

# Richmond Adult Community College

## Inspection report

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Unique reference number: 131095

Name of lead inspector: Alex Falconer HMI

Last day of inspection: 21 May 2010

Type of provider: Further education and adult education college

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## Information about the provider

1. Richmond Adult Community College (RACC) is a general further education college that provides adult and community programmes, accredited further education courses and training programmes for those in employment. The college has a long history of adult and community education and has recently widened its remit to meet changing government training and education priorities and funding regimes. RACC has two main sites, one in Richmond and the other in Twickenham, but also operates in a number of community venues and employers' premises. The recently realigned curriculum seeks to provide opportunities for adults who value learning, local people at risk of redundancy and learners who have a disability or learning difficulty. It also seeks to provide for learners who are at work and require skills and qualifications, young people who want to work in a more adult ethos, and adults who require foundation Skills for Life.
2. The number of learners at RACC has declined over the past three years following changing government priorities and cuts to adult and community education budgets. In 2008/09, just over 5,200 learners were on further education accredited programmes; around 1,000 on First Steps; 4,000 on adult and community learning and just over 1,000 on training for those in employment or on Train to Gain. In addition, around 100 school pupils at risk of exclusion, or significantly under-performing, attended vocational programmes. Most learners are on part-time courses and around two thirds are female. Approximately 20% of learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds, a proportion higher than the resident population of the local area. The college offers provision in 13 of the 15 subject areas and around half of learners are on preparation for life and work or arts and media programmes.
3. Richmond is an affluent borough but does have wards with some levels of deprivation. Twickenham is less affluent but has some areas of deprivation. Unemployment is low and below the London average. One in ten residents has no formal qualifications, which is on a par with both the London and England averages. However, around 40% of residents have degree-level qualifications. In 2009 around two thirds of the 16-year-old school leavers in Richmond qualified with five A\*–C grade passes at GCSE. This was considerably higher than the outer London average but at the average for the rest of England. The college mission is to enable adults to unlock their talent and fulfil their potential through learning, skills and enterprise. At the previous inspection in 2006 the college was found to be outstanding.
4. The college provides training on behalf of the following providers:
  - Kingston University
  - The University of Westminster.
5. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the college:

- London Borough of Richmond-upon-Thames
- e-Training
- MPQ Training
- Lifeline Childcare
- EMAG (First Steps)
- Age Concern (First Steps)
- Castelnau Community Centre (First Steps)
- Kew Community Trust (First Steps).

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Provision for young learners: 14 to 16	92 part-time learners
Further education (16 to 18)	37 full-time learners 86 part-time learners
Foundation learning, including	9 full-time learners 7 part-time learners
Provision for adult learners: Further education (19+)	239 full-time learners 5,687 part-time learners
Non-accredited provision (adult safeguarded learning)	4,923 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain	1,112 learners
Apprenticeships	2 apprentices

## Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 1
Capacity to improve	Grade 1
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	1
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	1
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2
Subject Areas	
Health and social care	2
Visual arts and media	1
Literacy and numeracy and ESOL	3

## Overall effectiveness

6. Richmond Adult Community College is outstanding. Managers and governors demonstrate exceptional capacity to secure improvements for learners and to the quality of the provision. Learners' achievements are excellent and have improved over the past year. College managers and staff are working hard to improve further the progress made by some learners from minority ethnic backgrounds. Teaching and learning are good and learners gain in confidence and employability. Standards of learners' work are high and assessment is good. However, some individual learning plans and targets are not effective in helping learners to improve. Care, guidance and support for learners are good, but do not always help learners make decisions about progression opportunities. The college promotes equality and diversity successfully and robust safeguarding procedures are in place. The range of provision is wide and meets local needs well. Partnership working is well developed and the college plays a key role in responding to the changing needs of individuals, businesses and other employers in the locality. Leadership and management are outstanding and quality assurance is well developed. The college provides outstanding value for money.

## Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Success rates have improved over the past four years and are currently well above national averages. Achievements for pupils aged 14 to 16 and learners on arts and crafts programmes are outstanding.
- Some groups of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds make less progress in their studies than their peers. Prompt action has been taken to rectify this and improvements to attendance rates and retention have taken place.
- Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and include a range of learning activities to stretch and challenge learners. Lessons take place in a relaxed but purposeful environment and learners feel completely safe on both campuses.
- Standards of work are good overall, and outstanding in art and crafts programmes. Assessment practices are good and teachers provide helpful verbal feedback to learners. However, in a minority of lessons, individual learning plans are not used effectively to help learners set realistic targets. College managers have identified this as an area for improvement.
- The range of provision is outstanding and is very well planned to meet the needs and interests of learners. The curriculum has been reshaped to meet the needs of adults, younger learners and those from more deprived backgrounds and to respond to changes in the local economy. Partnership working is outstanding.
- Care, guidance and support are good and teachers work well to support learners. Initial advice and guidance available to learners is effective and detailed. However, advice and guidance do not always help learners to make informed decisions about progression opportunities.
- Senior managers and governors provide outstanding leadership and a very clear strategic direction for the college. Outstanding collaborative work with a broad range of partners has ensured that the college acts as a valuable resource for the local community.
- Governance of the college is exemplary. The governing body exercise their role of scrutiny, support and challenge exceptionally well. Many governors have close links with the college, visiting lessons, exhibitions and other learners' events.
- Procedures for safeguarding learners are good. The college has well-established and extensive procedures for ensuring that all staff and volunteers receive Criminal Record Bureau checks and these are recorded appropriately on a central register.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The self-assessment report contains a thorough analysis of learners' outcomes and acknowledges the achievement gap for certain minority ethnic groups. Managers and teachers have introduced support measures, which are having an impact attendance and retention.

- Arrangements for capturing and responding to the views of learners are good. The college has a strong tradition of taking the views of learners seriously and making changes to reflect their views. Arrangements for receiving feedback from employers are not as well developed.
- Quality assurance is rigorous. Self-assessment is thorough and judgements are self-critical and accurate. Procedures for judging the quality of teaching and learning are broadly accurate, although the link between staff training and identified weaknesses in lessons is not always explicit. The college provides outstanding value for money.

### What does Richmond Adult Community College need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning further by more effective individual learning plans and more consistent follow-up to lesson observations.
- Ensure that learners are able to make informed choices about their learning and of all potential progression opportunities through more timely and consistent information, advice and guidance.

### Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

#### What learners like:

- enrichment activities, especially projects outside the college
- inspirational teachers who are passionate about their subjects and have experience in industry
- additional learning support and support from everyone in the college
- teachers and managers listen to our views and then change things where possible
- making friends in college
- enjoyable lessons and good feedback
- good informative website, really easy to read and understand.

#### What learners would like to see improved:

- some courses are too expensive
- more and longer courses
- the quality of books and CDs in literacy provision
- not enough computers and up-to-date software
- more information about the mistakes made in exams.

## Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

### What employers like:

- good, effective and supportive partnership working
- highly professional, enthusiastic and supportive college staff
- the 'can do' attitude
- flexible and successful development of training to meet needs
- innovative solutions to maximise resources
- the support and guidance to improve quality and standards of partners' provision.

### What employers would like to see improved:

- No areas for improvement were identified.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 1

7. Senior managers and governors have worked tirelessly to maintain the high quality of provision reported at the previous inspection. The governing body provide exceptional challenge and support. Strengths highlighted at the last inspection have been further developed through outstanding leadership and management. Learners' outcomes remain very high and resources continue to be managed very well, ensuring the college has excellent financial health. An ethos of high expectations is prevalent throughout the college. Although some aspects identified as areas for development at the previous inspection remain as challenges for the college, including success rates for certain groups of learners, all of these issues show considerable improvement. Quality assurance procedures are rigorous and effective. Self-assessment involves all staff and leads to accurate and self-critical judgments. The well-established senior management team have a good record for sustaining high standards and evidence suggests that this is likely to continue.

