

Tameside MBC

Inspection report

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Type of provider: Local Authority

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Information about the provider

1. Tameside Adult Learning Service (TALS) is part of Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council (TMBC). The Tameside local authority area, situated seven miles east of Manchester, has around a quarter of a million people in its 40 square miles. Tameside Adult Learning Service offers courses for adults in family learning, Skills for Life, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), information and communication technology (ICT), and learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. TALS prioritises people with low-level qualifications or no qualifications, those unemployed, at risk of redundancy, in low paid employment and those who encounter barriers to participation in learning. Courses take place in a variety of community venues.
2. The service is led by an education officer – family adult and learning, supported by a quality manager and an assistant manager with responsibilities for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A team of twelve full- and part-time teaching staff and two classroom assistants deliver programmes in the subject areas and development in the community. A manager, responsible for data, a student services officer and two administrative staff, support the team. Around 84% of the provision is government funded.
3. The unemployment rate in Tameside, between October 2009 and September 2010, was 8.3% which is comparable with the rate for the North West of 8.2% but is higher than the national rate of 7.7%. The proportion of the population aged 16 to 64 who hold no qualifications is 12.5%, slightly higher than the national rate of 12.3%. According to the 2001 census, the proportion of Tameside's population from minority ethnic groups was 5.4%, compared with the rate for the North West of 5.6% and the national average of 9.1%.
4. Tameside MBC does not provide training on behalf of any other providers.
5. The following organisations provide training on behalf of TALS:
 - Tameside College in preparation for life and work, ICT, and community development
 - Tameside Sixth Form College in preparation for life and work, and community development

Type of provision	Number of learners in 2009/10
Provision for adult learners: Learning for qualifications	605 part-time learners
Learning for social and personal development	1,294 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain	78 learners

Summary report

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

Overall effectiveness of provision		Grade 2
Capacity to improve		Grade 2
Aspect	Grade	
Outcomes for learners	2	
Quality of provision	2	
Leadership and management	2	
Safeguarding	3	
Equality and diversity	3	
Learning for qualifications		Grade
Information and communication technology	2	
Preparation for life and work	2	
Community development	3	

Overall effectiveness

6. The overall effectiveness of TALS provision is good. Learners make good progress and achieve well in their qualifications. The number of successful learners has risen steadily and rates are now above those achieved nationally. Learners' improved employability skills, increased confidence and self-esteem helps them at work, and in their personal and social lives.
7. TALS provides good quality education for its learners. Most learning sessions are well planned with a good range of teaching methods. Well equipped classrooms have good access to information and learning technology (ILT) resources, although ILT is not always effectively used. Learners enjoy their classes and are kept fully informed of their progress. Very good in-class support is particularly successful in helping learners overcome a range of barriers to learning. The range of provision is good and meets the needs of the service's learners. Very effective use is made of learning champions to identify needs within the community and TALS liaises well with parents, carers and other interest groups. However, the service recognises the need to develop more direct partnerships with employers.

8. Staff lead and manage the provision well. The council's strategic priorities set a clear agenda for adult learning. Communications within TALS are good but communication between council departments over the community development programme has been less effective. Arrangements for promoting equality and diversity are satisfactory as are the arrangements for ensuring that learners are safe. The service successfully prioritises the recruitment of disadvantaged learners.
9. TALS places a good focus on continuous improvement. Thorough and improved quality procedures are clearly linked to an annual quality cycle and to the self-assessment report. The self-assessment process is inclusive and the report is largely accurate for two areas of learning but not for community development. TALS works well with learners to bring about improvement. However, there is too little use of partners' and employers' views.

