

Plymouth City Council

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 53927

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Type of provider: Local authority

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Adult and Community Learning Service
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Information about the provider

1. Plymouth City Council (the council) is a large unitary local authority. Plymouth Adult and Community Learning Service (PACLS) is located in the neighbourhood and informal learning team within the department for children and young people of the city council. PACLS restructured in August 2009. The senior management team comprises the principal adult education officer, supported by three curriculum managers, and managers with responsibility for resource and finance, learner information and management information and quality. PACLS currently employs four full-time senior tutors and 76 tutors, most of whom are employed part-time.
2. PACLS offers programmes in 14 subject areas. At inspection, PACLS had recruited to courses in 12 subject areas. Learner numbers in some subject areas are very small. Provision in the subject areas with the largest number of learners were inspected and graded: arts, media and publishing; languages, literature and culture; and, preparation for life and work. All other provision, including Train to Gain, was included in the inspection judgements.
3. PACLS holds contracts with the Skills Funding Agency for adult provision and with the Young People's Learning Agency for provision for 16- to 18-year-old learners. PACLS subcontracts a small amount of the provision to specialist organisations working with specific groups of hard-to-reach learners. About 95% of PACLS's provision is government funded.
4. The following organisations provide training on behalf of PACLS:
 - Mountbatten Outdoor Centre
 - Plymouth YMCA
 - Shekinah Mission.

| Type of provision | Number of learners in 2009/10 |
|--|--|
| <p>Young learner provision: Further Education (16-18)</p> <p>Foundation Learning including Entry to Employment</p> | <p>19 full-time learners 20 part-time learners 40 part-time learners</p> |
| <p>Adult learner provision: Learning for qualifications</p> <p>Learning for social and personal development</p> | <p>967 part-time learners 3,827 part-time learners</p> |
| <p>Employer provision: Train to Gain</p> | <p>119 learners</p> |

Summary report

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

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Overall effectiveness of provision | Grade 3 |
|---|----------------|

| | |
|----------------------------|----------------|
| Capacity to improve | Grade 3 |
|----------------------------|----------------|

| | Grade |
|---------------------------|--------------|
| Outcomes for learners | 3 |
| Quality of provision | 3 |
| Leadership and management | 3 |
| Safeguarding | 2 |
| Equality and diversity | 2 |

| Learning for qualifications | Grade |
|------------------------------------|--------------|
| Preparation for life and work | 2 |

| Learning for social and personal development | Grade |
|---|--------------|
| Arts, media and publishing | 3 |
| Languages, literature and culture | 2 |

Overall effectiveness

5. PACLS has satisfactory provision, with some good courses on which learners do well. Most learners on long courses leading to qualifications are successful. Learners on Train to Gain courses succeed satisfactorily. Learners on courses for social and personal development generally complete their courses.
6. Most learners enjoy their learning and make good progress. However, not all learners have clear learning goals, especially on courses not leading to a qualification. Learners gain in confidence and many progress to other courses. Learners on vocational courses develop appropriate skills and increase their employability.
7. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The proportion of good teaching and learning sessions has increased, although few sessions are outstanding. Tutors generally plan their sessions well to meet individual needs. The best sessions include a variety of activities for learning and learners engage well in these

sessions. Tutors are generally knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subject.

8. PACLS meets community needs well. It works well with partners to attract learners from disadvantaged groups and motivates them to make good progress. Some subject areas offer a good range of courses with good opportunities to progress to higher levels. The range of courses offered in other areas is very limited.
9. PACLS's leaders and managers have a strong commitment to serving the needs of the community. PACLS has restructured the service recently in order to improve the management of provision. It is too early for this to have made significant impact and some processes are not yet fully effective. Managers have a good understanding of how to improve the provision further and have clear plans for future developments.

