

Derbyshire County Council

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Information and communications technology (ICT)
- Arts, media and publishing
- Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)
- Employability training
- Family learning

Description of the provider

1. Derbyshire County Council (the council) is funded by Derbyshire LSC to provide adult and community learning and work-based learning. It also receives funding from Ufi for its three learndirect centres. The provision is managed by the Derbyshire Adult Community Education Service (the service), which is located within the council's department for children and younger adults. The service forms part of the council's cultural and community services cabinet portfolio.
2. In 2005-6 the service ran over 4,000 classes with approximately 41,000 enrolments across all the 15 sector subject areas. Some 48% of enrolments were on non-accredited and 46% on accredited adult and community learning courses. A further 6% of enrolments were on learndirect courses. Programmes were offered in 22 main centres and a further 200 outreach venues.
3. The highest enrolments were in arts, media and publishing, sports and leisure, ICT, preparation for life and work, languages, literature and culture, and in health, public services and care. The service receives separate funding for wider family learning and for family literacy, language and numeracy (FLNN). The latter is delivered in partnership with Read On-Write Away! (ROWA), a literacy initiative for Derbyshire. The three learndirect centres form an integral part of the service and offer provision in skills for life, ICT, and business. The service also provides skills for life provision and other corporate training for the council.
4. In September 2006 the service took over responsibility for the management of the council's Entry to Employment (E2E) programme which is delivered through the Derbyshire youth service. A pre-E2E programme is cofinanced with European Social Fund (ESF) funds. At the time of the inspection there were 32 E2E learners.
5. A central strategic and administrative team is assisted by three area teams and a curriculum management group. The service employs approximately 650 tutors, most of whom are part time.
6. In November 2006 the unemployment rate in Derbyshire was 2.1% compared with 2.3% for the East Midlands and 2.5% for England. According to the 2001 census, minority ethnic communities comprised 1.5% of the population of Derbyshire.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
learnirect	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
learnirect	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory Grade 3
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
learnirect	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
learnirect	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory Grade 3
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Sector subject area

Information and communications technology	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Arts, media and publishing	Good: Grade 2
Literacy, numeracy and ESOL	Good: Grade 2
Employability training	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Family learning	Good: Grade 2

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning
learndirect

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

7. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Learners produce a good standard of work overall in adult and community learning. The development of learners' skills is good on many non-accredited programmes and learners' personal and social development is good. Overall success rates on accredited programmes are satisfactory and improving. Achievement and standards in learndirect are good overall with good progress made by learners on skills for life programmes and satisfactory progress by those on ICT courses. The development of E2E learners' personal and social skills is good. Their standard of work and progression is satisfactory.
8. Teaching and learning are good overall. In the best sessions tutors are skilled at demonstrating specialist techniques, developing learners' confidence and ensuring they are appropriately engaged and challenged. In a minority of sessions learning activities lack variety. Good progress has been made in establishing procedures to recognise and record progress and achievement on non-accredited programmes across the service. In some accredited classes target-setting is ineffective and some individual learning plans are not regularly updated.
9. The council's approach to education and social inclusion is good. The provision meets the needs and interests of learners well. Programmes are effectively targeted in areas of social and economic disadvantage and a very wide range of venues are used. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported. The provision in ESOL is insufficiently developed.
10. Guidance and support are good. Learners receive good initial advice and guidance. Arrangements for the provision of learning support are effective. The service has good links with external agencies, particularly in support of E2E learners.
11. Leadership and management are good. There is a clear strategic direction for the development of the service, which has responded well to new funding priorities. Partnership working both within and outside the council is well established and has led to effective measures to widen participation in learning and in workforce development. Equality of opportunity is good and procedures are well implemented. Standards of accommodation are generally high and centres are well resourced. The implementation of the skills for life strategy is satisfactory. There is insufficient analysis of data by some curriculum teams. The E2E programme is not well integrated. Arrangements to observe teaching and learning are good but insufficient use is made of learners' feedback to support quality improvement.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

12. The council has demonstrated a good capacity to improve. Leadership and management have been good and achievements have improved. The provider has made good progress in addressing the key challenges identified at the previous inspection. The quality of provision has been maintained during a period of significant change as the service has restructured and responded positively to very different funding arrangements. The service has extended its provision to reach more learners who are traditionally under-represented in education and training and engaged in workforce development initiatives. Good progress has been made in establishing the recognising and recording of progress and achievement across the service. The service's quality improvement plan is appropriately detailed and consolidates actions from the self-assessment report and other key quality improvement processes. Senior managers monitor the plan regularly. The service has taken prompt action to review and improve the quality of the E2E provision.
13. The self-assessment process is thorough and accurate. It has been developed since the previous inspection to take greater account of curriculum managers. The 2005-06 report is appropriately critical and judgements are generally well evidenced. Inspection grades closely match those of the self-assessment report. learndirect self-assessment reports have been produced at centre level and reflect many of the strengths and areas for improvement identified. However, the development plans have not been adjusted to take account of in-year data.

