

# Skills and Learning: Bournemouth and Poole

## Inspection report

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## Information about the provider

1. Skills and Learning: Bournemouth and Poole (Skills and Learning) is the merged provision of two previously separate adult and community learning providers: Poole Adult Learning (Borough of Poole) and Bournemouth Adult Learning (Bournemouth Borough Council). The two entities were formally merged with effect from August 2011 and the delivery of courses began in September 2011. A central management and administration team operates from a base in Poole, headed by a principal learning manager. A joint managing board includes a representative from each borough.
2. Courses are offered from pre-entry level to advanced levels in 15 of 18 subject areas. Most courses are offered in the principal centres in Bournemouth and Poole, with others delivered in over 100 venues including libraries, museums, children's centres, local businesses, community centres, churches, a bowling and golf centre and several schools.
3. Of just under 3,500 current enrolments, 47% are undertaking programmes for personal and community development, neighbourhood or family learning. The remainder are undertaking learning for qualifications courses, with around 60% of these following programmes in literacy, numeracy or English for speakers of other languages.
4. The combined population of Bournemouth and Poole is just over 310,000. The percentage of the population from a minority ethnic heritage is around 3.5%. In 2009/10 the percentage of young people gaining five GCSEs at A\* to C including English and mathematics was 55% in Poole and 56.5% in Bournemouth, compared to the national rate of 53.4%.
5. In Poole 77% of working age adults are in employment, with 69% in Bournemouth, compared to 70% nationally (2010/11 data). In Poole, 67.5% are qualified to National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at level 2 and above, with 69.4% in Bournemouth, compared to 67.3% nationally. In the respective areas, 8% and 7% of adults have no qualifications, compared to 11.3% nationally. The percentage claiming jobseeker's allowance in Poole is 2.4% and 3.6% in Bournemouth, compared to 4% nationally.
6. Skills and Learning does not provide learning programmes on behalf of other providers. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the provider:
  - Pathways for Success (construction)
  - EDAS (provision for recovering addicts)
  - W & P Training (care training centre)
  - Best Training (apprentice provision in business and administration, customer service, team leading)
  - Prince's Trust (teamwork and community skills).

<b>Type of provision</b>	<b>Number of learners in 2010/11</b>
<p><b>Provision for young learners:</b> Further Education (16 to 18)</p>	<p>150 part-time learners</p>
<p><b>Provision for adult learners:</b> Learning for qualifications Learning for social and personal development</p>	<p>2218 part-time learners 2997 part-time learners</p>
<p><b>Employer provision (Learning for qualifications for employment):</b> Train to Gain Apprenticeships</p>	<p>190 learners 15 apprentices</p>

## Summary report

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
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<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
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	<b>Grade</b>
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2

<b>Learning for qualifications</b>	
	<b>Grade</b>
Health and social care	2
Hairdressing and beauty therapy	2
Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages	2
<b>Learning for social and personal development</b>	
	<b>Grade</b>
Family Learning	2

## Overall effectiveness

- Skills and Learning is a good provider of adult and community learning. All of the provision inspected and graded was good and has improved since the joint working arrangements and merger were implemented in 2010 and 2011 respectively. When last inspected as separate entities in 2008, each provider was previously judged satisfactory overall. Learners' success rates have improved progressively since that time and many now exceed national rates,

although some disparity remains between the extents of improvement in the two local authority areas. Retention rates have improved significantly since the last inspection and have been maintained at a very high level during the merger. Learners make good progress on their courses, and on to successive courses, and develop good practical and theoretical skills and greater self-confidence.

8. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Slightly under half of the teaching sessions observed by inspectors were graded good and a few were outstanding. Particularly good teaching was seen in numeracy classes. None of the sessions inspectors observed was inadequate.
9. Overall, the majority of the better teaching was lively, informative and fun; learners were enjoying their lessons and learning well. The standard of work observed in classes was generally good. Tutors were not using personal learning plans consistently well to plan individual learning. The range of courses offered is extensive, and the service is successfully attracting learners from under-represented groups and those who have been resistant to learning. Care, guidance and support are good.
10. Leadership and management have been very effective, particularly since the merger, at identifying what needs to be done to improve the provision, and in carrying out appropriate actions. Staff are experienced and well qualified. Safeguarding arrangements are good. The arrangements for the promotion of equality and diversity are also good, although neither aspect is yet sufficiently embedded within all lesson plans.

## Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are good overall. On courses for personal and social development, including family and neighbourhood learning, success rates are very good. Success rates for courses leading to qualifications have improved progressively over time, with many exceeding national rates, and are now satisfactory overall. In year, the success rates are good. Current retention rates are very good and have improved progressively over time.
- Learners are enthusiastic and highly motivated. They develop and apply useful practical skills underpinned by sound theoretical knowledge. They make good progress and many move on to higher level or complementary courses. Numeracy, literacy and language learners develop their skills well within a short period. Learners develop good employability skills; for example, many hairdressing and complementary therapy learners gain employment.
- Teaching and learning are good. Initial assessment is timely and effective. A high proportion of lessons observed by inspectors were good or better. In the better sessions learners were engaged in challenging and lively activities, skilfully directed by tutors, teaching was carefully paced and included a range of different and enjoyable learning activities. Tutors used stimulating resources

well to support learning. Tutors' use of personal learning plans is variable and their target setting is sometimes vague.

- The range of provision meets the needs of learners well. A good range of courses is offered from pre-entry entry to advanced levels, with good opportunities for progression between some of them. Other courses are complementary and together provide a balanced offering. Tutors respond sympathetically and constructively to learners' needs. Hairdressing is only available at the main Poole learning centre, restricting the number of learners who can access the course.
- Partnership working is good. A wide range of partnerships has been developed by Skills and Learning locally and regionally. The approach to partnership working demonstrably reflects a strong commitment toward supporting local communities and meeting the needs of a broad range of existing and potential learner groups.
- Care, guidance and support are good. Tutors provide good academic and pastoral support in the classroom. Specialist, trained staff provide very effective support for specific learning needs such as dyslexia.
- Leadership and management are good. The management of change has been effective and the provision is operating effectively as a single entity. Good quality data are analysed well by senior and curriculum managers to manage and monitor performance and gauge progress towards targets. The service has progressively improved success and retention rates, although some historical differentials remain between the two local authority areas.
- The practice of governance is satisfactory. However, the governing board does not currently include representatives from either the local community or local employers.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good and given a high priority within Skills and Learning. Training programmes for staff have been effective. Skills and Learning has developed productive links with a wide range of support agencies. Learners are confident about reporting concerns to tutors and designated staff and appropriate action has been taken by them with the high number of reported safeguarding cases. Learners' safety concerns have been addressed promptly by Skills and Learning.
- The arrangements for the promotion of equality and diversity are good, including successful programmes engaging and supporting learners from under-represented groups. Differences in the success rates of different learner groups have been progressively reduced. Equality and diversity are insufficiently embedded in all areas of the curriculum.
- The arrangements for quality improvement, including self-assessment and improvement action planning, are very effective. Improvement planning is very closely linked to areas for improvement identified through formal evaluation and day-to-day review. The system for observing teaching and learning is accurate and thorough. The self-assessment process has taken note of staff and stakeholders' views. Self-assessment is comprehensive and accurate.

- Skills and Learning provides good value for money. The service has been successfully reorganised, rationalised and financial and operating efficiencies have been gained. Most learners' outcomes have improved to at least national rates. Resources and premises are used well. Investment in premises in new locations is extending the geographical reach of the service.

### **What does Skills and Learning need to do to improve further?**

- Improve success rates on all courses and eliminate historical differences in performance between the two original providers by sharing and promoting good teaching and learning practice across all sites.
- Increase community and employer representation at board level to harness these stakeholders' specialist skills and knowledge.
- Devise and implement a strategy to embed equality and diversity consistently and meaningfully in all curriculum subject areas.

### **Summary of the views of learners as confirmed by inspectors**

#### **What learners like:**

- the teachers - who are very patient, skilful and helpful
- the excellent learning support
- very enjoyable courses which build skills and confidence
- the very calm classroom atmosphere
- the well maintained and clean premises
- extremely helpful administrative staff, especially the receptionists.

#### **What learners would like to see improved:**

- more time for one-to-one attention
- reducing the amount of paperwork which has to be filled out at the beginning of short courses
- improving the quality of some of the teaching rooms, particularly the cold, hard floor in the room used for over-50s yoga
- a greater range of clients available for hairdressing.

### **Summary of the views of partners as confirmed by inspectors**

#### **What partners like:**

- very beneficial meetings with work-based learning assessors
- very responsive partnership working.

