

REPORT TO: Employment Learning and Skills and
Community PPB

DATE: 5th June 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Children & Enterprise

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People and Families

SUBJECT: Ofsted Inspection of Halton Borough
Council Adult Learning & Skills
Development Service

WARDS: All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- **To provide Members with details of the outcomes of the recent Ofsted inspection of the Adult Learning & Skills Development Service**

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

(1) The report is noted

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Adult Learning & Skills Development service operates within the Further Education & Skills sector. The work is governed by the framework for the inspection of further education and skills (The Common Inspection Framework), the overall aim of which is to evaluate how efficiently and effectively education and training provision meets learners' needs.
- 3.2 The Common Inspection Framework comprises the principle criteria that inspectors must consider when inspecting every education and training provider. The inspectors make a judgement based on adequacy from the two categories: adequate and inadequate. A provider will be deemed to be inadequate if it is graded inadequate for 'overall effectiveness'. For all other grades, the provider is deemed adequate.
- 3.3 Learning and skill providers receive two working days' notice before a planned Ofsted inspection. On Friday 19 April, the Adult Learning Service received a telephone call from the Lead Inspector, Harmesh Manghra, informing an Ofsted inspection would take place from Tuesday 23 April to Friday 26 April and that a team of 6 inspectors would undertake the inspection, each with a key area of focus.

- Lead Inspector (Outcomes for Learners)
- Assistant Lead Inspector (Leadership & Management)
- Quality Inspector (Quality of Teaching, Learning & Assessment)
- Employability provision Inspector
- Community Learning Inspector

The Quality Inspector was being mentored by an experienced HMI, making the Inspection Team up to 6.

3.4 On receipt of the 'phone call, the Adult Learning Service had to provide the following information by close of play on Friday 19 April:

- the number and type(s) of sector subject areas they deliver teaching/training/assessment in
- information about current volumes and types of learners
- timetables/schedules of assessment or learning sessions
- information about the provider organisation with staff names and responsibilities
- location and numbers of subcontractors
- names and email addresses of any employers whose premises the inspection team intends to visit; this should be submitted to the inspection team on the first inspection day or agreed during the planning phone call.

3.5 During the period of Friday 19 April and Sunday 21 April, the Divisional Manager Employment, Learning & Skills discussed the scope of the inspection with the Lead Inspector. It was agreed to change the scope of inspection to better reflect the work of the Adult Learning Service as part of a wider Employment, Learning & Skills Division. The inspection would examine and make 'key aspect' judgements on 3 areas:

- Outcomes for learners
- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- Effectiveness of leadership and management

An 'Overall Effectiveness' grade for the service would then be determined based upon the grades for the 3 key aspects.

In addition, the inspection would examine and grade two other areas:

- Employability provision
- Community Learning (including maths, English, Family Learning, Childcare, Counselling, Floristry, ICT, Art & Design, Languages)

- 3.6 In making their judgements, inspectors would evaluate the evidence for each against the grade characteristics:

Grade 1: outstanding	Grade 2: good
Grade 3: requires improvement	Grade 4: inadequate.

Impact for Local Authority/Provider

- 3.7 The Adult Learning & Skills Development service has been through 2 previous inspections. In November 2005 it was inspected and achieved a Grade 2 (Good) for Overall Effectiveness. In June 2009 it was inspected and again achieved an overall Grade 2 (Good) with some 'outstanding' elements.

4.0 The inspection process

- 4.1 The inspection process involved a wide range of activity including:

- Observations of Teaching, Learning & Assessment across all centres, including schools and Children's Centres
- Meetings with learners
- Meetings with tutors
- Meetings with stakeholders
- Meetings with senior HBC managers
- Meeting with Portfolio Holder
- Desk top research including examination of learners' portfolios and course files
- Visits e.g. Castlefields Community Art Subway Project
- Meetings with managers from the Adult Learning Service.
- Meetings with staff responsible for provision of information, advice and guidance to learners.

- 4.2 The identified 'nominee' from the Adult Learning Service was the Divisional Manager Employment, Learning & Skills and she acted as the main contact between HBC and the Lead Inspector. Ofsted regard the nominee as a member of the Inspection Team and it is the nominee's role to ensure the evidence is made available and to negotiate, as a result of evidence, on judgements being made.

