

North Yorkshire County Council

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Contents

Background information	3
Inspection judgements	3
Scope of the inspection.....	3
Description of the provider	4
Summary of grades awarded	5
Overall judgement	6
Effectiveness of provision.....	6
Capacity to improve	6
Key strengths	6
Key areas for improvement	7
Main findings.....	8
Achievement and standards	8
Quality of provision	8
Leadership and management	9
Equality of opportunity	9
What learners like:.....	11
What learners think could be improved:	11
Sector subject areas	12
Information and communications technology	12
Classical and modern foreign languages.....	15
Literacy and numeracy	18
English for speakers of other languages.....	21
Independent living and leisure skills	24
Family learning.....	27

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)
- Classical and modern foreign languages
- Literacy and numeracy
- English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)
- Independent living and leisure skills
- Family learning

Description of the provider

1. North Yorkshire County Council (the council) is a direct provider of adult and community learning (ACL) across North Yorkshire through its adult learning service. The service is part of the county council's children and young people's service. The council receives all its funding for adult and community learning from North Yorkshire LSC.
2. The council's ACL provision includes all 15 sector subject areas (SSAs) and family learning. Since September 2006, 7741 adult learners have made 13,632 enrolments. The SSAs recruiting the largest numbers of learners are ICT; leisure, travel and tourism; arts, media and publishing; languages, literature and culture; and preparation for life and work. Many learners enrol for more than one course. About 50% of the provision is for personal and community development learning (PCDL). The council uses well over 200 different locations for ACL including schools, village halls, church halls, community centres, public houses and mobile ICT units called Skills Mobiles.
3. Re-structure of the provision took place shortly before the inspection. Until 1 August 2006, 29 district community education managers managed the provision. Now, the seven areas, Craven, Hambleton, Harrogate, Richmondshire, Rydale, Scarborough and Selby are managed through seven area offices. Six managers have responsibility for curriculum management and development and support the two education officers. A principal of the education officers has overall responsibility for the development of ACL across the county. Family learning and the skills for life provision are managed centrally. Managers for this provision are line managed by the principal education officer. The council employs more than 500 tutors to deliver the provision, most of which are part time.
4. North Yorkshire is the largest county in the country and many communities are rural and isolated. However, the county includes large towns such as Harrogate and Scarborough, and a number of market towns. While the county includes national parks and areas of outstanding beauty, it also includes pockets of severe deprivation in some coastal communities. Rural isolation also causes problems for many individuals through lack of amenities, public transport and poor job prospects in many areas. The county has a significant number of people employed in the armed forces.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Sector subject areas

Information and communications technology (ICT)	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Classical and modern foreign languages	Good: Grade 2
Literacy and numeracy	Good: Grade 2
English for speakers of other languages (ESOL)	Good: Grade 2
Independent living and leisure skills	Good: Grade 2
Family learning	Good: Grade 2

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

5. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. More specifically overall, achievement and standards, the quality of provision and the arrangements for guiding and supporting learners are all good. Leadership and management are good, as are arrangements for equality of opportunity and social inclusion. The quality of provision in classical and modern foreign languages, literacy and numeracy, ESOL, independent living and leisure skills and family learning is good. The quality of provision in information and communication technology is satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

6. The North Yorkshire County Council Adult Learning Service's capacity to improve is good. The council has implemented effective actions to improve the quality of provision and this aspect of its work is good. Retention and success rates have improved steadily over the last three years and most inspection grades have improved by one grade since the previous inspection. Most of the weaknesses identified during the previous inspection and the subsequent quality-monitoring visit have improved. The council monitors the quality of provision regularly through each of the seven area offices, although some aspects of quality assurance are not implemented consistently across the county.
7. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. Many judgements made in the self-assessment report are the same as those identified by inspectors. Most SSA grades were the same as those awarded at inspection. The inspection awarded higher grades for leadership and management and equality of opportunity. However, the report is mainly descriptive and insufficiently evaluative. Judgements are not fully supported by evidence in the text. The council has introduced well-designed course logbooks to help tutors to better contribute to the self-assessment report and participate more actively in the process, but it is too soon to judge the effectiveness of these.