#### **What partners would like to see improved:**

- prompt induction for learners in all instances.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

**Grade 2**

11. Skills and Learning has a good capacity to improve. When last inspected in 2008 as separate entities, each provider was judged satisfactory overall. The merged provision has since improved and is judged good overall. Improvement action planning is well focused and effective. A new vision, mission, values and key improvement targets have been developed collaboratively and implemented successfully.
12. Success rates for the majority of learners have improved progressively to at least national rates, particularly since joint working arrangements were introduced in 2010 and further following the full merger in the summer of 2011. Retention rates have improved significantly and are now good.
13. Some historical differences in success rates remain between the two authorities' originally separate provisions. Skills and Learning is now actively and effectively pursuing a strategy for progressive improvement in teaching and learning designed to raise all success rates to at least national and higher levels.
14. Skills and Learning is achieving a series of challenging key improvement targets. Progress towards achieving these targets is closely monitored using accurate data. The range and analysis of these data have been systematically improved since 2008/9. The arrangements for quality improvement are well structured and effective, and include thorough performance monitoring and intervention arrangements. The effectiveness of improvement actions is reviewed routinely by senior managers, and additional or alternate actions taken when required. Skills and Learning sought the views of users and staff which have been incorporated in quality reviews and improvement plans, and have led directly to change. Self-assessment is thorough and accurate, although the current self-assessment report is made unnecessarily long through the inclusion of comparative detailed reviews of the past performance of the two original providers.

### Outcomes for learners

**Grade 2**

15. Learners' success rates on family, community and neighbourhood learning courses are consistently very high, routinely close to 100%. Retention rates are now very good on all courses. The success rates for courses leading to qualifications have improved, and for the majority of learners have reached or exceed national rates.
16. However, the overall judgement on success rates including learning for qualifications courses is that they are satisfactory overall. Success rates for long courses at entry and foundation levels, which involve the majority of Skills and Learning's learners, are mostly better than national averages, but relatively low on long intermediate-level courses. Success rates for shorter courses are generally at the national average. Success rates for learners with learning



difficulties and/or disabilities are good, with good progression to other courses or projects. Pass rates and grades achieved on GCSE courses are also generally good. Success rates for the small number of Train to Gain learners are also good, but still too few learners complete within their planned timescale.

17. Since the merger in 2011, the success rate on short courses completed to date is good. The performance of different groups is now broadly equal and past differences in performance between men and women and some minority ethnic groups have been reduced successfully by Skills and Learning. Raising performance to overcome persisting historical differences in success rates between the two local authority areas is a priority improvement action. Skills and Learning is now actively and effectively pursuing a strategy for raising all success rates to at least national and higher levels.
18. Learners are enthusiastic and highly motivated. They make good progress during their courses and many progress to higher level or complementary courses. Numeracy learners make particularly good progress. Learners on literacy, numeracy and language courses develop good confidence and employability skills, including curriculum vitae writing. These learners are able to participate more fully in their children's school work and in community roles. Learners on family or community learning courses grow in self-confidence and gain from the emotional support developed in the course of their learning. Many older learners develop confidence in the use of personal computers.
19. On vocational courses learners develop good practical skills which build on sound theoretical knowledge. The standard of work in business administration and computerised accounting is good. The drawing and painting skills of arts learners are often very good. Learners in complementary health courses develop good clinical skills combined with good interpersonal skills. Many complementary health and hairdressing learners progress to further learning or employment. The Train to Gain provision enables learners to gain a qualification which affords them with increased job security and opportunities for promotion.
20. Skills and Learning puts great emphasis on safe working practice. Learners feel safe and have a good awareness of health and safety issues. All learners on the complementary health and hairdressing courses demonstrated safe working practice in their practical sessions, and were suitably dressed. Learners on counselling courses are reminded about how to handle disclosure issues.

## **The quality of provision**

## **Grade 2**

21. Around two thirds of the sessions observed by inspectors were graded good or better, of which just over 10% were outstanding. None was inadequate. The proportion of good teaching seen by inspectors is the same as that identified through Skills and Learning's thorough and developmental process for formally observing teaching and learning. Teaching staff are generally well qualified; 97% have a teaching qualification, of whom just over 50% hold a higher level qualification.

