Learning and Skills inspection report

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Inspection Number: 404215

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Knowsley Family and Community Education Service

Local authority

Inspection dates		28 January–1 February 2013
Overall effectiveness	**This inspection:**	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- The proportion of learners who complete their courses successfully and achieve their personal goals is good.

- Learners significantly enhance their personal, social and economic well-being and there is good development of their employability and practical skills.

- Learners receive good teaching, learning and assessment which contribute well towards their good progress.

- Leaders and managers provide good leadership to ensure that Knowsley Family and Community Education Service (FACE) offers high quality courses to meet the diverse needs of Knowsley's community.

- FACE's arrangements for monitoring the quality of teaching, learning and assessment are very effective and have contributed well to the good quality of teaching and learning. FACE's self-assessment process and quality improvement planning are thorough.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Too few learners receive an outstanding quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

- For a small minority of learners, tutors do not clearly identify and record individual learners' personal learning goals, their progress and achievements.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve learners' outcomes by ensuring that all tutors, especially in the subcontracted community development courses, identify and record learners' starting points, set them clear and achievable personal learning goals, and record their progress and achievements systematically.

- Increase the proportion of the sessions which are outstanding by sharing the best practice in teaching, learning and assessment across all courses. Ensure tutors are confident and skilful to integrate successful practices in the promotion of equality and diversity in teaching, learning and assessment, and use information learning technology (ILT) to enhance further learning.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good

- Since the last inspection, the success rates of learners on accredited courses, who are around 20% of all learners, have improved consistently and are high. The success rates for learners on foundation, intermediate and advanced courses have improved steadily and are good. The proportion of learners who achieve their personal learning goals is high. Current learners are making good progress from their starting points. Retention rates and pass rates for learners on non-accredited courses are good.

- Learners are very motivated and they significantly improve their personal, social and employability skills, and apply their learning in their lives and communities well. They enhance their life chances and economic well-being significantly. Information and communication technology (ICT) learners make good progress and quickly become competent users of computer software such as word processing and database. For example, one learner used her better understanding of database software to evaluate her employer's use of a database system.

- On family learning courses, learners' success rates on accredited qualifications are good. Parents enhance their capacity to improve their children's achievement and progress in schools through improving their own English and mathematics skills. They gain a better understanding of their children's learning process and use this well to motivate them, for example, by negotiating their learning objectives weekly.

- Learners on subcontracted community development courses, a high proportion of whom have not participated in a learning programme since they left school, take part in a wide range of training and development activities. They develop their employability, emotional, mental and physical well-being well. They become more confident in making life choices such as, eating more healthily, managing their finances better and working together to improve their environment. Many are involved in social networks to enhance further their community and each other's capacity to make positive changes.

- Learners with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities develop a good range of independent learning skills and self-esteem. They become progressively more competent and confident in carrying out tasks that improve their lives significantly, such as working together and learning from each other.

- The standard of learners' work is good. Some produce outstanding work, for example, in cake decorating and knitting and crochet; one learner was successful in a cake decorating competition. Learners become more confident in applying English, mathematics and ICT in the home and work context.

- There are no significant differences between the performance of groups of learners. Overall, learners have a satisfactory understanding of their rights and responsibilities. They have a satisfactory understanding of progression routes and employment opportunities. The

progression of learners on accredited and non-accredited provision to other courses or employment is satisfactory. The service has begun to improve the accuracy of its data on learner destinations.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good and contributes to good outcomes for learners. Teaching is stimulating and sessions are well planned to meet learners' individual needs and interests. This ensures learners are fully involved during the sessions and achieve their learning goals.

- Tutors provide good individual coaching to ensure learners with different levels of subject ability and experience learn and progress well. They encourage learners to develop good, independent learning and problem-solving skills by guiding them to reflect on their learning and explore solutions to their problems without immediately asking the teacher for help. For example, some learners with little previous experience of computers, confidently used the 'help' function of a software package to successfully explore, learn and change the 'font' of the text which they had typed.

