

# PEOPLE (CHILDREN) SCRUTINY PANEL

1 May 2014

## OFSTED REPORT ON THE INSPECTION OF RUTLAND ADULT LEARNING SERVICE

Report of the Director for People

STRATEGIC AIM:	<b>Creating a Brighter Future for All</b>
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### 1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report provides an overview of the Ofsted Inspection reports relating to Rutland Adult Learning Service (hereafter referred to as 'RALS')

The RALS Ofsted Inspection grade outcome is Grade 3, which results in a judgement of "Requires Improvement."

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 **That the People (Children) Scrutiny Panel considers the contents of this report noting the inspection judgements, overall effectiveness, capacity for sustained improvement, the strengths of the Service and what the Service needs to do to improve further.**

### 3. KEY FEATURES OF THE 'COMMON INSPECTION FRAMEWORK FOR FURTHER EDUCATION AND SKILLS' FROM SEPTEMBER 2012.

3.1 From September 2012, under the revised Ofsted arrangements for the inspection of providers of 'Further Education and Skills', inspectors are required to focus on the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the impact of this on skills development in particular.

3.2 Inspectors are required to report on the quality of education provided by the Provider (in this case RALS), and must, in particular, cover:

- a) Outcomes for learners ('hard' and 'soft' outcomes);
- b) The quality of teaching, learning and assessment;
- c) The effectiveness of leadership and management;
- d) The overall effectiveness of the Provider.

Under the existing Common Inspection Framework a clear focus has developed on inspection being conducted as much as possible through the live observation of teaching, learning and assessment with an associated decrease in the focus on data and other retained evidence. The judgement for overall effectiveness takes account of the other three headline areas of inspection and it is this grade that is 'awarded' to the Provider.

**3.3** During the inspection process, Ofsted will seek to engage with a broad range of Service Users and staff members in order to inform their judgements. This will typically be achieved through:

- a) Individual and group meetings with key staff members and representatives of the Provider's Governance structure;
- b) Individual and group meetings with learners, employers and partners of the Service;
- c) Telephone conversations with a broader range of partners and stakeholders;
- d) The use of a standard survey that all current (at the time of the inspection) learners and employers are invited to complete.

The outcome of these interactions will be considered alongside the evidence gathered through observation and desktop analysis in forming final judgements.

**3.4** In reporting, inspectors must also consider:

- a) The broader skills development of learners other than just the achievement of qualifications, such as increased confidence, work-readiness and health.
- b) Arrangements for the Health and Safety and Safeguarding of Service Users and for the promotion of Equality and Diversity.
- c) The engagement of the Community in determining an offer that is relevant to local needs.

**3.5** Under the 2012 Ofsted Inspection Framework:

- a) There are no formal 'limiting' grades but in general it is unlikely that a Provider would be graded more highly for overall effectiveness than it is graded for quality of teaching and learning;
- b) An acceptable inspection outcome is a Grade 2 (good) or better judgement;
- c) A Provider that is not deemed at least 'Good', but that is not judged 'Inadequate', is a Provider that 'Requires Improvement';
- d) A Provider that is 'Inadequate' in terms of leadership and management will be deemed to be 'inadequate' in terms of overall effectiveness.
- e) Providers that are judged as 'Requires Improvement' will normally be monitored and re-inspected within a period of twelve to eighteen months and will receive ongoing input from Ofsted via the 'Getting to Good' programme that seeks to offer challenge and support to underpin a Provider's development.
- f) If a Provider is judged as 'Requires Improvement' (or prior to 2012, 'Satisfactory') at two consecutive inspections and is still not 'Good' or better at a third inspection, it is likely to be deemed 'Inadequate' and to require 'Special Measures';

The 'Common Inspection Framework for further education and skills: for use from September 2012' was devised by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector in line with the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

**3.6** This framework applies to all Further Education and Skills Providers in England that are to be inspected in line with the Education and Inspections Act 2006. As well as Local Authority Community Learning and Skills Providers (CLASP) (such as RALS), this encompasses a range of CLASP organisations from the Private and Third sectors, Colleges of Further Education and private training providers.

**3.7 What inspection judgements mean**

When finding the overall effectiveness of the Provider and when making the three key judgements about the outcomes for learners, quality of teaching and learning and effectiveness of leadership and management that together inform the judgement for overall effectiveness, inspectors use the scales below:

- a) Grade 1 Outstanding
- b) Grade 2 Good
- c) Grade 3 Requires Improvement
- d) Grade 4 Inadequate

**3.8 Outcomes and Ofsted monitoring process**

Depending on the results of the Ofsted annual selection process:

- providers graded as requiring improvement overall will normally be inspected within twelve to eighteen months of their previous inspection;
- providers who were found to be satisfactory before September 2012 will normally be inspected between September 2012 and August 2014;
- new providers will normally be inspected within three years of the start of the funding contract;
- 'good' providers will normally have up to six years between inspections;
- 'outstanding' providers whose performance drops or there is another compelling reason to do so may be inspected.

