

# Worcestershire County Council

## Inspection report

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**Unique reference number:** 55422

**Name of lead inspector:** Cliff Rose HMI

**Last day of inspection:** 18 November 2011

**Type of provider:** Local Authority

**Address:** County Hall  
Spetchley Road  
Worcester  
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## Information about the provider

1. In 2008 Worcestershire County Council's (WCC) adult education service merged with the county's library service to form the library and learning service (the service). Within the service, adult education is managed by an adult education manager supported by 53 sessional tutors, one part-time Skills for Life tutor, a full-time learning support assistant, a neighbourhood learning centre manager (post vacant) and four programme managers. The service's 165 library staff, 21 library managers and six leadership team managers provide further support for adult learning.
2. The service's main office is in County Hall, Worcester. Roughly half the provision is through direct delivery and the remainder through sub-contracted partners. Classes take place in libraries throughout the county, the neighbourhood learning centre, schools and a variety of partners' premises. During the week of inspection there were 996 learners with 589 enrolments on accredited, and 446 enrolments on non-accredited courses.
3. The service delivers Skills Funding Agency (SFA) funded provision in three main areas; information and communications technology (ICT), preparation for life and work and family learning. It continues to provide other courses, mainly in modern foreign languages, through full cost recovery.
4. In 2010, 3.9% of the working age population in Worcestershire was unemployed compared to a national rate of 5.5%. In 2009, 12.5% of the county's working age population had no qualifications compared to 15.1% in the West Midlands and 11.1% in England overall.
5. The following organisations provide training on behalf of the provider under Adult Safeguarded Provision:
  - Arrow Valley Countryside Centre
  - Asha Women's Centre
  - Birchensale Middle School
  - Borrowers Toy Library
  - Buttercup Children's Centre
  - CAWF Community Training team
  - Challenge
  - Charford First School
  - Christ Church Community Project
  - Community Action Wyre Forest
  - Cranham primary School
  - CSV Redditch
  - EPIC Community Interest Company

- Evesham Library
- Gorse Hill Community Primary School
- Great Malvern primary School
- Heronswood primary School
- HMP Hewell
- Holywell Primary and Nursery School
- Homestart
- Malvern Community Centre
- Mencap
- Moons Moat First School
- Nationwide Community Learning partnership
- Orchard Vale and Spring Vale Children Centre
- Peartree Children’s Centre
- Redditch Surestart Children’s Centre
- Sandycroft Centre Redditch
- St Ambrose Catholic Primary School
- St Georges CE Primary School Worcester
- Stourport Primary School

<b>Type of provision</b>	<b>Number of learners in 2010/2011</b>
<p><b>Provision for adult learners:</b>                      Learning for qualifications                      Learning for social and personal development</p>	<p>1,127 part-time learners                      2,499 part-time learners</p>

## Summary report

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Grade 2</b>
	<b>Grade</b>
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2
<b>Learning for qualifications</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Information and Communication Technology for users	2
Preparation for life and work	2
<b>Learning for social and personal development</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Family learning	2

## Overall effectiveness

6. Worcestershire County Council is a good provider of adult and community learning. Provision in all three of the subject areas graded is good. Learners attain the qualifications or learning objectives they set out to achieve well. They gain in confidence and improve their social and employability skills. Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are often interesting, lively and fun. The service uses partners' expertise well to meet the needs of learners and particularly to reach those groups who might otherwise not participate in learning. Learners get good advice on the most appropriate classes for them and on what to do after the course. They get good help in class from tutors and support staff. The service promotes safeguarding and equality and diversity well.
7. The provision supports the council's priorities and is well targeted at the most deprived areas and the residents most in need of educational support. The service meets the needs of other residents by also offering a broad range of non-government funded courses. Having effectively combined its library and adult learning services in 2008 the council now has a single service providing more informal adult learning in addition to course-based programmes. Classes

are in easy to reach venues, taking place in libraries throughout the county and in the many partner organisation premises as well as the one neighbourhood learning centre.