Key strengths

- Clear strategic direction for the development of the service
- Good standards of learners' work on most programmes
- Well-established partnership working to widen participation
- Good guidance and support for learners
- High standard of accommodation and well-resourced centres
- Effective measures to monitor and improve teaching and learning.

Key areas for improvement

- Achievement on long accredited courses in ICT
- The analysis and use of learners' performance data by curriculum teams
- The further development and integration of the E2E curriculum.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning
learndirect
Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

14. Achievements and standards in non-accredited adult and community learning courses are good, as noted in the self-assessment report. Retention is good overall and ranges from 89% to 95% across the service's six curriculum areas. Learners develop good skills on most programmes. There are high standards of learners' work in many classes in art, media and publishing and good development of new skills in family learning courses. Learners' personal and social development is good. Learners make significant gains in self-confidence and self-esteem.
15. Overall success rates on accredited programmes in adult and community learning are satisfactory. During the three year period 2003-04 to 2005-06 the success rate has significantly improved from 60% to 71%. It has risen above the 2005-06 national average for external institutions but remains below the national average for adults in general colleges of further education. Success rates for minority ethnic learners are at or above the average performance of all learners. The performance of learners with a declared learning difficulty or disability is in line with the performance of all learners. In 2005-06 there were particularly good overall success rates in literacy and numeracy, in health and social care and in education and training. Actions carried out through development planning following self-assessment have improved performance. Success rates were poor on some long accredited programmes in ICT and in business administration.
16. Achievement and standards in learndirect are good. In quarter 1 and 2 of 2006-07, success rates in literacy and numeracy were good and above national averages. Learners make good progress and many achieve well ahead of their planned end date. Overall success rates in ICT are satisfactory and in line with national averages, but there is too much variation in the performance at the three centres.
17. Achievement and standards are satisfactory on the E2E programme. The development of learners' personal and social skills is good. Progression to further study, training or employment is satisfactory and the standard of learners' work is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning
learndirect

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

18. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching in most classes was found to be good or better and the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has significantly decreased since the previous inspection. These findings correspond to the judgements in the self-assessment report. Development planning following self-assessment has supported improvements in the quality of provision. Tutors are skilled at developing learners' confidence and in challenging learners to extend their understanding and skills development. In the curriculum areas inspected, teaching was particularly good in art, design and media, in literacy, numeracy and ESOL and in family learning. Learners receive good individual support to develop their skills in ICT workshops. However, some sessions have too narrow a variety of activities and rely too much on worksheets. Information learning technology (ILT) is used well in some classes but is need of further development. learndirect learners receive good individual coaching and skills for life learners are provided with a good range of materials to help them achieve.
19. Good progress has been made in establishing systems for recognising and recording progress and achievement in non-accredited learning across the service. A countywide set of procedures and practices have been introduced to ensure that this method of recognising and recording is used in all non-accredited provision. The service has developed appropriate forms which cover the key stages of the process. They have been adapted well for use by different curriculum areas. For example, in some of the sports and leisure classes such as yoga and pilates, the process is used well actively to engage learners in understanding how well they are progressing. In arts there is particularly good use of digital photography to record progress and achievement. Not all tutors have attended formal training in the procedures and practices and there is inconsistent use of initial assessment to plan learning in some arts, media and publishing classes.
20. Although most learners on accredited programmes have individual learning plans some target-setting is ineffective, particularly in ICT and in some literacy, numeracy and ESOL classes. In some cases individual learning outcomes are not discussed with learners. In learndirect some learners are not set suitably challenging targets to encourage progress and learning plans are not regularly updated.
21. The provision meets the needs and interests of learners well. The service uses an extensive range of venues to ensure classes are accessible to learners. Provision is effectively targeted to engage non-traditional learners. The service has responded well to meeting the council's workforce development needs. The range of curriculum and progression opportunities is appropriate in most curriculum

areas. However, ESOL provision is insufficiently developed in some parts of the county and E2E learners have insufficient opportunities for work experience and to develop skills for life.