Main findings

- Success rates are satisfactory overall, with good success rates in some subject areas, such as science and mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT). Timely success rates in Train to Gain provision are satisfactory overall and good in service enterprises. Achievement on courses for social and personal development is satisfactory overall, and good on some courses.
- Learners enjoy their classes and work with enthusiasm. They improve in confidence and many report benefits to their health and well-being. Many learners progress to further learning and increase their employability skills.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall, with an increase in the proportion of good sessions. However, good practice is insufficiently shared. Most tutors plan their lessons thoroughly to meet the range of abilities of the learners. Many classes include a good range of activities that engage the learners well. However, some teaching is dull and uninspiring.
- The provision meets the needs and interests of learners satisfactorily overall. In some subjects, such as literacy and numeracy, PACLS provides appropriate opportunities for progression and good development of study and employability skills. Some subject areas offer few courses. PACLS has insufficient links with other local providers to rationalise the curriculum offer more effectively.
- PACLS uses partnerships well to meet learners' needs. PACLS subcontracts with three partners to provide courses to engage specific hard-to-reach groups. Good partnerships with schools and community groups enable PACLS to target learners in the most deprived communities.
- Information, advice and guidance are satisfactory overall. PACLS demonstrates good practice in recruiting learners to literacy and numeracy provision and access to higher education courses. PACLS provides good support for learners, particularly those identified as having additional support needs. Tutors generally support learners well and with sensitivity.

- Strategic leadership and management are good. PACLS has managed significant changes well, for example by recent restructuring and working within a reduced budget. PACLS has a clear understanding of the challenges facing the sector and has taken positive steps to implement appropriate strategic priorities.
- Operational management is currently insufficiently effective. Some recently appointed senior tutors have limited management experience. PACLS currently employs tutors under a variety of contracts. Not all tutors engage effectively in staff training or implement PACLS policies and procedures fully.
- The council provides good direction and challenge for the development of the provision. Senior managers within the council provide good oversight and support to the service. The council provides guidance to PACLS in its actions to introduce a new overarching contract for staff.
- PACLS has good safeguarding arrangements. The designated senior manager with responsibility for safeguarding is appropriately trained and has ensured that all staff have received relevant training. Staff have a good understanding of safeguarding issues. PACLS maintains accurate Criminal Records Bureau checks on its staff.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. PACLS has a clear commitment to meeting the needs of the community, in particular of disadvantaged and under-represented groups. Staff and learners have a good understanding of equality and diversity matters. PACLS promotes an environment of mutual respect in the classroom effectively.
- PACLS has satisfactory self-assessment and quality improvement processes. It has revised many of its quality improvement processes, for example observations of teaching and learning. However, PACLS does not implement these sufficiently effectively to improve the quality of provision.

What does PACLS need to do to improve further?

- Further improve success rates and the recognition and recording of achievement in non-accredited provision by ensuring that tutors implement PACLS's policies and procedures to set and monitor individual learners' targets through individual learning plans.
- Increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching and learning through sharing good practice effectively across the service and by using the process of observations of teaching and learning more effectively to identify and monitor specific and time-bound action plans for improvement.
- Implement plans for a single employment contract for all tutors and consolidate the operational management of the service in order to ensure further improvements to the quality of provision.
- Monitor and review quality improvement processes so that PACLS uses them effectively to improve the quality of provision across the service.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- the friendly and supportive teachers
- taking part in discussions in class
- the good personalised teaching with a variety of methods and good assessment
- meeting up with other learners and making new friends
- the helpful advice and encouragement
- being treated like adults.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the large amount of paperwork
- some poor venues and some hard-to-find venues
- the lack of refreshment facilities.

Summary of the views of employers/partners as confirmed by inspectors

What employers/partners like:

- the good communication with PACLS
- the excellent feedback on learner progress
- the very good support at the planning stage of the course.

What employers/partners would like to see improved:

- none reported.