## Main findings

- Most learners achieve their planned learning goals. Many learners take several qualifications and the proportion of entries which result in the successful achievement of the target qualification is high at 84%. However, learners' target qualifications are not recorded on their individual learning plans (ILP) and consequently the service cannot calculate success rates in the same way as other providers. Achievement of non-accredited outcomes is monitored although some targets recorded in the ILP are not sufficiently specific, measurable, achievable, realistic or time-related.
- Learners develop good skills. Those in family learning classes and those with learning difficulties and disabilities show particularly good development of social and life skills. Learners on employability courses demonstrate good understanding of, for example, letter and CV writing. In ICT learners use software with confidence and work to a good standard.
- Teaching and learning are generally good. Lessons are often lively and interesting and tutors make learning fun. Most lessons are well planned although some lesson plans do not sufficiently address the needs of all learners. Tutors are appropriately qualified and relationships between learners and tutors are good. Learning support assistants are used effectively when needed. Venues are secure and learners feel safe.
- Many targets for non-accredited outcomes in ILPs are insufficiently detailed to enable accurate measurement of their completion and the ILP does not include the target qualifications for those learners who choose to take them. Consequently the provider cannot fully assess the achievement of individual learners or groups of learners.
- The range of provision meets the needs and interests of learners well, with a wide range of courses including Asian dressmaking, business administration, family arts and child development. WCC is beginning to work more closely with other local providers to reduce duplication and ensure coherent progression routes for learners.
- The service works well with a wide range of partner organisations to enhance the provision and benefit learners. For example one partner offers courses for homeless young people. Another is based in one of the county's more deprived areas and offers specific courses to meet the needs of that particular community.
- Initial advice and guidance (IAG) is generally good with all learners being offered an individual interview, although the take-up of these is not very high. However, in one centre IAG is particularly effective. In this centre the IAG worker visits every class at the start and the end of the course to offer an individual interview to those who want it. The take-up of these is high.

- The service's strategic direction is good. By continuing to offer a broader range of provision than is funded by the SFA, the service is able to meet the needs of residents more successfully. The coordinated service following the merger of the former adult education and library services in 2008 has considerable operational advantages for both parts and represents an improved service for the county's residents.
- Staff development is good. The service requires its tutors to have qualified teacher status and supports their continued professional development. It targets training workshops at those staff, identified through observation of teaching and learning or other quality improvement arrangements, who would most benefit. Recently introduced tutor mentors also provide direct support to tutors with development needs.
- The service promotes safeguarding well. Its health and safety risk assessment is thorough. Good staff and learner awareness of safeguarding is evidenced by their reporting of suspected incidents. The service identifies the most vulnerable young people and adults, instigates enhanced criminal records bureau checks on all staff in regular contact with these groups and requires all staff to undergo appropriate training.
- The provider has introduced good initiatives to further improve its quality improvement arrangements. Its new quality improvement group is more objective, being drawn from the wider service and chaired by a representative of a sub-contracting partner. A revised observation of teaching and learning scheme is more effective. Staff are more effectively involved in self-assessment following training.

### **What does Worcestershire County Council need to do to improve further?**

- Undertake more effective monitoring of the achievement of learners' accredited outcomes by ensuring that all target qualifications are recorded on the ILP.
- Record the achievement of non-accredited outcomes more accurately through the better setting of planned learner goals, making them more individualised, more detailed and measurable.
- Fully implement the new initiatives to improve quality improvement arrangements in order to maximise their impact on continuous improvement.

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

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

- the helpful and informative teachers
- the small class sizes
- the accessible local centres
- the variety of courses on offer
- the all-female environment
- their increased employability

- practising their writing
- having fun while learning.

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

- bigger classrooms
- better furniture
- more hairdressing blocks to practise on
- evening and weekend provision
- longer classes
- the outdated computers
- more opportunities to take exams
- more variety of teaching aids.

**Summary of the views of partners as confirmed by inspectors****What partners like:**

- the regular contact with the provider
- the opportunities for additional collaborative work with each other
- the enthusiastic support from provider staff.