- 4.3 Daily meetings between the nominee and the Inspection Team took place, as did daily meetings with just the Ofsted team. Each day of the inspection involved the Inspection Team gathering their evidence to back up their judgements.

5.0 Ofsted Inspection Outcomes

5.1 The final grades for the Adult Learning Service Ofsted inspection were very positive, as follows:

Aspect	Grade
Overall Effectiveness of provision	GOOD (2)
• Effectiveness of Leadership & Management	OUTSTANDING (1)
• Outcomes for Learners	OUTSTANDING (1)
• Quality of Teaching, Learning & Assessment*	GOOD (2)
Curriculum Grades:	
• Employability	OUTSTANDING (1)
• Community Learning	GOOD (2)

** This is a 'limiting' grade; i.e. the Overall Effectiveness of provision grade can never be higher than the grade awarded for the Quality of Teaching, Learning & Assessment.*

5.2 Whilst the Overall Effectiveness grade awarded matched the last 2 inspections' Overall Effectiveness grade, the service has never been awarded any Outstanding grades. To have received 3 areas of outstanding practice is a massive improvement for HBC's Adult Learning Service and one to be commended.

5.3 The Inspection Team was particularly impressed with the range of services offered across the wider Employment, Learning & Skills Division and how the Adult Learning Service and the Enterprise & Employment Service have integrated so effectively to offer a comprehensive 'learner/client journey'.

5.4 Key findings included:

- Learners develop outstanding levels of personal, social and employability skills to benefit themselves, their families and communities;
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good with some inspirational teaching
- Support from well-qualified, experienced, enthusiastic staff who have a clear sense of purpose
- Excellent information, advice and guidance that help, guide and support learners to engage, enjoy, learn and progress

- Excellent leadership and management, including a clear vision, strategic planning, partnerships, data, quality improvement and a well established self-assessment process.

5.5 The areas that Ofsted identified as areas for improvement were as follows:

- Improve retention and success rates for a small number of learners on English and mathematics through a more appropriate curriculum design, better monitoring of attendance, evaluation of pilot activities and a stronger focus on improving the quality through existing good quality processes;
- Plan community learning to better target those groups that would benefit most from the provision;
- Further improve the proportion of outstanding teaching, learning and assessment.

6.0 Next Steps

6.1 The Adult Learning Service already has a comprehensive Quality Improvement Plan (QIP) in place. The recommendations from the Inspection will be factored into the QIP. In addition, the Service is already consulting with the community on preferences for Adult Learning provision in the next academic year.

6.2 Changes to how the Skills Funding Agency funds adult learning provision together with a more flexible Adult Learning Tutor contract will mean that the service can better and more quickly respond to changing demands from September 2013.

6.3 An already implemented new 'Observation of Teaching, Learning & Assessment' policy and procedure includes 'outstanding' tutors supporting other tutors in aspiring to improve their observation grades.

7.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The production of a Post Inspection Action Plan will be required; however, given the positive outcome from the Ofsted Inspection, the Adult Learning Service will be free from further Ofsted inspections for a period of 4 years.

8.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 A positive inspection grade places the service in a good position in terms of being able to bid for future Adult Learning funding.

9.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

9.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The delivery of Family Learning was inspected and was deemed to be very good. Inspectors were also impressed with the piece of research recently undertaken that evidenced the impact of Family Learning on the SATs results of the children who took part in Family Learning programmes.

9.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Given the main focus for the Division is the delivery of employment, learning and skills services, a successful Ofsted inspection has provided public recognition that the services offered by the council are of a very high standard.

9.3 A Healthy Halton

None

9.4 A Safer Halton

None

9.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

9.6 Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency

A review of the Adult Learning Tutor contract is currently underway to ensure the Adult Learning Service can offer a more responsive curriculum offer to meet the needs of the community and employers.

10.0 RISK ANALYSIS

11.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

The Inspectors commented on the good quality data that the Service collects in terms of monitoring and auctioning issues relating to equality and diversity.

12.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None under the meaning of the Act