Key strengths

- Good development of learners' skills and confidence
- Good success rates
- Much good teaching
- Good range of provision responding to community needs
- Very effective support mechanisms
- Very effective actions to improve provision
- Good range of partnership working

Key areas for improvement

- Inconsistently applied processes for recording progress and achievement
- Underdeveloped systems to provide course information
- Insufficient application of some aspects of quality assurance
- Insufficient use of target-setting

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

8. Achievement and standards are good. Most learners develop good skills and confidence and make good progress. They acquire good personal and social skills and skills for use in employment. Language learners use the target language extensively and develop good listening skills. Literacy and numeracy learners make good progress against personal learning goals and complete challenging tasks. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities develop skills enabling them to progress to further study and, in some cases, employment. Parents and children benefit from family learning. Standards of work are good in many areas.
9. Success rates for accredited provision are good. For 2005-06, the overall success rates were almost 80%. Overall retention is very good at 97% for 2005-06. Success rates have improved consistently over the last three years. In ICT and hospitality, success rates on the short accredited courses are satisfactory. Overall attendance is satisfactory in most areas, but there was some poor attendance in literacy, numeracy and family learning provision.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

10. The quality of education and training is good. Much teaching is good or better. No teaching was judged inadequate. Many tutors use a wide range of strategies to enhance learning. Good teaching resources stimulate learning and maintain interest. Most tutors customise worksheets and handouts to meet a range of learning needs and styles but, in a minority of classes, the individual needs of learners are not met fully. Tutors provide very effective one to one coaching and manage small group work well. Schemes of work and session planning are good in most cases. Course content is reviewed routinely.
11. The recording and monitoring of learners' progress and achievement varies widely across the provision. In ESOL, progress towards clear targets is regularly monitored and learners are given constructive feedback. Some tutors use digital cameras to record achievement visually. In art, learners effectively record their progress and achievement in annotated sketchbooks and reflective notebooks. However, on some programmes, clear and realistic targets to challenge learners are not systematically set. Reviews are not sufficiently frequent and not linked to target dates.
12. A very wide curriculum is delivered across a diverse range of locations. Some provision meets the very specific needs of rural communities, such as dry stone walling. Well-placed community venues and an ICT mobile training bus enables people in isolated communities to access learning. Provision meets the needs of people of many levels of ability and interest. The planned timing and location of

many programmes supports learners' domestic and employment commitments. New provision in hospitality links well to the council's wider strategies for the county.

13. Arrangements to provide specialist support to learners are good. Access and hardship funds enable disadvantaged learners to join courses, take exams and obtain specialist equipment. Specialist dyslexia support is available. Arrangements for providing information, advice and guidance are effective. Fifteen (eleven full-time equivalent) community development workers are very effective in identifying learners' needs. Many tutors provide good in-class support. Currently 47 teaching assistants and support staff provide additional classroom support, but these are not available throughout the county.
14. Pre-course information does not give enough detailed course information for all learners. The prospectus for each of the seven areas provides outline information of the courses, but supplementary information on some individual courses is insufficiently detailed. Some leaflets use vocabulary that is too complex for the targeted learner groups.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

15. Leadership and management are good. The council has made many improvements through a management restructure. This has resolved longstanding structural weaknesses and enabled a better response to the challenges of programme delivery over a wide geographic area. The management of most subject areas is good. The quality of provision across different sector subject areas has improved. Delivery standards are more consistent. Success rates on accredited provision have improved steadily over the last three years and many are now good.
16. Managers and elected members set clear strategic priorities for curriculum development to meet local skill shortages and community priorities. Skills for life and ESOL provision have expanded. More provision takes place in workplaces and public sector organisations. Non-accredited provision has significantly reduced. The priorities of the adult learning service compliment the council's overall planning for the county and link effectively with other council services. The service responds well to demographic and socio-economic changes.
17. The council engages very effectively with a wide range of partners. Particularly close work with the area learning partnership and other providers has reduced duplication in provision. A broad range of focused community development projects successfully engages many local marginalised and disadvantaged groups. Active partnerships with many employers support the provision of workplace skills for life and vocational training.

