

London Borough of Bromley

(Bromley Adult Education College)

Inspection Report

Unique reference number: 53108

Name of lead inspector: David Martin HMI

Last day of inspection: 12 February 2010

Type of provider: Local Authority

Address: Bromley Adult Education College
Widmore Centre
Nightingale Lane
Bromley BR1 2SQ

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Information about the London Borough of Bromley

1. Provision is delivered through Bromley Adult Education College (BAEC/the college), under a scheme of local management. The college has three main sites, in Bromley, Orpington and Penge, together with numerous other community venues. The principal of BAEC reports to the director of renewal and recreation and to the college's governing body, which includes three local authority representatives. The work of the principal is supported by a deputy principal. Three heads of faculty manage nine programme managers and around 300 part-time tutors.
2. The London Borough of Bromley (the Borough) secures funding for adult and community learning from the London South Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The BAEC offers mainly adult learner provision, with both learning for qualifications and learning for social and personal development. There is a small, but growing, amount of employer responsive provision, which is Train to Gain. A relatively small amount of provision is delivered by 14 sub-contractors within the local community. In 2008/09 there were nearly 17,500 enrolments by around 11,000 learners. Of these enrolments, some 19% were for learning for qualifications and this pattern continues into 2009/10. The most significant subject areas for enrolment are arts, media and publishing, languages, literature and culture, leisure, travel and tourism, information and communication technology (ICT) and preparation for life and work.
3. The Borough's local economy is relatively prosperous, with 80% of the population economically active. Unemployment, at 3.4%, is below the average for London, although there are local pockets of social deprivation. Around 87% of the population are White British and 14% are of Black and other minority ethnic heritage.
4. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the Borough:
 - Bromley Field Studies Centre (horticulture and creative arts and design)
 - Animi Training (ICT)
 - Bromley Children Project (family learning)
 - Bromley Refugee Day Centre (preparation for life and work and family learning)
 - London Borough of Bromley Cotmandene Community Resource Centre (health and care, ICT and preparation for life and work)
 - Direct Teaching (preparation for life and work)
 - Mencap (preparation for life and work)
 - Mind (preparation for life and work)
 - Mottingham Community Learning Shop (preparation for life and work and business)
 - Bromley Probation Service (preparation for life and work)

- Soul Food 4 All (hospitality and catering and business)
- Somali Well Women Project (ICT)
- Bromley Museum (family learning)
- St Philomena’s (RC) Primary School (family learning).

Type of provision	Number of learners in 2008/09
Young learner provision: 14-16 Further education (16-18)	19 part-time learners 37 part-time learners
Adult learner provision: Learning for qualifications Learning for social and personal development	2,640 part-time learners 7,607 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain	91 learners

Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
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Capacity to improve	Grade 2
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	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	3

Learning for qualifications	
	Grade
Modern foreign languages	2

Learning for social and personal development	
	Grade
Information and communication technology	2
Crafts, creative arts and design	2
Family learning	2

Overall effectiveness

- The overall effectiveness of provision is good. Leadership and management are good. They provide a secure basis for serving learners and the local community well, both now and into the future. A clear direction and strategy is successfully communicated to staff and inclusive management engages them in the development and review of the college's mission, vision and values. Quality improvement and self-assessment are good. Equality and diversity are satisfactorily promoted.
- Outcomes for learners are good. Achievement on courses for social and personal development is good. Success rates on courses for qualifications are satisfactory and have remained constant over the last two years. They are high in some areas but are too low in literacy and numeracy. Learners' skills and standards of work are good. Learners routinely make good progress, attain their learning goals and apply new skills in their daily lives. Learners enjoy their studies and are strongly motivated to develop the confidence and enthusiasm

to study further. They feel safe in the college and demonstrate safe working practices. The college's arrangements for safeguarding learners are satisfactory.

8. Teaching and learning are good. Tutors successfully motivate individuals and groups to learn. The use of information learning technology (ILT) has significantly improved since the previous inspection, although good practice by tutors is insufficiently widespread. Arrangements to provide information, advice and guidance to learners are well established and effective.
9. An extensive range of provision meets a wide variety of needs throughout the community and the college responds positively and flexibly to learners requests for new courses. Outstandingly effective partnerships provide learners with a rich variety of learning opportunities. Partnerships play a particularly strong role in enabling the college to reach learners from specific communities and other unrepresented groups.

Main findings

- Learners' achievement on courses for social and personal development is good. Both retention and achievement rates are high. Success rates on courses for qualifications are satisfactory and have remained constant over the last two years. Success rates on modern foreign languages courses are high, but too low in literacy and numeracy.
- Learners' skills and standards of work are good. Learners routinely make good progress, attain their learning goals and apply their new skills in their daily lives.
- Learners enjoy their studies and are rightly proud of what they achieve and what they can now do. They are strongly motivated by their studies and develop the confidence and enthusiasm to engage in further learning.
- Learners feel safe and demonstrate safe working practices. The college's arrangements for safeguarding learners are satisfactory. Government requirements are met, but some aspects of the infrastructure for safeguarding are more recent and less well established.
- Teaching and learning are good. Tutors are skilled at motivating and including individuals and groups to learn. The use of ILT has significantly improved since the previous inspection. However, good practice across the college is not yet sufficiently consistent.
- An extensive range of provision meets a wide variety of needs throughout the community. Curriculum design provides well for learners to progress from courses without qualifications to courses leading to qualifications. The college responds positively and flexibly to learners requests for new courses.
- The college's outstandingly effective partnerships provide learners with a rich variety of learning opportunities. These play a particularly strong role in enabling the college to reach learners from specific communities and other unrepresented groups.

- Arrangements to provide information, advice and guidance to learners are good. They are well established and effective. Staff consistently foster an ethos of care and support for learners.
- Good leadership and management provide the secure basis for serving learners and the local community well, both currently and into the future.
- Equality and diversity are satisfactorily promoted. The college's thorough review of its policies and procedures has established a sound basis for the further improvement of the promotion of equality and diversity.
- Arrangements for self-assessment and quality improvement are good. The comprehensive and rigorous quality assurance system is well used to bring about improvement. However, the evidence gained from observations of teaching and learning is insufficiently used for quality improvement.
- The college provides good value for money. Learner numbers have remained strong in a challenging financial climate. The quality and availability of resources are good and the college manages its resources well

What does the London Borough of Bromley need to do to improve further?

- Improve success rates for literacy and numeracy by ensuring that learners complete their courses and assessments.
- Reduce the amount of teaching that is no better than satisfactory by clearly identifying areas for improvement through observation. Plan the actions needed to remedy these and ensure rigorous monitoring and follow up.
- Continue to implement the well-conceived ILT training strategy to improve teaching and learning further.
- Improve the promotion of equality and diversity by the further implementation of the single equality scheme.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the quality and dedication of their knowledgeable and supportive tutors
- the conveniently located and accessible study venues
- the friendly and welcoming environment
- making friends with like-minded people
- the facilities for learning, which are very good
- the opportunity to gain many new skills to help in family life
- the good individual support from tutors and other BAEC staff
- the unthreatening venues, where they feel very safe
- the ready availability of computers

What learners would like to see improved:

- the availability of car parking
- enrolment arrangements, to ensure that there is always a place on their chosen course
- catering arrangements at sites with no cafeteria
- the sometimes unreliable heating.