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

- nothing reported.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

**Grade 2**

8. The service's capacity to improve is good. The county council delivers its adult and community learning provision through a very different organisation to that inspected in 2007. However, despite significant changes within the service it has successfully maintained its inspection judgement of 'good' for overall effectiveness and leadership and management. The judgements awarded by inspectors for the quality of teaching and learning and provision in ICT for users have improved from satisfactory to good.
9. The service has introduced some good initiatives to further enhance its quality improvement arrangements. The arrangements are now more objective and inclusive; however it is too early to judge their full impact as some, such as the broader membership of the quality improvement group, have only been introduced in the current academic year. The self-assessment report is self critical and broadly accurate. Staff involvement in the self-assessment process is good. The service also actively seeks the views of partner organisations and learners in order to improve the provision. The collaboratively produced observation of teaching and learning arrangements have contributed to self assessment and the improved standard of teaching and learning.

### Outcomes for learners

**Grade 2**

10. Most learners achieve their planned learning goals. On many accredited courses learners agree with their tutor how many qualifications they will take. Many enter for more than one. The proportion of these entries which results in successful achievement of the target qualification is good at 84%. WCC managers routinely monitor how well learners achieve these qualifications but, as they are not recorded as targets on learner ILPs, managers cannot easily judge how many learners achieve all their learning objectives. There are no significant differences between the levels of achievement of different groups of learners.
11. The pass rate for the one or more qualifications taken by some learners as an option on some non-accredited courses is high. On these courses there were 314 entries for qualifications in 2010/11 and of these, 87% resulted in qualification achievement. Achievement of non-accredited learning outcomes is monitored through the use of personal learning goals agreed in the early stages of the course. Tutors monitor progress towards these goals. However, many of the learning goals are not sufficiently detailed.
12. Learners develop good skills. For example, learners with learning difficulties and disabilities show good development of social and life skills and improve their speaking and listening skills. Those on family learning courses also develop good social and life skills and improve their parenting skills. ICT learners use the software confidently and some use their newly acquired skills to improve



their applications for employment. Learners enjoy their courses and many comment on the interesting and lively sessions. At 80%, attendance is satisfactory. Courses run for job seekers to improve their interview skills and CV and letter writing skills are effective and have helped many learners into employment.

13. Learners say that they feel safe. The venues used by WCC are generally secure. Most have a reception area to ensure that unwelcome guests are not able to enter the building undetected and some have keypads on the doors. Learners are encouraged to use safe working practices. In ICT the promotion of safe use of the computer is particularly thorough.

## **The quality of provision**

## **Grade 2**

14. Teaching and learning are generally good. Inspectors observed no inadequate learning sessions. WCC's own observation of lessons is effective and the grades awarded match those given by inspectors. Lessons are mostly well planned and effective. In most sessions tutors change activities regularly and make lessons lively and interesting and really involve learners. They use a wide range of good quality, relevant resources to make lessons fun. Learning support assistants are available for those learners who need additional help and support to achieve their learning goals. However, many of the non-accredited planned learning outcomes on individual learning plans are not individualised to meet the specific needs of each learner.
15. Premises used to deliver the provision are well suited to the needs of the learners. Sessions take place in a wide range of venues, some of which are excellent. WCC has chosen many venues specifically to engage learners from the more deprived areas of the county. In some of these areas sessions take place in rooms which are relatively cramped and do not provide a good learning environment. The service is aware that many of these learners would not go to a different venue.
16. The provision meets the needs and interests of users well. The service uses information from a wide range of communities, in particular those in the more deprived areas of the county, to determine which courses to offer. This has resulted in courses which range from Asian dressmaking to business administration. Use of the service's computer bus is effective in ensuring that classes are available to those in relative rural isolation. Recent meetings with local colleges and other providers are beginning to shape next year's provision to minimise duplication and ensure that the WCC provision has clear progression opportunities for learners.
17. WCC works particularly well with partners to enhance and develop its provision and benefit learners. For example, one partner offers a range of courses for homeless people. Another is based in one of the county's more deprived areas and offers specific courses to meet the needs of that particular community. The ASHA women's centre, a women-only environment which helps women

integrate into the community, works closely with the provider in providing a range of courses. Another partner runs courses on behalf of WCC for people with learning difficulties.