Main inspection findings

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

10. PACLS demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve. It has made substantial progress in responding to the key challenges identified in the previous inspection report of 2007. However, although PACLS has taken good actions, it recognises that it has yet to ensure effective and consistent implementation of improvements across the service; for example in the effective use of individual target setting to recognise and record learners' progress and achievement. The restructuring of the service in August 2009 centralised management responsibility to a core team in place of line management based in local venues. However, senior tutors are not based at the same centre as the senior management team, which limits the impact of this change. PACLS has not arranged sufficient training for all new managers to ensure that they have the skills to undertake their management responsibilities effectively. PACLS is working on implementing plans to rationalise staff contracts. Currently, not all tutors attend team meetings and staff development events or engage in quality improvement initiatives effectively.
11. Since the previous inspection, PACLS has made substantial efforts to bring about sustained improvements. Success rates have generally improved, but in 2009/10 not all subject areas had a positive improvement trend. PACLS has recently reviewed the Train to Gain provision and has yet to implement new processes. PACLS has revised its process of observations of teaching and learning, which is now thorough and rigorous. However, PACLS does not use it effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning, especially in raising performance from satisfactory to good or good to outstanding.
12. The self-assessment process is thorough and inclusive. The self-assessment report of 2008/09 was detailed. However, it focused on measuring internal improvement trends with insufficient focus on whether they met national performance trends. The self-assessment process for 2009/10 is not yet complete. PACLS provided a draft introductory section of the report alongside incomplete draft reports of the subject areas to be graded to inform inspectors of recent developments. Although incomplete, inspectors found these reports broadly accurate.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 3

13. Outcomes for learners are satisfactory, with good outcomes on some courses. Success rates on long courses leading to qualifications have improved since the previous inspection. Data for 2009/10 indicate that success rates for almost half of the provision leading to qualifications were above national figures. In the period between 2008/09 and 2009/10, success rates in some areas improved and were above national figures, for example in science and mathematics and business, administration and law. In other subject areas, although success rates had decreased, they were still above national figures, for example in ICT,

languages, literature and culture, and, education and training. In other areas success rates had decreased and were at or below national figures.

14. PACLS has held a contract for Train to Gain provision since 2008 covering provision in seven subject areas. Timely success rates for Train to Gain provision are satisfactory overall for 2009/10, and are above national figures in service enterprises.
15. Outcomes for learners on courses for social and personal development are satisfactory overall. In languages, literature and culture many courses lead to accreditation, success rates on these courses are high. In other programmes, the setting of appropriate individual learning targets is of variable quality. Some courses do not identify learner progress effectively.
16. Overall, learners enjoy their courses and improve their confidence and study skills. In some areas, such as family learning and literacy and numeracy, learners engage well, develop new skills and progress to further learning. In access to higher education courses, learners gain a good grounding which prepares them well for progression into higher education. Learners on vocational courses, such as hairdressing, gain valuable skills and underpinning knowledge. Learners report that their health and well-being benefit from attending courses, especially in provision for social and personal development, such as arts, media and publishing.
17. Learners feel safe. PACLS has sound safeguarding and health and safety procedures. Learners work well within an environment of mutual respect. Most venues have good arrangements to ensure the health and safety of learners. Learners on Train to Gain provision and other vocational courses use safe working practices.

The quality of provision

Grade 3

18. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Most tutors plan their lessons well. Many tutors demonstrate good responsiveness to the needs of individual learners in their groups, for example in family learning, literacy and numeracy and languages classes. Many classes include a good range of activities to engage learners actively. For example, in a hairdressing class observed during inspection, learners worked well in small groups to explore colour theory and hair colour techniques. The session was well planned and supported by the tutor, and an additional tutor helped to ensure that all learners understood the content and engaged positively in the learning activities. Some weaker sessions do not involve learners effectively. In these sessions, learners are passive recipients of tutor knowledge. Some tutors use information learning technology (ILT) well.
19. Resources for teaching and learning are generally satisfactory. Most venues and classrooms are satisfactory with appropriate access to ICT. However, some rooms are cramped and not suitable for the class sizes timetabled in them, for example in some literacy and numeracy and visual and performing arts

provision. The quality of some resources, such as handouts and worksheets, is not of an appropriate standard.