- Sessions are paced well and tutors use a good range of effective questioning techniques to promote and reinforce learning. They extend successfully the knowledge or the skill levels of the more-able learners. On vocational courses such as counselling, tutors make good use of real-life examples from their own professional experience to link theory to practice. In family learning, tutors link learning points well to learners' own experiences or that of learners' children to apply learning to real life situations.

- Tutors develop highly effective relationships with learners which helps them to feel confident to ask questions and take responsibility for their own learning. For example, learners routinely ask questions during sessions to clarify their understanding of a topic or to develop their knowledge. They participate well in sessions' activities and apply their learning outside the classroom. Learners help each other to learn better.

- Sessions are planned well to include the learners' individual needs and interests. For example, on ICT courses tutors plan training to meet the needs of the employed learners who want to improve their use of ICT in the workplace. The quality of learning resources overall is good and printed resources are prepared well to meet individual needs. However, in many sessions, tutors do not use ILT innovatively to broaden learning. For example, they make little use of ILT to present information in different ways.

- Teaching, learning and assessment for learners on subcontracted community development courses are satisfactory. Tutors have a good knowledge of learners' starting points and the challenges which they need to overcome. However, for the small number of learners on non-accredited courses, tutors do not record learners' starting points, their personal learning goals, their progress and achievements sufficiently.

- Well-qualified tutors use their extensive subject knowledge and experience well to develop and then maintain learners' interest during sessions. They provide good individual help for learners and enjoy productive relationships with learners. They are particularly sensitive to the needs of learners who are not confident about learning or about their own abilities. Through praise and encouragement, these learners remain on their courses and progress well.

- Progress reviews for learners are thorough and provide clear information about the steps they need to take to improve their learning. On family learning courses, in addition to using individual learning plans, tutors use learners' learning diaries to encourage them to reflect on their progress.

- Assessment practices for accredited and non-accredited courses are good. Tutors use a good range of methods to assess learners' progress and achievements. They provide detailed feedback to learners about their work and offer clear guidance on what they need to do to achieve units, qualifications or their personal learning goals. Initial assessment is thorough and

provides reliable information about learners' starting points. It accurately identifies learners' personal learning goals, career and employment goals, and their support needs.

- Tutors integrate English and mathematics effectively in their teaching and assessment practices to develop learners' competencies in using these skills. This approach contributes well to the vast majority of learners who acquire sufficient English and mathematics skills to achieve their qualifications and complete their personal goals.

- Learners receive good quality guidance and advice before they start on their courses. Once enrolled onto courses, tutors provide good advice about the opportunities for further learning or employment.

- Tutors promote a culture of respect and inclusion throughout the service. In some sessions tutors make good use of opportunities to promote and extend learners' awareness about different cultures and life styles. However, the systematic planning and integration of equality and diversity across some courses require improvement.

Foundation English and mathematics **Community learning**	Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, which contributes to good outcomes for learners. Tutors coach individual learners in sessions which are planned well for learners with different levels of subject ability. Many attend at times that meet their needs. Good English and mathematics individual coaching has resulted in the vast majority of learners successfully completing their qualifications and some who progress to other courses or employment.

- Teaching and learning are good. Tutors use very effective teaching strategies such as skilful questioning and individual monitoring of learners' progress to motivate learners to progress and learn well. For example, one tutor used good questioning technique to encourage a more-able learner studying mathematics to attempt a more complex multiplication.

- Not all tutors use ILT sufficiently to ensure learners develop a good understanding of the different ways that English and mathematics is used in everyday activities. For example, tutors do not use ILT to help learners understand quicker the different ways in which data can be presented.

- Tutors offer good extra support to help learners overcome a wide range of barriers to participation and learning. This helps learners to stay and continue on their courses and motivate them to achieve their long-term goals.

- Tutors have good subject knowledge and are appropriately qualified and experienced. They use their skills well to apply English and mathematics effectively to make topics relevant to learners' life experiences and employment. For example, in one session, a tutor demonstrated well the way which the learner volunteering in a children's centre could use his newly acquired English skills to write better records of meetings.