22. In the better sessions observed, teaching was stimulating and enjoyable throughout. Teachers used a range of teaching techniques well to engage learners, and used well-researched resources as good illustrations and prompts for discussion. The use of questioning to establish the extent of, or reinforce, learning was good. In many of the sessions learners were developing their skills progressively particularly in literacy and numeracy. Teaching for numeracy learners made very good use of everyday examples and references to put learning in context. In family and community learning sessions, teachers were patient and positive throughout, providing good individual support where needed.
23. Hairdressing teaching was briskly paced and linked well to industrial practice. Teaching in art classes was conducted at a professional level and involved some very good teaching resources. Good use was made of interactive whiteboards. The learning resources for computerised accounting were particularly good.
24. Teaching in less effective sessions was often slow paced, or involved an insufficient range of stimulating and interesting activities to meet individual learner needs. Tutors' effective use of personal learning plans to plan learning varied across the provision; timescales in target setting were sometimes imprecise and objectives vague.
25. The range of provision meets the needs of learners well. Courses are offered from pre-entry entry to advanced levels, although the majority are at entry and beginner levels. Good opportunities are available for progression between courses. For example, family and community learning courses are carefully designed to promote and facilitate access to successive levels of learning. Courses are offered at a number of different sites and times to match learners' work schedules and lifestyles. The range of complementary therapy courses forms a balanced therapeutic package of learning. Hairdressing is only available at the main Poole learning centre, restricting the number of learners who can access the course.
26. Partnership working is a strong feature of Skills and Learning's provision and includes local authorities, voluntary sector, schools, neighbourhood centres and employers. Skills and Learning makes intelligent use of a variety of funding streams to develop and fund its programmes. It has successfully widened participation, including attracting learners from disadvantaged areas. Partnerships with schools and children's centres have encouraged parents to engage in learning to better support their children's learning. Some partnerships provide access to learning courses for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, whilst others provide opportunities for recovering addicts to regain self-esteem and independence. A new learning adviser post has established good relationships with Jobcentres and the Citizen's Advice centre, increasing referrals to courses that improve employability skills. The approach to partnership working demonstrably reflects a strong commitment toward supporting local communities and meeting the needs of a broad range of learner groups.

27. Care, guidance and support are good. Individual learner profiles are used well by tutors to personalise learning in the classroom and provide tailored support. Tutors provide good personal support, referring learners to additional support where needed. Trained staff provide very effective support for dyslexia and other identified learning needs.

## Leadership and management

## Grade 2

28. The service is led and managed well. A new vision, values and mission have been formulated collaboratively and clearly communicated to staff. Various capacity and organisational issues relating to joint working and the subsequent merger have arisen over the past two years but these have been resolved well or are being actively addressed. The management of change, overall, has been good and the provision is now operating very effectively as a single entity. The quality of service delivery has improved since the previous inspection, particularly success and retention rates, although some differences remain between the two local authority areas. The range of data has been developed and data are now used particularly well to manage and monitor all aspects of the provision. Performance management and monitoring are very sound. Whilst a number of improvement aspects remain work in progress, most appear to be advancing well towards resolution.
29. Operational management and overall administration are very sound. The service is well organised on a day-to-day basis, although the arrangements for providing cover for any tutor's absence are not always wholly effective in the more remote locations. The quality of communications within the merged service is good. Staff have a good understanding of their own and others' performance and the progress being made by the service. They are generally very supportive of the service as a merged entity. Teaching staff are well qualified and have good access to opportunities for professional development.
30. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is a small group comprising representatives from each local authority and the head of service. It plays an effective oversight and link role between the authorities and their respective service strands. At present no representatives are on the board from the local communities or employers, although a new model of governance is being considered which will have wider representation.
31. Safeguarding arrangements are good and are given a high priority. Staff undergo enhanced Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks on appointment and at three-yearly intervals thereafter. All staff and volunteers have undertaken appropriate levels of safeguarding training, with two-yearly updates. Extensive working links with a wide range of support agencies have been developed. Safeguarding policies and procedures are comprehensive and implemented well. Staff are sufficiently well informed about what to do when safeguarding issues arise. Learners' awareness of safeguarding is good and is reinforced through the learner handbook and posters in centres. The three designated safeguarding staff are well known to learners. Learners are confident about

reporting concerns and appropriate action has been taken in response to reported safeguarding cases. Thorough records are kept of each case. Learners are risk assessed at the onset of courses and appropriate support is put in place where required. E-safety posters, prominently displayed near computers, were developed in conjunction with learners. Learners' safety concerns, such as poor lighting in remote centres, have been addressed. A recent project successfully increased safeguarding knowledge amongst a vulnerable group of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Learners in all practical classes observed were working safely.