20. Assessment practice is satisfactory. PACLS has good and thorough internal moderation and verification processes. Assessment practice in Train to Gain provision is generally thorough but sometimes requires learners to produce more evidence than necessary to complete the qualification. Assessors in some subject areas use observations in the workplace effectively to provide evidence of learner competence.
21. PACLS meets the needs and interests of learners satisfactorily. PACLS prioritises provision for disadvantaged groups within the community. It provides learning opportunities in areas of greatest disadvantage, particularly in family learning and literacy and numeracy. Some subject areas, such as languages and literacy and numeracy, have sufficient provision to enable learners to progress within the range of courses provided by PACLS. In other subject areas, PACLS has very limited provision. PACLS has insufficiently developed links with local providers to identify clear progression routes for learners.
22. PACLS uses partnerships well to meet the needs of learners, especially those from disadvantaged or under-represented groups. Subcontractors provide good programmes to meet the needs of specific groups. Plymouth YMCA and Mountbatten Outdoor Centre engage well with young people who are not in education, employment or training and motivate them to succeed and progress further. Shekinah Mission focuses on learners who are homeless or recovering from substance misuse. The provision is good and learners engage well, for example in courses in brickwork and plastering. Good and effective partnerships with schools and community organisations enable PACLS to provide suitable provision in family learning and literacy and numeracy. Learners from disadvantaged groups benefit from this provision and often progress to other courses or to employment as a result.
23. Advice, guidance and support have improved and are satisfactory. Some courses, such as literacy and numeracy and access to higher education, provide detailed initial assessment and guidance. In most courses for social and personal development, course information sheets provide satisfactory information for potential learners. Advice and guidance on appropriate progression routes are satisfactory overall. Support for learners is generally good. Learners with specific additional support needs, such as the profoundly deaf, receive good support. Tutors generally provide good support for learners, and meet individual needs sensitively. The team of learning advisers contacts learners with poor attendance and checks whether they require additional support.

Leadership and management

Grade 3

24. PACLS has satisfactory leadership and management. PACLS has good strategic leadership, and benefits from good oversight and support from senior members of the council. It has a good understanding of the needs of the local community

and of the challenges that face the service. PACLS has restructured the service twice in recent years. The latest restructure in August 2009 drew together one central management, curriculum and administrative team largely based on one site. This replaced a centre-based line-management structure dispersed across the city. Three curriculum managers now work from the central site alongside the principal adult education officer. Four senior tutors have recently been appointed to support the curriculum managers; a fifth appointment has yet to be made. The senior tutors are not based at the central site, although PACLS has plans to remedy this in the near future. PACLS has managed a significant reduction of funding for the service as a result of the withdrawal of additional financial support from the council in February 2009. PACLS has managed this very effectively, with little impact on the size of the provision. PACLS is committed to developing closer relationships with other local providers in order to secure future funding to maintain and develop the provision. Most staff are highly committed to the further development of the service.

25. Operational management is currently insufficiently effective in improving the quality of provision. Currently, tutors have different contracts of employment with varying terms and conditions of service, depending upon which learning centre had originally employed them. Consequently, managers are not always able to ensure that tutors attend meetings and training events or contribute effectively to initiatives to improve the quality of provision. For example, not all tutors engage effectively in setting appropriate individual learning targets for learners. PACLS recognises the need to take action to rationalise tutor contracts. The self-assessment report identified this as a key challenge for the service. PACLS is in the process of working with the council towards introducing one overarching contract for all tutors and assessors. The recent restructuring led to the appointment of some senior tutors with little prior experience of management. PACLS has yet to provide sufficient management training to support them in carrying out their roles effectively. In addition, one of the curriculum managers has only been in post since July 2010. The responsibilities of this manager include the Train to Gain provision and the possible development of apprenticeships. The manager has reviewed the quality of current provision. However, planned improvements have yet to be implemented. PACLS has not recruited new learners onto Train to Gain provision this academic year, pending the outcome of the review. PACLS plans to recruit learners onto this provision in the near future.
26. Safeguarding arrangements are good. The policies and procedures to protect and support learners meet legislative requirements. The designated safeguarding officer is appropriately trained and familiar with good safeguarding practice. PACLS has well-developed plans to appoint further safeguarding officers. In line with council procedures, PACLS maintains accurate Criminal Records Bureau checks on all staff. All staff have received safeguarding training. They have a good awareness of safeguarding issues and a good knowledge of resources available to learners. Learners also have a good knowledge of safeguarding issues and of how to deal with any issues relating to health and safety, bullying and harassment. Several safeguarding issues have arisen over the last year and these have been resolved very effectively. PACLS

arranges for staff to attend the learning venues for the first week of new courses to ensure that learners know where to go for the classes.

27. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. PACLS has a very strong focus on social inclusion and actively promotes initiatives to engage people who are disadvantaged and to meet the needs of those with barriers to learning. Promotional materials contain appropriate images. PACLS has developed very good working arrangements with local organisations that specialise in assisting disadvantaged and under-represented groups. PACLS has developed programmes to challenge and develop the skills of people with learning disabilities and provides some excellent support for individuals with particular needs. PACLS collects information on gender, age, ethnic background and disability and analyses the data to identify any performance differences. PACLS provides a good range of staff training opportunities on equality and diversity matters. Staff awareness is good, and staff demonstrate a good commitment to ensuring that all learners achieve their potential.
28. PACLS engages appropriately with users to support and promote improvement. A process of termly reviews of learner satisfaction surveys requires curriculum managers to respond to learner feedback. PACLS takes learners' views seriously and displays posters summarising the changes made to the provision as a result of learner feedback. PACLS introduced a learner forum in January 2010. The forum meets every term. PACLS uses the forum to inform the learner representatives of current issues within the service. The representatives have a good understanding of the organisation and the challenges it faces. However, PACLS has not yet fully developed arrangements for representatives to feed back to other learners or take up concerns raised by learners. PACLS is in the early stages of developing appropriate communication channels for learners through an intranet site to engage learners more effectively.
29. Arrangements for quality assurance and improvement are satisfactory. PACLS works closely with its subcontractors and monitors their contracts very effectively. PACLS has recently introduced a comprehensive quality assurance cycle with an associated monitoring plan. PACLS has recently introduced rigorous procedures to monitor the quality of lesson plans, schemes of work and other documentation. It regularly updates its quality improvement plan linked to the self-assessment report of 2008/09 to improve and develop the provision. PACLS has revised its process of observations of teaching and learning. The new process is thorough, but PACLS does not implement it as a quality improvement tool effectively. Observers provide insufficiently detailed feedback to tutors for appropriate action planning to improve the quality of their teaching. The process does not sufficiently encourage tutors to strive to improve their practice. Grades awarded to lessons through the internal observation process tend to be higher than those awarded by inspectors. PACLS has insufficient arrangements to share good practice across the provision.
30. The service uses its resources adequately to secure value for money. Learners' progress and achievement are satisfactory overall, with some very good progress made by disadvantaged learners or those with barriers to learning.

The resources are generally of appropriate quality, although some of the accommodation is poor. Many class sizes are small, restricting opportunities for effective group interaction.

Learning for qualifications

Other learning for qualifications provision considered as part of the main findings but not separately graded; health, public services and care; science and mathematics; information and communication technology; retail and commercial enterprise; leisure travel and tourism; languages literature and culture; education and training; business, administration and law