Main findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Success rates have risen steadily since the last inspection and are now above national rates. In 2009/10, success rates were above national rates at entry and intermediate levels and were around national rates at advanced level. However, success rates were below national rates at foundation level. In 2009/10, success rates were higher than national rates in each of the six subject areas.
- Learners enjoy their learning and make good progress. They develop good employability, and personal and social skills. Particularly, most learners quickly, improve their self-confidence, communication skills and self-esteem. They improve their independent living skills through the development of literacy skills and project work. Learners on ESOL courses demonstrate good speaking and listening skills.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good. The better sessions include a wide range of learning activities that keep learners motivated and interested in learning. Language, literacy and numeracy skills are included within the programmes but there is little evidence of the promotion and raising awareness of equality and diversity issues within learning sessions. However, on community development programmes teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory.
- The process for recognising and recording prior achievement (RARPA) is thorough with close attention given to learners' progress. For most learners, initial assessment is comprehensive and they are placed on appropriate courses. Individual learning plans are detailed and contain specific targets for learners, who take responsibility for their own learning. For most learners, the effectiveness of learning and their progress are reviewed at each session.
- The provision is very good in meeting the interests of the learners and is flexible and responsive to their needs. Good liaison with parents and carers and other interest groups has led to the development of new provision. Very effective use is made of learning champions to identify needs within the community.
- TALS uses links with partners effectively to develop the provision. It has satisfactory links with a range of agencies such as children's centres, libraries

and housing associations that have led to the development of courses for specific groups. The service has satisfactory relationships with organisations to support adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and with job centres, but there are insufficient direct links with employers.

- TALS and their partners provide a good range of support to learners. Course information and support are readily available to ensure that learners' needs are met and barriers to learning are overcome. Experienced staff respond quickly to support learners when issues arise and very good in-class support is available. On community development programmes, support for learners is satisfactory.
- The council's strategic priorities set a clear agenda for adult learning. Good communication within TALS helps ensure staff are aware of priorities and service developments. However, communication between council departments over the community development programme has been less effective. Accountability for the management of neighbourhood learning in deprived communities (NLDC) funded provision is unclear and this provision is insufficiently monitored.
- TALS manages the performance of staff very well, making good use of improved access to data on achievement and retention. Performance management of staff is good and well supported by better access to up-to-date data on recruitment, retention and achievement.
- TALS arrangements for safeguarding learners are satisfactory. They meet government legislative requirements. Awareness of safeguarding among staff and learners is satisfactory. A central register of Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks is maintained, although information related to safeguarding is divided across several lists. Subcontractors confirm that their staff have been subject to CRB checks and have received training in safeguarding.
- TALS approach to equality and diversity is satisfactory. The service successfully targets disadvantaged and under-represented groups and new learners. However, the tutors miss opportunities to promote equality and diversity through teaching activities.
- Thorough and improved quality procedures promote continuous improvement. These are clearly linked to an annual cycle of quality assurance events and to the self-assessment report. The self-assessment process is inclusive and is largely accurate for two areas of learning, but not for community development. The service involves learners very well to bring about improvement. However, there is too little use of partners' and employers' views.
- TALS provides satisfactory value for money. It has improved outcomes for learners and provides sufficient resources to support teaching, much of which is good. Good and improving outcomes support this judgement.

What does Tameside MBC need to do to improve further?

- Improve the success rates on foundation-level courses by closely monitoring retention rates and by anticipating and responding rapidly to the changing needs of particularly vulnerable learners.
- Continue to improve the quality of teaching, training, learning and assessment so that all learners experience provision of the highest quality. Ensure that

learners fully develop their understanding of equality and diversity through relevant discussions in teaching and learning sessions.

- Improve the management of community development programmes to clarify responsibility for key aspects of management, ensure that planning is coherent and takes account of other provision, and that consistent quality procedures lead to continuous improvement for all learners.
- Extend the good practice in the use of learners' views to improve the use made of partners' views to evaluate the provision. Develop direct links with employers to identify and meet specific local needs.
- Develop the collation and analysis of data on reasons for leaving, the achievement of different groups and learner progression in order to identify trends and plan improvements.
- Develop further the use of the observation system to improve the evaluation and quality of teaching, learning and induction.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- learning with other people of similar age and experience
- spending quality time with children working on enjoyable and fun tasks
- gaining new skills and developing more confidence
- the flexible delivery of courses in easily accessible locations
- highly supportive staff who are easy to talk to and committed to helping learners succeed
- the wide range of teaching methods which make learning fun
- meeting new people and making new friends
- NLDC programmes help to create pride in the area and help individuals to be more self-sufficient.