18. Strategies to widen participation are very effective. Currently 40% of learners in 2006-07 are new to learning and 60% are in receipt of concessionary fees. The recruitment of minority ethnic learners from Eastern European countries has significantly increased. The hardship fund enables learners on low incomes to participate. Learners with disabilities receive specialised equipment in response to need. Equality of opportunity is well promoted through the adult learners' charter. A wide range of data is analysed and used to inform planning and recruitment strategies. Most centres are accessible to learners with mobility difficulties. The council works hard to recruit more men into learning, but their representation remains low.
19. The council meets the five outcomes of Every Child Matters well. Checks by the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) are completed routinely for all council staff who work with children or vulnerable adults. The council has adequate arrangements for recording disclosures. Many staff have taken on-line safeguarding children training. Health and safety arrangements are generally satisfactory. However, some childcare learners began training before CRB clearance was received.
20. The implementation of some aspects of quality assurance is insufficient. Arrangements for self-assessment are satisfactory. These have been improved. The three-year cycle for observing tutors, however, is not frequent enough. Records are detailed and grades compare well with inspectors' observation grades, but judgements are often insufficiently evaluative to support improvement. Learner feedback arrangements are inconsistent. There is no central co-ordination or overall analysis of learners views to inform systematic actions and targets.
21. Targets are set for success rates within the three-year development plan, but none are systematically set for learner performance and teaching for teams or individuals. The quality logbooks have a section for targets covering a range of performance indicators, but these are not set.

What learners like:

- Feeling valued - 'It's the first time the children have come to me with homework instead of going to their dad. That's what I like about coming here.'
- Setting a good role model for children – 'By learning myself, I can encourage my children to learn'.
- Good teaching and support - Superb tutors and supportive staff, who are very professional.
- The relaxed atmosphere in class.
- The mode of learning - 'Learning has changed my life; I have been helped every step of the way.'
- Improved self-esteem - 'I feel free and enabled at age 50, after 35 years of feeling 'thick'.'
- Improved employment skills - 'I like the way numeracy classes help me to cope with demands of tasks at work in engineering.'
- Skills recognition - being able to get qualifications for first time
- Improved confidence - 'This course has changed my life 100%. It's brilliant. I feel like a different person'. (ALDD learner)

What learners think could be improved:

- The range of provision - the provision of Family Learning courses all the way up as children develop.
- Opportunities for learning – 'The availability of longer courses and during the long summer break.'
- The range of academic courses – 'There's only English and Mathematics available, when we reach Level 2, there are no more courses to do'
- The timetabling - 'English and Mathematics are on the same evening – I can only do one at a time'.
- The demands of the programme – 'The amount of paperwork which needs to be completed'.

Sector subject areas

Information and communications technology

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

22. The council has 2939 learners enrolled onto 195 ICT courses. Accredited courses account for just under half of the provision. Programmes include modular courses leading to nationally recognised qualifications up to level 2, internet, and web page design. Courses are offered during the day and evening. Approximately 27% of learners are men and 50% are over 60 years of age. Few learners are from minority ethnic groups. ICT is available in 80 venues across the county, including colleges, schools, local community centres and two mobile ICT buses. Most of the 94 tutors are part time. Area programme adult learning managers manage them.

Strengths

- Good acquisition of personal and ICT skills
- Good coaching of learners
- Very effective partnership arrangements

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient monitoring of individual learner progress on accredited programmes
- Inadequate attention to health and safety of workstations
- Inadequate arrangements to share good practice

Achievement and standards

23. Learners acquire good personal and ICT skills. They are well motivated and gain skills for use in employment and in their personal lives. For example, many learners use skills gained in digital photography classes to edit family photographs. Learners quickly gain levels of confidence, which enables them to use computers without fear, and they gain sufficient understanding to overcome computing problems encountered at home.

24. Success rates are satisfactory and are close to the national averages for short courses in IT. Achievement of learning targets on non-accredited courses is satisfactory. Learners work at a satisfactory pace and approach lessons with purpose. The standard of learners' work and progress is satisfactory. Attendance during the inspection was satisfactory.