Preparation for life and work

Grade 2

Context

31. PACLS has 195 learners in 29 literacy and numeracy courses, of which 23 are open to all and 6 are linked to specific venues in the community or the workplace. Literacy and numeracy courses provide accreditation from entry level to level 2. All learners access a six-hour initial session that is part of the initial assessment to ensure that learners are ready for learning and understand the commitment needed to complete their accredited programme. Women account for 75% of the learners.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good, with high success rates in literacy and numeracy at all levels. Thorough internal and external moderation ensures that learners achieve their learning goals at a good standard. Progression rates from entry level to level 1 and level 2 are high. Attendance and retention are low in some courses. However, PACLS has good follow-up procedures to minimise non completion.
- Learners make good progress. They enjoy their classes and gain in confidence and self-esteem. They develop skills for further study or employability. The quality of learners' work in class is good. Learners work cooperatively. They develop self- and peer-assessment skills and independent study skills.
- Learners feel safe and adopt good working practices within the classes. Tutors carry out risk assessments effectively. PACLS has appropriate actions and strategies to ensure that all learners are safe on site and on visits in the community. PACLS implements good safeguarding arrangements rigorously.
- Teaching and learning are good. In most classes teaching is well planned, lively and includes a good range of activities that engage learners effectively. Tutors meet the individual needs and interests of learners well within classes. The pace of learning is slow in some classes, with insufficient extension activities to challenge the more able learners.
- Most tutors are well qualified, and many have specialist qualifications in teaching literacy or numeracy. Some new tutors are undertaking subject-specific training, having gained their initial teaching qualifications.
- Resources are satisfactory overall. Most centres have appropriate access to computers. Most materials used in classes are satisfactory, but some are of poor quality. For example, photocopies do not always include all of the original

content. Not all classrooms are large enough for the effective teaching and learning of the groups timetabled in them.

- Assessment practice is good. Learners receive good feedback from tutors, with clear guidance on areas for development. Learners keep individual records in which they reflect on work undertaken in classes to assess their own progress in achieving learning goals.
- Initial assessment is good. Learners attend a six-hour short course as part of initial assessment and as preparation for learning. PACLS has six regular entry points throughout the year at which learners join the programmes. This process enables tutors to plan more effectively for new learners to join existing classes.
- Partnership working is very good. PACLS works closely with community organisations, schools and training organisations. Partners value the provision run by PACLS, which meets community needs. By using venues run by community organisations, PACLS engages with a range of learners who do not traditionally access learning.
- Guidance and support for learners are good. Initial assessment and guidance effectively place learners on suitable programmes. On completion of their course, learners receive further impartial guidance to support them to progress with their learning. Learners receive good support while on programme, for example, good support for learners with disabilities ensures that they are fully included in lessons.
- Leadership and management of the curriculum are good. The recent restructuring has resulted in a strong, cohesive team with a curriculum manager and senior tutor, two full-time tutors and part-time tutors with substantial teaching commitments. A new system of 'hot desking' at the main centre enables tutors to meet with other staff who have links with the learners.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. PACLS links effectively with other agencies to support learners, for example those with mental health issues and those recovering from alcohol or substance misuse. Tutors show good awareness of the social differences and expectations of learners and lessons reflect a good sensitivity to meeting their needs.

What does PACLS need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that good practice is shared across the teaching team so that all learners are sufficiently challenged by appropriate extension activities during classes.
- Ensure that accommodation is appropriate for each class by timetabling all classes in rooms that are large enough for effective teaching and learning.
- Monitor the impact of the initial short course and further develop the recruitment process so that PACLS can improve attendance and retention rates throughout the provision.

Learning for social and personal development

Other social and personal development learning provision considered as part of the main findings but not separately graded: health, public services and care; science and mathematics; construction, planning and the built environment; information and communication technology; retail and commercial enterprise; leisure travel and tourism; history, philosophy and theology; education and training; preparation for life and work; business, administration and law.

Arts, media and publishing

Grade 3

Context

32. Currently, 277 adult learners study visual and performing arts for social and personal development. Most courses take place at two main centres, with a small number of classes in four other centres in the city. The 23 art courses include painting and drawing, life drawing, digital photography, upholstery, jewellery and dress making. Four dance classes and one music class make up the rest of the provision. Most courses run for eleven weeks and none are accredited. Classes take place during the day and in the evenings, with some specialist workshops at weekends. Currently, 193 of the learners are female.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Retention and success rates are high. Learners enjoy their classes and work with enthusiasm. PACLS establishes an encouraging environment for learners to develop their creativity and dance skills.
- Learners achieve good standards of work in lessons. For example, in life drawing they develop good analytical and evaluation skills, in watercolour painting they increase their technical skills, and in dance classes they practise dance routines with increasing confidence and good humour. Some classes do not sufficiently encourage learner participation and lack the creative impetus to produce ambitious work.
- PACLS has good health and safety procedures. Learners feel safe in all centres. Learners report good social interaction, health benefits and enhanced concentration. Many learners have improved mobility and manual dexterity following illness, particularly in dance, upholstery and jewellery classes. Initial assessment includes self assessment of mental and physical health and levels of fitness.
- Teaching and learning are good. Tutors plan lessons to include appropriate activities for the wide ability range of learners. In life drawing, meticulous planning challenges every learner to exceed their aspirations. However, less effective lessons move at a slow pace and do not sufficiently challenge learners able to work at a more skilled level.
- Individual learning plans monitor progress and achievement satisfactorily, often through group learning goals. Personalised learning goals are infrequently set, limiting the aspirations and achievements of learners, particularly in mixed