What learners would like to see improved:

- the quality and availability of resources within some sessions
- the length and range of courses available
- better information on classes and progression opportunities
- more practical courses
- a few classrooms are too small and cramped
- the reliability of interactive whiteboards at Union Street
- increase the speed of the internet
- better access to printing resources.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the flexible and rapid response to requests for help.

What employers would like to see improved:

- shorter waiting lists for some courses
- a wider range of courses.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

10. Capacity to improve is good. TALS has successfully taken steps to improve provision since the previous inspection. These include key aspects such as achievement and retention, initial assessment, RARPA and the performance management of staff. Outcomes have improved in ICT and in preparation for life and work and are above national averages. Quality procedures are thorough, take good account of learners' views and systematically lead to improvement. Self-assessment is satisfactory and drives improvement well in most curriculum areas.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

11. Outcomes for learners are good. Overall success rates, retention rates and achievement rates have risen since the last inspection and are now above national rates. Success rates have improved steadily over the last three years from 63% to 79% and are now above the national rate of 74%. In 2009/10 success rates were above national rates at entry and intermediate levels and were around the national rates at advanced level. However, in 2009/10 success rates were below national rates at foundation level. In 2009/10 success rates were above national rates in each of the six subject areas offered by the provider. On NLDC programmes outcomes for learners are satisfactory but have successfully led to some individuals directly taking up paid employment and/or work as volunteers. Some community initiatives have been particularly successful in enriching the community. Success rates in non-accredited provision are high. Success rates at entry and foundation level for adult literacy in 2009/10 were low at 55% and 57% respectively. Women outperform men at all levels, particularly at advanced level. The few learners from minority ethnic backgrounds generally do not perform as well as other groups of learners.
12. Learners enjoy their learning and make very good progress towards the achievement of short-term targets. They have clear knowledge of their progress. Many learners are enthused to re-enter learning and often gain literacy and numeracy skills in addition to their chosen programmes. Learners develop good employability, personal and social skills. Particularly, most learners quickly improve their self-confidence, communication skills and self-esteem. Most learners are able to describe clearly how much their confidence has grown since commencing their studies. In family learning, learners become better able to help their children with schoolwork and build relationships through newly gained skills. Learners improve independent living skills through the development of literacy skills and project work. On NLDC programmes, project funding to community groups has led to a wide range of activities which help contribute to learners' choices about health and well-being. On most courses learners produce a good standard of work. Learners on ESOL courses demonstrate good speaking and listening skills.
13. Learners feel safe and appreciate the arrangements in place to promote their health and safety. TALS carries out suitable risk assessments on learner activities and teaching rooms and also covers other venues where educational

trips take place. TALS focuses well on providing a safe learning environment. The learner induction includes a strong focus on health and safety, including how to stay safe on the internet. Vulnerable learners receive further reinforcement of safety and safeguarding at induction and during their courses. Learner handbooks provide a suitable range of information on equality and diversity and the safeguarding arrangements. Learners are confident about safety and who to consult for support. All learners wear appropriate personal protective equipment when necessary.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

14. Teaching, learning and assessment are good. Tutors generally provide thoroughly planned and stimulating teaching sessions. They plan sessions effectively with particular attention to the individual needs of learners. The better sessions include a wide range of learning activities which keep learners motivated and interested in learning. On ICT programmes, tutors make effective use of interactive learning technologies which enrich sessions. However, on preparation for life and work programmes interactive whiteboards are available in most classrooms but they are not always used effectively to enliven learning. Classroom sessions contain good activities to help develop learners' independent study skills and their confidence in explaining and presenting their ideas. Skilful questioning techniques employed by tutors provide effective checks on individual learning and encourage participation by all learners. On NLDC programmes, teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory. The better sessions are lively and informative and group work is used well to encourage discussion and develop communication skills. Although language, literacy and numeracy skills are included within the programmes, there is insufficient promotion and raising awareness of equality and diversity issues within learning sessions.
15. RARPA was identified as an area for improvement at the last inspection and has significantly improved. The RARPA process is now thorough and ensures close attention is given to learner progress. For most learners, initial assessment is comprehensive. All learners complete a detailed assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills to ensure they have the necessary skills to complete courses at foundation and intermediate levels and to identify where they would benefit from support. Learners applying for ICT courses take a separate initial assessment to determine their level to ensure they are placed on the appropriate course. Learners also complete a self-assessment of their existing skills.
16. The results of initial assessment are used well to set detailed targets for learners to progress. Assessment is timely and thorough throughout the programmes and leads to helpful detailed feedback that assists learners in understanding how they can improve. Individual learning plans are detailed and contain specific targets for learner progress that are understood by learners. For most learners, both the learner and tutor review the effectiveness of learning and the progress individual learners make at each session. Learners take responsibility for their individual progress. On NLDC programmes initial assessment takes place but is not always used effectively in individual learning plans which merely record activities without indicating the progress made. On