32. The arrangements for the promotion of equality and diversity are good. Skills and Learning practises a culture of respect, which is communicated well to learners during induction. Particularly productive strategies are engaging learners from under-represented, minority and hard-to-reach groups. The involvement of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and learners from a minority ethnic heritage each comprise 18%, significantly higher than in the local population. Differences in success and retention rates between groups of learners have been progressively reduced. Learners are very well supported individually. Regular and thorough staff training takes place in equality and diversity and during induction. Staff have a good awareness of equality and diversity issues. Learners' understanding of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The service recognises, and is addressing through additional staff training, the need to further improve the extent to which equality and diversity are embedded within the curriculum in some subject areas.
33. Skills and Learning's engagement with users to support and promote improvement is satisfactory. The service sought the views of a wide range of stakeholders, staff and employers in the course of the merger and a number of improvements were introduced. A good proportion of learners contribute their views through formal annual surveys. Attempts to create a broad-based learner forum have so far not been successful.
34. The arrangements for quality improvement, including self-assessment and improvement action planning are good. A wide range of data are now generated and used well. Quality improvement planning is linked very closely to addressing areas for improvement identified as part of day-to-day issues and formal evaluation. The system for observing teaching and learning is accurate and thorough; written judgements are detailed and clearly support the grades awarded. The outcomes are used well to support tutors' professional development. The self-assessment process is inclusive and comprehensive. The self-assessment report is extremely detailed and appropriately evaluative, but it dwells too much on detailing historical differences in service performance between the two separate authorities compared with an assessment of the strengths and areas for improvement of the merged service. Good efforts are being made to ensure that self-assessment becomes a continuous rather than an annual process.

35. Skills and Learning provides good value for money. It has successfully reorganised and rationalised two services into one effective functional entity, in the process supporting a level of service which might otherwise have been reduced by lower government grants. Efficiencies include rationalisation of staffing, joint curriculum planning, improved communications, harmonisation of the curriculum and awarding bodies and management arrangements. Learners' outcomes have improved over the past two years. Retention rates have improved significantly during the past year. Resources and premises are used well, although a lack of computers in some mathematics classes remains. New investment has been agreed for additional premises to increase further the reach of the service.

**Other learning for qualifications provision considered as part of the main findings but not separately graded: Business Administration; Arts, Media and Publishing.**

## Health and social care

## Grade 2

### Context

36. Currently 70 learners, mainly women, follow health, public services and care courses leading to qualifications. Skills and Learning currently offers six complementary health courses at four sites in Bournemouth and Poole in reflexology, aromatherapy and different types of massage. All learners complete a course in anatomy, physiology and pathology prior to joining a course. Courses typically last between 7 and 26 weeks.

### Key findings

- Success rates are broadly satisfactory. Retention and attendance rates are good. Progression routes are well signposted, with many learners progressing to higher level courses or further extending their skills. On some courses the success rates are good, but on others they have declined.
- Learners develop good professional skills. They show a good understanding of the theory behind therapeutic practice. They develop good clinical skills as well as developing good interpersonal skills to engage effectively with clients. They gain confidence in applying techniques as well as ensuring the safety and comfort of the clients.
- Learners feel safe and have a very good understanding of safe working practice. They all wear appropriate clothing, ensure that all equipment is used properly and that the treatment areas are clean and safe. They ensure that high standards of hygiene are maintained.
- Teaching and learning are generally good. Tutors are knowledgeable and experienced. They are enthusiastic and make good use of questioning in practical sessions to check learners' understanding. They use resources well to complement their teaching and in the sessions observed challenged learners appropriately. Some teaching lacked focus and group discussions were not always sufficiently well managed.
- The needs and interests of learners are met satisfactorily by the range of courses on offer. The courses complement each other to form a balanced therapeutic package of learning and also provide packages which embrace a broader spectrum of learning. Courses are available at different locations and at different times of the day to suit learners' needs. Courses are sometimes offered on demand due to the varied skills of the tutors.
- Learners receive very good individual care and support from tutors. One-to-one support for learners in classes is very good. Tutors are particularly good at supporting learners' individual needs.
- Leadership and management are good. Leaders offer clear guidance and the recent merger of the two services has been managed well. The number of courses has been maintained and the delivery of the provision is now more

efficient, with fewer tutors. The operational management of the provision is good with effective communication and clear lines of accountability.

- Quality improvement arrangements are good. Course documentation is of a high standard and most schemes of work and lesson plans are detailed and informative. Records of learner achievement are thorough and enable learners and tutors to be clear about their progress and what they need to do next. All risk assessments and observations of teaching and learning have been completed and are up to date, although the proportion of good or better sessions needs to increase.
- The promotion of safeguarding is good. Tutors and learners have a good understanding of safeguarding issues. Each tutor file contains a detailed flowchart indicating appropriate courses of action for safeguarding issues. Tutors have all received appropriate training. A safeguarding incident within this area had been managed well.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Tutors explore the different cultural implications of the application of therapeutic techniques. Learners' understanding of equality and diversity issues is satisfactory. Men and learners from minority ethnic groups are under represented.
- Skills and Learning engages satisfactorily with users to support and improve the provision. Learners' views are sought after each course. Feedback from learners is used to plan and design additional courses as well as to improve the facilities at some sites. More height adjustable couches were purchased for use in massage at the request of learners.
- Skills and Learning uses resources satisfactorily. Classroom accommodation is generally fit for purpose. Teaching resources are generally good and used to good effect by tutors. The rationalisation of resources during the recent merger was managed well to improve efficiency while maintaining the quality of the provision. Skills and Learning has responded to complementary health learners' concerns about the space available for teaching and learning by using larger rooms to accommodate growing class sizes.

