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3 March 2017

Jo Evans  
Council of the Isles of Scilly  
Adult & Community Learning  
Town Hall  
St Mary's  
Isles of Scilly  
TR21 0LW

Dear Ms Evans

### **Short inspection of Lifelong Learning**

Following the short inspection on 15 February 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The inspection was the first short inspection carried out since Lifelong Learning of the Council of the Isles of Scilly was judged to be good in November 2012.

### **This provider continues to be good.**

You and your staff have successfully carried out the recommendations made at the previous inspection. Senior managers have undertaken an effective restructuring and merger of local services and maintained the quality of courses you provide for local people. Your small team works well together with your tutors. The team has a clear focus on ensuring that high-quality and relevant courses are provided to learners and potential learners as efficiently as possible.

Your arrangements to evaluate the quality of courses are well established and provide senior managers with a good review of what the service does well and the areas for improvement. An external partner provides suitable review and challenge to the arrangements.

You have built on the established links with local employers and businesses and maintained good links with the Islands' Partnership. These contacts enable managers to provide courses and training that local people and employers want. The success of working together has also contributed to you securing funding for courses from the European Social Fund that complement the funding you receive from the government.

Through your effective partnerships with providers on the mainland, for example a local college and university, learners on the islands have participated in well-

received courses that they would not otherwise have been able to undertake. These productive relationships have also enabled tutors to take part in relevant training and updating of their skills.

Learners continue to enjoy the courses you provide. They improve their confidence as a result of the support of tutors who encourage them to develop new skills on courses such as working with willow, creative writing or ballroom dancing. Many learners find the practical skills that they acquire on courses such as manual handling or first aid useful in running their businesses.

Learners receive good, clear guidance and advice from well-qualified tutors and managers before and during their courses. The geography of the islands and the availability of funding constrain what learners can do at the next level when they complete their courses.

Your managers and tutors pay careful attention to the well-being of learners, who benefit from the help they receive. Tutors reinforce the messages in leaflets and highly visible posters drawing attention to the availability of support for individuals experiencing isolation, mental health illness or domestic abuse.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Managers and tutors pay careful attention to safeguarding learners and to health and safety when planning and delivering courses. They have received regular and up-to-date training which includes the requirements of the 'Prevent' duty.

Learners feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe. Clear, visible and relevant displays reinforce important messages to learners about keeping themselves safe and explaining where they can get help if they need it.

### **Inspection findings**

We agreed on six key lines of enquiry, including safeguarding of learners, and the following are the inspection findings from the other five lines of enquiry.

- A senior elected member provides good support and challenge to the managers. Senior managers of the council maintain a close overview of the performance of the new team following the restructuring in 2014/15. They ensure accountability through regular meetings, briefings and a monthly review of the risk register.
- Learners' access to information learning technology has improved since the previous inspection.
- Learners have a clear understanding of the progress they have made towards completing their qualification as a result of tutors redesigning the system on which their progress is recorded. Tutors focus more accurately on assessing learners' knowledge and skills and learners gain a clearer and more accurate picture of what they have achieved. However, tutors do not systematically record learners' views when they complete their courses.

- Local people and businesses have a good awareness of the courses and support the service provides as a result of the improved use of social media and advertising and recommendations through word of mouth. Managers and tutors organise courses thoughtfully and imaginatively in convenient locations on the islands and at times to suit learners, reducing potential obstacles to participation.
- During family learning courses, tutors help learners to improve their English and mathematics skills by giving good individual support to each learner. Tutors design very appropriate lessons and use good examples based on sound knowledge of the backgrounds of the learners, linked to local resources.
- In recreational and leisure courses, tutors creatively incorporate highly appropriate activities that build learners' confidence in numeracy. Tutors' expertise in identifying opportunities to improve the English skills and expertise of learners is not as well developed.
- Learners improve their mathematical skills during their courses; for example, in sewing classes and painting lessons, learners calculate the quantities of material needed or the relative volumes and angles of objects, such as pine trees or fruits.
- Tutors improve their teaching following lesson observations. Feedback to tutors from observations provides clear, constructive and helpful advice to tutors on what they do well and how they can improve.
- Tutors benefit from the training, support and guidance provided by the partnership arrangements with a large provider on the mainland. Appraisals are regular, recognise good practice and motivate tutors.

### **Next steps for the provider**

Senior managers should ensure that:

- tutors record the information on learners' achievements and their comments more systematically when learners complete their courses to ensure that improvements for future courses can be made as a result of the feedback
- tutors improve learners' English skills on recreational courses, based on each learner's competence and need in each subject.

I am copying this letter to the Skills Funding Agency. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Peter Green  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one Ofsted Inspector were assisted by the Council of the Isles of Scilly's Officer for Learning and Library as nominee. We met with you, the elected member responsible for the service, managers, tutors and learners. We observed learning. We scrutinised key strategic and policy documents, including those relating to self-assessment, quality assurance, safeguarding and the service's performance. We analysed information on learners' achievements. We also analysed feedback from telephone calls to employers and from learners, gathered during the inspection and from Ofsted's online questionnaires.