

Council of the Isles of Scilly

Local authority

Inspection dates		6-9 November 2012
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory-3
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Good-2

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- Learners attending courses provided by the Council's Lifelong Learning (LLL) service thoroughly enjoy the vast majority of courses. They learn a variety of skills, meeting or at times exceeding their expectations, and outcomes are good.
- LLL is offering an increasingly wide range of interesting recreational courses. It also offers basic training courses to help meet the needs of many local employers and employees.
- Opportunities for such things as apprenticeships, and courses at a higher level of study than an initial class, are limited. This will remain a challenging area given the small number of potential learners and the geography.
- Tutors plan creative and interesting classes. Learners in the small classes respond well to these opportunities and produce a good standard of work in things such as silk scarf production or web design.
- Classes are often imaginatively linked with local resources and interests. This can range from walks around the islands that involve zoology or biology, courses that emphasise the sustainability that is so important on the islands, or bicycle maintenance for the many cyclists.
- LLL is very well managed, at the higher level with clear direction from councillors and directors, but more particularly in the routine work. Here the small size of the provision is a positive aspect with permanent staff working very closely and effectively with every tutor and almost all learners.
- The majority of the learning takes place on the main island. LLL is still developing ways of ensuring that learners from the less populated islands can easily access training.
LLL has taken innovative and helpful approaches to such things as recruiting local tutors as well as working with partner organisations on the mainland to extend the range of courses they offer. The use of technology, particularly internet communication, is effective in the delivery of a minority of courses.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Further work is required to overcome the challenges of scale and geography to enable residents on the islands to have an even wider range of courses, including apprenticeships and opportunities for progression to higher levels of study.
- LLL needs to improve the ways it enables learners from the less-populated islands to access courses.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Offer an even wider range of training and education, including apprenticeships, and provide progression opportunities to enable learners to build on skills they have previously obtained.
- Improve the ways that learners from the less-populated islands access courses.
- Ensure the very comprehensive plans for tutor development, including courses leading to professional qualifications, are delivered in a timely way.
- In preference to using limited resources on an ambitious online learning strategy, concentrate on supporting tutors who are using technology to deliver learning and direct other learners needing online learning to currently available internet resources.
- Extend the vocational training provision by building on the current links with small employers to ensure they are fully aware of the availability and relevance of qualification based courses.
- Carry out a review of the effectiveness of the current advertising and promotional activities to ensure that the community is fully and promptly informed of learning opportunities.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Virtually all learners attain their learning goals in the wide variety of recreational courses on offer. Progress is rapid in small classes with willing learners and enthusiastic tutors. On previously offered accredited courses achievement has been good. ▪ Retention on all courses is very high, as is attendance, although the majority of courses are short or one-day courses. Learners thoroughly enjoy the great majority of courses and are routinely inspired by tutors who are keen to share their expertise and enthusiasm for subjects ranging from history through to bicycle maintenance or intermediate level spreadsheets. ▪ Achievement gaps between different groups of learners are negligible. LLL closely monitors the provision and learner outcomes, and managers and tutors take prompt action on an individual basis when a learner is in danger of not succeeding. ▪ Recreational courses are rightly seen by learners as a significant element of community life and personal development. The short vocational courses have been a great help to learners and local businesses in developing or recognising skills. ▪ LLL is just starting a series of literacy and numeracy classes which should meet the limited demand from the generally well-qualified local population. Seasonal workers and some visitors also attend and benefit from a variety of vocational and recreational courses. ▪ Progression to higher level qualifications is limited, mainly due to the restricted offer from this small provider operating in challenging circumstances. However, once learners have become engaged in learning the majority then progress to other, usually more taxing, recreational 	

