

South Tyneside Council Adult and Community Learning

Local authority

Inspection dates		11–15 March 2013
Overall effectiveness	This inspection:	Good-2
	Previous inspection:	Good-2
Outcomes for learners		Good-2
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment		Good-2
Effectiveness of leadership and management		Outstanding-1

Summary of key findings for learners

This provider is good because:

- The proportion of learners who complete their courses successfully and achieve their personal goals is high. They enhance significantly their personal, social and economic well-being and extend their employability and practical skills well. Learners clearly improve their confidence, self-esteem and life chances.
- Learners receive consistently good teaching, learning and assessment which contribute well towards their good progress. Tutors plan sessions well to include a good range of activities that involve learners fully and which have contributed to high levels of motivation and high retention rates.
- During a period of significant organisational change, leaders and managers have provided outstanding leadership to ensure that South Tyneside Council Adult and Community Learning (STCACL) continues to offer high quality education and training courses.
- STCACL is extremely responsive to the education and training needs of South Tyneside communities, hard-to-reach learners and its stakeholders, and has widened participation outstandingly.
- STCACL's subcontracting arrangements are extremely thorough and effective; all subcontractors have fully embraced the drive for continuous improvement.
- STCACL collects data and information about learners' progress and development and uses it to monitor and improve the effectiveness of its provision exceptionally well. The service's self-assessment process and quality improvement system are very thorough.

This is not yet an outstanding provider because:

- Too few learners receive an outstanding quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- For a small minority of learners, tutors do not clearly record individual learning goals, their progress and achievements.

Full report

What does the provider need to do to improve further?

- Continue to improve learners' outcomes, particularly for the small number of apprentices, by ensuring that all tutors record learners' starting points, set them clear and achievable learning goals and record their progress and achievements systematically.
- Increase the proportion of the sessions which are outstanding by ensuring tutors have the confidence and skills to successfully integrate the promotion of equality and diversity in teaching, learning and assessment, and use information learning technology (ILT) effectively to enhance learning further. Ensure all tutors provide detailed feedback for learners about ways to improve their English and mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Outcomes for learners	Good
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- Since the last inspection, the proportion of learners who have successfully achieved their learning goals has improved consistently; it continues to be high. Retention rates on most courses are high. The success rates for learners on foundation, intermediate and advanced courses, which were influenced negatively by the transfer of a significant number of learners from a provider with weak performance, have improved steadily and their progress is now good. All current learners are making good progress from their starting points.
- A high proportion of apprentices, a significant number who have multiple barriers to making progress completed successfully in 2010/11. In 2011/12, this proportion declined slightly due to a small number of apprentices who left their employers as the result of significant personal and legal difficulties.
- Learners, of whom the very large majority have substantial barriers to participate in learning, improve significantly their personal, social and employability skills. They enhance substantially their capacity to improve their life chances and economic well-being. A good proportion of learners on foundation learning courses progress to a paid or unpaid employment or further training. The standard of learners' work is good.
- On family learning courses, learners' success rates on accredited qualifications are good. Parents develop very useful knowledge about the way their children learn, for example, through using imaginative role-play games, and help them to improve their learning and progress in schools.
- Learners on community development courses take part in a wide range of training and development activities and use their newly developed skills well, for example, they use their newly developed writing skills well to address their housing affairs. They become more confident in making better life choices, for example, eating more healthily and managing their finances better.
- Learners with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities develop a good range of independent learning skills and enhance their self-esteem. Through good teaching sessions on budgeting and finance, they become progressively more competent to manage their finance and deal with changes that impact upon them personally, for example, the changes to social security benefits.
- There are no significant differences between the performances of groups of learners. Overall, learners have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities. However, many learners' understanding of equality and diversity issues is not sufficiently in-depth and requires improvement.
- Learners have a good understanding of progression routes to other courses and employment opportunities. The proportion of learners who progress to further courses or employment, based

