaching result in learners making good progress and ensure they enjoy their learning
- tutors assess the individual needs of learners thoroughly and help them understand what they need to do to improve and achieve their learning aims
- tutors are sensitive to the needs of a diverse range of learners and encourage them successfully to understand and value cultural differences
- managers plan community learning and vocational courses very effectively. As a result, courses are popular and well attended in a wide variety of venues across the borough
- managers have maintained the good standards of the provision and brought about further improvements through the rigorous monitoring of quality.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- learners do not make sufficient progress towards their qualifications on a small minority of courses
- tutors do not use information technology sufficiently to enliven teaching and learning, and in a small minority of courses, do not set sufficiently clear targets for all learners
- although managers have introduced a very small number of successful apprenticeships and are increasing links with local employers, they have been slow to develop provision aimed at meeting employers' needs
- managers do not have enough information on learners' destinations following the completion of courses to evaluate fully the impact of the service's provision in supporting learners into higher level study or to gain employment.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Ensure targets in all individual learning plans are specific and measurable so that all learners know what they have to do to improve their vocational, English and mathematics skills. Make sure all tutors check how well learners are achieving their targets so that all make better progress towards their qualifications.
- Provide training for tutors and share good practice, so that all tutors can use information and learning technology confidently when teaching and develop a wider range of learning materials for learners on the virtual learning environment.
- Develop better links with local employers to enhance the range of routes into employment for learners. Develop the provision further to match the strategy for employability in the borough. Make sure the provision enhances learners' employment prospects.
- Provide clear guidance for tutors so that they record learners' intended next steps accurately and collect information on their destinations. Use this information to evaluate how well the service helps learners progress to higher levels of education and to gain employment, and to plan future provision.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- All learners at Hounslow Adult and Community Education Service (the service) are adults. The majority of learners follow community learning courses. The proportion following vocational courses has grown since the previous inspection and now represents around 45% of the provision. A very few learners currently follow discrete employability training courses. The largest subject is English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), which represents around a quarter of the provision. The subject areas reported on represent around 42% of the provision overall. Inspectors also inspected teaching, learning and assessment in all the other subject areas that the service offers.
- Learners achieve well in almost all subjects. The very large majority of learners on vocational courses and all of the very small number of apprentices achieve their qualifications. A high proportion of learners following community learning courses achieve their course aims and personal goals. Attendance is good; learners attend their learning sessions regularly, enjoy their learning and participate fully on courses.
- Learners come from a wide range of backgrounds, which reflects the diversity of people living in Hounslow, and they achieve better than those with similar backgrounds who study elsewhere. Differences in achievement between different groups of learners have narrowed and are not significant.
- Almost all learners finish their courses having developed good skills, subject knowledge and understanding. For example, learners on early years courses produce good written work and gain knowledge they can apply in the workplace. Learners on community learning arts courses produce high-quality craft products. Learners on ESOL courses make good progress in improving their English. Most learners make good progress in their English and mathematics having started with low levels of skills.
- Learners acquire good skills that benefit them in their everyday lives. For example, on a family learning course, parents and children learn good computer programming skills and the potential dangers of using social media. Learners on visual arts courses develop good craft skills and produce high standards of work. Learners on ESOL courses learn to speak English more fluently and use a wider range of vocabulary.