### Outcomes for learners

Grade 1

8. Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Over the past four years, success rates have improved and in 2008/09 the overall success rate was 85%, around ten percentage points above the recent, relevant national averages. Success rates on accredited long courses were above national average and the rate for short courses, over half of the college provision, was 11 percentage points above average. Learners' success rates for non-accredited provision have been around 97% for the past three years. However, success rates for work-based learning declined in 2008/09 owing to the failure of one of the commercial partners in the college's pan-London consortium. The collapse has been investigated thoroughly and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) has recognised that the college took the necessary steps on behalf of the consortium to make sure that learners were able to complete their programmes.
9. Retention rates have improved to 92% for accredited courses in 2008/09 and college data suggest that the current in-year rate has improved again. Retention on non-accredited courses has remained around 96% for the past three years. Current in-year retention rates for those learners and trainees taking work-based learning programmes have improved markedly. Attendance has also substantially improved in the past year. Actions taken by managers and teachers have had a significant impact, especially in health and social care.
10. Learners' achievements have been high for the past three years on the vast majority of accredited and non-accredited courses. Pupils aged 14 to 16 on part-time vocational programmes make very good progress and pass rates were very high in 2008/09. Learners aged 16 to 18 also achieved very good pass rates. However, on a small minority of GCSE courses, high-grade pass rates

were at national averages. Pass rates for adult learners in 2008/09, the bulk of the college provision, continued to demonstrate very high standards.

11. The college self-assessment report identified that some groups of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds made less progress in their studies than their peers. Prompt action has been taken to remedy this and both attendance and retention for learners from minority ethnic backgrounds have improved in 2009/10. Learners with a declared disability who have additional learning support make progress at least in line with their peers and often better.
12. Learners feel completely safe on both college sites. Safe working practices were observed in studios, workshops and classrooms during the inspection week. Risk assessments are thorough. Learners enjoy their studies and training; they develop in confidence and acquire appropriate employability skills. They are encouraged to adopt healthy lifestyles and regularly make positive contributions to local communities. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities develop confidence in working with the public and handling money by successfully running a college shop selling Fairtrade goods and a variety of students' art work.

## The quality of provision

## Grade 2

13. Teaching and learning are good. This judgement agrees with the college's view in the self-assessment report. Lessons are well planned and include a range of learning activities to stretch and challenge learners. In most lessons clear objectives are set and shared with learners. In arts and business lessons, teachers are highly effective role models for their students. In non-accredited programmes, teaching is good and supports learners' development effectively. Teachers know the learners well and provide good support in lessons. Lessons take place in a relaxed but purposeful environment in which learning is fun. However, in a minority of lessons the pace of learning is slow and learners are too passive.
14. Standards of work are good overall, and outstanding in art and crafts programmes. Most learners develop significantly increased levels of confidence and enjoy meeting like-minded people during their studies. Adult learners report that the college provides a very valuable service that not only allows them to develop new skills, but to meet and form new friendships. In addition, younger learners find the learning environment encouraging and appreciate the opportunity to study in an adult atmosphere.
15. In most programmes, assessment is good and is used effectively to support learning. Verifiers' reports confirm that assessments meet course and awarding body requirements. Teachers provide helpful verbal feedback to learners and use praise effectively to motivate and encourage them. However, in a minority of lessons learning outcomes are not shared clearly with the learners. In these lessons assessment lacks focus and learners' progress is insufficiently monitored and tracked. Learners attending weekend and evening classes use individual learning plans (ILPs) well to identify their start points and to set their personal

goals. However, ILPs are used inconsistently across most curriculum areas and are not used effectively to help learners set realistic targets. College managers recognise that further training is needed to develop the confidence of both staff and learners in setting challenging targets.