these programmes the effectiveness of individual target setting is variable across the three subcontractors, with some learning goals being insufficiently specific.

17. The service meets the needs and interests of learners very well. TALS provides courses in a variety of community venues, often in small groups, and with flexibility over entry dates and duration. TALS offers a range of accredited ICT courses with clear progression routes. Family learning programmes support parents and carers well through courses such as craft-making and phonics, to gain knowledge and skills that directly benefit children. Learning champions work very effectively with residents in areas of high deprivation to identify needs and provide suitable courses. The service develops many courses to meet the interests of specific groups. These include courses run for a stroke rehabilitation unit, a women's refuge and an addiction dependency centre. For example, liaison with parents and carers led to a course in budgeting for a group with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
18. TALS uses links with partners effectively to develop their provision. These links include job centres, housing associations and tenants' groups, children's centres, libraries and organisations that support learning of adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are effective partnerships with Jobcentre Plus which acts as a referral agent. The student services officer and the community development learning champions have been particularly active in developing and maintaining links. Although the service has informal links with local education providers, there is no formal planning structure to support this. There are few links with employers to identify and meet specific local needs.
19. TALS ensures that a good range of support is available to learners. Advice and guidance are provided regularly through suitably qualified and experienced specialist staff. Partners also provide information on courses available to ensure that learners' needs are met. Tutors are very sensitive to learners' support and health issues and provide good additional support and access to specialist equipment when necessary. TALS provides additional ICT support and assistance with curriculum vitae writing to assist learners in job seeking. Learners on preparation for life and work courses are advised carefully about progression opportunities. Careful attention to the key learning processes ensures that all learners know how they are performing on their course. Experienced staff respond quickly to support learners when issues arise. There is very good in-class support for learners where a need has been identified. On NLDC programmes support for learners is satisfactory. The learning champions provide support and ensure that suitable advice and guidance are available on progression opportunities into further training, volunteering or employment. External speakers provide specialist guidance into next steps in training, education or employment. Learners welcome the individual care and support offered by learning champions and tutors to help them achieve their potential.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

20. The council's strategic priorities set a clear agenda for adult learning. The head of service reports quarterly through senior council officers on progress against

key priorities. Good communication within TALS helps to ensure that staff are aware of service developments, understand priorities and are involved in decision-making. Regular, well-documented meetings are used effectively to plan and monitor provision. The service has managed the changes brought about by recent budget cuts effectively to minimise the impact on the learner.

