

East Berkshire Community Learning and Skills Service

Self-Assessment Report

Slough Borough Council

August 2018 – July 2019



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Royal Borough
of Windsor &
Maidenhead

Headline Information/Overall Effectiveness

Assessment Period	1/08/18 to 31/07/2019
Overall Effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of Leadership and Management	Good
Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare	Good
Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment	Good
Outcomes for Learners	Requires Improvement
Adult Programmes	Good

Area	Enrolments Numbers	Achievement %	Retention %	Pass %	Attendance %
Overall	3665	86	91	94	93
Skills	654	72	84	86	91
Community Learning	3020	90	93	96	96

The period covered by the self-Assessment Report (SAR) and a Quality Improvement Action Plan (QIP) has seen rapid improvement across teaching, learning and assessment (TL&A) and in the curriculum which is offered to local communities.

Improvements in TL&A have been achieved primarily through the introduction of a comprehensive mentoring system where each tutor has a named person to support the tutors' development and to work with, to plan effective and innovative delivery.

The curriculum offer has improved with the introduction of intensive courses alongside the implementation of holistic information, advice and guidance to support learners to achieve their goals. These changes have been made as a result of learner feedback, an analysis of destination data, and in response to Job Centre needs.

The governing body have been instrumental in these improvements giving strong leadership in terms of service direction as well as through the challenge the board gives to the Service's management team.

The improvements to TL&A as well as to the curriculum offer have now begun to impact on learner outcomes with improvements to retention, pass, and overall achievement rates. This is especially evident in the improvements made to the achievement rates of learners who report a learning difficulty/disability. There are also early signs that more learners are now moving closer or into work.

The Service has recently undergone a complete restructure. This was initially challenging, however, these challenges have now mainly been overcome and improvements to TL&A, and to the curriculum offer, can be directly attributed to the benefits that the restructure has had to the overall effectiveness of the Service.

In comparison with the Service's last inspection, governors, and the service's leadership and management have awarded the following grades:

- Teaching, Learning and Assessment have moved from being "Requires Improvement" to being judged as "Good";
- Personal Development Behaviour and Welfare has remained as "Good";
- Outcomes for Learners has remained as "Requires Improvement" but has improved rapidly during 2019/2020;
- Leadership and Management has remained as "Good";
- Overall Effectiveness" has improved from "Requires Improvement" to "Good".

The Effectiveness of Leadership and Management	Grade: 2
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Strengths

- Governance arrangements, through the Service's Shared Service Management Committee, continue to be very effective. As a result of the committee's challenge to managers, rapid improvements have, and are, being made in teaching, learning and assessment and in the curriculum offer
- Effective strategic oversight from the shared Service Management Committee and managers' use of destinations data has led to the service developing and delivering an effective curriculum offer, which meets local needs and priorities
- The Service has developed strong partnerships which have enabled it to offer a wider mix and balance of courses. Effective partnership arrangements have also meant that the service is able to recruit learners who are furthest away from learning and work, support learners on their programmes, and in their next steps after completing their courses
- Governors, leaders, managers and staff have accurately identified the strengths and areas for improvement in the service. This has enabled the Service to make the necessary improvements required for the overall effectiveness of the Service to improve to "Good"
- Governors, leaders and managers have effectively supported teaching, learning and assessment through the introduction of a service-wide mentoring system where each tutor has a named mentor to support their development. This, alongside targeted CPD activities and improved observation procedures, has led to rapid improvements in teaching, learning and assessment
- The vast majority of learners in the service achieve well on their courses
- Continuing excellent learner satisfaction rates: 97% of learners report that they would recommend the service to friends and family
- Curriculum management is good and improving. Continuous development of quality improvement arrangements, such as its use of MIS, have ensured that managers can make timely and accurate interventions on behalf of learners to ensure they progress rapidly on their courses
- Safeguarding and Prevent arrangements continue to be effective. The promotion of these has been further improved through the introduction and monitoring of a standardised induction. This has ensured that learners are able to articulate much more effectively how to keep themselves safe
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. This has been further improved through the introduction of termly equality and diversity themes, for example, Black History Month. Learners report very high levels of satisfaction with the respect they receive in the service

- Support for Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare improved through more effective embedding of health and well-being across the curriculum.