22. learndirect offers a good range of outreach provision to meet the needs of a wide range of learners, particularly vulnerable groups and those with specific literacy and numeracy needs. For ICT learners the range of provision is adequate and there are suitable plans to enlarge the provision to incorporate national vocational qualifications (NVQs).
23. Support for learners is good. Prospective learners receive good initial advice and guidance from well-qualified staff. The service has appropriate arrangements for providing learning support. There are crèches in nearly every centre, although there has been a reduction in the number of places available. Learners on programmes in literacy, numeracy and ESOL are supported particularly well by tutors, support workers and centre staff. E2E tutors work well with staff in other parts of the council and with external agencies to provide advice and guidance for particularly vulnerable learners. Support for learndirect learners is good. Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities are integrated well in classes in art media and publishing.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
learndirect	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

24. Leadership and management are good. The strategic development and direction of the service to support local priorities are clearly defined. Senior staff and portfolio holders in the council have a good understanding of adult and community learning and are keen to ensure that it plays a key role in realising their vision for the provision of services. Senior managers have worked well to mitigate the effect of a significant reduction in funding by seeking alternative funding sources and introducing economies which have resulted in a less than proportionate contraction of learning opportunities.
25. Actions to widen participation are very good. The service makes very good use of external partners' expertise to build capacity and to engage learners not traditionally involved in learning. Good care is taken to ensure that provision exists in the areas of most significant economic and social deprivation and priority has been given to sustaining personal and community development learning even though some centres are no longer used as a result of funding cuts. There are many examples of working with other organisations such as the probation service to provide skills for life courses, with Connexions to work with disaffected young people, with ROWA to provide courses for travellers, and with members of the College of the Peak partnership to develop traditional rural craft skills. Very good

partnership arrangements within the council have resulted in arrangements which encourage young people and adults to engage in learning. Examples include the provision of learning within libraries or children's centres, the skills for life provision for council employees and the development of NVQs in childcare and early years. Similarly successful partnerships exist with Sure Start and the Bolsover Mental Health Team. There is scope for the benefits of some of these initiatives to be spread more widely across the whole county.

26. The service implements its equal opportunities policies and procedures well. It supports its widening participation agenda by enabling most learners to claim some element of fee remission. The performance of particular groups of learners is analysed. There are good arrangements to support learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The promotion of equality of opportunity within sector subject areas is satisfactory.
27. The service has taken effective actions to improve success rates for learners on accredited courses. Success rates have risen in the three years to 2005-06. However, some low rates remain on some long courses in ICT and business. Actions have recently been taken to address this. Managers have also taken appropriate steps to improve the E2E provision which transferred to the service last year.
28. Resources are good. An ambitious four-year plan to refurbish or build new accommodation is nearing completion. Centres are pleasant and welcoming to learners and nearly all of the accommodation is accessible to wheelchair users. Learning resources are good. The service has made good progress towards ensuring that all staff have teacher training qualifications. Appropriate procedures are implemented in relation to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. Priorities for staff development are clear and good opportunities exist, although the take up by part-time tutors is sometimes low.
29. The service's implementation of its skills for life strategy is satisfactory. There is strong support for skills for life from senior managers. Discrete skills for life provision is good. Detailed planning has taken place for a number of initiatives which will develop skills for life in the other curriculum areas.
30. Progress has been made since the previous inspection in the accuracy of the management information system. Managers have much better access to reports. Although they do not yet have online access to data, managers can readily request information. However, as the service recognises in its self-assessment report, there is insufficient use of management information at programme manager level to plan and improve the provision.
31. The service has been restructured since the previous inspection. The process has taken longer than anticipated. Some aspects of the restructuring are working well. By moving from a structure involving eight districts to three areas, communications are clearer and the management of curriculum areas has improved. The changes to the arrangements for administrative support have been less successful and will be subject to a further service review. Curriculum management and planning are satisfactory overall, although there are insufficient

links between the strands of the E2E programme. learndirect curriculum management is good. There is strong communication between team members and a good sharing of information through regular meetings

32. The service has strengthened its quality improvement arrangements since the previous inspection. A revised quality improvement framework is comprehensive and covers all key aspects of the learners' experience. A quality improvement plan draws together key actions for improvement from the self-assessment report, the observation of teaching and learning and other quality processes. The self-assessment report for 2005-06 is accurate and largely corresponds to the findings of inspectors.
33. The observation of teaching and learning was identified as a strength at the previous inspection and has seen further improvements. The number of observers has increased to include curriculum specialists and experienced tutors. All observers have received training, which includes taking better account of the recognition and recording of progress and achievement and differentiation in classes. Inadequate teaching is re-observed within a month. However, satisfactory sessions are not systematically followed up to ensure areas for improvement are rectified. Most observation reports are detailed and evaluative and take sufficient account of learners' experience.
34. Learners' feedback arrangements have not changed substantially since the previous inspection. Surveys are carried out in the middle and at the end of every course. Programme managers and curriculum managers view the surveys and send them to tutors for action-planning. However, the process is not amenable to detailed analysis at all levels of the service and there is little evidence of the process sufficiently supporting curriculum planning and quality improvement.
35. Overall, the service provides good value for money. Most learners succeed and the recent budget reduction has been well managed, although there is likely to be a small operating deficit this year.

