

## **Cabinet – 12 April 2006**

### **Walsall Council - Adult Learning Inspectorate Report December 05 (Draft)**

**Portfolio:** Councillor Garry Perry, Leisure and culture

**Service Area:** Leisure Culture and Lifelong Learning

**Wards:** All

**Forward Plan:** No

#### **Summary of report**

The Adult Learning Inspectorate inspected the College and its provision between the 5 and 9 December 2005.

The College received an overall grading of 3 (Satisfactory) this represents a significant achievement by the College, because no other Local Authority in the Black Country achieved a grade 3 at their first inspection.

Whilst two areas of learning were graded at 4 (Inadequate), overall the College achieved satisfactory grades for Leadership and Management and for its Skills for life provision that includes literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages. Arts and media was also graded as satisfactory with in sectors making

The two main areas of learning graded at 4 are Sport, leisure and recreation and Languages, Literature and Culture and the College is now working hard with its partner providers to improve their teaching and learning quality.

Inspectors stated that they had confidence in the capacity of the College to make improvements and this further underlines the efforts made by the College to improve quality over the past two years.

The College has developed its post-inspection action plan, which will be monitored and directed by a team of staff from the Local Authority, the Learning and Skills Council, a provider representative and staff from the College of Continuing Education.

The Adult Learning Inspectorate will re-inspect those areas of the provision that have been graded inadequate before the end of March 2007 and a re-inspection report will be published.

Providers having funding withdrawn because of inadequate provision may not receive contracts in the 2006/07 academic year unless they can demonstrate an improvement in quality.

Where it is clear that improvement of the inadequate provision is not possible within the timescale set for re-inspection that provision will cease to be funded as part of Adult and Community Learning.

Improvement will be determined by a further independent inspection to be carried out by a team of specialist inspectors, if at this point the providers concerned have improved their levels of quality provision, funding will be re-instated.

## **Recommendations**

That Cabinet approve the preparation of an action plan to address the ALI findings and that this be submitted for Cabinet approval in due course.

## **Resource and legal considerations**

There are limited cost implications arising from this report, in that the recovery plan is to be financed by the Learning and Skills Council and will not require a contribution from the Authority. The impact however of any reductions in LSC funding as a result of the re-inspection during 2006/07, could reduce College budgets and impact both on funding available to finance adult learning and on that funding given to community and voluntary organisations.

The College has suspended funding to community providers for new learners on courses in Sports, leisure and recreation and Modern foreign languages. This is because under LSC rules, the funding of new learners on courses judged to be inadequate has to cease. This will impact marginally on providers in this year as the academic year ends in July and many providers have already met their all year target of learner numbers. Existing learners on these courses are able to continue their courses until the end of the academic year.

## **Citizen impact**

Adult Learners from the age of 19 are affected by the results of this report in two ways, where the adult learning provision has been graded satisfactory learners are receiving an average learning experience. Where the provision is graded inadequate learners are not receiving a quality learning experience. New learners will not be funded to join these courses until the quality of each course being provided has been determined by independent inspection.

## **Community safety**

There are no Community Safety issues arising from this report.

## **Environmental impact**

There are no environmental issues arising from this report.

## **Performance and risk management issues**

Risk – The risks arising from the implications of this report are that the Learning and Skills Council could, at their discretion, withdraw adult and community learning funding for Sport, leisure and recreation and Modern Foreign Languages, if the subsequent re-inspection continues to grade these areas as inadequate.

Performance Management – There are no direct implications that will impact on the Council's overall performance. However, performance issues will impact on the community and voluntary organisations that act as providers for the delivery of adult community learning in Walsall.

## **Equality implications**

There are no equality and health issues, nor, any human rights implications as a result of this report.

## **Consultation**

In undertaking this inspection the Adult Learning Inspectorate consulted with the Governors, Principal and staff of the College of Continuing Education together with Officers of the Local Authority. Consultation also included 373 learners from across the borough and 16 community providers/partners.

Each year the College also issues a learner survey document that is sent to over 6000 learners on courses funded by the College and the results of this survey are published and used to inform improvements in the next academic year. The 2005/06 - learner survey has already been sent out to learners in February of this year.

## **Vision 2008**

This report links to Vision 2008 priorities; Through its main objectives of offering Life Long Learning to Walsall adults the College is supporting vision 4 - "Local people and local employers want lifelong learning to be an everyday reality".

The report also links to and supports vision 6 - "Local people, local businesses, our schools and colleges want Walsall to be a borough with a strong, positive image", through continuing to pursue the drive for excellence in adult education.

This report supports vision 10 – "Transform Walsall into an excellent local authority" by continuing to develop a quality Adult Education service

## **Background papers**

Adult Learning Inspectorate Inspection Report on Walsall LEA, 9 December 2005.

## Contact officer

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**Signed:**

**Executive Director: Jamie Morris**

**Date:** 4 April 2006



**Signed:**

**Portfolio holder: Gary Perry**

**Date:** 4 April 2006

## **1.0 Context**

- 1.2 The Council is funded to deliver further education and adult community learning through The College of Continuing Education, which is part of the Neighbourhood Services Directorate.
- 1.3 The Council will receive in 2005/06 in excess of £1.6 million to deliver further education and just over £1 million to deliver adult community learning.
- 1.4 Further education can be defined in respect of the Walsall provision as being mostly formal courses, either mapped to national curriculum standards or following accepted external accredited certification routes. The college of continuing education delivers skills for life, which includes literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages, communications technology, courses for learners with a learning and/or physical disability.