Areas for Improvement

- Generally, RARPA arrangements are good and improving. However, in a small number of courses, evidence collection needs to be more robust and a more comprehensive standardisation process needs to be implemented
- Achievement rates for men are below that for women. Pass rates are comparable, however, men have lower retention rates than women
- Retention rates for learners with learning difficulties and or disabilities issues are lower than internal achievement rate benchmarks
- Functional Skills achievement rates are below national benchmarks due to a small number of courses being offered on an annual basis which adversely affected overall retention rates.

Leadership and Management Actions

- The Shared Service Management Committee approved a restructure of the service which is already leading to improvements. Tutors were consulted on all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment as well as curriculum design. As a result, a new curriculum offer is in place, which will ensure both improved outcomes for learners and an increase in the number of learners who move nearer or into work
- A new arrangement for delivery of courses was implemented in August 2019 and has led to rapid improvements in achievement rates. Further changes to the curriculum from January 2020 will lead to more improvement
- New holistic initial assessment arrangements introduced to ensure learners are triaged on to the appropriate course to meet their needs. This has led to more confidence in placing learners onto the right level of course and improving retention
- Improved mentoring arrangements to ensure course planning and delivery of knowledge, concepts and activities clearly link to course intent
- Development of intensive provision with increased IAG support to ensure learners move nearer or into work
- Increased partnership work with the local JCP to ensure the engagement of appropriate learners on skills provision
- Continued development of sector based work academies to ensure learners progress nearer or into work
- Continued improvement in internal communications to ensure that all staff are aware of the changes being implemented in the Service, and the reasons for them to ensure that learners are more effectively supported to achieve their goals

- A new process for supporting learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has been implemented from August 2019 which has led to improvements in retention and overall achievement rates
- Development of intensive courses aimed at JCP learners will attract more men and will lead to improvements in retention rates
- The service to carry out an extensive retention survey in early February to find out why some learners do not complete their courses
- Delivery of intensive RARPA training for tutors to ensure that learners rapidly progress from their starting points
- Introduction of a more comprehensive standardisation process to be implemented in early 2020.

The Quality of Teaching Learning and Assessment	Grade: 2
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Strengths

- Most tutors demonstrate high and realistic expectations of learners and use these to enable them to achieve their learning goals
- Tutors use group work very effectively. This enables learners to develop their thinking skills and gain confidence in their own ideas
- Equality and diversity are promoted extremely well. Learners from diverse backgrounds work effectively with each other; they have a good understanding of British values, and use their own cultures to compare life in Britain. High numbers of learners report that they feel they are treated fairly on their courses
- Learners enjoy their lessons and score the service highly on the teaching, learning and assessment they have experienced on their courses
- Tutors create an effective and positive learning environment which promotes learning
- Rapid improvements have been made in the planning and delivery of learning in relation to learners' individual starting points and needs. This has ensured that learners are now making much more rapid progress against their goals
- Good TL&A in both skills and community learning commissioned delivery has led to good outcomes for learners
- Effective implementation of a more holistic curriculum which ensures that key topics such as equality and diversity and British values, health and safety, health and well-being, IAG and safeguarding and prevent are fully embedded and promoted in the curriculum.

Areas for Improvement

- All tutors have taken part in CPD involving the use of questioning techniques. There is still some work required to be confident that learners fully understand the topic before moving on to the next one
- RARPA arrangements are generally good. In some sessions however there is insufficient written feedback to learners
- Rapid improvements have been made in teaching, learning and assessment for the service to make the next step. However, tutors need to feel more confident and empowered to plan and deliver innovative and creative sessions, which will enable learners to progress more rapidly from their starting points
- In a small number of courses instructions are not given clearly enough to enable learners to fully understand the tasks set

- In some course delivery more emphasis should be placed on activities which promote independent learning
- In a small number of courses a lack of clarity over the intent of the provision has led learners to feel that the course has not fully met with their expectations.