courses, or in instances to develop their own business such as silk scarf production. Vocational learners build up a good portfolio of employment-related qualifications.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Learners thoroughly enjoy their lessons, gaining new skills and often learning more than they expected, particularly on one-day courses. Many learners find their new skills useful in running their businesses and in working as volunteers in the community. The lively and creative teaching and learning are reflected in the good outcomes for learning.
- The standard of learners' work is good. In creative writing learners have achieved the confidence to progress from writing short texts to completing award winning one-act plays. Silk painting learners create richly patterned lengths of fabric. Calligraphy learners have produced a high standard of work complemented by watercolour images and web design learners gain the confidence to work independently.
- Tutors are well qualified and plan effectively and imaginatively for their mixed ability groups. They use local resources well, for instance in 'walking for wellbeing' sessions which may incorporate botany, zoology or astronomy as learners gain fitness walking across the islands. A history course has an interesting approach that invites learners to identify a particular topic they wish to explore, followed by intellectually challenging discussions on why the topic may be important and how it will be properly researched.
- Close support and monitoring from managers aid individual tutors to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As well as informal systems, formal lesson observations are effective in monitoring learning. An innovative shared partnership has four different providers moderating a common approach to lesson observations, with routine, robust benchmarking discussions carried out using four-way online conferencing.
- Well managed initial assessment encourages learners to set relevant personal goals and raise their ambitions. Individual learning plans are used effectively in longer courses with a constructive mid-course review. Learners value this support which helps them understand their progress and what they need to do to improve.
- Communications technology is being used increasingly effectively to support learning. A course in Spanish was highly effective with the tutor, based on the mainland, using internet-based communication, a virtual learning environment and an interactive whiteboard to deliver training and engage learners in various locations. Email was used well for marking and feedback in this course.
- Resources are satisfactory with sessions being delivered largely on the main island in a dedicated centre, but effective use is also made of churches, farms, hotels and community venues across the islands. The facilities in the smaller islands are of variable standards, but are adequate for their purpose. Although there is appropriate use of the internet, particularly in the well-equipped main centre, an unreliable and low-speed internet connection to and around the islands can have a negative impact on learning.
- Sustainability, which is particularly relevant to island life, is continuously reinforced in courses, displays, policies and learning. LLL works with every tutor to raise their awareness of ecological issues and opportunities for recycling. For example, the knitting and jewellery classes use a variety of wire and found objects to create artefacts, and in a recent sewing class learners acquired skills to recycle, mend and alter garments.
- Initial guidance is good with learners receiving clear individual advice from managers or tutors. However, progression advice is constrained as local courses do not necessarily provide progression from one level to another.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Classes routinely have learners with a mix of individual needs, and staff are sympathetic to this and effectively meet their requirements through individual coaching or activities at different levels.