What learners like

- Being treated as an equal
- 'The tutors help us to feel less nervous'
- The good range of courses on offer
- Classes near where they live
- The good support they receive from centre staff
- The different teaching methods used by tutors
- 'Being able to write stories to read to my grandchildren'

What learners think could improve

- The way that the service manages course closures
- Information on why courses have been made shorter
- The timing of some of the sessions

Sector subject areas

Information and communications technology

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

36. In 2005-6 there were 5,821 starts on accredited courses and 299 enrolments on non-accredited courses in ICT. In the first two terms of 2006-07 there were 4,431 starts on accredited courses and 398 enrolments on non-accredited programmes. From September to the time of the inspection there were 643 enrolments on learndirect courses. Courses in ICT lead to qualifications including certificates and diplomas for IT users at levels 1, 2 and 3. Many of these courses last for 60 hours, over 30 weeks. Short, non-accredited courses are offered for those learners with no computer experience, including use of the internet for older learners. Courses are held during the day and in the evening at a wide range of venues including adult learning centres, community centres, village halls and libraries. The curriculum leader works at operational level with three area managers, who are responsible for programmes, and then with the network of six programme managers and around 100 tutors, most of whom work part time.

Strengths

- Good achievement of personal learning goals
- Good support for developing learners' skills in workshops
- Well-designed learning centres with good resources
- Very wide and effectively targeted outreach provision

Areas for improvement

- Low success rates on long courses
- Insufficient variety in teaching and learning methods
- Insufficient use of target-setting to plan learning

Achievement and standards

37. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Learners' achievement of their personal learning goals is good. Last year about 70 % of learners on long courses obtained a pass in one or more course units. On short courses and non-accredited courses learners achieved and progressed well towards their learning goals.

38. Overall success rates on long courses are low. In 2005-06 the success rate was 39% for men and 41% for women. Some learners, particularly those of retirement age, decline opportunities to gain accreditation for their work or are not seeking full qualifications. The service is extending opportunities for non-accredited courses. Success rates on learndirect courses are satisfactory overall and in line with national averages. However, stronger performance at the Clay Cross centre outweighs the poorer performance at the Glossop and Ilkeston centres.

39. Attendance and retention on courses is generally good. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Learners on courses for those with no previous experience of computers successfully improve their confidence in using ICT, for example gaining word-processing skills and using email.

Quality of provision

40. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Learners receive good individual support for developing their skills in workshops. Tutors are skilful at gaining learners' trust and developing their confidence. Most tutors have a good knowledge of individual learners' needs and they use this well to provide personalised support within the classroom. Some tutors use an insufficient variety of teaching and learning methods. There is too much use of self-learning workbooks and the use of e-learning is insufficiently developed on mainstream courses.

41. The ICT rooms in the learning centres are well designed and welcoming. They are bright and well resourced with industry standard computers and software. Some computer rooms celebrate learners' skills with displays of their work. A good range of assistive equipment is available for those with physical support needs. The learndirect room at the Ilkeston centre is too small to accommodate a viable group of learners.

42. Programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners well. There is a very extensive outreach provision in a wide variety of locations accessible by learners in all areas of the county. The locations of these venues have been effectively selected to target and engage priority groups in learning. There are good initiatives to widen participation through strong and innovative partnership arrangements. However, on accredited courses some learners do not want to study all the units needed for the full qualification.

43. Learners receive satisfactory information, guidance and support. They report that information is available from a wide range of sources. Learners take a short assessment of their ICT skills and can indicate if they need help with literacy, numeracy and language skills. Learning support is available when needed. For example, in one workshop two learners appreciated the support from readers. Learners are given an informative induction to their courses.

44. Assessment and the monitoring of learners' progress are satisfactory. The service has systems for recording learners' progress and attainment but these are not sufficiently developed. Although learners have individual learning plans, insufficient use is made of targets to plan learning. In some cases individual learning outcomes are not discussed with learners at the start of the session and reviews of learning are not documented.

Leadership and management

45. Leadership and management in this curriculum area are satisfactory. Communication with part-time tutors is effective. Tutors are provided with useful handbooks for the curriculum area and there are regular meetings to discuss new developments and promote the sharing of good practice. A learning platform is

now in place and is increasingly used to share good practice by tutors. Staff are suitably qualified and there are appropriate staff development opportunities. Co-ordination of the learndirect provision is good. learndirect is used effectively to fill gaps in provision and to provide a flexible alternative to mainstream provision.

46. Systems are in place to promote and monitor improvement. However, insufficient use is made of management data to analyse performance and set targets. A good proportion of staff have been observed and those who needed to improve have been re-observed after support and development. The self-assessment report for 2005-06 is appropriately evaluative. It identifies the strengths but not all the areas for improvement found by inspectors. The service has implemented a comprehensive action plan to secure improvement in the success rates on long courses.