Quality of provision

25. Working relationships between tutors and learners are very good. Tutors carry out good one to one coaching, including good demonstrations of software features. At one centre, the tutor emailed assignments to a learner who had missed a session. Small group teaching provides good support. Much course delivery is flexible. Learners work at their own pace and can complete qualifications quickly if they wish. Provision and support for learners with dyslexia is good. Many classrooms are well equipped with interactive whiteboards, data projectors and industry standard hardware.
26. In the better lessons, tutors involve learners well and encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning. However, in other sessions there is too much tutor-led teaching. The planning of individual and whole group activities is satisfactory. Tutors provide adequate feedback to learners on marked assignments to show how they could improve. Learners on non-accredited programmes have measurable and realistic targets, but some recording of progress and achievement is insufficiently detailed to guide learning.
27. Tutors respond well to the needs of the learners. For example, in one lesson specific software was used to ensure teaching and learning was compatible with learners' home computer software. Courses are available in many convenient locations to promote wide participation. For instance, courses held in a childcare nursery offer accredited learning to parents and carers while their children are cared for. The range of programmes offered is satisfactory. Many learners enrolled for basic IT courses progress to higher-level programmes as their confidence develops.
28. The guidance and support learners receive is satisfactory. New learners receive appropriate advice to help them choose courses. Many learners benefit from flexible programmes that enable them to study at times appropriate to their needs. Learners with additional learning needs receive adequate support. Learners initially self-assess their needs and tutors work with them to give support.
29. There is insufficient monitoring and recording of the progress of individual learners on accredited programmes. Individual learning plans are used but they contain only brief detail. Records of achievement similarly contain little detail and many do not include measurable or achievable targets. Progress reviews are held frequently to fully support progress.

Leadership and management

30. Partnership arrangements are very effective. The council works well with employers and other organisations to recruit target groups of learners. Joint projects provide training for older learners and local groups such as the residents of rural communities. A 'REAL IT' at work project provides local employers with effective customised training to meet their needs.

31. Arrangements for self-assessment are satisfactory. However, not all tutors are involved or aware of the process. The self-assessment report broadly agrees with inspection findings, although some strengths were overstated and some areas of improvement not identified.
32. The attention to the health and safety of learners at workstations is inadequate. Many of the chairs at some centres are damaged, non-adjustable or without adequate back support. The quality of the teaching accommodation varies. Some classrooms are outstanding with good quality facilities, but others are cramped. Learners do not have enough space to open workbooks adjacent to computers.
33. Quality Assurance arrangements are broadly satisfactory. However, there are inadequate arrangements to identify and share good practice. Lesson observations are not sufficiently frequent to improve teaching, or to introduce teachers to new developments and be able to share good practice.

Classical and modern foreign languages

Good: Grade 2

Context

34. The council has 1544 learners enrolled on 157 courses. Courses, offered at 40 centres across the county, are available in modern foreign languages, English at GCSE and A level, British Sign Language at levels 1 and 2, and lip reading. Of the courses 36% lead to a qualification. Foreign language courses include Arabic, French, Spanish, German, Greek, Italian, Polish, Portuguese and Russian. There are 67% of courses in the evening. Most learning sessions last for two hours, with courses varying in length from five weeks to 36 weeks. Over 63% of learners are women. There are 80 part-time staff employed. Currently 83% hold a teaching qualification. A specialist language co-ordinator manages the subject area.

Strengths

- Good success rates on accredited courses
- Effective strategies to develop speaking and listening skills
- Good development of provision in response to local need
- Good actions to improve curriculum co-ordination

Areas for improvement

- Weak recording of progress and achievement in non-accredited learning
- Insufficient pre-course information
- Some weak aspects of quality assurance

Achievement and standards

35. The success rates on accredited courses are good. In 2005-06 it was 72%. This has significantly improved since 2004-05 when the success rate was just under 29%. Retention of learners has improved from 73% to 89% in the same period. There are 40% of learners are on accredited courses. In 2005-06, retention on non-accredited courses was satisfactory at 90%.

36. Attainment is satisfactory. Most learners are able to manipulate language structures with a reasonable degree of confidence and accuracy, but there are some instances of poor pronunciation. Written work is of a satisfactory standard. Attendance during the inspection was satisfactory.

Quality of provision

37. Tutors use a very effective range of strategies to promote the use of the target language. They use the foreign language extensively and learners develop good listening skills. Good use is made of audio and DVD recordings for comprehension activities. Tutors expect the use of the target language for classroom exchanges. Learners respond well to instructions and questions from the tutor and other

learners. Good use of images, information and learning technologies, presentations, handouts and authentic materials provide good prompts to develop speaking and listening skills. Imaginative activities extend vocabulary and develop questioning techniques. Good use of pair work and role-play enables learners to contextualise new structures and encourages independent use of the language. Arrangements to support learners with literacy and numeracy needs are effective and enable learners to fully participate in learning.