18. The quality and availability of impartial IAG for learners is good. All learners can have an interview to help them decide how to use the knowledge gained on their course, for example to enrol on further courses or gain employment. One centre is particularly effective in providing IAG, using a qualified worker to speak to every group and conduct individual interviews when requested. The take-up of these interviews is very high. Learners are well supported by their tutors. Learning support assistants provide help for those in need of additional support.

## Leadership and management

## Grade 2

19. The service has good strategic direction. The council recognises the importance of adult education. Its decision to continue, through full cost recovery, to offer a broader range of provision than is funded by the SFA enables it to meet the needs of residents while maintaining control of the quality of the provision. The merger of the former adult education service with the library service in 2008 and the resultant coordinated service has considerable operational advantages for both parts, encouraging more residents to visit libraries, providing accessible teaching venues in the libraries and readily available face-to-face advice and guidance to existing and prospective learners. The service's vision and priorities mirror those of the council. Elected members and corporate officers appropriately monitor the provision to ensure that its strategic direction continues to align with the council's policies and to meet the educational needs of those residents most in need.
20. Staff development is good. The service requires its tutors to have qualified teacher status and supports their continued professional development. Training workshops are targeted at staff who observation of teaching and learning or other quality improvement arrangements have identified most need to attend. The service has identified a number of tutors who were delivering outstanding teaching and learning themselves and now deploys them as tutor mentors to support others. The service has supported 20 library staff to gain qualifications in preparing to teach in lifelong learning.
21. Safeguarding arrangements are good. The designated safeguarding officer is trained to level 4 and all staff undergo mandatory training to level 1 in the safeguarding of both young people and/or vulnerable adults. In addition to all the service's teaching staff, administrative staff at the service's neighbourhood learning centre, which is attended by young people as well as adult learners, have enhanced criminal records bureau (CRB) checks, repeated every three years. Safeguarding posters are widely displayed and policies are included in learner and tutor handbooks. Both staff and learners report suspected safeguarding issues, which the designated officer and adult learning manager

then investigate and report appropriately. Links with the local safeguarding board and with other agencies are good.

22. The service promotes equality and diversity well. The main priority of the service is to help the most disadvantaged residents to improve their life chances and economic well-being. In addition to its direct provision the service also works closely with partners who either specialise in working with particular disadvantaged groups or who are operating in the most disadvantaged areas of the county. In addition to the more usual equality and diversity training for staff the service has used a bush craft course in a nearby country park as an innovative way to get staff to view everyday activities from a disabled person's point of view. Service run dyslexia awareness courses have successfully attracted attendance from other council staff and elected members. Lesson plans include good prompts on the need to embed equality and diversity in teaching and learning, which has also been a feature of recent staff training.
23. The service uses the council's various resident surveys, as well as its evaluative questionnaires from learners, other forms of learner feedback and suggestions from partners to improve the service. It is also an active member of a peer development group drawn from local authorities on the Welsh borders, which has collaboratively produced an effective observation of teaching and learning system.
24. The provider has introduced good initiatives to further improve its quality improvement arrangements. These include a new quality improvement group drawn from the wider service and chaired by a representative of a sub-contracting partner to replace the previous group made up of adult learning programme managers and which it had identified as being too subjective. Staff involvement in self-assessment is now good and the process now produces termly and annual reports. Quality improvement planning reflects the areas for improvement identified through self assessment and the service's aspiration to be an outstanding provider by 2015.
25. The service provides good value for money. Learners gain good outcomes from low start points. The use of council-owned facilities such as the libraries for the delivery of provision is efficient and economic. The service is committed to the council's sustainability policies.

## Learning for qualifications

### Information and communication technology for users    Grade 2

#### Context

26. Currently there are 142 learners taking accredited courses in information and communication technology (ICT) at entry level 3 and level 1. Of these 27 learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The provider also offers a range on non-accredited courses. Learning takes place within the local community in a range of venues that includes libraries, the service's computer bus, community centres, local schools, village halls, children's centres and community rooms within sheltered housing accommodation. The provision is delivered by a team of 10 part-time tutors.