Arts, media and publishing

Good: Grade 2

Context

47. In 2005-06 there were 1,183 starts on accredited courses and 7,089 enrolments on non-accredited courses in arts, media and publishing. In the first two terms of 2006-07 there were 116 starts on accredited courses and 5,023 enrolments on non-accredited courses. Classes are held in a variety of subjects including art, jewellery, upholstery, card making, watercolour painting, clothes making, life drawing, mixed media, pottery, beadwork, decoupage, creative writing, singing, tap dancing and ballroom dancing. Most non-accredited courses run for ten or 12 weeks a term in two-hour sessions during the day and evenings. Some courses such as watercolours are offered as one-day programmes and there is also provision at weekends and during the summer. Courses are held at a wide range of venues including adult education centres, libraries and community centres. An arts and crafts curriculum group leader works closely with three area managers who manage local programme managers and 141 part-time tutors.

Strengths

- High standard of learners' work
- Good teaching and learning
- Good accommodation for specialist courses
- Good use of community venues to provide learning opportunities
- Particularly effective integration of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities

Areas for improvement

- Inconsistent use of initial assessment to plan learning
- Insufficient subject-specific measures to promote the sharing of good practice

Achievement and standards

48. Achievement and standards are good. Learners' work is of a high standard. In art classes learners work with a variety of media to good effect, developing creative and technical skills. In pottery classes learners produce well-designed and ambitious large sculptural work, and in beadwork complex and detailed forms are produced. In dance classes learners develop musicality and co-ordination, and there is a good marketable standard of work in creative writing and upholstery classes. Intricate and detailed work is produced to very high standards in the lace making classes, with learners travelling considerable distances to attend the sessions. Success rates on accredited courses are satisfactory at 74%.

49. Good exhibition facilities are permanently in place at some centres, although there are fewer opportunities for learners to exhibit their work or perform in other public settings. The annual craft and textile day allows many learners to exhibit their own work and be inspired by the work of others. In the week of inspection attendance was satisfactory at 87%.

Quality of provision

50. Teaching and learning are good. Enthusiastic and knowledgeable tutors use well-paced and challenging activities, demonstrate particular skills and techniques well and provide good individual support. In the better classes tutors maintain an analytical approach to the subject, ensuring their classes do not develop a club culture and that learners remain appropriately challenged. Some less successful classes follow set formats that do not cater to a range of learning styles or offer sufficient variety fully to engage and enthuse learners.
51. Accommodation is good for specialist courses. Art classes take place in airy and spacious venues with plenty of natural light. One centre has specialist silversmithing facilities. Pottery classes are well equipped with several kilns, wheels and plenty of storage space. Upholstery classes have access to a lift which can transport larger items to the classroom and storage is available to store large work securely. Dance classes take place in spacious rooms with dedicated dance space, or in some cases a fully equipped dance studio. However, one life class is in a room which is too cramped for the number of learners to work comfortably.
52. Programmes meet the needs and interests of learners well. The provision makes good use of community venues across the county to maximise learning opportunities available to residents. Adult education centres are complemented by the use of community outreach centres and similar venues in the heart of communities. Existing work with mental health groups benefits from the localised placement of classes to enable ease of access for such harder to engage learners.
53. Guidance and support for learners are good. The integration of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities is particularly effective. They attend craft classes such as pottery and decoupage, and are able to engage well in all activities. They receive good support from tutors and their peers, develop skills in their own right and are encouraged to work independently.
54. Initial assessment is not used effectively to plan learning in some sessions. In some cases it is too brief and makes insufficient reference to the subject being taught. However, formative assessment is generally satisfactory and where the process for recognising and recording progress and achievement is used well, the staged process tracks the learner's journey clearly. Many classes make effective use of a monitoring sheet allowing tutors to see at a glance which skills and techniques learners have demonstrated and accomplished. The process for recognising and recording progress and achievement is used particularly effectively in some art and craft classes, with learners keeping sketchbooks and portfolios of work. An upholstery tutor has successfully encouraged her learners to keep design files demonstrating their notes and the progress of their projects through phased photographs, and a pottery tutor regularly takes digital photographs of work as it progresses which can be used as an assessment tool. Learners see the value of these records which reinforce their learning.

Leadership and management

55. Management of the curriculum area is satisfactory. The area managers and curriculum leader have overall responsibility for the curriculum and at local level operational decisions are taken by programme managers. Planning of the provision is largely based around the availability of tutors which restricts opportunities to broaden and develop the curriculum. Some innovative partnership work has been carried out with youth offenders and mental health groups across the county. Arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning are well established. The setting of developmental action points is monitored, but in some cases these are not written by subject specialists and are not focused sufficiently on the teaching of the subject. Although there have been some staff development sessions there are insufficient opportunities for all tutors to share good practice. The judgements in the self-assessment report are broadly in line with the findings at inspection.