on the service's comprehensive system for recording and monitoring of learner destinations, is good.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, which has contributed to good outcomes for learners. The consistently good quality teaching and learning, and tutors' high expectations of learners, have led to the overwhelming majority of learners who stay on their programmes and complete successfully.
- Overall, tutors plan teaching sessions well to match individual learners' development needs and extend their knowledge and skills. Learners are highly motivated, contribute well to discussions, and take part in well-considered activities. Most tutors have a good knowledge of learners' starting points and what they can achieve. They are very ambitious about learners' progress and provide the more-able learners with extra work during and/or after sessions. Good individual support and monitoring of learners' progress contributes well to their achievements. Apprentices receive a good quality of on- and off-the-job training.
- The weaker aspects of some sessions are the insufficient use of ILT to extend learners' skills in the use of information and communication technology (ICT), and the insufficiently detailed recording of learners' progress and achievements against clear learning objectives. Tutors are well-qualified and experienced and use their knowledge well to develop constructive relationships with learners. Learners have a good access to a variety of suitable learning resources and activities, for example, the learners on a four-week family learning course making face masks.
- Overall, tutors use initial assessment well to identify learners' starting points and for establishing their short- and long-term learning goals. For example, learners on a short ICT course completed a questionnaire to indicate whether they had previously used a computer and, if so, what they could do. However, tutors in a small number of subcontractors do not always make enough use of initial assessment to identify and record individual learners' needs clearly.
- Tutors provide detailed oral feedback to learners following assessment of their work. Learners find this particularly helpful in identifying what they have done correctly and where they can improve. Assessment practices are effective. Not all tutors routinely provide detailed written feedback to improve learners' spelling, punctuation, grammatical and mathematics errors.
- In many sessions, tutors skilfully link English and mathematics to the subjects being learned and learners' English and mathematical competencies are developed successfully. However, in other sessions, tutors do not integrate English and mathematics sufficiently to extend learners' skills beyond what is required by their courses.
- Additional support for learners is very effective. In many cases, the high retention and success rates is linked to the good support that learners receive. Tutors have an extremely good knowledge of their learners which they use very effectively to determine the level of support required. High levels of tutor support successfully help learners to overcome many barriers to learning, for example, relationship difficulties, financial problems and housing needs. Learners also benefit from helpful peer support.
- Learners benefit significantly from extremely good advice and guidance arrangements. Subcontractors are required to demonstrate that they meet the standards for providing impartial advice and guidance to learners before and during courses and when they have completed their courses. A high percentage of learners attribute their progress and successes to the good advice and guidance they have received at various times during their courses.
- Tutors promote a culture of respect and inclusion in teaching and learning sessions. For example, in a community development session, good discussion of inclusion and diversity arose from studying attitudes to mental health issues. However, the extent to which all tutors promote actively relevant equality and diversity issues which impact on learners is variable and requires improvement.

Foundation learning Community learning

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good with some outstanding features, which contributes to good outcomes for learners. The very large majority of learners who transferred from a weak provider to the service, now progress well into employment or further training.
- Tutors use a wide range of very effective methods to motivate learners to stay on their courses and achieve. In the majority of sessions, tutors plan carefully to ensure that individual learning needs are well met. Tutors are very ambitious for learners to progress and for their future.
- Outstanding teaching and learning in emotional resilience training, a course which increases learners' capacity to learn from their past and plan for the future success, has been extremely effective to improve learners' communication and their reflective practice. This training has improved significantly learners' motivation and their outlook for the future.
- In a very small minority of sessions, tutors do not sufficiently plan for individual learning to develop learners' interest in the teaching topics. Most tutors make insufficient innovative use of ILT to develop learners' skills and confidence in the use of ICT. The service has developed new arrangements to increase the low proportion of learners who benefit from work experience.
- Very effective individual extra support helps learners overcome many complex barriers to learning. Tutors know the learners' challenges well and refer them to appropriate specialist agencies to provide practical advice on financial, housing and other related issues. Many vulnerable learners benefit from subsidised prices for meals and fruits. Good arrangements for extra learning support ensure that learners who require this support, for example, dyslexia and dyspraxia, receive prompt and effective extra help.
- Tutors are enthusiastic, experienced and committed to their work and have the appropriate levels of skills and qualifications. They use the skills acquired as the result of their professional development well to improve teaching practices in sessions. One tutor uses the skills learnt on a coaching course to develop strategies to manage successfully the disruptive behaviour of one learner. Most tutors use assessment processes, including the initial assessment process, effectively to establish learners' starting points and guide them to set clear short- and long-term learning goals and make progress.
- Most tutors provide learners with constructive verbal feedback, which clearly identifies ways in which they can improve. However, not all tutors provide sufficiently detailed and evaluative written feedback on learners' work including the ways to improve their English.
- Most tutors make a creative use of resources to make learning English and mathematics fun and relevant to learners. For example, learners building a wooden store all developed measuring and calculation skills; they gained a clear understanding of metric measurement.
- Learners benefit from highly effective and impartial advice and guidance. They make informed choices about their future options, for example, progressing to other courses or paid or unpaid employment. Specialist career advisors discuss short-, medium- and long-term goals with learners which help them to recognise their aspirations.
- Learners work well together and show mutual respect and understanding. Many tutors promote equality and diversity well in sessions through meaningful discussions with learners, for example, what equality and diversity means in practice and how to learn from each other.