38. Provision responds well to local need. Courses in eight languages are available throughout the day and evening. Courses are offered at 40 venues throughout the county. There are opportunities for families to learn French or Spanish together. Positive responses to requests from local community groups include the provision of Russian classes for people who support survivors of the Chernobyl disaster. Local council employees receive Polish tuition to help them communicate with migrant workers. Local businesses have benefited from taking part in specialist language training. Enrichment opportunities include taster courses linked to Greek and Russian food and participation in a European project. The celebration of cultural diversity is a constant theme in lessons.
39. Recording progress and achievement in non-accredited courses is weak. A significant number of tutors do not implement the council's standardised process and supporting documentation to record learners' progress and achievement consistently. Just under a third of the tutors are not trained in the process.
40. Insufficient pre-course information is provided to learners and that provided varies in quality. It does not always advise on the levels of skill and knowledge required before joining a course or give clear information about what learners can expect to achieve. Learners do not routinely receive course information before joining. Descriptors in the prospectus are not adequate to allow learners to identify and select the most appropriate course.

Leadership and management

41. Managers have taken good actions to improve curriculum co-ordination. The curriculum manager works closely with area managers and ensures a cohesive and standardised approach to languages across the county, and advises on specialist language issues. Area managers use the curriculum manager's expert knowledge when selecting language tutors. Success rates have significantly improved. A new curriculum framework establishes clear progression routes from beginners' short non-accredited courses into advanced qualifications. Sector subject specialists support tutors with quality improvement issues. Regular meetings effectively disseminate information, provide opportunities to share good practice, and offer subject specific training. However, course reviews are mainly a paper-based exercise. They do not provide tutors with the opportunity to meet to review their courses.
42. Most accommodation is satisfactory and of suitable size and layout, with a range of appropriate equipment. However, the accommodation at one centre has poor acoustics. It is unsuitable for language learning.

43. Some aspects of quality assurance are weak. Feedback is collected regularly and the service responds well to learner and tutor comments. Monitoring of retention occurs each term, but although service targets are set for enrolments, there are none for retention and achievement. The observation process is thorough and completed by language specialists. However, the judgements made are not always evaluative enough to identify areas for improvement. Grades are not awarded until a moderation panel at the end of the observation period. This delays the start of the improvement process. The self-assessment report identified many of the strengths found by inspectors, but not the areas for improvement.

Literacy and numeracy

Good: Grade 2

Context

44. At the time of the inspection, 387 learners were enrolled on 78 skills for life literacy and numeracy courses at 47 different venues, including community venues, schools, libraries, employers' premises and armed forces service bases. A significant single group of learners are school classroom support assistants working for level 2 qualifications. Classes are held throughout North Yorkshire, during the daytime and in the evening. Classes include accredited courses in literacy and numeracy at all levels from entry level 1 to level 2.
45. Most learners attend two hours each week. The length of courses range from 10 to 36 weeks. Learners are able to enrol throughout the year. Approximately 65% of learners are female.
46. There is a skills for life manager, seven skills for life co-ordinators, one based in each area, and 10 substantive skills for life tutors.

Strengths

- Good achievement and success rates
- Good provision of skills for life in workplaces
- Good support for learners
- Very effective centralised curriculum management

Areas for improvement

- Some poor attendance
- Some weak planning for learning

Achievement and standards

47. Success rates for national tests in literacy and numeracy are very good with an overall success rate of 79% in 2005-06. Classroom teaching assistants succeed well in literacy and numeracy national tests. Learners can take tests, when they are ready, at their local centres throughout the year.
48. Learners' achievement in non-accredited learning is good. They make good progress against personal learning goals and complete challenging tasks. They develop skills to apply in areas of their work and family lives. For example, classroom teaching assistants use newly acquired numeracy skills to support children in mathematics lessons. Standards of work are good. Learners produce course portfolios of a high standard at entry level. Learners grow in confidence and self-esteem, some achieving success in skills for life initiatives. Learners progress well, onto other skills for life courses and into vocational and further academic training.

49. Attendance during the inspection was poor. In observed sessions, attendance averaged 56%. In some groups, it had declined significantly during the academic year.

Quality of provision

50. Skills for life provision delivered at work is good. It is particularly well enveloped, and responsive. There are strong partnerships with a number of employers who release employees from work to attend classes. One employer began with workplace numeracy classes and now has literacy and ESOL on-site as well. Council strategies enable all staff without level 2 qualifications to obtain required skills for life support. Course delivery meets the needs of priority groups well. Some community classes start mid-year in response to identified need. Courses are available at a wide range of venues in each area of the county. Good partnership arrangements with local agencies and the armed services ensure that adult learners from service families have access to courses at their bases.