The Quality of Teaching Learning and Assessment Actions

- Continued development of mentoring arrangements to support tutors to continue to improve their practice and deliver innovative teaching, learning and assessment
- Improved holistic initial assessment to ensure that learners are on the right course, which in turn will ensure that their needs and expectations are being fully met
- Further development of new provision with courses which have a clear intent with support for tutors (through the mentoring arrangements) to ensure that knowledge, concepts and activities deliver the course intent and clearly meet the needs and expectations of learners
- Use of CPD to improve teaching, learning and assessment. Range of CPD activities planned to support tutors in the following areas:
 - New Education Inspection Framework with emphasis on intent, implementation and impact
 - RARPA training
 - Further questioning technique training
 - Independent learning training
 - Innovation and creativity
 - Giving instructions.

Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare	Grade: 2
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Strengths

- The service makes a significant impact on learners' confidence, which helps them to work and live productively in modern Britain
- Learners work particularly well together and respect each others' ideas and viewpoints. Learners learn about British values effectively and compare life in their own cultures to understand how to live and work in modern Britain
- Learners are very positive about their learning with 97% of learners saying that they would recommend the service to friends and family
- Tutors have high expectations for behaviour and conduct. Learners arrive at sessions prepared for learning. Attendance has been consistently excellent for a number of years with 95% attendance across provision in 2018/19
- Attendance on courses is excellent. Tutors promote regular attendance to create good habits for learners which support their future learning and employment prospects
- Information, advice and guidance advisors and tutors ensure that learners can articulate their next steps and are enthusiastic to continue in their learning or to find employment
- Safeguarding is effectively promoted which ensures that learners can articulate how to keep themselves safe and understand what they need to do in the event of a safeguarding concern
- The service effectively celebrates learners' achievement in festivals of learning in both Slough and, Windsor and Maidenhead.

Areas of Improvement

- Healthy living, emotional and mental well-being activities have been embedded into provision. However, there is still room for a more systematic approach to ensure effective learning is taking place in this area
- Attendance and time keeping are generally good, however, to ensure all learners progress from their starting points tutors need to more effectively challenge poor timekeeping and attendance.

Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare: Actions

- Use of the '5 ways to well-being' in all courses and Active Slough to visit courses to promote sport and leisure provision
- Health and Well-Being questionnaire for all learners to initially assess starting points for health and well-being

- Increased emphasis on active learning to promote independent learning
- Introduction of the “Progress and Progression form” which monitors attitude, punctuality and attendance for all learners intending to progress their learning.

Outcomes for Learners	Grade: 3
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Strengths

- Learners achieve well on Community Learning courses
- Good achievement rates for people from disadvantaged areas and those with no qualifications
- Good achievement rates in both skills and community learning commissioned provision
- Generally, achievement rates are consistent across ethnic groups (a number of groups are being monitored)
- Excellent wider benefits of learning reported by learners particularly in Community Learning provision
- Learners report very high levels of satisfaction and take pride in the skills they develop when studying with the Service.

Areas of Improvement

- Achievement rates for men are significantly below that for women. Pass rates are comparable however men have lower retention rates than women
- Retention rates for learners with mental health issues are lower than the service average. As yet it is too early to evidence whether additional tracking and support has led to improvements in this area
- Achievement rates for Functional Skills English are below national benchmarks.

Outcomes for Learners Actions

- A new arrangement for delivery of courses was implemented in August 2019 and has led to rapid improvements in achievement rates. Planned changes to the curriculum from January 2020 will improve this further
- Introduction of a more holistic initial assessment process which uses the new “Progress and Progression form” to ensure learners are triaged onto the appropriate course
- Development of intensive provision to improve retention pass and achievement rates

- Continued development of mentoring arrangements to support tutors to improve their practice and deliver innovative TL&A
- Development of new provision with courses which have a clear intent and implementation with support for tutors (through the mentoring arrangements) to ensure that knowledge, concepts and activities deliver the course intent lead to high rates of achievement
- Implementation of a new process for supporting learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities which has significantly improved retention and achievement rates amongst this group of learners
- The implementation of intensive courses and increased referrals from the Job Centre will support the improvement in male recruitment as well as in men's retention and achievement rates.