16. Learning resources are good and information learning technology (ILT) is used well by teachers to promote learning. However, not all printed learning materials are of high quality which can disadvantage learners whose first language is not English or those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The observation of teaching and learning is thorough and well organised. Observers are skilful at identifying key strengths but are not always sufficiently clear about what actions are needed to bring about improvement.
17. The range of accredited and non-accredited programmes at RACC is outstanding and is very well planned to meet the needs and interests of learners. The new curriculum strategy has widened the provision significantly and the college now caters for younger learners and those from more disadvantaged backgrounds. The range of courses in all subject areas is good and is outstanding in visual arts, business and for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Short intensive programmes offered at weekends and evenings respond effectively to the needs of employed or self-employed people who want to enhance their skills and career prospects. In addition, the college has successfully mounted programmes specifically aimed at those who have been adversely affected by the economic recession. A programme of interesting taster courses is offered several times a year and always attracts new learners.
18. Partnership working is outstanding. Strong links with the local authority, other providers and businesses ensure that the provision is well planned and coordinated. College managers have worked hard to shape the curriculum to respond to changes in the local economy, including the impact of redundancy on local employment. The college is a key partner in the borough's initiative to engage hard-to-reach learners and to improve the quality of learners' experience. College staff are engaged very effectively in collaborations to promote social cohesion. A strong representation on the 14 to 19 partnership has resulted in increased participation by learners at risk of educational exclusion. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have benefitted from successful partnership initiatives such as 'Keep Safe, Keep Well' and 'Recognising Abuse'.
19. Care, guidance and support are good and teachers work well to support learners. Staff give good financial, personal and pastoral support to learners. In most subjects, teachers and managers have good knowledge of opportunities for employment or self-employment. Emphasis on developing learners' employability is high. Initial advice and guidance available to learners is effective and detailed. A wide range of marketing materials, including an informative website, are used to inform and recruit potential learners. However, advice and guidance do not always help learners to make decisions about progression opportunities.

20. The quality of individual and group tutorials is satisfactory. However, learners receive good support from the highly committed staff. They do not always have regular help in setting realistic targets to help them improve. Additional learning support needs are identified promptly and support plans are put in place in a timely manner. Additional learning support for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well resourced and managed very effectively. Initial and diagnostic assessments are used inconsistently to inform lesson plans and learners' targets. Induction activities are well designed for different groups, engage learners quickly and help them settle in to the college.

## Leadership and management

## Grade 1

21. The principal, senior managers and governors provide outstanding leadership. They have established a very clear strategic direction for the college, adopting a high degree of responsiveness to government and local priorities. The curriculum is more vocationally relevant and many programmes now lead to accreditation, preparing learners well for employment. At the same time, a strong focus on leisure programmes has been maintained. Outstanding collaborative work with a broad range of partners has ensured that the college acts as a valuable resource for the local community. The welcoming and adult atmosphere is highly appreciated by staff and learners of all ages, including the increasing number of 14 to 19-year-olds. Managers work in a climate of openness and transparency. Communication with the largely part-time workforce takes many forms and is good. Morale is high and staff show their commitment by placing the well-being and success of learners above all else.
22. Governance of the college is exemplary. The governing body exercise their role of scrutiny, support and challenge exceptionally well. Board members have a broad range of skills and experience and attend meetings regularly. They are supported very ably by highly effective clerking. Many governors have close links with the college, visiting lessons, exhibitions and other learners' events.
23. Procedures for safeguarding learners are good. Comprehensive policies for safeguarding, child protection and anti-harassment and bullying are updated annually. The college has well-established and extensive procedures for ensuring that all staff and volunteers receive Criminal Record Bureau checks and recorded appropriately on a central register. Designated safeguarding officers have established good links with relevant local agencies. Training to raise awareness of safeguarding procedures has taken place for governors and all permanent staff. Most part-time staff receive information that raises awareness of safeguarding issues, but not formal training. An on-line training programme for all staff is to be introduced before the start of the next academic year.
24. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The college's equality and diversity group meet regularly and the comprehensive single equality plan, with actions for improvement, has specific and appropriate targets that are monitored closely. Recent staff updating for managers and a small group of staff has taken place, but not for the majority of teaching staff. The self-

assessment report contains a thorough analysis of learners' outcomes and acknowledges the achievement gap for certain minority ethnic groups. Staff have introduced support measures, particularly for 16 to 18-year-olds, which are having an impact. In the current academic year, the attendance and retention of learners of minority ethnic heritage have improved. The college has continued to widen the participation of learners from deprived areas, including many young people aged 14 to 19 previously reluctant to participate in education and training.