- Learners build well on their prior skills and complete courses with a real sense of achievement. For example, learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities learn through participating in challenging music activities. They develop a good understanding of the behavioural attitudes and music skills required to enable them to perform complex repertoire accurately in an ensemble. While many learners progress to higher-level courses and employment, the service does not have comprehensive information on all learners' destinations.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
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- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, which is reflected in the outcomes for learners. The vast majority of tutors have high expectations of learners which enable them to make good progress in learning sessions and achieve their goals. Most tutors plan and implement stimulating learning activities skilfully that help learners from a range of diverse backgrounds develop their skills and knowledge successfully. Tutors use imaginative ideas for learning that motivate and interest learners.
- Learning in a wide range of settings is good. Knowledgeable and enthusiastic tutors create a lively learning environment which enables learners to participate fully in productive activities, discuss concepts and develop successfully the subject knowledge and skills they came to learn. For example, in mathematics, good discussions enable learners to perform calculations of ratios correctly. Learners on English courses present and discuss intelligently their views on pieces of set text in detail, which helps them improve their evaluation skills.
- Tutors assess learners' individual needs effectively. They assess learners' skills well at the start of their courses and their work during courses. They use a good range of methods to assess learners' progress, including regular well-organised self-evaluation activities that help learners understand what they need to do to improve and achieve.
- Tutors on vocational courses, such as bookkeeping and beauty therapy, provide good support for learners in learning sessions to develop the technical skills they need to succeed in their working lives. Learners on health and social care and childcare courses benefit from well-organised work experience that prepares them effectively for employment in their specialist area.
- A minority of tutors use information technology confidently. For example, in a childcare session, learners used a good range of electronic equipment, including tablet computers and mobile phones to research environmental and genetic factors that may affect children's physical growth, before preparing a presentation of their findings. In a family learning session, a tutor developed the children's and parents' understanding of algorithms by enabling them to break down the steps they would take to clean their teeth. The children and parents then thoroughly enjoyed working together to programme a number of moves for a character in a computer game.
- The majority of tutors do not use information technology sufficiently to extend learning, such as introducing new topics or demonstrating practical skills. In addition, online resources, such as the virtual learning environment, are insufficient to support independent learning.
- Most tutors provide good support to help learners develop their skills in English and mathematics in discrete and vocational learning sessions. For example, hair and beauty tutors, whose learners speak English as an additional language, teach specialised vocabulary well. Learners benefit from good mathematics teaching, for example, the learning of numbers and time for purchasing bus, film and train tickets. However, on a small minority of courses, tutors do not set pertinent targets for learners to improve their English and mathematics or their subject skills.
- Tutors provide good guidance to learners to ensure that they are on appropriate courses. The additional support learners receive during tutorials and homework clubs helps them complete assignments and make good progress. However, too many individual learning plans do not show learners their potential next steps clearly enough.

- Tutors are very sensitive to the needs of the culturally and ethnically diverse learners that follow courses, and introduce relevant topics on equality and diversity well in most learning sessions. They create a productive and harmonious learning environment in which learners learn well together. Good additional support from learning support assistants enables learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress.

Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Good

19+ Learning programmes

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, reflected in the high achievement of qualifications. Learners make good progress on their courses. Attendance and punctuality are good.
- Learners develop good skills in well-directed learning sessions. Beauty therapy learners demonstrate good technical skills when completing facial treatments. Tutors skilfully help learners to learn a variety of massage techniques and focus carefully on the correct pressure to stimulate facial muscles. Tutors guide hairdressing learners well in learning sessions so they learn to produce smooth, sleek finishes on hairstyles.
- Tutors have good industry knowledge and expertise and high expectations of their learners. Learners are well-motivated and respect their tutors. Tutors ensure that learners develop particularly good professional skills to the standard expected in industry. However, in the majority of learning sessions, tutors do not place sufficient emphasis on the importance of commercial deadlines expected by employers.
- Tutors' thorough planning and good use of technology motivates learners to respond enthusiastically during learning activities, concentrate fully and work hard on the different learning tasks set.
- Tutors check learning effectively after each learning session to ensure learners have made progress and are ready to move on to the next task. As a result, learners are confident in determining the best hair colours for clients, including the particular depth and tone required.
- Discrete English and mathematics learning sessions for hair and beauty learners are good. Tutors introduce hair and beauty terminology adeptly, which helps learners to become familiar and confident with the technical language of the industry. They reinforce this through the good use of interactive learning games. However, tutors in the majority of vocational learning sessions do not equip learners sufficiently with the mathematics skills they need for business.
- Learners benefit from a range of good additional learning activities that helps build their knowledge of the industry. For example, learners attend particularly useful product manufacturer training centres and exhibitions. They take part in challenging internal and external competitions. Guest speakers attend centres to provide learners with a good insight into the industry.
- Tutors provide good information, advice and guidance which ensure that courses meet learners' expectations well. Learners receive good additional training, such as an employment skills course, to prepare them for jobs. They benefit from good work experience which develops further their interpersonal skills when dealing with clients.
- Learning support is good. Tutors identify learners' needs at the start of the course and make good arrangements to ensure that learners receive appropriate help. For example, a specialist tutor supports a learner with a hearing impairment well, which enables the learner to take an active part in the lesson. Learners also attend a successful homework club where tutors provide them with timely additional support with their course work.
- Learners receive good constructive oral and written feedback and, consequently, understand what they need to do to improve their work. Tutors correct spelling and grammatical errors well. Target setting is good on the large majority of learning plans and identifies what learners need to do to make progress.

- Tutors introduce diversity well in learning tasks. In the large majority of learning sessions, learners discuss the different expectations and practices in hair and beauty. For example, learners give good presentations on how salons might offer specialist treatments to attract clients from a variety of cultures.