21. Communication between council departments over the community development programme has been less effective. Accountability for the management of community development provision is unclear. The council has not taken opportunities to integrate the planning of NLDC funded and other adult learning provision. The community development programme is inadequately monitored. The council recognises this weakness in management and plans are in hand to resolve this issue.
22. TALS manages the performance of staff very well. Managers make full use of monthly individual meetings and annual reviews with staff to monitor performance against targets and deal with any issues of concern. The improved access to up-to-date data on retention and achievement supports this process well. Appropriate interim arrangements are in place to continue this process following significant cuts in management posts.
23. Managers support staff well to maintain and extend their professional development. Staff training days update staff on service developments and provide training on issues such as initial assessment and safeguarding. Staff keep up-to-date records of their continuous professional development which managers evaluate effectively.
24. While better access to data has supported some aspects of management, the service makes too little use of data to monitor the community development programme, reasons for leaving and progression. TALS has identified through self-assessment the need to improve the collection, analysis and use of data on reasons for leaving and progression and has begun work on improving these aspects.
25. TALS arrangements for safeguarding learners are satisfactory. They meet government legislative requirements. Awareness among staff and learners of safeguarding is satisfactory. All staff are trained to the required levels through a combination of presentations and access to online training modules. The two designated responsible officers have received further training and suitable links are in place with local safeguarding boards through senior council managers. TALS has appropriate arrangements to ensure that checks carried out on all service staff, including enhanced CRB checks, are renewed every three years. A central register is kept, although information related to safeguarding is divided across several lists. Subcontractors confirm that their staff have been subject to CRB checks and have received training in safeguarding. Where a member of staff has not yet received CRB clearance, TALS ensures they are accompanied whenever in contact with learners. TALS focuses well on providing a safe learning environment for its learners. Learners have a good awareness of safe working practices, the arrangements in place for their protection and how to protect themselves. The learner induction includes suitable information to raise

- learners' awareness of the safe use of the internet. Contact details for the two designated responsible officers are contained within the learner handbook and issued to all learners. Learners are not consulted about the development of safeguarding policies.
26. TALS approach to equality and diversity is satisfactory. The service successfully prioritises the recruitment of disadvantaged and new learners. The community development programme targets recruitment in geographical areas of significant deprivation. Many other programmes are also directed towards under-represented groups, such as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and victims of domestic violence. Through induction, tutors ensure that learners understand the service's commitment to equality. However, tutors miss the opportunity to raise awareness of issues relating to discrimination and cultural diversity in the planning and teaching of courses.
 27. Effective use is made of some data to monitor the recruitment of different groups. Managers take action to address any causes for concern. For example, the service has increased the proportion of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, encouraging learners attending discrete provision to progress to other courses. However, insufficient use is made of data to monitor performance on the community development programme or of achievement.
 28. TALS engages well with learners to bring about improvement. Following induction and at the end of all courses staff routinely gather learner feedback. Where appropriate, tutors use group sessions to collect feedback rather than written questionnaires. At one centre, two learner representatives very effectively support the feedback process. Tutors on some courses use regular end-of-session learner evaluations to improve future lesson planning. A complaints and suggestions box is located in each of the main centres. Staff take prompt action to address any issues of concern or proposals for improvement.
 29. The service makes too little use of partners' and employers' views. Partners are invited to respond to self-assessment but the response rate is low. Partners are not invited to give feedback on specific courses developed in consultation with them. There is insufficient consultation with employers.
 30. Thorough and improved quality procedures link clearly to an annual cycle of quality assurance events and to the self-assessment report. TALS makes very effective use of evidence from learner feedback, teaching observations and quality checks on a range of documentation, such as lesson plans, to improve quality. However, the observations of teaching and learning do not always place enough emphasis on learning. The development plan clearly reflects the issues identified in the self-assessment report. The thoroughness of quality procedures has contributed to the improvement of key aspects of provision over the last three years. These include achievement and retention, initial assessment, RARPA and the performance management of staff.
 31. Self-assessment is satisfactory. The self-assessment process involves most staff and draws on a wide range of evidence such as achievement data and the

views of learners and partners. TALS staff contribute to self-assessment and have the opportunity to comment on the draft report. The report is largely accurate in the judgements and grades awarded. However, the section on community development is less accurate. The report correctly identifies many of the positive features but fails to identify some key aspects for improvement. Some sections are insufficiently evaluative. The service monitors the TALS development plan arising from the report very effectively to ensure continuous improvement.

32. TALS provides satisfactory value for money. Good and improving outcomes support this judgement. Resources are sufficient to support teaching, much of which is good. The service has used funds well to improve the availability of information technology equipment such as interactive whiteboards and portable electronic equipment for community use.