Community development Community learning

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good, reflecting the good learner outcomes. Tutors plan well to meet the needs of individual learners of which a significant number are vulnerable adults. They are ambitious for learners' success and have high expectations of them.

Learners are encouraged to take responsibility for their learning and develop much improved independent learning skills.

- Good teaching has contributed to learners gaining new skills and enhancing their confidence in dealing with difficulties. In one session, a learner overcame his anxiety and communication difficulties in a role-play about offering food service which prepared him better for employment in restaurants and canteens.
- Tutors use an excellent questioning technique; this includes a good balance of challenging questions with sensitive support and good humour, to extend learners' knowledge, encourage independent thinking and good learner participation in session activities. In one session to develop counselling skills, learners reflected well on difficult experiences in their own lives and established a set of learning points for others.
- In a small minority of sessions, tutors do not plan for learners to reflect on their work and miss opportunities to include the less-confident learners in discussions. Tutors make insufficient use of ILT to expand or reinforce learning.
- Good and sensitive additional support has contributed well to the high proportion of learners who stay on their courses and succeed. Tutors encourage learners to work as groups and to support each other. In a sugar sculpture session for learners recovering from mental illness, one learner described how the opportunity to help the less-able learners increased his confidence and self-esteem.
- Tutors are well qualified and experienced; they use their experience well to develop a better understanding of the challenges which learners need to overcome. They develop very effective relations with learners which help them to learn in a safe and positive environment.
- Most tutors use the initial assessment process well to guide learners to develop clear individual learning goals and a good understanding of the importance of achieving the overall learner group targets. Tutors use this information well to monitor learners' progress. One tutor used an excellent review of the progress made both by the overall group and by individual learners to evaluate and set new learning goals for both the group and individual learners. Tutors provide learners with clear feedback on their work and on ways to improve.
- Most tutors integrate English and mathematics skills development appropriately in their teaching, discussions and examples, which help learners recognise the value of developing these skills. However, the tutors in a small number of subcontractors miss opportunities to integrate the development of these skills in the topics which they teach in sessions.
- Learners receive highly effective advice and guidance. Career specialist advisors provide much encouragement for learners to progress, which has contributed well to their high progression rates into other courses and paid or unpaid employment.
- Tutors promote respect, equality and diversity successfully in teaching, learning and assessment. However, a small number of tutors are insufficiently skilled to integrate relevant equality and diversity issues that have an impact on learners in discussions during sessions.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- Highly effective and determined leadership and management have been extremely successful to transform the service while improving the proportion of learners who stay and achieve. The service's management of change is outstanding, particularly during very difficult periods of severe financial cuts; the service has reduced staff numbers drastically from around 250 to 20 and now uses subcontractors to deliver education and training to about 96% of learners. Outcomes for learners and the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have remained consistently good during this period.
- The commissioning and contracting arrangements are well-considered and highly developed, which include clear guidance about the service's demanding expectations. The management of subcontractors and the monitoring of staff performance are very rigorous. STACL undertakes

regular unannounced observations of teaching and learning sessions in subcontractors and acts very quickly to tackle any underperformance.