### **What does Skills and Learning need to do to improve further?**

- Further promote and share good practice across different learning sites in order to increase the success rates for all courses.
- Through focused observation of teaching and learning and the sharing of good practice, increase the proportion of good teaching.

## **Hairdressing and beauty therapy**

**Grade 2**

### **Context**

37. Skills and Learning offers hairdressing and beauty therapy programmes from foundation to intermediate levels at the main Poole centre. Currently, 65 learners are on part-time programmes. All are adult learners. Of these, 27 are on beauty programmes and 37 on hairdressing programmes. Men account for four of the total learners. Longer courses are delivered as full day provision or across two evenings. All the provision is accredited.

### Key findings

- Success rates improved by 36 percentage points between 2009/10 and 2010/11 and are now high, having previously been below the national average. Progress in achieving individual units of qualifications is good and almost all learners who complete the course achieve successfully.
- Learners make good progress in developing their skills and enjoy their learning. The standard of learners' practical work is at least satisfactory and often good. Learners display particularly good customer service skills in attending to the needs of clients. Beauty learners progress to other related qualifications which increase their employment prospects.
- All learners feel safe. They demonstrate particularly good attention to health and safety, both in protecting themselves and their clients by using personal protective equipment and in adhering to high standards of hygiene. They maintain clean and clear working areas and sterilise tools as required. The personal presentation of beauty learners meets industry requirements.
- Teaching and learning are good. Teaching is briskly paced with a range of different learning activities and checks linked to industrial practice which benefits learners. Tutors use demonstration well in developing learners' practical skills. All learners are constantly engaged, quickly moving onto other tasks when they finish with a client. Small group sizes ensure prompt checking of practical work.
- Tutors use information and learning technology well to illustrate and promote learning; learners benefit from good-quality teaching resources in general. Assessment is timely and fair. Feedback to learners by tutors is constructive, helping improve their performance. Portfolios are well evidenced with photographs of learners' work demonstrating the standards achieved. Internal verification meets awarding body standards.
- The range of provision is satisfactory. In beauty, learners can take courses that give them a breadth of therapeutic skills including beauty and complementary therapies. However, in hairdressing no advanced level courses, providing a progression option for learners, are currently available. Learners undertake useful work experience as part of their courses and all hair and beauty tutors are working practitioners. No hairdressing provision is currently available in Bournemouth.
- Support for learners is good. Individual profiles are developed following initial assessment by induction staff to identify learner needs. Learners with literacy, numeracy or language needs are sometimes referred for initial support before starting their course. Staff are flexible on attendance, particularly



involving child care arrangements. Learners receive high levels of individual support and information about employment and progression routes, helping them achieve their potential.

- Programme management is very effective and high standards are promoted by managers. Tutors are supported comprehensively, and new staff are mentored through their probationary period. Staff feel well informed, attending monthly curriculum meetings and larger termly staff meetings. Good appraisal and staff development are in place. Data are used effectively to monitor and set targets.
- The promotion of safeguarding is good. Learners and staff have a good understanding of safeguarding and all staff have clear guidance on what to do if safeguarding issues arise. Learners are clear on who to approach should help be required. Attention to safe working practices is highly promoted by staff and evidenced in the work of learners.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of these aspects and some opportunities are taken to promote it further in the curriculum. Few male learners enrol on courses.
- Actions to improve outcomes for learners are very effective. Learners' views are sought and acted upon throughout the year. Results are analysed to inform improvements, such as the purchase of a new steamer for use in hairdressing.
- Staff contribute their views to the self-assessment process and the resulting report is largely accurate. The quality assurance and improvement of teaching delivery through observations are good.
- Value for money is good. A high number of learners achieve their qualifications and develop skills that help them gain employment. Resources are of a good standard and are used effectively with a suitable emphasis on preventing waste in practical and theory teaching.

### **What does Skills and Learning need to do to improve further?**

- Develop new hair and beauty provision in Bournemouth to increase the provision available.
- Develop an advanced level route for learners in hairdressing, either through Skills and Learning's own provision or in collaboration with other providers.