Learning for qualifications

Other learning for qualifications provision considered as part of the main findings but not separately graded: retail and commercial enterprise; leisure, travel and tourism; arts media and publishing; business, administration and law; family learning

Information and communication technology

Grade 2

Context

33. TALS provides ICT courses from foundation level to advanced courses. Foundation courses range from six to ten weeks duration and to 30 weeks for advanced courses. Specialist and personal interest courses are provided in digital imaging, eBay and keyboarding. Courses are taught by three full-time and one part-time staff. During 2010/11, 576 learners have taken courses, of whom 177 are currently attending learning. The provision is largest between entry and foundation level.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Overall success rates are high and above national rates. Retention is high on most courses. The success rate on foundation courses has increased significantly from 63% to 88%. Participation in intermediate qualifications has increased significantly and retention is good. Success rates in non-accredited provision are high. Attendance is satisfactory.
- Learners enjoy learning and make good progress. They make very good progress towards the achievement of short-term targets and have clear knowledge of progress. Learners on non-accredited courses and some foundation provision develop good literacy and numeracy skills, some taking specialist courses.
- Learners develop good employability, personal and social skills. They quickly increase their confidence and ICT skills and use these effectively to apply for employment. Learners are motivated to learn ICT skills to improve job prospects and are better able to help children with homework through newly gained internet skills. Learners improve independent living skills through the development of literacy skills and project work.
- Induction to ICT courses provides a strong focus on office safety, reducing health hazards when using ICT equipment and studying safely online. Vulnerable learners receive further reinforcement of safety and safeguarding at induction and during their courses. Learner handbooks provide detailed information on equality and diversity and safeguarding arrangements. Learners are confident about safety and who to consult for support.
- Teaching and learning are good. Tutors plan sessions with particular attention to individual needs and a range of learning activities. They make effective use of interactive learning technologies which enrich sessions. Tutors use good questioning techniques to check learning, understanding and encourage participation. Learners receive good support and learning materials for independent study.

- RARPA is particularly detailed and consistent across all aspects of the provision. Both learner and tutor review learning at each session. Learners take responsibility for their progress and tutors provide constructive and encouraging feedback. Formal reviews of progress are satisfactory although a small minority of reviews are not recorded on individual learning plans. Assessment of learners' work is frequent.
- Initial assessment is comprehensive. All learners take a detailed assessment of ICT skills resulting in a learning plan related to their current operating level. They complete a self-assessment of skills. Literacy and numeracy assessment are provided to ensure learners have the necessary skills to complete courses at foundation and intermediate levels. Initial assessment ensures learners are placed on appropriate courses to suit their abilities.
- TALS provides a good range of accredited courses which meet the needs of learners and employers. Courses and qualifications provide logical progression routes. Functional skills, recently introduced, provide accreditation at entry level. Class sizes are small and courses are available throughout the academic year, increasing flexibility for learners. However, there are insufficient evening classes. Partnerships with other organisations are satisfactory.
- A good range of support is available to learners. Specialist staff provide regular advice and guidance. Partners also provide information on courses available. Tutors are sensitive to learners' support and health issues and provide good additional support and access to specialist equipment. At the St Ann's centre TALS provides additional ICT support to assist learners' job seeking. Attendance monitoring procedures are thorough.
- The management of ICT is good. Communications are regular and curriculum management is effective. Target setting is successful at improving learner success rates. Good use is made of the available resources. At the St Ann's centre resources are good. Data are used effectively to monitor participation and success rates. However, they are not collected and analysed to show progression rates between courses and destinations. Equality and diversity and safeguarding are satisfactory.
- TALS take effective actions to improve quality. Actions taken to improve RARPA have been highly effective. Observation practices are thorough and evaluative and they have improved grades awarded to teaching and learning sessions. However, observations do not cover initial assessment and induction. Quality improvement plans do not include actions resulting from the analysis of success rate data related to the achievement of different groups.

What does Tameside MBC need to do to improve further?

- Improve the reporting of destination and progression data by collecting and analysing learners' progression between the range of ICT courses provided.
- Improve success rates by analysing the performance of different groups of learners, identifying how improvements can be made and setting targets in the quality improvement plan.