**3.9 Rutland Adult Learning Service**

**Key Findings:**

<b>Inspection Dates</b>	4 - 7 February 2014	
<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	Previous Inspection	Grade 3 Satisfactory
	This inspection	<b>Grade 3 Requires Improvement</b>

Key Judgment Area	Grade Awarded	Outcome
Outcomes for learners	Grade 2	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade 2	Good
Effectiveness of Leadership and Management	Grade 3	Requires Improvement

### 3.10 Main findings

The **attached** Ofsted inspection report provides background information about the inspection carried out – in summary:

This is a Provider that requires improvement. It is not ‘Good’ because:

- a) Leaders have been slow to take effective action to ensure that the working and learning environment is free from possible hazards at its main centre at Catmose College. In recent months, senior managers have commissioned a specialist health and safety report to deal with the staff anxieties about the impact of the centre’s environment on their health and its potential impact on learners.
- b) Strategic management of the provision is weak. Senior leaders have not taken adequate action to secure the future of the service including setting a clear strategy for curriculum that would best meet the wider future needs of the county council or the area covered by RALS.
- c) Self-assessment is not sufficiently timely for managers and staff to make improvements in subsequent years. Managers start work on the self-assessment late in the year.
- d) Personal learning objectives for a minority of learners in their learning plans are not specific. It is difficult to measure the exact progress the learners make.

The provider has the following strengths:

- a) The well-motivated learners achieve good and improving outcomes. They develop further their personal, social, employability and vocational skills that they use to benefit themselves, their families and communities.
- b) Highly professional and skilled tutors use their skills and expertise very well to provide good and improving teaching, learning and assessment. They use the findings of initial assessment well to provide well-paced individual and group teaching and learning that challenges most learners.
- c) The service has a strong focus on developing the English, mathematics and employability skills of its learners. Tutors plan their lessons to promote and reinforce these skills to all learners.
- d) Subject area management is good for all strands of learning. The increased focus on improving outcomes for learners and teaching, learning and assessment by managers and tutors has started to improve the learning experiences of most learners at a good pace.

Information relating to the inspection which provides background includes:

- a. The inspection team comprised two of Her Majesty’s Inspectors and three additional inspectors who between them observed a range of lessons and teaching sessions, including two joint observations with curriculum leads. The Adult Learning Quality and Development Manager was involved as part of the inspection team as nominee;

- b. Inspectors spoke to learners, employers and partners about their views of the provider and assessed the impact on them, their business or their organisation that could be attributed to the learning undertaken through RALS;
- c. Meetings with senior managers and leaders took place with the Portfolio Holder for the Adult Learning Service, the Assistant Director (People) and the (interim) Head of Lifelong Learning;
- d. Inspectors considered the 12 responses to the online Learner View survey;
- e. A range of information provided by RALS was checked carefully, including the Service's Self-Assessment Report and Quality Improvement Plans, records of Observations of Teaching and Learning, meetings records, the files and work of learners and records relating to Health and Safety and Safeguarding.

Information relating to the provider which provides background includes:

- a. RALS occupied purpose-built premises at Catmose Campus in February 2011 and now conducts the majority of its operations from that site. Staff and learners started raising issues relating to their well-being in the environment during 2011 and the volume and perceived severity of those issues has increased over the intervening period;
- b. A specialist investigation of environmental conditions at Catmose Campus was commissioned in mid-autumn 2013 and took place between November 2013 and January 2014, culminating in the production of a report that was presented to inspectors in draft form during the inspection which indicated that the environment required seven actions to improve the quality of the workplace;
- c. Since the last inspection, RALS has experienced reductions in its overall allocation of Skills Funding Agency grant monies and within that allocation, an increasing emphasis on apprenticeship training at the expense of other 'Classroom Based' vocational and skills training. These changes are in line with Department for Business, Innovation and Skills publications released under the current Government going back to late 2010;
- d. In response to the Government's stated intentions for the Further Education and Skills sector, and the perceived impact on the RALS service, a management report was drafted in October 2011 and considered in early 2012 outlining options for potential partnerships or other arrangements to address skills gaps / shortages and provide a sustainable financial position for RALS;
- e. The strategic response to the pressure identified focused, between February 2012 and July 2013, on pursuing a formal partnership with Rutland County College, including sub-contracting in full the delivery of the Adult Skills Budget element of the grant receipt. This initiative ceased after July 2013 as a result of the need, as advised by the Welland Procurement Unit, to follow a formal procurement process for the sum of grant funding involved. The resulting procurement process is still in train;
- f. During 2011/12 RALS was unable to fulfil its contract for Adult Skills Budget delivery as a result of the slow development of apprenticeship

programmes and the lagged funding associated with this type of delivery. As a result, there was a significant claw back of funds in 2012-13 together with a rebasing of the RALS allocation, ultimately costing the Service c.£208,000;

- g. The vast majority of RALS teaching staff are engaged on a sessional basis on low full-time-equivalent hours; typically a tutor delivers no more than 100 to 200 hours' of teaching per annum, though some deliver significantly more;
- h. In response to the reducing grant allocations and the changed delivery priorities, RALS is undertaking a restructure process that was underway at the time of the inspection.
- i. Between April and October 2014, RALS was visited on two occasions by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors under the auspices of the 'Getting to Good' programme, and representatives of the Service attended four seminars offered by Ofsted under this remit.
- j. The Service has increasingly focussed on maths and English provision as a core element of delivery in response to national priority, local need and financial expediency where funding for other programmes has been decreased significantly and learner contributions are not forthcoming in sufficient volume to sustain delivery.