## Context

38. Skills and Learning offers literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages courses from entry to intermediate levels in 20 locations across Bournemouth and Poole. Around 70% of learners are on entry and foundation level courses. Currently, 815 learners are on programmes. Adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are 31% of the total. Women account for 62% of learners and 7% are from a minority ethnic heritage.

## Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Current attendance for 2011/12 is good, at 85%, and has improved compared to 2010/11. Retention rates have further improved in 2011/12 to 95%. Pass rates to date for this academic year are very good and average 86%. Learners progress well from entry level to GCSE and often transfer to further learning and employment. Learners feel safe.
- Learners' success rates are satisfactory. In 2010/11, around 45% of all learners' success rates were good or outstanding and 40% were satisfactory. However, a year-on-year improvement in success rates has been uneven. For example, success rates for learners on long foundation level courses in literacy and numeracy rose well to at, or above, the national averages in Poole and Bournemouth, but were respectively high and low on entry level courses. Success rates on intermediate level courses, affecting a relatively small number of learners, were a similarly mixed picture.
- Learners' confidence and employability skills improve well as learners quickly develop their literacy, numeracy and language skills. Learners on numeracy courses make particularly good progress. Learners are enjoying their learning. They develop useful employability skills in specially-organised curriculum vitae writing courses. Learners enrich their social and working lives as a result of the skills they gain and their experiences of learning.
- Teaching and learning are good. Class sizes are small, providing good opportunities for individual support and attention. In the better sessions observed by inspectors, learners were engaged in challenging and lively activities, skilfully directed by tutors. In numeracy sessions they learnt measurement and conversion of fractions successfully using relevant everyday examples. In less successful sessions the pace of learning was sometimes too slow or activities were not interesting or stimulating enough to engage all learners.
- Initial assessment effectively identifies additional learning needs. The outcomes of further effective diagnostic assessment then inform the learners' personal learning plan. Work is set and marked constructively and promptly with frequent opportunities to check learning through on-line testing. Most tutors use personal learning plans (PLPs) well to plan and direct learning, but some do not always see the benefit of PLPs for learners.
- Learning resources are good and used well. Learners have good access to computers and the internet and find the well-designed mathematics resources on the virtual learning environment particularly useful. Most rooms are pleasant

to work in, with furniture which can be used flexibly to accommodate group work. Many tutors use the interactive whiteboards well for presentations.

- The range of provision meets the needs of learners well. Courses provide for progression and learners can access courses at local sites and times to suit their lifestyles. Partnership arrangements are good and extend the range of learning options available to learners. A learning adviser has attended sessions at Jobcentre Plus agencies in Poole, Bournemouth and Winton. This has resulted in over 100 adults taking initial English and mathematics skills assessments and then enrolling onto a suitable training programme.
- Tutors are sensitive to learners' needs and provide good personal support, referring them to the social inclusion officer or outside agencies when needed. Tutors give excellent one-to-one tutorial support. Trained volunteers provide very good learning support in lessons. Specialist staff provide good support for dyslexia and other identified needs. A range of adaptive equipment is used for learners with auditory or visual impairment.
- Operational management is good. Communications and team working are good. Managers monitor staff performance targets closely and new tutors are supported well. Appraisals provide clear direction and targets for improvement. Staff have good access to useful professional development. Many tutors have progressed from a volunteer role. Arrangements for covering staff absence are not always well managed in more remote locations.
- Safeguarding and health and safety are promoted well. Good safeguarding guidance is provided by Skills and Learning tutors and staff. Safeguarding requirements are routinely incorporated into session plan templates and hence into the context of lessons. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Staff receive regular updating and promote aspects well during learner induction. Course information sheets use language which is inappropriate for the target group.
- Learners' feedback informs quality improvement and course reviews inform learners of previous changes made as a direct response to their comments. Curriculum planning takes learners' views into account, for example the teaching assistant courses are now provided in the evening and a language for mathematics ESOL course was set up for parents who identified this as a need.
- The outcomes of formal observations of teaching and learning are improving the standard of teaching and learning but have yet to improve all success rates. Schemes and lesson plans have been improved and harmonised across sites. The self-assessment process includes contributions from staff and stakeholders, but not all staff are clear about the main areas for improvement

**What does Skills and Learning need to do to improve further?**

- Improve the success rates for all courses by ensuring that good teaching and learning practice, including tutor use of personal learning plans to effectively monitor progress, is shared widely and effectively between all sites and tutors.
- Simplify course information sheets to ensure that all learners are able to understand the course content and feel encouraged to join the courses.

