
LIBRARIES AND COMMUNITY LEARNING SERVICE

Purpose of Report

1. To update Members on the Ofsted inspection of the Libraries and Community Learning Service.

Information and Analysis

2. The inspection took place between the 4th and 7th December 2007 and inspectors looked at:
 - (a) Adult and Community Learning
 - (b) Family Learning
 - (c) Work-based Learning
3. There were 9 inspectors and between them they interviewed 91 learners and 11 of our partners. They also had 66 interviews with staff.
4. The inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements:
 - (a) Grade 1 outstanding
 - (b) Grade 2 good
 - (c) Grade 3 satisfactory
 - (d) Grade 4 inadequate
5. The inspectors consider a number of areas in order to make their judgements. These include the overall effectiveness of the provision, its capacity to improve, its achievements and standards, its quality of provision and its leadership and management. In addition they inspect the different subject areas.
6. The grades awarded are as follows:

(a) Effectiveness of provision	2
(b) Capacity to improve	3
(c) Achievement and standards	2
(d) Quality of provision	3
(e) Leadership and management	2
(f) Equality of opportunity	2
(g) Early Years and Playwork	2
(h) Construction crafts	3
(i) ICT	2
(j) Languages	2
(k) Family learning	2
7. The number of inspectors was at times overwhelming particularly as we are a small provider in comparison to other authorities. However, we do feel that it was a very thorough inspection and therefore feel that the key strengths and key areas for improvement are justified.

8. Effectiveness of Provision

The inspectors judged that the overall effectiveness of the service is good. They commented on the positive learner experience and how the learning enhances people's lives and enables them to be more active within their communities. The inspectors reported 7 key strengths and 2 areas for improvement.

Key strengths included:

- (a) Good development of learners' skills
- (b) Good support for learners
- (c) Good planning in work-based learning
- (d) Good management of change
- (e) Good strategic management and curriculum planning
- (f) Very good partnership working
- (g) Good approach to equality and diversity

The key areas for improvement are:

- (a) Insufficiently detailed development plans
- (b) Declining apprentices success rates

9. Each of the curriculum areas also had reported strengths and areas for improvement . In total 19 strengths were reported and 6 areas for improvement. We are now developing our action plan to address the areas for improvement and to improve our areas of strength.
10. The inspectors praised the leadership and management of the service and noted that 'good management of change has very significantly contributed to the performance of the Service'. They went on to say that 'the strategic management and curriculum planning is very effective and is focussed on community, LSC and council priorities'. Leadership and management not only includes the direct management of the service but also the support it receives from senior managers and members.
11. Our partners were very complimentary about the service we provide and the support we offer to the community. The report states that 'the Service staff provide inspiration and encouragement to partner providers and voluntary groups'
12. The inspectors also reported on our LAA funded project and have highlighted this as an area of good practice. They said

'The development of the family learning intensive support project enables isolated and hard to reach learners to receive regular home tuition. The intensive support programme works in liaison with a range of partners including social services, the health service and the youth offending team. The programme has been highly effective in supporting some of the most vulnerable learners in the community to develop communication and advocacy skills.'

Legal Implications

13. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members,

other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

14. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Impact on Looked After Children

15. This report does not have an impact on looked after children other than the results of the Ofsted inspection benefit all residents of the Borough.

Recommendation

16. Members are asked to note the content of this report

Murray Rose
Director of Children's Services

Background Papers
Ofsted Inspection Report

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