ability groups. In some cases, the use of digital recording of learners' work in progress and of dance routines leads to the recording of personal evaluation and reflection on individual learning plans.

- PACLS has satisfactory resources. Painting and drawing classes have sufficient space and access to a range of materials and ICT. Dance classes take place in appropriate rooms with suitable flooring. However, in some venues cramped and unsuitable rooms limit the opportunities for the planned practical activities, group work and discussion.
- PACLS offers a satisfactory range of courses in art and photography at introductory and mixed levels. However, currently PACLS offers insufficient courses throughout the city, for example in performing arts and at advanced level. Plans are in place for increasing partnerships, venues and courses for the future.
- Learners receive good support from tutors in lessons. Learners value the knowledge and expertise of their tutors. In many cases, tutors respond to the particular health and medical needs of their learners to ensure they progress and achieve. This year, initial advice and guidance have improved through the availability of comprehensive course outlines.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Social inclusion for disadvantaged groups is evident, with courses for learners who may not have completed formal education. Recent monitoring of data regarding new learners, returning learners, ethnicity and postcode informs the development of courses for next year.
- The process of observation of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The lesson observation profile has improved over the last two years, but PACLS does not sufficiently share the good practice identified. Observation feedback does not provide sufficient guidance for tutors to plan for learning which challenges and inspires learners to exceed their ambitions.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. The impact of recent restructuring is positive, but has yet to provide sufficient appropriate training for tutors. PACLS's commitment to raise standards has yet to have a clear impact on improving the quality of provision.

What does PACLS need to do to improve further?

- Review and improve individual learning plans so that they include personalised learning goals across the provision.
- Use the process of observations of teaching and learning more effectively so that action planning for teaching focuses on challenging and inspiring learners to exceed their ambitions.
- Provide appropriate training for the staff team so that the members are better able to implement PACLS's policies and procedures to improve the quality of learners' experience.

Languages, literature and culture

Grade 2

Context

33. Currently, 214 learners follow languages courses for social and personal development. Of these learners, 87 attend non-accredited courses and 127 attend accredited courses from entry level to level 3. Courses in Arabic, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese and Spanish take place at three centres across the city in the day and the evening. The provision is managed by a curriculum manager, supported by a senior tutor, and is delivered by 12 part-time tutors.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates are high. The majority of courses show a significantly improving trend with all accredited provision above or significantly above national figures. Learners on non-accredited courses achieve their learning goals successfully. Retention rates are very good and improving. Attendance is good.
- Learners enjoy their courses. They are well motivated and some travel considerable distances to attend classes. Learners significantly increase in confidence and make good progress. Their attendance contributes to maintaining their health and well-being. The lessons provide a good opportunity for personal and social development.
- Teaching and learning are good. Tutors are knowledgeable and make good use of the target language. Many tutors make good use of ILT. The quality of learning materials is satisfactory. Tutors use some very effective strategies to teach language structures. However, they do not focus sufficiently on developing the communicative language skills of learners, such as, pronunciation and intonation.
- Schemes of work are well developed. However, in many lesson plans learning outcomes and activities are not sufficiently detailed. Tutors do not sufficiently share the learning objectives of lessons with the learners.
- Initial assessment is good. Learners attend appropriate courses. Assessment processes are flexible, inclusive and meet learners' needs. Processes for measuring the progress and achievement of learners on non-accredited courses are satisfactory overall. The quality of individual learners' targets varies from course to course, with insufficient sharing of good practice to improve target setting overall.
- The provision meets the needs and interests of learners well. PACLS uses effective strategies to provide courses in a range of locations at times which suit learners' needs. PACLS provides good progression opportunities. It plans the range of provision to take into account the interests of learners in specific languages and levels.
- Care, guidance and support for learners are good. Learners receive good initial advice about courses and possible progression routes. Tutors provide good