- STCACL's strategy to develop subcontractors' capacity is highly effective. Managers are well aware of the challenge that its subcontracting model presents; it engages providers that are extremely effective in recruiting hard-to-reach learners and offering specialist and innovative training, but have little experience of offering provision. STCACL works extremely hard to develop the capacity of these subcontractors, such as the capacity of a provider who offers a novel approach in providing learners with work experience through a not-for-profit company.
- All staff, including the tutors in subcontractor organisations, benefit significantly from training opportunities to improve their practice in areas such as assuring and improving the quality of teaching and learning, and the integration of equality and diversity and English and mathematics in teaching topics. However, staff development, especially in the more recent subcontractors, has not increased the proportion of outstanding sessions. STCACL has identified the need to continue to develop the observation of teaching and learning system to include observations of initial assessment and progress reviews.
- Senior managers in the council provide particularly effective support and oversight for the adult and community learning service. The self-assessment and quality improvement processes are thorough, accurate and well implemented. STCACL has developed extensive and thorough monitoring and improvement processes for its subcontractors. They include the systematic monitoring of the impact of provision on learners, monthly meetings of subcontractors, and a scorecard system to monitor all aspects of the quality of subcontractors' provision.
- The self-assessment report is scrutinised thoroughly by external partners and managers to ensure the findings represent the accurate experience of learners. All subcontractors are fully involved in the self-assessment process. All the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection have been tackled successfully. This inspection's judgements agreed fully with the self-assessment report's findings and the resulting improvement plan.
- STCACL uses learners', partners' and stakeholders' feedback particularly well to improve its provision. Less attention is paid by STCACL to collect systematically the view of employers, but recent feedback indicates a high degree of satisfaction.
- The management-information system to monitor, evaluate and improve the quality of provision is outstanding. Data is of an extremely high quality and are used well at all levels to drive improvement. The improvement plan uses the data well to set ambitious and realistic targets; the implementation of action plans is carefully monitored and evaluated by all staff. STCACL pays particularly good attention to measuring the impact and effectiveness of the provision through careful analysis of destination data and self-reporting measures from learners. These indicate the service is making a significant difference to the life chances of some of the most difficult to reach adults and young people in the area of whom most have had disrupted or unproductive education at school.
- STCACL is outstandingly responsive to local need and the provision meets the needs of learners, employers and regional priorities extremely well. STCACL uses extensive local knowledge very effectively to inform and target its resources and capacity to develop provision for hard-to-reach learners and to widen participation. Programmes to enhance the skills of unemployed adults are very effective and offer learners many good opportunities for progression.
- STCACL actively promotes equality and diversity through its subcontractors. Its equality and diversity action plan reflects well the Equality Act 2010 and other legislative requirements. Very effective work with the local Mosque has improved the take up of courses and increased the numbers of apprentices and women learners from the under-represented communities. STCACL recognises the need to continue to provide all tutors with effective training to help them to extend learners' knowledge of relevant equality and diversity issues further through teaching, learning and assessment activities.
- STCACL meets statutory requirements for safeguarding learners. Arrangements to ensure that learners in all subcontractors learn and work in safe environments are good. STCACL arrangement to respond to safeguarding issues promptly is also good.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

South Tyneside Council Adult and Community Learning					
Inspection grades are based on a provider's performance: 1: Outstanding 2: Good 3: Requires improvement 4: Inadequate	Overall	19+ Learning programmes	Apprenticeships	Foundation Learning	Community learning
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2	2
Outcomes for learners	2	2	2	2	2
The quality of teaching, learning and assessment	2	2	2	2	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management	1	1	1	1	1

Subject areas graded for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Grade
Foundation learning	2
Community Development	2

Provider details

South Tyneside Council Adult and Community Learning	
Type of provider	Local authority
Age range of learners	16+
Approximate number of all learners over the previous full contract year	Full-time: 73
	Part-time: 4,624
Head of service	Shashi Chopra
Date of previous inspection	May 2009
Website address	http://www.southtyneside.info/article/8018/adult-learning

Provider information at the time of the inspection								
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	21	0	10	2	0	1	0	0
Part-time	133	390	22	205	0	35	0	0
Number of apprentices by Apprenticeship level and age								
	Intermediate		Advanced		Higher			
	16-18	19+	16-18	19+	16-18	19+		
	40	8	8	13	0	0		
Number of learners aged 14-16	0							
Number of community learners	1,325							
Number of employability learners	0							
Funding received from	Education Funding Agency and Skills Funding Agency							
At the time of inspection the provider contracts with the following main subcontractors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Biddick Hall and Whiteleas Childrens Centre ▪ Blissability ▪ Children North East ▪ Community First North East ▪ E-Achieve ▪ Foundation of Light ▪ Gateshead and South Tyneside Sight Service ▪ Gateshead College ▪ Gateshead Council Learning and Skills ▪ Groundwork South Tyneside and Newcastle ▪ Lifeskills Centres Ltd ▪ NACRO ▪ Northern Learning Trust ▪ Northumberland College ▪ PP Training ▪ Resources NE Ltd ▪ South Tyneside Catering Services ▪ Springboard ▪ Sunderland College ▪ TDR Ltd ▪ The Children’s Foundation ▪ Training in Care ▪ Women’s Health in South Tyneside 							

Additional socio-economic information

South Tyneside is the smallest metropolitan borough in England. The main centres of population in the borough are the towns of South Shields, Jarrow and Hebburn and the villages of Whitburn, Boldon and Cleadon. The borough is the 52nd most deprived area in England out of 354. In May 2012, the total number of key benefit claimants was around 8% above the England average; this percentage included around 5% higher proportion of claimants who received benefit for incapacity, being lone parents, carers and individuals with disabilities. Results from the 2011 census showed that all people from Black and minority ethnic groups, including people who describe themselves as White non-British, comprise 4% of the total population, compared to 14.3% across England as a whole.

Information about this inspection

Lead inspector	Shahram Safavi HMI
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Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and four additional inspectors, assisted by the head of service 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 and employers; these views are reflected throughout the report. They observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. 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 and graded the sector subject areas listed in the report above.

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>

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