Literacy, numeracy and ESOL

Good: Grade 2

Context

56. There were 3,860 starts on accredited programmes in literacy, language and numeracy in 2005-06 and 2,825 starts in the first two terms of 2006-07. All courses lead to qualifications at entry level and levels 1 and 2 and the majority last for 30 weeks. Up until the start of the inspection there were 85 long courses and 15 short courses in literacy, 64 long and 10 short courses in numeracy and 29 mixed literacy and numeracy courses. There were 28 ESOL classes, most of which last for 30 weeks. From September 2006 to the start of the inspection 1,007 learners enrolled on learndirect skills for life courses.

57. Most classes cater for a mixture of learners at entry level to level 2. The service employs one full-time tutor and 82 part-time tutors who teach classes in all of the service's main centres and in a number of community venues in collaboration with partners. A curriculum group leader oversees curriculum developments across the service in skills for life and programme managers with skills for life responsibilities support the tutors from adult education centres.

Strengths

- Good success rates in literacy and numeracy
- Good teaching in most classes
- Good support for learners
- Good management initiatives to widen participation

Areas for improvement

- Poor attendance
- Ineffective target-setting in some classes

Achievement and standards

58. Achievement and standards are good overall. Success rates in literacy and numeracy are good. In 2005-06 the success rate was 89% in the level 1 certificate in adult literacy and 82% at level 2, 88% in the level 1 certificate in adult numeracy and 83% at level 2. Success rates at entry level were slightly lower at 78% for literacy and 66% for numeracy. Standards of work on ESOL programmes are satisfactory.

59. Achievement is good on learndirect literacy and numeracy courses. Success rates were above national averages in both quarter one and quarter two of 2007-08, at 83% and 79% respectively. learndirect learners make good progress and many achieve well ahead of their planned end date. Learners enjoy their chosen course and the style of learning meets learners' needs particularly well. Learners are highly focused and the short course format encourages rapid progress. Those who are able to access online resources at home develop confidence to continue their learning outside the classroom.

60. During the inspection attendance in observed adult and community learning sessions was poor at 60%. Attendance is monitored and there is a clear procedure to follow up non-attendance. Tutors are aware of reasons for learners' absence, but absent learners are not making appropriate progress. Poor punctuality in some classes disrupts the start of the class and planned activities such as introductory group activities. Tutors rarely challenge lateness.

Quality of provision

61. Teaching and learning are good. In the best sessions tutors use a good range of teaching and learning strategies and a variety of learning resources. Many tutors have good session plans which show clearly differentiated activities to meet the needs of a wide range of learners. Clear learning objectives build on and reinforce previous learning. Tutors assess learners' progress regularly and give accurate and timely feedback on progress. In less successful sessions there is too much reliance on worksheets.

62. Support for learners is good. Tutors provide good individual support and learning support assistants are particularly effective. All learning support assistants are qualified to level 2 in supporting literacy, language or numeracy and some have good specialist experience. They are regularly involved in the planning of the learning and most are well briefed on learners' objectives during the class. Learners are also supported well by programme managers and centre staff. Where it is identified as a need, learners receive effective advice and guidance to help them choose the most appropriate qualification or progression route to future employment or further learning. Adaptive technology is provided where needed and learndirect centres provide good information on what is available.

63. The provision meets the needs and interests of learners well. There are good management initiatives to widen participation and facilitate progression. For example, collaboration with the probation service and the library service has resulted in discrete classes in accessible locations. The council has committed to the Get On Local Government Initiative under which classes are provided for council employees by skills for life tutors. Capacity building training for union learning representatives and training and development officers raises awareness of skills for life and facilitates the enrolment of new learners. Detailed plans are in place to begin a project to embed the delivery of skills for life in a childcare course in September 2007 and to begin the process of assessing for skills for life needs in other areas of the curriculum. However, ESOL provision is insufficiently developed in some areas. The service has identified this as an area for improvement in its self-assessment.

64. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall. Many venues are of a good quality and provide a pleasant learning environment. One venue belonging to a partner organisation is shabby and uninspiring. ILT facilities are good in some centres and are used well to stimulate reading and writing in some classes. There is a high demand for use of computers particularly for formative assessment and practise tests. However, in some venues there is insufficient access to ILT. In some classes there are too few working computers, or

computers are old and slow. A small number of tutors are beginning to use the service's ICT-based learning and are encouraging learners to explore and work on these materials.

65. Initial assessment is satisfactory. Results of assessments are effectively shared with tutors. Tutors carry out appropriate diagnostic assessment once learners join a class. Clear records of assessments are recorded on individual learning plans. A separate initial assessment tool for ESOL learners has insufficient focus on speaking and listening.
66. Target-setting is ineffective in some classes. This area for improvement has been identified by the service and tutors are being trained to set more specific targets. Some individual learning plans focus too much on activities relating to qualification achievement rather than incremental steps to consolidate and establish skills. Targets are often not related to reviews or assessment of previous learning and learners are not sufficiently involved in setting future learning objectives.