Context

34. Currently, 194 learners are enrolled on courses ranging from pre-entry level to intermediate level. Most courses are accredited. Eighty per cent of learners are women and 37% of all learners are from a minority ethnic heritage. Thirteen per cent of all learners have a declared disability. The manager for this provision is responsible for a team of nine tutors who teach courses in eight venues and several local primary schools, children's centres and community centres.

Key findings

- Success rates are generally high. In 2009/10, 82% of learners completed their courses successfully. Literacy and numeracy success rates at intermediate level are particularly high. Work-based provision success rates are consistently high. Success rates at entry level and foundation level for adult literacy in 2009/10 were low at 55% and 57% respectively. This affects approximately 14% of the learners.
- Learners enjoy their courses. They attain good reading skills and produce high standards of work during cooking and gardening classes. Learners on ESOL courses demonstrate good speaking and listening skills. They can clearly describe how much their confidence has improved since commencing their studies.
- All learners feel safe. Good attention is given to the health, safety and welfare of learners during every session. All learners wear appropriate personal protective equipment when necessary, which is checked constantly by tutors. Risk assessments are carefully followed and accidents are kept at a minimal level.
- Teaching and learning are good. Tutors generally provide well planned and stimulating teaching sessions. They initiate good activities to help develop learners' independent study skills and confidence in explaining and presenting their ideas. Insufficient use is made of ILT to enhance the learning experience for learners. The use of interactive whiteboards, available in most classrooms, is not always effective.
- Assessment and feedback for learners are good. All learners and tutors complete an assessment of the learning outcomes following every session. Tutors allocate time in sessions to check learners' work thoroughly and provide detailed written feedback which learners find useful. The RARPA process is thorough and ensures close attention is given to learner progress. The good quality of teaching ensures most learners succeed and enjoy their learning experience.
- TALS provides a good range of literacy and numeracy courses to meet local need. For example, it provides courses in a number of communities with high levels of deprivation, unemployment and poor achievement. Often courses are provided at the request of small groups in the community. For example, a group of Asian women completed a 10-week course in conversational English, which enabled them to manage their daily life more easily.

- Partnership arrangements are satisfactory. There are close working relationships with some local primary schools and children's centres but there are insufficient direct links with employers. Most employer links develop from other training providers.
- Care, advice and guidance are good. Learners on preparation for life and work courses are advised carefully about progression opportunities. Careful attention to the key learning processes ensures that all learners know how they are performing on their course. Experienced staff respond quickly to provide good support to learners when issues arise.
- Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff feel well supported by managers during the recent and significant changes to the provision. Teaching staff are highly motivated and proud of their work. Most of the classrooms are well equipped and fit for purpose. However, at one centre the classrooms are small which restricts the number of learners who can attend each class.
- Safeguarding is satisfactory. All staff have an adequate knowledge and understanding of safeguarding. Safeguarding, introduced well during induction and appropriately reinforced during courses, is promoted through leaflets and on strategically located wall displays.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Teaching sessions are generally well managed and successful efforts are made to include all learners. Occasionally tutors miss opportunities to discuss relevant issues which would help learners to understand the practical application of equality and diversity.
- Involvement with learners is particularly effective. Learners provide regular and frequent feedback on all aspects of their course. However, the views of employers are not used effectively to identify issues. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate, clearly identifying many key strengths and the main area for improvement; however, it is overly descriptive.

What does Tameside MBC need to do to improve further?

- Improve the success rates on adult literacy entry- and foundation-level courses by closely monitoring retention rates and by anticipating and responding rapidly to the changing needs of particularly vulnerable learners.
- Build on the good quality teaching and learning by encouraging tutors to make greater use of interactive whiteboards to enhance the learning experience.