#### Key findings

- On accredited courses learners achieve their target qualifications well. The service uses two accreditation organisations. In 2010/11 the 291 entries with one of them resulted in 239 achievements (82.1%). The 130 entries with the other resulted in 129 achievements (99%). Attendance rates are satisfactory.
- Venues are secure and learners feel safe. Safe working practices are adopted by learners, and are effectively promoted by wall posters and by tutors in teaching and learning sessions.
- Skills developed by learners are appropriate and their work is of a good standard. Tutors provide feedback, verbal or written as necessary, which enables learners to understand how they can further improve. Learners make good use of newly acquired IT skills to make a positive contribution within their communities and the voluntary sector.
- Teaching and learning are good, with good participation by learners. Lesson planning is detailed and incorporates a range of appropriate learning strategies enabling learners to work successfully at their own pace and enjoy their learning. Extension activities for the more able learners are not sufficiently well recorded on lesson plans. There is good individual coaching by tutors to support learners. Tutors are knowledgeable about their subject areas.
- Accommodation and the range of physical resources available are good. Staff utilise the IT equipment available in the classroom appropriately to support their range of learning strategies and aid learning. The service's computer bus has been used successfully to engage learners in outlying areas where there is little or no internet access.
- Individual learning plans are insufficiently detailed to monitor learner progress. Learner outcomes are not consistently recorded and when used are not sufficiently specific, measurable, realistic or time-bound. The provider is unable to track and monitor learner progression successfully.

- The range of accredited courses at entry level 3 and level 1 meets the needs of the local communities. However, this provision is too narrow and does not allow sufficient internal progression within the service.
- The ICT department has been pro-active in developing a wide range of partnerships which has been used to widen participation in learning. The service continues to seek further opportunities to expand and broaden this area. The department has developed good links with the ASHA women's centre, which works to help women integrate into the community.
- Learners receive good initial advice and guidance prior to enrolment onto courses. Tutors attend a range of open days at library venues that enable prospective learners to have individual discussions on both course content and course suitability. Learners can also access individual course information sheets on the service website, which provide a broad outline of course content. After enrolment learners undertake an initial assessment which includes an evaluation of their preferred learning styles.
- Curriculum leadership and management are good. The approach to course planning is robust. Managers consult with and involve library staff. They systemically gather learner feedback and use it to improve and update course provision. Teaching and learning observations, monitoring visits and annual appraisals help to identify areas for staff development. New staff get an individual tutor mentor for their first term with the service.
- The promotion of safeguarding to learners is satisfactory. All staff have undertaken safeguarding training and undergone a full CRB check. Sessions on safeguarding are delivered to all learners at induction. Learners report that they feel safe when attending their classes in the various learning venues. All lesson plans have an area where any safeguarding considerations for the teaching and learning session can be recorded.
- The departmental annual self-assessment report and quality improvement plan are satisfactory. The quality improvement plan identifies actions for improvement with completion target and review dates. However it does not record current progress for each planned improvement. Staff use team meetings to share good practice identified through teaching observations.

### **What does Worcestershire County Council need to do to improve further?**

- Increase internal progression opportunities between courses by extending the provision to include level 2 accredited courses.
- Increase the effectiveness of the monitoring of learner progress and achievement by recording clear meaningful and measurable learning objectives within the individual learning plans.
- Formalise the use of activities to challenge and extend the more able learners by including them in the lesson plan.

## Preparation for life and work

## Grade 2

### Context

27. The life skills programme consists of ten accredited, year-long courses delivered by four tutors and five learning support assistants. There are 67 enrolments on life skills courses. In addition, there are currently 65 enrolments on literacy and numeracy courses that make up the Skills for Life programme. Literacy and numeracy courses generally last for 10 weeks and are delivered by 11 sessional tutors. Classes take place in 20 community venues across the county including libraries, children's centres, day centres and schools.