51. There is good support for learners. Tutors respond well to the needs of learners returning to learning. Some classes are planned with crèche facilities, to ensure learners with young children are able to attend. Arrangements for initial assessment of skills levels and diagnostic assessment are good. Learners are aware of progression routes, their long-term learning goals and what is required to achieve them. Tutors take an intermediary role in ensuring learners have access to appropriate guidance. Learning support workers provide good support in class for learners with identified needs. A specialist dyslexia workshop provides dyslexia assessment and support in one area. Learner support funds are used well, for example, by providing transport to classes for a learner with mobility problems.

52. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the best sessions, tutors plan carefully to meet the individual needs and interests of learners. Tutors are enthusiastic and establish good relationships with learners. They respond flexibly to learners' needs and interests and use relevant real life resources. Tutors often develop individual resources to match learner need. For example, number games to demonstrate ratio or everyday items produced from a bag help learners to identify common or proper nouns. Tutors provide good, positive one to one support, taking into account learners' preferred learning style. They are effective in supporting learners with personal issues, which may adversely affect learning. Written feedback to learners in some numeracy groups is very detailed. It promotes independence in learning.

53. Some planning for learning is weak. Targets in individual learning plans are mapped to the core curricula in literacy and numeracy, but in some individual learning plans, these targets are vague with no timescales for completion. In some lessons, teaching does not take enough account of learners with different ability levels. There is little use of information technology. Some centres do not have computing facilities for use by learners. In observed sessions, there was very little use of information and learning technology. In some small group sessions paired or collaborative work between learners was not used. Reviews of

work to monitor individual progress happen infrequently. Some records of work are insufficiently detailed to guide learning and learners take little responsibility for their own individual learning plans.

Leadership and management

54. The centralised curriculum management is very effective. Communication and teamwork between staff are good. Common systems and documentation are used across the provision. Procedures for initially assessing learners' literacy and numeracy skills are completed consistently. Similarly, a standard format of individual learning plans is used across the county. Tutors share expertise and resources during quality circle meetings. These meetings contribute to tutors' continuing professional development and provide a regular forum for updating. However, many skills for life tutors do not have specialist qualifications at level 4. There is no structured plan to ensure all staff gain these qualifications.
55. Skills for life co-ordinators based in each area support tutors well. They provide specialist cover support when staff are absent. Skills for life co-ordinators work closely with local partners and employers. Observations of teaching and learning are satisfactory.

English for speakers of other languages

Good: Grade 2

Context

56. At the time of the inspection, 311 learners were enrolled onto 44 English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programmes. The council provides ESOL classes at adult education centres, community venues and employers premises throughout the county. The four substantial tutors and a number of hourly paid staff work at more than one location. Enrolment of learners onto courses occurs at the beginning of each term and learners usually attend one learning session a week.

57. Learning sessions are available in different contexts including; work, everyday life, community settings and citizenship. All learners work to achieve learning goals agreed with them following negotiation at the start of the programme. Approximately 90% of the learners work towards nationally recognised ESOL qualifications at entry level 3, level 1 and level 2. Entry level 1 and entry level 2 learners mainly work toward individual learning targets. Sessions run for two hours a day.

Strengths

- Good retention and achievement
- Much good teaching and learning
- Good assessment
- Good partnerships that promote work skills
- Very good management of provision

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient use of initial assessment information to plan for individual needs

Achievement and standards

58. Retention and achievement in non-accredited learning are good. In 2005-06, all learners worked towards individual learning targets and retention and achievement were 86% and 94% respectively. Learners now take national qualifications at entry level 3, level 1 and level 2. It is too soon to measure the success rates. Learners show increased confidence. Most significantly improve their ability to communicate more effectively in English in situations critical to their economic and social well-being. Attendance is satisfactory. Absences are promptly followed up.