25. Equality and diversity are promoted strongly through many aspects of the college's work. Imaginative promotional literature portrays learners and staff in a positive, non-stereotypical way. Exciting events celebrate the diversity and differences of learners, with opportunities enabling learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to demonstrate their skills and abilities. The proportions of staff, governors and learners belonging to minority ethnic groups are higher than is found among residents of the local community. The diversity of learners is not promoted or utilised as a teaching resource sufficiently in some lessons.
26. Arrangements for capturing and responding to the views of learners are good. The college has a strong tradition of taking the views of learners seriously and making changes to reflect their views. Different methods are used by college staff to obtain feedback, including well-organised learner forums, end-of-course questionnaires, complaints and suggestion forms and learner focus groups. Arrangements for obtaining feedback from employers are still developing. However, a good deal of contact takes place between college staff and employers, enabling their views to be taken into account.
27. Quality assurance processes are rigorous and quality improvement plans contain specific and relevant targets whose progress is monitored at regular team meetings. The self-assessment process is thorough and judgements are self-critical and accurate. Procedures for judging the quality of teaching and learning are broadly accurate, although the link between staff training and identified weaknesses in teaching sessions is not always explicit. Curriculum management is good. Management information on learners' outcomes is accurate, but information technology (IT) systems are not integrated and it is difficult for staff to gain access to timely reports. The college has firm investment plans to upgrade these systems.
28. The college provides outstanding value for money. A high proportion of learners complete their courses successfully. Budgets are controlled rigorously and, despite the difficult financial climate facing adult and further education institutions, the college has generated a surplus of funds annually. Managers actively ensure resources are used in a sustainable fashion. For example, refurbishments are planned with the aim of reducing carbon emissions and an electric van is available to transport staff and goods between the college's two sites. Staff are well qualified and good support is provided by business support staff and technicians. Learners benefit from the current commercial and business experience of many part-time staff. The standard of accommodation is

generally good, particularly at the Richmond Business School, and there are good specialist resources in many subject areas, particularly art.

## Subject areas

Health and social care

Grade 2

### Context

29. The college offers part-time courses in health and social care, counselling and complementary therapies, and full-time courses in access to higher education. The provision extends from entry and foundation to undergraduate level. There are 269 adult learners, of whom 46 are studying full time. In addition, some 29 learners aged 14 to 16 are following the BTEC first diploma in health and social care. NVQ provision in health and social care is offered through partnership arrangements. Currently around 190 trainees are following NVQ intermediate level courses.

### Key findings

- Success rates on the majority of courses are high. Outcomes have been consistently good on counselling courses, with good progression from intermediate to advanced courses. In 2008/09, success rates were low on the advanced diploma in anatomy and physiology and on the access to social work programme. Standards on the access course are now good. Progression to employment or higher level study is good.
- Retention was good in 2008/09 and continues to improve in the current year. Attendance has improved significantly in the current academic year and is currently above 90%.
- Standards of learners' work are good. Learners develop good specialist knowledge and practical skills. In a counselling lesson, learners demonstrated very good awareness of the role of the counsellor and the needs of the client. In a beauty therapy practical session, students successfully demonstrated their ability to carry out a hot wax procedure safely and with great sensitivity to the client.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have high expectations and set realistic but challenging targets for both theory and practical work. Teachers are experienced practitioners and draw upon their professional knowledge to make lessons interesting and relevant.
- In most lessons there is good planning of activities and a good balance of teaching and small group work. Learning is checked frequently. In less effective lessons, the pace of teaching and learning is slow. Learning objectives are not sufficiently clear in terms of the knowledge, understanding and skills to be acquired or improved.
- The assessment of assignments and practical work is good. Learners receive good feedback to help them improve. Teachers use question-and-answer techniques well to check and extend learning. Initial assessment and guidance enable learners to study courses which meet their personal and professional needs.