The college also delivers family learning provision throughout the borough.

- 1.5 Adult Community Learning can be defined as those courses that are in pursuit of leisure activities and will not, in the main, be externally accredited, and also those courses that are designed to provide a first step from adult community learning into further education.
- 1.6 The College of Continuing Education was responsible for the delivery of courses to over 9000 adult learners during 2004/05.

## **2.0 Adult Learning Inspection**

- 2.1 Further education and adult community learning provision is externally inspected by the Adult Learning Inspectorate, usually on a 4-year cycle of inspection.
- 2.2 The inspection in December 2005 was the first inspection of Walsall Council Adult Education provision.

## **3.0 The Inspection Report**

- 3.1 The Adult Learning Inspectorate inspected the College and its provision between 5 and 9 December 2005.
- 3.2 The provision inspected was:

Information and Communications Technology  
Sport, leisure and recreation  
Arts, Media and Publishing  
Languages, Literature and Culture  
Preparation for Life and Work

The inspectors also graded the leadership and management of the College overall.

### 3.3 About the inspection

A team of inspectors conducted the inspection between 5 and 9 December 2005.

Number of inspectors	12
Number of inspection days	60
Number of learners interviewed	373
Number of staff interviewed	131
Number of subcontractors interviewed	16
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	67
Number of Partners/external agencies interviewed	7
Number of visits	1

- 3.4 **Grading** - Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas, as well as to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes equality of opportunity and quality assurance. The descriptors for the four grades are: -

Grade 1 – Outstanding

Grade 2 – Good

Grade 3 – Satisfactory

Grade 4 – inadequate

- 3.5 As a result of the inspection in December 2005, the gradings given to the College were: -

Leadership and management – 3

Information and Communications Technology – 3

Sport, leisure and recreation – 4

Arts, Media and Publishing – 3

Languages, Literature and Culture – 4

Preparation for Life and Work – 3

- 3.6 The inspectors graded the College overall as ‘Satisfactory’ (Grade 3).
- 3.7 Two areas of learning were graded at 4, this being the lowest grade on the scale. The grading of 4 is given where the provision being inspected is described as inadequate. The two main areas of concern are Sport, leisure and recreation, which accounts for over 1000 learners. The second area of concern is Languages, literature and culture, which has 332 learners, this is made up of modern foreign languages such as Spanish, French and German and this has been graded at 4.
- 3.8 The Sport, leisure and recreation together with Languages, literature and culture are provision that is delivered by contracted providers. These providers are in the main Community Associations, and the College contracts with each of the providers on an annual basis. The contract between the College and providers requires providers to deliver education and training to required levels of quality and safety. Where contracted providers fail to meet quality standards and/or follow quality processes, the contract can be withdrawn.

## **4.0 Implications**

- 4.1 The College has achieved an overall satisfactory grade, however, as indicated in 3.7- 3.8 above, two areas of learning are judged to be inadequate and therefore need remedial action to raise the grading to a minimum standard of grade 3.
- 4.2 The Learning and Skills Council now require the College of Continuing Education to put together a post-inspection action plan that will address all of the issues of concern raised by the inspectors during their inspection. The Learning and Skills Council have provided £40 K to assist the College in this plan, which will include costs for the provision of an independent inspection of the areas judged to be inadequate as well as arts and media, the other largest area of learning.
- 4.3 The post-inspection action plan will be monitored and reviewed by a panel consisting of representatives from the Learning and Skills Council, Community Providers, the Assistant Director of Leisure, Culture and Lifelong Learning, a member of the Governing Body, the Principal and Vice Principal of the College together with the Head of The Adult and Community Learning Observation Team and a College Curriculum Team Leader. The action plan has been constructed and the planning and monitoring team met on 24 March 2006 to begin the work of improving the grading of leisure, travel and tourism and languages,literature and culture.
- 4.4 The College has, as part of its recovery plan, engaged a specialist independent team of inspectors who will inspect every taught session in the two areas causing concern and in the additional area of Arts and Media. They will report their findings to the college by the end of March 2006.
- 4.5 The Adult Learning Inspectorate will re-inspect those areas of the provision that have been graded inadequate before the end of March 2007. Following that inspection a further re-inspection report will be published nationally.
- 4.6 If upon re-inspection the areas being re-inspected have shown no improvement, the Learning and Skills Council can exercise their right to withdraw further funding for these two areas.

## **5.0 Actions**

- 5.1 Where provision is shown by the independent inspection to be at grade 4, exhaustive efforts will be made by the College to improve the quality of teaching and learning to reach a minimum of grade 3 in those areas graded 4 at inspection. The College has a team of staff who are working with the providers concerned to improve the quality of their provision before the re- inspection
- 5.2 Where it is clear that improvement is not possible within the timescale set for re-inspection that provision will cease to be funded as part of Adult and Community Learning.
- 5.3 Providers having funding withdrawn will not receive contracts in the 2006/07 Academic year unless they can demonstrate an improvement in any of their inadequate provision.

- 5.4 Improvement will be determined by a further independent inspection to be carried out by a team of specialist inspectors, if, at this point the providers concerned have improved their levels of quality provision, funding will be re-instated.
- 5.5 The College will need to look closely at the possibility of providing more directly delivered provision in 2006/07, if the provider partners are not in a position to deliver the high quality teaching and learning required to be successful at the re-inspection in 2007.