Community development

Grade 3

Context

35. Tameside's community development provision includes targeted projects and learning programmes aimed at hard-to-reach learners and communities. The majority of this work is funded through the NLDC grant. In 2010/11, 257 learners completed community development programmes. Courses range from taster days to short courses and workshops. At the time of inspection, 65 learners were on programmes. Thirty-one per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups and 72% are women. NLDC funding also supports community development through project work.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are satisfactory overall. However, outcomes for some learners and for some community groups are good and lead to individuals directly taking up paid employment and/or work as volunteers. The Working with Communities programme has been particularly successful in enriching communities and changing lives. Insufficient evidence is available to make a judgement on accredited outcomes.
- Learners enjoy learning and develop good personal and social skills, self-confidence and communication skills and feel safe. Project funding to community groups has led to a range of activities which contribute to learners' choices about health and well-being. Recent activities include healthy eating, food hygiene and food safety.
- Learning champions make a good contribution to encouraging sustainable community development within targeted and prioritised communities. The champions work well with other agencies to engage local learners and support them in developing skills and overcoming barriers to learning. The NLDC community grants fund enables a range of groups to develop activities to support community activity and engagement.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are satisfactory. Sessions are lively and informative. Skilled tutors put learners at ease and break down barriers to learning. Group work, used well to encourage discussion, develops learners' communication skills. Initial assessment takes place but is not always used effectively in individual learning plans which often merely log the activities covered during the session.
- There are some good examples of RARPA, particularly through programmes delivered by the Adult Learning Service. This demonstrates significant improvement since the last inspection. Individual target setting overall is inconsistent with some learning goals being broad and non-specific. There is insufficient promotion of equality and diversity through the programmes. Language, literacy and numeracy skills are included as appropriate.
- The provision meets the needs and interests of learners well. The service offers a good range of opportunities for community development, including taster sessions, short courses and funding to support community group activities. Provision is flexible and accessible and offered in local centres across priority

areas. Progression routes are specified but there is no monitoring of destinations.

- The effectiveness of partnerships is good. Community learning champions work collaboratively and productively with a wide range of statutory and voluntary partners. These include children's centres, schools, libraries, the youth service, housing associations and tenants' group. The St Peter's partnership provides the opportunity for key workers and volunteers to come together to provide a wide range of opportunities for residents.
- Support for learners is satisfactory. Learning champions provide support and ensure that advice is provided on progression opportunities into further training, volunteering or employment. External speakers provide specialist guidance into next steps in training, education or employment. Learners welcome the individual care and support offered by learning champions and tutors to help them achieve their potential.
- Leadership and management are inadequate. The community development provision is managed through a number of council departments and the lines of accountability are unclear. Although there is a strong commitment to provide a route back to learning for disadvantaged communities, monitoring and planning processes are insufficiently thorough. Tameside MBC is currently undergoing a restructuring process with significant numbers of staff leaving the council under a severance programme.
- There is insufficient use of data to plan and review the provision of community development. Target setting is underdeveloped. The quality of subcontracted provision is not sufficiently monitored by the service; it is too reliant on the quality improvement and assurance arrangements of the three key providers. Staff are adequately involved in the self-assessment process.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The priority areas for the NLDC fund specifically target disadvantaged groups. Work to reduce any significant variation in outcomes between different groups of learners is insufficient, in particular recruitment of men onto community development programmes. Safeguarding is satisfactory.

What does Tameside MBC need to do to improve further?

- Improve the collection and use of information about learners' progression so that Tameside MBC can make clearer judgements about the impact and effectiveness of community development provision.
- Improve the lines of accountability for the management of community development provision so that a supportive framework is in place that aids communication and improves performance.
- Ensure that the quality assurance processes are effective in driving improvement in community development.
- Improve the use and accessibility of data to ensure that the monitoring of performance of different groups of learners can lead to improved outcomes.

Information about the inspection

36. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the Tameside MBC's quality manager, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the Skills Funding Agency, Framework for Excellence indicators, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's monitoring visit and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
37. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails to gather the views of learners. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had completed on behalf of Tameside MBC. They also visited learning sessions, assessments or progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subjects the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)**Tameside MBC**

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 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	0	0	0	0
Part-time learners	1,300	365	56	879
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2
Capacity to improve	2			
A. Outcomes for learners	2	2	2	2
A1. How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2			
A1.a) How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2			
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?	3			
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	2	2	2	2
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?	3			
B4. How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2			
C. Leadership and management	2	2	2	2
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?	3			
C4. How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	3			
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?	3			

*where applicable to the type of provision

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