- Tutors involve learners well in setting useful and appropriate long-term career, personal or learning goals that motivate learners. They set relevant targets with learners that they aim to achieve on a weekly basis. Tutors negotiate and agree good targets that extend the more-able learners' learning. However, they do not always record learners' progress against these targets clearly.

- Learners benefit from good initial advice and guidance that help them choose the most suitable course which meets their academic and employment needs. Learners have access to a wide range of advice and guidance for further progression opportunities. However, not all learners are sufficiently motivated to use this.

- English and mathematics are integrated well in teaching and learning activities. For example, learners are encouraged to use correct spelling and punctuation relating to their mathematics work that helps them to improve their English skills. Tutors encourage learners to study English and mathematics if any weaknesses in either area are identified. For example, one learner who

enrolled to improve his mathematics is planning to enrol on an English course on completion of the mathematics course.

- Learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity and show respect for one another. For example, in one session, a learner with a physical disability was fully involved in and contributed well to the session with other learners. Tutors do not consistently include equality and diversity matters in their teaching or assessment practices.

Family learning **Community learning**	Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, which contributes to learners' high success rates and to improvements in outcomes for learners' families. Tutors plan sessions well to encourage good learner participation and development of their confidence and self-esteem. As the result of lively and stimulating sessions, learners are very motivated, make good progress and enhance their ability in helping their children.

- Teaching and learning are good and lead to very effective learning. Tutors make good use of questioning technique, which extends well the knowledge of the more-able learners. Tutors have high ambitions for learners which encourages almost all learners to choose to study for accredited qualifications. Tutors use good resources, such as activity packs in mathematics, to encourage learners to extend their learning at home and develop independent learning skills.

- Tutors generally do not make an imaginative use of ILT to enhance learning. Not all premises used for teaching and learning sessions are suitable for adults. For example, in one session, learners had to use low tables for writing, which many learners found unsuitable.

- Extra support for learners is good. Tutors and staff in schools and children's centres work well together to enrol a high number of the parents whose children need the most help on family learning courses. Tutors have a good understanding of learners' personal and/or learning barriers and support them sensitively. Learners are confident to ask questions and discuss individual difficulties or concerns. They appreciate the caring approach of tutors and the mutual support of other learners.

- Tutors have good skills and knowledge and use their experience well to make topics relevant to learners' interests. Learners describe the significant impact that learning has had on their lives. For example, on a Story-Sacks course, learners enhanced significantly their emotional bond with their children.

- Tutors review learners' progress well, both for accredited and non-accredited learning. Learners contribute well to the progress-monitoring process and negotiate new learning targets for themselves and their children. Feedback to learners is full of praise and encourages learners to work towards challenging targets.

- Assessment practices, including feedback, are very effective to ensure that learners understand their achievements and can develop further to complete successfully. Learners' initial assessment process is thorough; it identifies any additional support needs and tutors use the information well in their teaching.

- Tutors integrate English and mathematics well in their teaching, which ensures learners can apply their enhanced English and mathematics skills in their lives. For example, learners report that, as a result of the courses, they are more confident in writing notes to their children's teachers and help their children with their English or mathematics homework.

- Tutors promote well progression options at annual events when learners' achievements are celebrated. During courses, they provide much encouragement for learners to progress to other courses. However, pre-course information for learners does not provide sufficient details about the content of each course.

- Tutors promote respect, equality and diversity very successfully in teaching, learning and assessment. Good planning of sessions contributes well to broadening and extending learners' understanding of equality and diversity. For example, in one session about family cookery, well-

prepared handouts about different cultures' dietary requirements stimulated a wider discussion about the positive aspects of diversity.

The effectiveness of leadership and management	Good

- The overall quality of leadership and management is good. Managers, community education officers, tutors and support staff focus strongly on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment that has led to the good outcomes for learners and significant improvements since the last inspection.

- The head of service, with the support of senior managers and heads of other council departments, determines business and council priorities as they relate to the service, setting challenging targets to develop and improve the provision. These relate closely to government targets, particularly to reduce unemployment in Knowsley. Development plans are scrutinised well to review progress made towards achieving objectives.