Leadership and management

67. Leadership and management are good in this curriculum area. Staff are engaged in development projects both locally and nationally. Communication between curriculum managers and tutors is effective. Most staff and volunteers have appropriate teaching qualifications. The observation of teaching and learning process is well established and judgements broadly match those of inspectors. The use of evaluation from learners, tutors and partners to support planning and improvements to provision is satisfactory. The self-assessment process is appropriately consultative and the report for 2005-06 closely corresponds to the findings of the inspection.

Employability training

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

68. The service took over responsibility for managing the E2E programme from Derbyshire Youth Service in September 2006. The programme is delivered in Chesterfield, South Normanton, High Peak and Amber Valley. The maximum size of each group is 12. Currently there are 32 learners on the E2E programme, nine of whom are women. Learners can join the programme at any time during the year and they attend for a minimum of 16 hours weekly. On average, they stay on the programme for nine weeks, although if they are not ready to progress they can stay for a longer period. Accreditation opportunities are available in vocational preparation, first aid and literacy and numeracy. There are also nine learners on a pre-E2E programme that is managed and delivered by the community economic development team.

Strengths

- Good development of personal and social skills
- Particularly committed and supportive tutors
- Good partnership working
- Very good managerial action by the service to improve the provision

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient employer engagement
- Inconsistent literacy and numeracy support
- Insufficient curriculum planning and integration

Achievement and standards

69. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. The development of learners' personal and social skills is good. Many learners report improvements in their self-confidence, self-esteem and motivation while they have been on the programme. They acquire a good range of useful personal and social skills, such as timekeeping, budgeting, team-working and independent living. Learners become more aware of the importance of socially acceptable behaviour and the effect of their behaviour and attitudes on others. Some learners have opportunities to participate in relevant activities away from their training centre. For example, one group of learners attended a residential outdoor pursuits course in the Lake District.

70. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Many learners obtain certificates of achievement in, for example, first aid and health and safety, which make a good contribution to their motivation.

71. Programme outcomes are satisfactory. Between 1 August 2006 and 30 April 2007, 54% of learners obtained a positive outcome on leaving the programme, against a contractual target of 60 % for the year.

Quality of provision

72. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Tutors are particularly committed and supportive. Most tutors have youthwork qualifications and experience and they have a very good understanding of the difficulties learners face. They provide very good support, particularly when learners have personal problems such as homelessness and relationship difficulties. Tutors are skilled at engaging learners not traditionally involved in learning, many of whom have low self-esteem and display challenging behaviour. Some tutors have expectations of learners that are too low and they do not exploit their learning potential. Some individual learning plans contain insufficient information and learning targets are not always well defined.
73. Partnership working is good. Links with Connexions are strong and effective in most areas. Personal advisers are effectively involved in reviewing learners' progress and in advising them appropriately. Learners receive good support from appropriate specialist agencies when required. Very good links have been developed with health workers, specialist drugs and alcohol misuse teams and the social services. Joint meetings with members of the youth offending teams provide good opportunities to evaluate learners' progress and to ensure that concerns are raised and addressed in an attempt to reduce the risk of re-offending. Although jobsearch is a regular feature of learners' programmes, its effectiveness is not monitored for success in obtaining interviews and jobs. The induction process is satisfactory.
74. Some aspects of the E2E programme do not meet the needs and interests of learners adequately. Satisfactory opportunities have been provided for learners on the pre-E2E course to spend one day a week in a work-placement to help them to learn about the world of work. However, many E2E learners do not have opportunities for work experience in realistic working environments in different occupational sectors. Insufficient attention is given to assessing learners' workplace readiness and to ensuring that they are placed in a supportive working environment as soon as possible. The service is aware of the importance of structured work sampling and is developing opportunities for work-placement experience in the council's departments.
75. Literacy and numeracy support is inconsistent, as acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Some learners receive literacy and numeracy tuition, while others can take only literacy or numeracy but not both. Initial and diagnostic assessments are satisfactory but the test results are not always used effectively to plan each learner's programme. Literacy and numeracy are not sufficiently linked to, or established in, vocational contexts. There are too few skills for life accreditation opportunities, including online assessment.

Leadership and management

76. Leadership and management are satisfactory in this curriculum area. The new management arrangements have been very effective in identifying weaknesses in the provision and in seeking ways to address them. Very useful resources, such

as laptop computers, digital cameras and skills for life learning and teaching materials have been obtained and supplied to learning centres. Learners' passports are now systematically audited and helpful feedback is given to tutors. The management information system is used effectively to monitor learners' progress and support needs and to identify those who are at risk of leaving the programme. However, the curriculum is currently insufficiently planned and integrated. There is little linking of personal and social development, literacy and numeracy skills, and vocational development. Although some tutors are taking an introductory teacher training course, there are too few trained teachers working on the programme.