Quality of provision

59. Teaching and learning are good. Tutors use a wide variety of teaching styles and methods incorporating well-designed activities and resources to challenge and stimulate learners. Classes are well paced and lively and learners demonstrate new skills well. There are good opportunities for learners to interact with each other. Tutors are adept at developing learners' skills within the context of topics relevant to their everyday lives. Tutors have a good understanding of learners' difficulties in grasping concepts. They provide clear explanations and use adapted teaching methods to help learners fully understand.
60. Assessment of learners' work and progress is good. Procedures are robust and frequently test learners' reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills. The findings are used by tutors to negotiate detailed individual learning plans with learners. Most learners are well aware of their learning targets and the course requirements. Tutors assess learners' work and give constructive feedback on it during each session as well as giving feedback on learners' progress towards learning goals. Homework is an integral part of the course and routinely set and assessed. Thorough formal assessment takes place at the end of each term.
61. Learning resources are satisfactory. Paper-based learning resources are of a good standard. Learners are encouraged to practice new skills at home using a range of learning materials provided by tutors. Teaching accommodation is satisfactory and welcoming to learners. Support for learners is satisfactory. Tutors show knowledge and understanding of learners' strengths and weaknesses and support them accordingly.
62. Initial assessment information is not always used well to plan lessons for individual needs. In the best lessons observed, tutors planned carefully for the course and for individual learner needs. However, many tutors plan lessons with learning outcomes focused on the needs of the course rather than on the learning needs of each learner. In such cases, although planning for individual needs includes a range of different activities around the lesson theme, progression steps are insufficiently graduated and extension activities are not provided. There is not enough use of information and learning technology in some sessions. Planning activities to enable learners to use computers to promote independent learning skills is not routine.

Leadership and management

63. Good partnerships promote effective work skills. Employers are actively involved with the development and content of courses. They identify clear benefits of learning in the workplace. For example, one employer used his own improved understanding of language development to analyse the language level of instructions for all machines used in the factory. He used employee/learners' assessed language level to match them to machines at the correct level of complexity. As employees grow in confidence, they move to a higher-level process. Another employer needed employees to improve their skills in measurement. This was built into the course. Significant production cost savings

were made. The amount of waste produce decreased as employees improved their language, number and work skills. Information about learner progression between levels is used to develop the programme.

64. Management of the provision is very good. Strategic planning is good. Local plans are effective in supporting national and local strategies. Management structures are more streamlined following the recent restructuring of the skills for life team. Lines of management and communication are clear and delivery of learning more focused on language for employability. The council has a whole organisation approach skills for life strategy. All tutors are provided with an electronic copy of all standard policy and procedure documents, analysis reports of course data, and information on training opportunities. The new course logbook is proving an important development to ensure consistency. It contributes well to the whole organisation approach. Quality assurance is satisfactory. The ESOL co-ordinator routinely quality assures schemes of work, lesson plans and quality of learners work. Staff contribute to the self-assessment report but the report is not sufficiently evaluative.
65. All tutors are appropriately qualified. All have attended core curriculum training and plan to undertake teaching qualifications and specialist Level 4 qualifications. A robust teaching and learning observation programme links to appraisal.
66. North Yorkshire County Council has successfully widened participation. Recruitment has increased and more learners are able to access provision. The council successfully promotes equality and diversity and gives learners good opportunities to develop their potential. Many learning activities promote cultural awareness and respect for learners' cultural and religious backgrounds is promoted through schemes of work. All staff receive suitable training in equality of opportunity and disability awareness.

Independent living and leisure skills

Good: Grade 2

Context

67. The council provides 108 courses for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. At the time of inspection there were 1,039 registered on these courses. Programmes are a combination of vocational and non-vocational courses in subjects such as art and crafts, music, life skills, cooking, literacy and numeracy, pre-work courses, and natural therapies. Just over 50% of the provision is accredited. Courses are available across the county in 40 different venues. Most classes are during the day and taught by 40 tutors. Further learning support is provided by 33 teaching assistants. The programme is co-ordinated by a manager for supported learning.

Strengths

- High levels of retention and achievement
- Good development of personal skills
- Stimulating teaching meeting the needs of individual learners
- Particularly good support for learners
- Good use of feedback to improve and extend the range of courses
- Very effective work with wide range of support agencies

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient use of information and learning technology
- Insufficient clarity of the roles and responsibilities for managing the learning environment
- Infrequent lesson observations to improve the quality of teaching

Achievement and standards

68. Overall retention and achievement on non-accredited courses are very good. All learners are retained and successful in achieving their individual learning goals. Learners make good progress and improve their skills and competence.