- Leaders and managers have managed the changes in organisational structure and provision well. Despite financial limits, the provision remains strongly responsive to learner and community needs. Staff morale is high and they provide good motivational role models for learners.

- Monitoring of staff performance is effective and appraisals are linked well to the quality of teaching, learning and outcomes for learners. Staff training is linked to improving skills in teaching, learning and assessment. However, while the quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, too few sessions are outstanding and tutors make too little use of ILT to extend learning further.

- Since the last inspection, the service has made significant progress in the development and use of its management information system. Data are used well to analyse learners' overall performance as well as performance at course level. Management information is improving further to include reports on the performance of learners in subcontractors. Management of subcontractors is satisfactory overall.

- Leaders, managers and tutors have a good understanding of the provision's quality. They use a range of information, including learner and staff views, well to inform the self-assessment report. The self-assessment process is well-established with staff and learners: it is viewed as a genuine tool for improvement. Managers work with other providers and subcontractors well to share practice and challenge each other to arrive at sound judgements about the quality of the provision and improvement strategies.

- Managers use the observation of teaching, learning and assessment process effectively to improve standards. The process is well-established and has recently improved further to include joint observations of sessions. In addition, the service is piloting subject-specific themed observations to ensure relevant improvements are taking place quickly. For example, in language sessions, observers are specifically linking grades to the amount of target language being used.

- Since the last inspection, for non-accredited learners, the process for identifying and recording progress and achievement has much improved and is now effective. Managers and tutors evaluate the process satisfactorily for consistency. However, tutors on some courses have a more rigorous approach to initial assessment, the recording of the assessments' results, setting of specific targets that learners understand, and the recording of learners' achievements.

- Tutors use a suitable range of policies, procedures and learning materials to promote learners' understanding of equality and diversity in learning sessions and community activities. They are very skilled in creating safe and respectful teaching environments in which learners feel happy to discuss sensitive issues. Active promotion of equality and diversity and challenge to learners is very good in some courses but less well developed in others.

- Managers make good use of management information to narrow the achievement gaps for vulnerable learners. They scrutinise data regularly to ensure they identify any issues and take

effective actions. For example, they identified that learners with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities were achieving qualifications at a lower rate than learners overall. They improved advice, guidance and support and the gap is much reduced.

- FACE meets statutory requirements for safeguarding of learners. Learners feel very safe, understand the importance of health and safety and are able to raise their concerns with tutors and support staff in detail, with the full understanding that they will receive sensitive and informed advice.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Knowsley Family And Community Education Service				
Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learning programmes	19+ Learning programmes	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2	2	2

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Foundation English and mathematics	2
Family Learning	2

Provider details

Knowsley Family And Community Education Service

Type of provider	Local authority
Age range of learners	16-18 and 19+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: N/A
	Learner Responsive: 646 learners Adult Safeguarded Learning: 2597 learners
Head of Service	Angie O'Neil
Date of previous inspection	May 2010
Website address	www.knowsley.gov.uk

Provider information at the time of the inspection

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Part-time	3	271	24	255	N/A	41	N/A	32

Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher	
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A
Number of community learners	1,233
Number of employability learners	N/A
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency, Skills Funding Agency
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	▪ Fire Service Network ▪ Home Start Knowsley ▪ Innovate Volunteering Community Interest Company ▪ Local Solutions ▪ Knowsley Works ▪ Nugent Care Society ▪ Training Solutions

Additional socio-economic information

Knowsley Family and Community Education Service is Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council's adult learning service. Around 80% of the service's provision is adult safeguarded learning and 20% is learner responsiveness. Almost half of those without qualifications in Knowsley are aged 50 or over. As at September 2012, there were 6,194 Job Seeker Allowance claimants which is 6.4% of the working age population; almost one third of the Borough's Job Seeker Allowance claimants are aged 16 to 24. The borough is ranked fifth in terms of overall indicator of deprivation.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Shahram Safavi HMI

Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the head of service as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012

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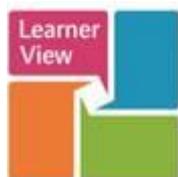
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