

# **REPORT ON ADULT AND COMMUNITY LEARNING IN WALTHAMSTOW FOR THE WALTHAMSTOW WEST COMMUNITY COUNCIL**

## **Background**

CLaSS is the Council's direct provider of adult and community learning and work based learning for young people in Waltham Forest. The service is borough wide operating from CLaSS' Council owned buildings and also from a range of community venues, school and halls, which are rented, leased or used through partnership arrangements. The range of venues and the programme offered is reviewed regularly and changes made in response to national and local priorities. In 2004/5 there were over 20,000 enrolments and 13,000 learners. The 2004/5 brochure contained 1103 courses and in 2005/6 there are 1536. CLaSS draws down the majority of its funding from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) but is also supported by Waltham Forest Council. The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) inspected CLaSS in May 2004 with a good report, although there were negative comments about the suitability of some of the accommodation.

## **What is CLaSS running in Walthamstow from September 2005?**

In Walthamstow there are courses planned for Chestnuts House, Harmony Hall, the Asian Centre, Whittingham School, Markhouse Centre, the Fashion Design Centre, Lloyd Park Centre, Chapel end Centre, City Learning Centre, Nubian Minds Bookshop, Priory Court Community Centre, William Morris Centre and the Disability Resource Centre. There are 566 courses at these venues in the new brochure, an increase on last year. More provision is added during the year to respond to new needs.

Acting, drama, singing, dance and keep fit courses are moving to Harmony Hall, where there will also be: computers for the terrified, E-Citizen, animation using MX flash, Excel, spreadsheets, web page design, back to work IT and business taster, family work out to music and guitar. Pattern cutting using CAD at the Fashion Design Centre in Sutherland Road offers industry standard equipment and high quality teaching to develop skills for work on your doorstep.

The Walthamstow offer also includes: Arabic, art, a range of GCSEs and A levels, counselling, creative writing, beauty and make up, European Computer Driving licence, English, maths, ESOL, accredited fashion courses, first aid at work, a wide range of computer courses, interpreting, massage, reflexology, crafts, parenting, and sewing.

## **Greenleaf Road**

Greenleaf Road is not a Council owned building. It is leased. There are 6 general classrooms, 2 specialist classrooms and a hall. The hall and one classroom are on the ground floor. The remainder and the café are upstairs and there is no lift. The general classrooms are not big enough to enable computer access to aid learning.

Although many students have enjoyed their learning at Greenleaf Road over the years there are also those who have been prevented from joining courses because of the poor physical access. It is also not very near to public transport and there are no car parking facilities.

## **The decision to move**

The plan to move CLaSS into the Queen's Road Education Centre site last year, amalgamating the Greenleaf Road and Chestnuts House provision did not go ahead as Education remained on the site. The prospectus for 2004/5 reflected the move with no classes there from January 2005.

The decision to move from Greenleaf Road is operational, and based on the following factors:

- Maintaining or increasing the level of classes in the Walthamstow
- Access at Greenleaf Road is very poor and does not meet the requirements of the DDA. As a service CLaSS is expected to make reasonable adjustments and reviewing the location of provision is part of that process. It would not be good value for money to make the physical adjustments required to a building that the Council does not own.
- Partnership with Harmony Hall has led to the development of provision on that site, which is very near to Greenleaf Road. There are 2 good halls. A successful joint project over the last year has enabled the installation of computers and also at the Asian Centre in Walthamstow.
- Increased accommodation at Chestnuts House due to other site users withdrawing.
- More ground floor accommodation at Chestnuts House.
- Improved access to public transport and car parking facilities on site.
- The provision of an art room and dark room at Chestnuts House to maintain art and photography courses in Walthamstow.
- Ensuring that resources for the continued delivery of provision are maximised.
- The continued use of Harmony Hall to accommodate classes needing hall space.

Clearly these types of decisions are not easy. CLaSS is very committed to local provision and meeting the educational and skills needs of residents. Funding of adult learning is increasingly tied to national priorities, but we try hard to manage this balancing act. Outreach work and the views of learners are used to inform the service. CLaSS was praised by inspectors for its work to widen participation in learning.

Current learners are invited to speak to administrative staff if they have any problems in getting to new venues and we will do all we can to help. There is a book for recording these queries and issues. The teaching staff are also there to support learners. We will do all we can to ensure a smooth transfer. The best way of safeguarding your learning is to sign up for next year now!