77. Communication between staff has been considerably improved to enable staff to share ideas and good practice. High importance is placed on equality and diversity and these attributes support all aspects of the E2E course. Questionnaires have been introduced to give learners good opportunities to express their opinions about the relevance of the E2E curriculum and the quality of the programme. The E2E self-assessment report accurately identifies most of the strengths and weaknesses in the provision.

Family learning

Good: Grade 2

Context

78. The service offers FLLN courses through a partnership with ROWA, an independent charitable organisation hosted by the council. Wider family learning courses are managed directly by the service. In 2005-06 there were 339 FLLN learners and 1,854 wider family learning learners. In the first two terms of 2006-07 there were 159 FLLN and 1,095 wider family learning learners.

79. All courses are free and are run termly throughout the year. In addition, individual projects and short taster courses are planned in response to community need. Courses are run in locally based centres, school nurseries and children's centres. FLLN sessions are usually held during the daytime, while wider family learning courses are held at twilight, early evenings and Saturday mornings or to suit specific group needs. Over 40% of the overall number of wider family learning learners attend arts and crafts-related family learning courses. Other courses include modern foreign languages, childcare and health-related courses. Accreditation is offered on FLLN intensive courses through national tests in literacy and numeracy up to level 2. There are currently forty-three part-time tutors in the service's wider family learning team and one curriculum group leader.

Strengths

- Good development of new skills
- Good teaching
- Particularly effective partnership working to meet local needs
- Good curriculum management

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient use and analysis of data

Achievement and standards

80. Achievement and standards are good overall. Learners' development of new skills is good. In wider family learning classes children and adults enjoy developing new skills in areas such as modern languages, craft and pottery. Children attending craft classes make a wide selection of items using an extensive range of techniques. Parents gain confidence in providing support for their families. They learn how to teach and support their children by using games, having fun together and giving praise and encouragement appropriately. They make good progress in understanding their children's education. The development of adults' listening and speaking skills is good. Some parents now help in schools or have gained paid employment.

81. Achievement in FLLN is satisfactory. Learners make good progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills. For the current year 25% of FLLN learners have achieved full accreditation and 5% have achieved a unit or partial award.

82. Retention is good and in 2005-06 was 91% on FLLN courses and 90% in wider family learning courses.

Quality of provision

83. Teaching on both FLLN and wider family learning courses is good. Lessons are well planned with clear aims and outcomes in most cases. Courses are practical and productive. Teaching is appropriately differentiated by tutors who are able to cater for a wide range of ages and abilities. In the main, tutors use a good range of well-developed resources, many of which have been developed by staff. However, in some cases tutors rely too much on paper-based resources. Comprehensive initial assessment guides the choice of accreditation in FLLN. Monitoring and recording of learners' progress is good in FLLN but insufficiently established in wider family learning. In some cases activities are listed rather than learners evaluating what they have learned.

84. The provision meets the needs and interests of learners well. There is particularly effective partnership working to meet local needs and the Every Child Matters agenda. Many projects focus on the emotional development of family members through the medium of education. There are an increased number of parenting courses. ROWA and the service work closely with children's centre staff and head teachers to provide FLLN and taster courses and sessions such as healthy lunch boxes and intergenerational first aid in the most deprived areas. Holiday projects and family fun days are offered in the school holidays. ROWA works with 70 of the 107 most deprived schools in the county. In 2005-06 44% of wider family learning provision took place in the most deprived wards.

85. Support for learners is satisfactory. The information, advice and guidance provided to learners is satisfactory. On FLLN courses impartial advice and guidance workers visit the course and inform learners of progression opportunities in the area. Staff identify appropriate internal progression routes where possible. On wider family learning course progression advice is less impartial and often limited to the curriculum area being taught. Wider family learning tutors are less effective at promoting and recording learners' progression routes.

Leadership and management

86. Leadership and management in this curriculum area are good. Managers are very effective in raising the profile of family learning across the county and nationally. Curriculum management is good in both directly delivered and ROWA provision. The service's and ROWA's staff work well together to improve and extend the family learning programme through the use of innovative projects. A diverse curriculum uses family learning in its broadest sense to engage and sustain commitment of both organisations and individual learners. However, there is insufficient use and analysis of data to confirm effective targeting and recruitment

87. of new learners. Although classes are effectively targeted in priority areas, staff at a local level do not routinely conduct a detailed analysis of all participants to monitor recruitment against priority groups.

88. Arrangements for quality improvement are good. All ROWA courses have one monitoring visit from ROWA's staff and tutors are observed by the service managers as part of the observation cycle. Questionnaires are completed and evaluated by both providers. Observation of teaching and learning is thorough. Staff are well qualified and are supported financially to take further training. Most have attended several internal courses. The self-assessment report is appropriately evaluative and closely corresponds to the findings of inspectors.