### Key findings

- Learners undertake up to four qualifications and a high number of those that enter, successfully gain their qualification. In the last complete year, 80% of life skills learners achieved at least one qualification, and many learners achieved more. On Skills for Life courses, 269 learners enrolled on accredited literacy and numeracy courses. Among them some 106 qualification entries resulted in 98 passes, which represents a 94% pass rate. However, some learners decided not to take a qualification and in too many cases, learners fail to complete the full course.
- The standard of learners' work is good. Learners contribute to discussions and participate very well. The development of their speaking and listening skills is good. Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities on art courses produce good creative drawings. However, the standard of learners' written work on some Skills for Life courses is only satisfactory. Most learners attend well and the average attendance rate is 80%.
- Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities develop their life skills well. They improve their ability to work independently, carry out practical and work-related tasks, and feel more confident and positive about themselves. They make new and valuable friendships. Tutors provide good role models for learners. Learners enjoy their classes and look forward to attending.
- Teaching and learning are good. Classes are interesting and well planned and include themes to raise learners' awareness of diversity and safe working practices. Tutors use a good variety of well selected activities that meet learners' interest and ability levels in mixed ability classes. Tutors plan carefully for learners' individual needs and learning support assistants effectively help the less able to contribute and achieve.
- Tutors use questioning very effectively to assess learners' developing knowledge and understanding. In mathematics classes, tutors positively promote electronic resources to extend learning. Classroom management is good. Tutors maintain effective control of more vocal learners and creatively involve the quieter group members. Staff are well qualified and skilful.

- Classrooms provide an adequate learning environment; however, some lack specialist resources. Most tutors do not have access to, or do not make fully use of interactive learning technology.
- Some individual target setting for learners is weak. Too few targets are sufficiently measurable. In some cases, agreed targets do not provide sufficient challenge for learners.
- The service provides a satisfactory range of courses. Learning is well targeted, relevant to communities and promotes social inclusion. Venues are very well located, improving learners' access to learning, and information, advice and guidance. The service carefully identifies target groups in conjunction with employers, community groups and other learning providers. However, the number of learners and courses are declining. Courses are mainly delivered during the daytime.
- Programme management is good. Tutors are well supported and informed. Staff training and development are good. Staff are well qualified. The curriculum is responsive to employers' needs. For example, a course for hairdressers is helping employees improve their reading and number skills. The service works very well with partners to bring learning to those that may otherwise not participate.
- The service effectively provides a supportive environment in which all can learn and achieve. Discrimination is quickly tackled and resolved. Safeguarding is prioritised. Self assessment takes account of feedback from staff, learners and partners and is used effectively to bring about improvement.

### **What does Worcestershire County Council need to do to improve further?**

- Develop the lesson planning process to include a wider variety of resources, including ILT, and reduce tutors' reliance on worksheets to make learning more relevant and up to date.
- Strengthen individual target setting for learners by ensuring that they are specific, measurable and linked to a greater range of individual learning aims.
- Increase the range of courses by continued close working with partners to ensure that the harder-to-reach groups access learning in a variety of locations and across a wider range of times.

## Learning for social and personal development

### Family Learning

### Grade 2

#### Context

28. In 2010/11, 1,202 learners attended 158 family learning courses in 37 schools, 19 children's centres and 13 voluntary and community venues. All courses are part-time, varying in length from 10 hours to 72 hours. The courses include literacy, numeracy, financial capability, developing children's language, healthy lifestyles, knowledge of the Early Years Foundation Stage and a variety of individual projects to promote learners' first engagement in learning. The courses are managed by a family learning manager and supported by a family learning co-ordinator and 85 part-time tutors.

