

Rutland County Council Adult Learning

Focused monitoring visit report

Unique reference number: 54229

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Last day of inspection: 12 May 2010

Type of provider: Local Authority

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Published date	17 June 2010
Inspection Number	354062

FOCUSED MONITORING VISIT: MAIN FINDINGS

Context and focus of visit

Rutland Adult Learning Service (RALS) is part of Children and young People's Services in Rutland County Council. Provision is offered across Rutland in a range of venues and in twelve subject areas. RALS contracts with the Skills Funding Agency. Learning for social and personal development and learning where the main aim is a qualification each form about 50% of the provision. There are 155 learners on a Train to Gain programme. A team manager manages RALS with support from three senior managers.

Since the last inspection, the Rutland Council and RALS have undertaken a substantial restructure. The restructuring took place during 2008/09 and was completed, with most staff appointed to their new posts, by September 2009.

RALS was inspected in May 2008. Effectiveness of provision, capacity to improve, quality of provision and leadership and management were graded good. Achievement and standards and equality of opportunity were judged to be satisfactory. Four subject areas were inspected. ICT and languages, literature and culture were graded good and health, public services and care and preparation for life and work were found to be satisfactory.

Themes

Self-assessment and improvement planning

How effectively is self-assessment and improvement planning used to bring about improvements?	Insufficient progress
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At the previous inspection, the self-assessment process was identified as good. It was well established within RALS' quality cycle. The report provided a broadly accurate assessment of RALS' performance. During 2008/09, there were difficulties with the production of the self-assessment report due to the reorganization. The current report does not have sufficient input from senior managers. The report includes the views of staff and learners; it does not include employer views. Managers have identified this and arrangements have been made to collect employer feedback for inclusion in the next report. Staff feedback is collected from end of course reports, but many of the reports are not fully completed so provide insufficient information. The report pro-forma is based on the old Common Inspection Framework and does not include all the key criteria now expected to be covered. Some sections of the self-assessment report are insufficiently detailed, particularly the sections covering overall achievement and standards and equality and diversity. The achievement and standards section is very poor; no data is included on retention, achievement and success rates for the service. The performance data used in the subject area self-assessment reports does not match the performance data produced by RALS' management information system. The

report informs a quality improvement plan for the service. Some of the success measures in the plan are too vague. However, progress against the plan is reviewed regularly and it is used well by staff as a quality improvement tool.

Outcomes for learners

What progress has been made in improving outcomes for learners? Insufficient progress

At the time of the last inspection, outcomes for learners were satisfactory. With the exception of the Train to Gain provision, the service is unable to provide accurate data on retention achievement and success rates for courses delivered in 2008/09. The data on the management information system is not accurate. There is insufficient strategic and management focus on success rates. RALS does not have overall targets for the whole service for retention, achievement and success rates, although targets are set within each management area. Train to Gain overall success rates are satisfactory. For 2008/09, overall success rates and those completed in the expected time were around the national rate. For 2009/10 to date overall success rates are slightly above the national rate and those completed in the expected time are significantly above the national rate.

Outcome data for personal and social development and learning leading to qualifications is unreliable. The data available shows that success rates declined in both these areas. Data available for the current year, 2009/10 is reliable and indicates that retention has improved since the last accurate data was available in 2007/08. However, it is too early to use the data for this year to inform judgements on outcomes for learners.

Quality of provision

What progress has been made in ensuring that the arrangements for recognising and recording progress and achievement (RARPA) for non-accredited courses are rigorous and reliable? Insufficient progress

At the time of the last inspection, a new system was in place for recognising and recording progress and achievement (RARPA) for non-accredited courses. Early indications were that it was reliable. Current arrangements for RARPA are not reliable. Learners do not always understand how to assess whether or not they have achieved their learning objectives. Staff have had insufficient training on RARPA and some teachers do not complete the RARPA documentation accurately. Learners and teachers agree challenging but achievable learning goals which are documented within the learner's record book. There are no formal arrangements for the moderation of RARPA. It is not always clear how the achievement of identified

objectives is assessed. The new manager of the social and personal development provision has identified the issues and has started to plan how to address them.

Leadership and management

What progress has been made to ensure that the collection, analysis and use of data, produces accurate information which is utilised by managers to improve the provision? Insufficient progress

At the time of the last inspection data collection and analysis was satisfactory. Data on retention, achievement and success rates for 2008/09 are unreliable. During 2008/09, there were significant problems with inputting data into the management information system. As a result, curriculum managers were not receiving management reports and unable to accurately monitor the performance of their curriculum areas. Managers did not receive monthly reports on participation, attendance, retention, achievement and success rates for the period from August 2009 to March 2010. Senior managers did not recognise the significant detrimental impact the lack of management information would have on the ability of curriculum managers to manage their provision properly. Much of the data entered into the MIS during 2008/09 was incomplete. As a result, the data submitted to the funding body was unreliable and incomplete. The new management team have worked hard to identify the issues and ensure that data is accurate. Recently managers have started receiving monthly reports showing the performance of their curriculum areas. The management reports showing retention and success rates by subject area and course level. Curriculum managers are using the data well to analyse the provision and identify underperforming courses and take appropriate actions. The new arrangements have led to significant improvements, but it is too early to judge the full impact of these.

What progress has been made in improving the promotion of equality of opportunity? Insufficient progress

At the time of the last inspection, the promotion of equality of opportunity was satisfactory. The service adopts Rutland Council's equality and diversity policy but does not produce a short version for learners. RALS has been involved in some effective initiatives to widen participation such as a project to teach young single parents numeracy skills and work with learners with learning difficulties and disabilities on managing money. Equality of opportunity is mentioned briefly in the learner diary that is issued to all learners. They can ask for a copy of the full council policy if they wish. There is no equality and diversity action plan for the service. Equality and diversity training is undertaken by all staff as part of their induction. There are no arrangements for the systematic and regular updating of staff on equality and diversity issues. Equality and diversity is covered by learners during induction, however the induction checklist, which indicates that staff have covered equality and diversity, is not always completed by staff. Safeguarding is not covered during the learner induction. In 2009/10, the service has twice the proportion of

learners from a minority ethnic background than there is in Rutland. Managers do not analyse variations in the attainment of different groups of learners and so do not have strategies to address the varying performance of different groups of learners.

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