Visual arts

Good

Community learning

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good, reflected in learners' achievement. Learners develop good communication and art and craft skills. Tutors create a welcoming and productive learning environment in learning sessions, that helps learners to develop their confidence and complete a wide range of technical tasks effectively.
- Tutors have high expectations of their learners. Tutors' skilful planning and implementation of a wide range of interesting and challenging activities and assignments ensures that learners improve their skills and make good progress. Tutors ensure that learners evaluate and analyse their own work and that of their peers, which enables them to understand fully the different techniques they may use or what they need to do to improve.
- Tutors' share their good expertise and skills particularly effectively with learners. They explain complex techniques and concepts in well-planned and implemented demonstrations and create very useful hand-outs. For instance, one tutor numbered a complicated bead pattern enabling learners to make products and to improve their craft skills independently during, and between, learning sessions. Learners appreciate the large, light and airy studios, which are well equipped, in many venues.
- Learners benefit from a wide range of additional activities enriches their studies. Many exhibit their work locally, visit exhibitions and sell their work to the public. Learners derive great enjoyment from meeting outside lessons to discuss their work and the exhibitions they have attended.
- A small minority of learners do not gain the confidence to work independently during learning sessions. As a result, they make slow progress in improving the quality of work they produce.
- Tutors assess learners work well. They review learners' progress towards completing their individual learning plans frequently and comprehensively. As a result, learners understand fully what they need to do to improve their work. Tutors make particularly good use of detailed photographic evidence to show the progress learners make compared to their work at the start of the course.
- Learners receive good personal support. Tutors' effective individual coaching enables most learners to progress quickly. Tutors develop learners' evaluation skills effectively and their understanding of art and craft language through well-facilitated project discussions with tutors.
- Tutors improve learners' mathematics skills through integrating measuring and cutting in sewing and stained glass learning sessions successfully. Learners understand the importance of measuring accurately, for example, in order to assemble pieces of glass for complex, irregular panel making.
- Too few tutors use information technology effectively to support and enhance learning. Few materials are available on the virtual learning environment for learners to use between learning sessions.
- Learning sessions are enjoyable and well-managed so that learners work together in a way that includes everyone in the learning taking place. Learners who may feel isolated in their communities or anxious about starting a new course value the open and welcoming environment and build their confidence, personal and social skills. Tutors and learners adhere to safe working practices and learners say they feel safe in the centres. However, in a minority of learning sessions, tutors do not include a wide enough variety of cultural references to enable learners to have a better understanding of the art works from different countries and cultures.

ESOL

**19+ Learning programmes
Community learning**

Good

- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Learners develop good language skills and a high proportion of them achieve qualifications and progress to a course at a higher level. Attendance in learning sessions is good. Learners enjoy their learning and are positive about the improvements they make in their understanding and use of English.
- Learners develop their writing skills well. The standard of learners’ work in learning sessions is good. Skilled tuition helps learners to achieve accuracy in writing, such as the correct use of tenses, prepositions and word order. Consequently, learners’ written work is good, with clear and well-organised notes demonstrating improvement over time. Learners benefit from well-directed learning sessions that result in them making good progress in developing their reading skills. They learn to understand, for example, the differences between persuasive and descriptive texts.
- Tutors are skilled and knowledgeable in language development. They plan carefully a good range of interesting learning activities that challenge and meet the needs of individual learners well. Tutors explain clearly new concepts, such as different ways to phrase questions. Learners are motivated, interested, participate well during learning tasks and make good progress.
- Learners enjoy participating in well-managed discussions. In one learning session, for example, learners worked together discussing job advertisements and highlighted the key vocabulary they needed to understand the use of acronyms and the phrase ‘lifetime skills’.
- Tutors focus well on ensuring that learners improve their pronunciation and clarity when speaking. As a result, learners grow in confidence in talking to others and become more skilled in listening accurately.
- Tutors are skilled at reviewing key learning points in learning sessions and checking learners’ understanding by asking the learners to provide examples. They mark and correct learners’ written homework with evaluative comments, and frequently check their writing in learning sessions; this results in improvement in learners’ writing.
- A minority of tutors use digital technology, such as interactive whiteboards, well to illustrate vocabulary or model dialogue. However, this happens too rarely and learners do not benefit from the use of a wide range of media to further their understanding.
- Learners receive good individual support in learning sessions, enabling them to make good progress. Tutors provide a safe, positive and supportive learning environment. Additional support workers improve learners’ self-confidence and give additional support, for example, helping learners with correct pronunciation.
- Tutors thoroughly assess learners’ skills at the start of their programme and use the results effectively to guide learners to courses at the correct level. They frequently review learners’ progress against the personal learning targets recorded on their individual learning plans. As a result, learners know the progress they are making. However, a small minority of learners have learning targets that are not sufficiently specific and so they are not clear about their progress.
- Tutors are skilled at extending and promoting discussions to give learners a clear insight into the cultures of fellow learners’ home countries, for example, when discussing cultural differences in the celebration of births and marriages.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior managers have maintained and built on the good standards of teaching and learning since the previous inspection. They have ensured that a high proportion of learners achieve

successfully. Managers monitor the quality of teaching, learning and assessment thoroughly and make good use of observations of learning sessions to improve teaching. All staff implement comprehensive arrangements to monitor and improve the quality of provision.