### **3.12 Further information**

The Ofsted report states that to improve further the Service should take account of the following.

In terms of the effectiveness of leadership and management:

- Take swift and decisive action to ensure that the learning and working environment is free from possible hazards at the main site at Catmose College. Working closely with the users of the campus, take prompt action to ensure that staff and learners are fully aware of the actions that you are taking to deal with the potential problems in the working and learning environment.

#### Action Taken:

Service management has moved quickly to ensure that the learning and working environment is free from possible hazards. This work has included bringing in engineers to check and remedy air control, doors, lighting, office accommodation and lighting.

Communications with staff and learners has been paramount and support from Rutland County Council property services has been used to address issues and make improvements.

- Provide clarity on the future direction of the service through conducting an analysis of the best possible options for learners and staff. Clarify that options such as partnerships, merger or collaboration with local service/s that share the service's mission and values have been considered to consolidate and enhance the learning offer to meet the

county council or the region's needs. Finalise the draft strategic plan for the adult learning service, disseminate to staff and complete the proposed procurement process to achieve strategic stability for the service.

Action taken:

Service management and senior leaders in the People Directorate have ensured that progress has been made with the restructure of the Adult Learning Service and procurement of the Adult Skills Budget element of the funding receipt from the Skills Funding Agency (SFA). The procurement 'Award of Contract' is being considered by Cabinet on 15 April 2014 after which point detailed contractual negotiations will be undertaken to complete the sub-contract arrangements for the service which will commence in time for the new SFA financial and academic year on 1 August 2014.

- Conduct self-assessment regularly, prepare the self-assessment report in good time and ensure the report has a clear plan of action with targets to raise the standards.

Action taken:

The service management team are undertaking self-assessment regularly and will prepare the self-assessment report (SAR) for the start of the new academic year. The SAR will include a position statement and action plan. The SAR will be reviewed and quality assured by the RALS Improvement Board which will continue to meet on a regular basis.

In terms of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment:

- Stay focussed on improving teaching, learning and assessment to outstanding levels by:
  - a) providing stretch and challenge for all learners to improve their performance

Action taken:

Service management are ensuring that all tutors are addressing this inspection finding.

- b) greater involvement of employers to link theory and practice

Action taken:

This is a priority action for the service and will feature as part of the development of the skills and employer engagement elements of the service provision.

- c) setting sharp and measurable personal objectives for learners so they know how to improve.

Action taken:

This action is being undertaken by managers and tutors and will be reviewed by the Adult Learning Service Improvement Board.

Further information is available within the content of the inspection report.

**3.13** As the Service 'Requires Improvement' the following further action is required:

- a) Regular Strategy Meetings involving appropriate senior representation from Rutland County Council;
- b) Support to develop, oversee and challenge delivery of an Action Plan;
- c) Support to ensure that additional training, cross-provider support and peer support is provided as necessary;
- d) Engagement with the Ofsted 'Getting to Good' programme to include ensuring that the nominated inspector is engaged with fully at an appropriate level. The first such visit has been scheduled for 23 May 2014.

#### 4. RISK MANAGEMENT

RISK	IMPACT	COMMENTS
Time	High	There is a requirement, clearly stated in the inspection findings, to take 'swift and decisive actions' in relation to the environment at Catmose Campus. Challenge and Support visits will commence within weeks of the publication of the report and an inspection will follow within twelve to eighteen months. Failure to take and evidence the required swift and decisive action is likely to prejudice the findings of subsequent inspection
Viability	Medium	Failure to achieve a 'good' or better result at the next inspection would lead to special measure being implemented and the potential loss of the contract with the Skills Funding Agency. The 'Requires Improvement' judgement limits the range of programmes RALS can offer and therefore precludes diversification of the curriculum offer, for instance through Traineeships.
Finance	Medium	The Skills Funding Agency considers Ofsted grades when allocating grant funding and considering bids for growth. By not achieving 'good', and in relation to the viability issues noted, it will be more difficult for the Service to achieve its contractual obligations for programme delivery and to increase funding in priority areas to offset reductions elsewhere.
Profile	High	Any Ofsted inspection outcomes will create interest in the community.
Equality and Diversity	Medium	The continued provision of facilities that are held to cause issues in terms of the well-being of staff and service users- especially where there is an underlying susceptibility – may render the learning environment

		inaccessible to some groups of learners
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**Background Papers**

Rutland County Council Inspection Report  
The Ofsted 'Common Inspection Framework for Further  
Education and Skills from September 2012'

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