- Individual support for learners is good. Learners receive useful one-to-one tutorial support which focuses on their individual learning needs and helps them set realistic targets. Some individual learning plans, however, do not sufficiently identify specific learning goals. In addition, not all learners have relevant work placements and links with employers are still developing.
- Leadership and management are good. The restructuring of the curriculum has been well managed and very effectively led. Managers have formed a cohesive team with a clear vision for the future. Managers meet regularly to review and plan provision but there is not enough involvement of part-time staff in this process.
- Self assessment is accurate. Areas for improvement have been identified and are being rectified. Teaching and learning are well monitored and teachers are supported by an effective mentoring system.
- Learners are able to express their views through their course representatives, surveys, written evaluations and other forms of feedback. There is a culture of openness in the faculty and learners' views are listened to and acted upon.
- Equality and diversity are well embedded and promoted in a variety of ways. However, equality and diversity are not always sufficiently explicit in lesson plans and activities. Achievement is analysed effectively to ensure that all students are achieving their potential.

What does the college need to do to improve further?

- In order to improve outcomes for learners, ensure that learning objectives in lessons and in ILPs focus on the knowledge, understanding and skills to be acquired or improved.
- Ensure that strategies to promote equality and diversity are sufficiently explicit in all lessons.
- Extend links with employers with a view to providing work placements and to add further vocational relevance to learning.

## Visual arts and media

## Grade 1

### Context

30. Currently some 2,366 learners are enrolled on a range of accredited courses and a wide range of non-accredited programmes. The majority of the provision is at advanced level. Courses are offered across a range of subjects in art and design, interior design, fine art, ceramics, photography, glass making, book binding and garment construction. Almost all learners are adults and three quarters are female.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are outstanding. Success rates are very high on the BTEC first diploma and all Open College Network (OCN) courses, where achievement was significantly above the national average in 2008/09.
- Retention rates are good overall and some are outstanding. For example, advanced OCN programmes and the foundation diploma in art and design were over 15 percentage points above the national average in 2008/09.
- Learners develop excellent practical and professional skills that enable them to produce work of a high standard. Work is innovative and well presented, enabling students to progress to employment or higher education. A widening participation project run in collaboration with the University for the Arts has been particularly successful in securing places for learners at prestigious London art and design institutions.
- Learners feel safe and are confident that staff will respond appropriately to any concerns. Health and safety is reinforced well across all art and craft areas. Learner forums have been established to respond to learners' views and are successful in informing improvements.
- Teaching and learning are good. Learners are encouraged to experiment and successfully develop individual styles. The pace of lessons is very good and learners are clearly developing new skills. However, in a minority of lessons the pace is slow, with limited teaching strategies and over-long introductions.
- Very good enrichment and wide-ranging opportunities are available to learners which enhance, complement and reinforce learning across the range of provision. Learners have the opportunity to work with practicing professional artists and exhibit their work publicly at Kew Gardens and National Trust properties.
- A wide range of specialist courses such as raku, glass making, book binding, interior design, jewellery making and sculpture is offered which ensures that learners' interests are well catered for. There is a balance of accredited and non-accredited courses. Taster sessions are designed and used effectively to engage learners and to encourage them to progress through to further study and higher education.

- Good and productive partnerships with local organisations include Kew Gardens and English Heritage. These provide a range of interesting and challenging opportunities for learners, who prepare their final exhibition in Marble Hill House, which is open to the public.
- Teachers provide good support to ensure learners achieve, and are sensitive to their needs. Learners receiving additional learning support make progress in line with that made by their peers. Learning support is greatly appreciated by learners but it is not always informed by initial assessment. Learners appreciate the help and support they receive from teachers outside lessons.
- Curriculum management is very good and there has been effective management of change. Staff at all levels feel valued and morale is high. Teachers are well supported and there are good professional development opportunities. Quality improvements are starting to focus more on teaching and learning, together with the sharing and developing of good practice.
- Self-assessment is accurate, but the evaluation of teaching and learning is not always detailed enough. Strategies to remedy areas for improvements identified in self-assessment are already beginning to have an impact.
- Specialist accommodation and resources are very good. The ceramics, glass-making and fine art studios are well equipped. Learners have good access to both PC and Apple Mac computers which have industry standard software.