individual attention and support in class and also help learners to catch up when they miss lessons. Some tutors email work, discussion topics and video clips to learners at home.

- Leadership and management are good. PACLS has effectively developed the provision in response to changes in funding arrangements. Internal communication is good. Tutors work well as a team and have good access to support from the curriculum manager and senior tutor. PACLS has effective staff induction processes. Managers make good use of data to analyse the provision and make changes.
- The promotion of safeguarding is good. In lessons, tutors pay good attention to safeguarding and health and safety. Tutors have responded positively to safeguarding training. They have an increased awareness and sensitivity of safeguarding issues with regard to learners.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Tutors make good use of inclusive practices in the classroom. They acknowledge and promote language varieties and culture well in lessons. They pay good attention to meeting the needs of learners with different abilities in their groups.
- The system of observation of teaching and learning is appropriate. However, observation feedback pays insufficient attention to subject-specific teaching skills. Feedback to tutors provides insufficient clarity on aspects of teaching and learning that could make the session outstanding. Inspectors did not observe any outstanding sessions, yet almost half of the internally-observed sessions were graded outstanding in 2009/10.
- Actions arising from the observations of teaching and learning are insufficiently time bound and specific to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Tutors do not receive sufficient guidance and support to develop their communicative language teaching skills. Recent professional development initiatives have yet to have an impact on the quality of learning activities in the classroom.

What does PACLS need to do to improve further?

- Extend the use of appropriate learning activities in the classroom so that learners have increased opportunities to develop their communicative language skills and improve their pronunciation.
- Improve the setting and monitoring of targets in individual learning plans so that individual learners can measure their progress more effectively.
- Improve the process for the observation of teaching and learning so that the grading more accurately reflects the observed lesson and the action points identified focus on developing a greater variety of communicative language learning opportunities.

Information about the inspection

34. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's principal adult education officer, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans and draft self-assessment report for 2009/10, comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding bodies, the previous inspection report, the report from the inspectorate's monitoring visit and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
35. Inspectors used group, individual interviews, and emails to gather the views of learners. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had completed on behalf of the provider. They also visited learning sessions, assessments or progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subjects the provider offers.

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| <p>Record of Main Findings (RMF)</p> <p>Plymouth City Council - PACLS</p> <p>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</p> |
|--|

| Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate | Overall | 19+ Learner responsive | Employer responsive | Social and personal development |
|--|----------|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------|
| Approximate number of enrolled learners | | | | |
| Full-time learners | 1,823 | 588 | 80 | 1,195 |
| Part-time learners | | | | |
| Overall effectiveness | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Capacity to improve | 3 | | | |
| A. Outcomes for learners | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| A1. How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning? | 3 | | | |
| A1.a) How well do learners attain their learning goals? | 3 | | | |
| A1.b) How well do learners progress? | 3 | | | |
| A2. How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development? | 3 | | | |
| A3. Do learners feel safe? | 2 | | | |
| A4. <i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i> | n/a | | | |
| A5. <i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i> | n/a | | | |
| B. Quality of provision | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| B1. How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development? | 3 | | | |
| B2. How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users? | 3 | | | |
| 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? | 3 | | | |
| C. Leadership and management | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| C1. How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation? | 3 | | | |
| C2. <i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i> | 2 | | | |
| 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? | 3 | | | |
| C6. How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners? | 3 | | | |
| C7. How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money? | 3 | | | |

*where applicable to the type of provision

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