**Other learning for social and personal development provision considered as part of the main findings but not separately graded: Community Learning.**

## Family Learning

## Grade 2

### Context

39. Skills and Learning offers a broad range of community, wider family learning (WFL) and family literacy, language and numeracy (FLLN) courses. Programmes are all part time and vary from taster provision to long courses. Courses are delivered in 58 locations which include children's centres, schools, voluntary organisations and charities. About 20% of learners are male. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities account for about 18% of enrolments.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates are high on all courses at around 95%. Learners mostly achieve their learning goals. Progression to follow up courses, formal or accredited learning is good. For learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities success rates are high with good progression onto other courses or projects. No significant differences in the outcomes of groups of learners occur.
- Learners enjoy their learning; they grow in confidence, skills and knowledge and simply attending learning sessions provides a form of emotional support. For some older learners on computer courses, their learning has opened fresh vistas and opportunities.
- Retention and attendance are good. Absence is followed up promptly and, where necessary, support is provided to learners who may be experiencing difficulties to enable them to maintain or resume attendance. Many are vulnerable learners who are successfully building self-esteem and self-belief as a starting point for further development, for example to become volunteers in the community.
- Learners feel safe when attending courses. The promotion of safeguarding is thorough and staff have received appropriate training. Tutors pay very careful attention to health and safety when teaching and anticipate and eliminate risks. Parents enjoy improving their parenting skills and attending venues they regard as welcoming and safe.
- Teaching, training and feedback are good. Tutors make good use of learner profiles to tailor individual learning. In sessions observed by inspectors tutors were patient, provided clear explanations where learners were uncertain and built confidence by identifying and affirming positive aspects. Tutors demonstrated tasks appropriately and engaged learners in work at appropriate individual levels.
- The needs and interests of learners are met effectively. Many courses inherently promote social inclusion, providing new opportunities for learning that were not

previously available. Courses are aimed at the right level to encourage potential learners to join them, stay and then move on to next steps.

- Partnership working is a strong feature of the provision. The range of partnerships developed by Skills and Learning is very broad and inclusive, particularly those targeting minority and hard-to-reach groups. Many of the partnerships demonstrate the service's commitment towards the community.
- Care, guidance and support are good. Additional learning support in class is effective. Good referral processes are in place between liaison staff in local centres, such as Jobcentre Plus, nurseries and schools, which clearly identify children and parents in need of support. Referrals are acted on promptly and relevant courses devised and offered for specific groups of learners. Publicity literature and material are clear and informative.
- Leadership and management are good. Data are analysed well. Managers have a good strategic overview of community initiatives and the community learning team uses funding streams intelligently to put on relevant programmes which enable learners to experience success and engage in further learning and training.
- The arrangements for the promotion of equality and diversity are good. Programmes are planned particularly well to promote social inclusion through targeting areas of social disadvantage and vulnerable learners. The staff development programme includes regular refresher training in equality and diversity. Staff have a good understanding of equality and diversity. The promotion of equality and diversity in lessons is often good, but is not always consistent.
- The views of learners are sought and evaluated fully and, as a result, appropriate actions are taken to improve and develop new courses. Arrangements for quality improvement are thorough and effective.

### **What does Skills and Learning need to do to improve further?**

- Help all tutors to be more confident about promoting equality and diversity within lessons so that learners understand these aspects in modern society and appreciate them as a natural part of their learning.

## Information about the inspection

40. Four of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and two additional inspectors, assisted by Bournemouth and Poole's Quality and Performance Manager, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment reports and development plans, the previous inspection reports, reports from the inspectorate's previous monitoring visits and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
41. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gather the views of learners. They also visited learning sessions. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in a range of the subjects the provider offers.

**Record of Main Findings (RMF)**

**Skills and Learning: Bournemouth and Poole**

**Learning types: 14-16:** Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; **16-18 Learner responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; **19+ responsive:** FE full- and part-time courses; **Employer responsive:** Train to Gain, apprenticeships. **Social and personal development:** all adult safeguarded provision

Grades <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	Employer Responsive	19+ Learning for qualifications	Social and personal development
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>				
Part-time learners	3,413	97	1,816	1,597
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>	-	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>2</b>			
<b>A. Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>2</b>	-	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
A1. How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2			
A1.a) How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3			
A1.b) How well do learners progress?	2			
A2. How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2			
A3. Do learners feel safe?	2			
A4. <i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	-			
A5. <i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	-			
<b>B. Quality of provision</b>	<b>2</b>	-	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
B1. How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2			
B2. How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2			
B3. How well do partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2			
B4. How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2			
<b>C. Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>	-	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
C1. How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2			
C2. <i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	3			
C3. How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2			
C4. How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2			
C5. How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2			
C6. How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2			
C7. How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2			

\*where applicable to the type of provision



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