The effectiveness of leadership and management**Good**

- LLL has the comprehensive strategic planning usually seen in local authorities but also employs a pragmatic and flexible routine approach to meeting the challenges of providing learning on the islands. Effective guidance comes from actively involved directors and councillors. Expectations and ambition are high, although some initiatives, such as the introduction of apprenticeships, are proving difficult to implement given funding and geographical challenges.
- The small team that implements the strategy has developed into a cohesive, dynamic and dedicated group. They work very closely with all tutors, learners and potential learners to ensure that learning is delivered as effectively as possible.
- Although LLL mainly provides community learning, the service enthusiastically delivers a range of learning and works closely with other island services. Examples range from running a European Social Fund project, mainly providing vocational learning, through delivering accredited courses in partnership with mainland providers, to supporting residents in a care home to remain active through the use of technology-based games.
- Performance management of staff is good, leading to benefits for learners. Permanent staff are subject to appropriate and rigorous council performance management, while tutors are individually well managed, with effective in-class help from managers and a useful 'buddy' system for supporting tutors working over the internet. Tutors also benefit from a constructive system of observations of teaching and learning, rigorous end of course and annual reviews, and an appropriate range of current and soon to be implemented professional training.
- The service has an innovative way of providing courses to engage learners in new activities and meet their continuing requirements. LLL offers potential courses and then agrees times and dates to suit the learners who have expressed an interest in a course. Despite an extensive range of methods to publicise the potential offer, including a very professionally presented local radio show, learners still claim that not all residents are aware of what is available.
- Learners from the islands with smaller populations than the main island have difficulties in accessing some courses. LLL is aware of this and has made attempts to improve boat transport, delivery methods or locations, but has not yet fully overcome this problem.
- A significant change to the way that tutors are recruited, paid and supported has been very successful in providing a greater pool of local staff and thus an extended offer.
- LLL has developed some innovative and successful ways of delivering learning with mainland tutors using communication technology alongside personal support. The service has an ambitious online learning strategy and action plan; however, the reality is that the majority of local learners prefer and benefit from some direct links with tutors. LLL's limited resources are currently more effective in supporting this 'blended' learning than in providing a range of online learning material which may be readily available elsewhere.
- Liaison with major employers is generally very good, with the service meeting most of their needs in a flexible and supportive way. However, at times, the small numbers of learners involved means that training is not delivered as promptly as employers hope. The service is still improving the way it persuades small employers that training can be helpful to individuals and businesses.
- Revised quality assurance and quality improvement systems are now actively enforced and result in routine benefits to learning. Improvement is partly driven through the close interest of senior staff and impressive partnership working with a range of providers on the mainland.
- Self-assessment is rigorous and useful. Increasingly, the views of learners and tutors are being gathered formally, although the small community means that concerns or ideas are usually quickly recognised. Consultants and partner organisations have helped develop self-assessment, along with other policies and strategies, but this support is rightly being reduced as new LLL staff become more confident and experienced in their roles.

- The service is acutely aware of equality and diversity issues, and monitors this aspect at both a strategic and an individual level. Policies, plans, and staff training all have an appropriate emphasis on promoting equality and diversity.
- LLL meets government requirements for safeguarding and provides a generally safe learning environment, although travelling in small boats at the edge of the Atlantic brings special concerns. Council services are properly used to assist in safeguarding policies, training and then support if incidents are identified. Learners are made aware of the opportunity to raise concerns during enrolment, but this is not routinely reinforced.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Council of the Isles of Scilly

Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	2	2

Main course or learning programme level	Level 1 or below		Level 2		Level 3		Level 4 and above	
Total number of learners (excluding apprenticeships)	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+
Full-time	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Part-time	-	-	-	89	-	-	-	-
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	-	-	-	-	-	-		
Number of learners aged 14-16	N/A							
Number of community learners	89							
Number of employability learners	N/A							
Funding received from	Skills Funding Agency (SFA)							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	■ N/A							

Additional socio-economic information

The Isles of Scilly, about 45 kilometres from Land's End, have around 1,800 permanent residents aged over 16. The majority of the population lives on the main island of St Mary's, with a minority on four other islands. Transport between the islands, particularly outside of the summer season, is by infrequent small boats. Transport to the mainland during the winter is by small aircraft, with a boat also running in the summer. The population's profile is slightly older and better educated than that of the mainland, with the vast majority being White. The main industry is tourism, with an influx of seasonal workers as well as visitors. No post-16 education takes place on the islands. The small provision means that no subject area was large enough to be graded on inspection.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Andy Harris HMI
-----------------------	-----------------

One of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one additional inspector, assisted by the Council of the Isles of Scilly's lifelong learning manager as nominee, carried out the inspection with short notice. Inspectors took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and the previous inspection report. Inspectors also used data on learners' achievements over the last three years to help them make judgements. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and online questionnaires to gather the views of learners, tutors and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. The inspection took into account all of the provision at the provider. Inspectors looked at the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across all of the provision.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement
Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Requires improvement
Grade 4	Inadequate

Detailed grade characteristics can be viewed in the *Handbook for the inspection of further education and skills 2012*, Part 2:

<http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-further-education-and-skills-september-2012>

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



Learner View is a new website where learners can tell Ofsted what they think about their college or provider. They can also see what other learners think about them too.

To find out more go to www.learnerview.ofsted.gov.uk or if you have any questions about Learner View please email Ofsted at: learnerview@ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and provider inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2012