#### Key findings

- Retention and achievement rates on family learning courses have improved over the last three years and are now good. Attendance rates are also improving, across all programmes. Most learners fully achieve their course and personal learning objectives. Learners speak highly of the good progress they have made. Although most of the provision is non-accredited, literacy and numeracy accreditation is offered where appropriate.
- The development of learners' social and personal skills is good. The learning experiences of most learners has transformed their lives and increased their skills and self-esteem. In particular, learners improve their parenting skills and are better able to support their children's education. Learners demonstrate a good standard of oral work and a high level of enjoyment of activities during lively interactive class discussions.
- Most learners feel more self-confident, especially by improving their literacy and numeracy skills. They are encouraged and often become more actively involved with their children's schools as volunteers, Parent Teacher Association members, dinner supervisors and in wider community activities. For example, a group of Chinese learners became learning ambassadors within their own community, successfully passing on the knowledge and information they had gained.
- Teaching and learning are good. Lesson planning by family learning tutors and early learning years teachers is very effective. Learners value the skilful integration of literacy and numeracy skills with the practical demonstrations of children's activities. For example, parents are shown how to make toys and games for their children. Teachers set useful and interesting homework tasks which parents share with their children to extend both their own and their child's learning.
- Initial assessment and progress tracking is satisfactory. Learners are encouraged to take ownership of their learning through regular self assessment



and to record what they have achieved. Some tutors take the learners' individual needs into account when planning lessons and recording progress, but this practice is not yet consistent across the provision.

- Learners appreciate the use of a variety of learning materials that are stimulating and very well prepared and presented. However, in some lessons there are missed opportunities for learners to use ICT to support their learning and insufficient use of information and learning technologies (ILT) such as DVDs and the internet.
- The good range of provision meets the needs and interests of the learners well. Most learners are young women parents from disadvantaged groups, and often new to adult learning. The service is committed to increasing the participation of male learners onto all family learning courses.
- Good partnerships with schools, libraries, and Children Centres enable highly effective targeting of families in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the county. The good collaborative arrangements with schools, sharing staff for team teaching in particular, benefits learners.
- Advice, guidance and support for learners are good. Learners receive good pastoral support from tutors during and outside lessons and value the help they get. Similarly learners have opportunities to gain advice and guidance from visits by Next Step staff, who provide relevant information, as well as arranging referrals and interviews with other agencies.
- Programme management is good. Quality improvement arrangements have improved with effective monitoring of the subject area's performance. Formal and informal observation of teaching and learning has helped to raise standards in teaching and learning. However, there is insufficient support for and supervision of staff, who work mainly part time and are dispersed across the county. Inspectors broadly agree with the self assessment report.
- Safeguarding is promoted well. Learners feel safe and are aware of WCC's procedure to ensure their safety. Tutors ensure they focus on safeguarding at induction and during the third week of the course to check learners' understanding and identify any safeguarding issues.
- Accommodation is good overall. Venues are chosen with care to suit local communities and their needs. The ASHA Women's Centre in Worcester, for example, caters well to support women wanting to learn in a female-only environment.
- The promotion of equality and celebration of diversity is good. Staff demonstrate a good awareness of equality and diversity issues in their dealings with learners. A culture of inclusivity and respect underpins the work of the family learning team. Learners value this highly.

**What does Worcestershire County Council need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that teaching and learning meet individual learner needs by strengthening the link between initial assessment findings and planning for individual learning.
- Enrich learning activities by providing more ILT resources and opportunities to use them in sessions.
- Ensure that part-time and geographically dispersed teaching staff get sufficient support and supervision to enable them to share good practice with the rest of the service.

## Information about the inspection

29. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's adult learning 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 funding body, the previous inspection report, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
30. 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 the provider. They also visited learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subjects the provider offers.

## Record of Main Findings (RMF)

## Worcestershire County Council

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

Grades <b>using the 4 point scale</b> 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	19+ Learner responsive	Social and personal development
<b>Approximate number of enrolled learners</b>			
Full-time learners	0	0	0
Part-time learners	1000	580	420
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>2</b>		
<b>Outcomes for learners</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2		
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2		
How well do learners progress?	2		
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2		
Do learners feel safe?	3		
<i>Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*</i>	n/a		
<i>How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*</i>	n/a		
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2		
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2		
How well do partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2		
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2		
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2		
<i>How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*</i>	3		
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2		
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2		
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2		
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2		
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2		

\*where applicable to the type of provision

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