- The service takes effective action to remedy weaknesses. Recent improvements have included more effective planning to meet learners' individual needs, a wider range of teaching and learning activities in sessions and a greater focus on learning support for those with a specific learning difficulty. Priorities for further improvement include the better use of information technology and the virtual learning environment to provide a greater range of learning possibilities and improving target setting for learners in a small minority of individual learning plans.
- Managers plan and implement community learning and vocational courses very effectively. They work closely with other community learning and skills providers in the borough to identify and meet local priorities. They plan provision carefully to meet the needs of learners from different backgrounds, gender and age. Courses are popular and well attended across the borough.
- Managers are responsive to ideas for setting up new provision or projects, such as supporting staff from the National Health Service to help patients with obesity to understand the calculations in planning weight loss. Similar partnership work has opened up learning to local residents through visiting children's centres, nurseries and a National Trust estate. Short taster courses in family learning, in topics such as gardening or Zumba, provide a good first step to further learning.
- Tutors are well qualified, especially all tutors of English, mathematics and ESOL. Vocational tutors have good expertise in their specialist areas and appropriate teaching qualifications. Managers use the council's performance management system effectively to identify development needs for established staff and sessional tutors. Managers and staff agree appropriate actions to improve performance, although a few individuals' progress towards improvement targets is currently slow.
- Managers evaluate the quality of provision thoroughly as an integral part of their quality improvement arrangements. Staff are fully involved and managers use the views of learners and partners effectively to review and improve provision. Managers use data on learners' achievements well to evaluate the provision. However, they do not have sufficient information on learners' progression to further learning or employment to evaluate the full impact of their courses. This hampers managers' ability to review the effectiveness of current provision in helping learners to move on to further learning or into work, and to ensure that future curriculum planning meets local priorities and skills needs.
- The service's procedures for promoting equality and diversity are good. The equalities policy and resulting action plan covers all aspects of the provision, including recruitment of learners and staff. Regular staff training ensures that tutors are well-informed about current topics and issues. Senior managers monitor the achievement of different groups carefully. They make good use of observations of learning sessions to monitor how well tutors cover equality and diversity in learning sessions. Managers use data on achievement according to learners' age, gender, ethnicity and disability well to identify any achievement gaps. Effective recent action has improved the achievement of some specific minority ethnic groups.
- Safeguarding is good. The service implements its safeguarding policy effectively. Managers carry out appropriate checks on staff. Training for staff has recently started to cover the prevention of radicalisation and extremism. Learners feel safe and know how to contact the named senior manager if necessary.
- Staff implement the service's procedures for identifying potentially vulnerable learners well. Detailed records of incidents show they have responded appropriately in sometimes difficult circumstances and have followed procedures effectively.
- Managers have been slow to develop provision to enhance learners' employment prospects. Despite the successful introduction of a very small number of apprenticeships, managers have not developed links with employers well enough to provide sufficient routes into employment. The service does not have a clear role in the strategy for employment across the borough.

Learners on vocational courses benefit from good work experience. The service has introduced employability training; however, tutors have not received a sufficient range of training to enable them to develop learners' wider employment skills in learning sessions.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Hounslow London Borough Council

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
Hairdressing	2
Beauty therapy	2
Visual arts	2
English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)	2

Provider details

Type of provider	Local authority							
Age range of learners	19+							
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	7,881							
Principal/CEO	Liz Meagher							
Date of previous inspection	December 2008							
Website address	http://www.hounslow.gov.uk/adulteducation							
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+
	-	738	-	291	-	11	-	-
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	-	-	-	3	-	-		
Number of traineeships	16-19		19+		Total			
	-		-		-			
Number of learners aged 14-16								
Full-time	-							
Part-time	-							
Number of community learners	1,375							
Number of employability learners	52							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							

Contextual information

The service provides learning across the London Borough of Hounslow at a variety of learning centres and community learning settings. It directly delivers all learning. The main office is in the Hounslow London Borough Council's civic centre. In 2012, the service moved to the Directorate for Regeneration, Economic Development and Environment. Unemployment in the borough is lower than nationally and for London as a whole. Most learners following courses are from a minority ethnic heritage and learners reflect the mix of residents in the borough.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector

Steven Stanley HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the Assistant Head of Lifelong Learning 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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