What does the college need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that learning support is fully informed by initial assessments and is in place in time to have the maximum benefit to learners.

## Literacy and numeracy and ESOL

## Grade 3

### Context

31. Literacy and numeracy programmes are offered from entry and foundation level to intermediate level across both campuses. Three quarters of the learners are female and just under a quarter have a declared disability. Of the 1,570 learners, most of whom are part-time, 700 are on literacy courses, 270 on numeracy and over 600 are ESOL learners.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory. Success rates for foundation level literacy courses are good and were seven percentage points above the national average in 2008/09. Retention rates have improved and were above national averages on most courses in 2008/09. Attendance is satisfactory.
- The standard of learners' work in lessons is satisfactory. However, learners' personal and social skills are well developed and many learners become more self-confident. Adults particularly value the opportunity to gain qualifications. ESOL learners develop their oral and written skills well and they become more effective communicators.
- Learners say they feel safe and enjoy their learning. Their employment prospects and social well-being are considerably improved by their studies. However, too few progress to intermediate programmes from entry and foundation level courses.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the best lessons, good planning with clear objectives and a variety of teaching and learning methods lead to the successful development of learners' skills and understanding. In some numeracy lessons a range of interesting and imaginative teaching and learning resources are used to set challenging tasks for learners.
- However, the narrow range of teaching and learning methods in some lessons restricts learners' progress and does not meet individual learning needs. Learning activities do not always sufficiently challenge learners. Written feedback on how learners can improve is inconsistent.
- Initial and diagnostic assessments do not always inform learners' individual learning plans. They are inconsistently used to set appropriate and challenging targets for learners.
- Where ILT is used imaginatively, learners are engaged and make good progress. For example, learners demonstrated accurate grammatical constructions and number concepts using interactive whiteboards. However, in other lessons ILT is used only by the teachers and is limited to displaying information. In addition, learners have limited access to computers in literacy and numeracy lessons.
- Teachers provide good personal support for learners. However, the management of additional learning support in lessons is not always effective.

Learning assistants and volunteers are not always informed sufficiently to be able to support learners effectively.

- Information, advice and guidance are satisfactory. Learners are placed on appropriate courses following initial interviews and assessments by team leaders. However, there is insufficient guidance to support learners for progression to employment.
- Leadership and management are good. Good efforts are being made by to develop literacy and numeracy through vocational subjects and to increase the range of numeracy provision.
- The management of the quality improvement is satisfactory. The skills for life self-assessment report is broadly accurate. All teachers contribute to self-assessment through course record books and meetings.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. However, equality and diversity is not always effectively planned for in lesson plans and activities.

What does the college need to do to improve further?

- Help all learners achieve their full potential by ensuring that diagnostic assessments inform individual learning plans and that learners' progress is fully monitored and recorded.
- Ensure that teaching staff use a variety of teaching and learning methods and adapt learning activities to challenge and interest all learners.
- Develop teaching and learning resources, including ILT, to inspire and motivate learners to achieve.
- Develop the expertise of staff to plan and direct learning support assistants and volunteers to enable them to support learners more effectively to become independent learners.

## Information about the inspection

32. Three of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and five additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's vice principal (curriculum and quality), as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the college's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from funding bodies, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
33. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the college. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the college offers.

**Record of Main Findings (RMF)**  
**Richmond Adult Community College**

Learning types: 14–16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16–18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	14–16	16–18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners	297		17	280	
Full-time learners	4,949	112	114	4,156	567
Part-time learners					
Overall effectiveness	1	1	1	1	1
Capacity to improve	1				
Outcomes for learners	1	1	1	1	1
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	1				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	1				
How well do learners progress?	1				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	1				
How safe do learners feel?	2				
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	1				
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	1				
Quality of provision	2	1	2	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	1				
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	1				
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2				
Leadership and management	1	1	1	1	1
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	1				
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	1				
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	1				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	1				

\*where applicable to the type of provision

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