69. Learners develop high levels of personal skills such as confidence, self-esteem, and teamwork, the ability to work independently and in using their own initiative. These skills help learners to improve their personal lives, as learners improve their personal effectiveness to a level at which they can consider progression opportunities for future study and, in some cases, employment.

70. Success rates on accredited courses are satisfactory with 67% of learners achieving their accreditation. This represents almost all learners who complete accredited courses.

Quality of provision

71. Teaching is stimulating and meets the needs of individual learners. Most of the teaching observed by inspectors was good or better. Schemes of work and detailed lesson plans help to structure the learning activities well. In one example, careful and considerate planning detailed the very specific needs of a learner following bereavement. Individual learning needs are carefully considered and skilful adaptations to teaching styles and strategies to promote recall, such as displays of work, ensure that all learners enjoy a positive experience.
72. In many classes, good use of resources stimulates learning. The impact of good use of visual resources was significant for the many learners with very limited communication skills or physical movement. In all classes, there was co-operation and partnership working between the tutor and the teaching assistant. This was particularly effective when the tutor and the teaching assistant delivered the session topics jointly. In performing arts this partnership working enabled all learners to progress well regardless of ability as their learning needs were fully supported.
73. There is particularly good support for learners. Many tutors use their experience and subject knowledge in combination with a good understanding of learners' needs to motivate and encourage learners. Learners are treated with respect and staff make great efforts to ensure barriers to learning are minimised. The effective use of tone of voice and different teaching styles provides the gentle encouragement needed to extend concentration spans and motivate learners to succeed.
74. Initial assessment is satisfactory. All newly enrolled learners are assessed for literacy, numeracy and sensory levels, and findings are used to plan additional support. The progress made by learners is effectively monitored and recorded. Learners' work is routinely assessed throughout the course. Review sessions are held with each learner to evaluate the overall progress being made. Tutors record learners' progress visually making good use of digital photography.
75. The programme of courses available to learners is comprehensive. There is a good range of activities to study in locations across the county. Good use is made of community facilities to ensure learners can attend classes within their local area.
76. In some classes, there is insufficient use of information and learning technology to motivate learners and develop independent learning. Some learning centres are not equipped with electronic learning resources, but in some classes where equipment is available, staff do not use it.
77. There is insufficient clarity of roles and responsibility in managing the learning environment. Care assistants accompany some learners, and many take an active and constructive role in the sessions. However, in some instances there is little co-operation. In a small number of cases, teaching areas that have are not properly prepared for the learning activity. Some care centre staff do not always

clean dining tables well enough for learning activities and some access routes are obstructed.

Leadership and management

78. Leadership and management are good. An extensive programme of courses meets the needs and interests of learners located across the county. Partnership working with a range of external organisations and support agencies is particularly effective. The involvement of these organisations frequently helps learners to overcome barriers to participation and making progress. Managers collect and analyse data effectively to monitor the provision. Staff are appropriately qualified. Regular meetings are held to inform and update staff in all matters. Training and development for teaching staff is satisfactory. However, some staff are not fully prepared to implement the new documentation developed for some processes.
79. Good use is made of learner feedback to improve the quality of provision. Surveys of learners' opinion provide information, which is analysed and used to review procedures and make changes for improvement. Good use is made of feedback from carers and parents. Arrangements for self-assessment are satisfactory and feedback from learners and staff informs judgements.
80. Observations of teaching and learning are infrequent. Individual tutors may be observed only once in three years. This is not frequent enough to assure quality or bring about further improvements. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Learners and staff work in an environment in which they are treated with dignity and respect.

Family learning

Good: Grade 2

Context

81. At the time of the inspection there were 192 learners attending 24 courses. The council has provided 83 family learning courses to 683 learners since September 2006. Currently 55% of courses have focused on family literacy and numeracy and learners have worked towards national tests at level 1 or 2. The remainder of courses are wider family learning courses, some of which are accredited. Courses vary in length from 3-hour tasters to 30 weeks. Most of the learners are women, 2% are from minority ethnic groups and 6% of learners have disclosed a learning difficulty or disability. More than 72% of learners this year are new to learning. Courses are taught in 24 different venues by nine tutors. Almost all classes are during school hours. Most classes are held in schools, but venues also included children's day-centres, a village hall, leisure centres and an army training college. A family learning manager manages the provision centrally, supported by area based family learning workers.

Strengths

- Very high success rates in accredited courses
- Good progression
- Good teaching and learning
- Good strategic direction

Areas for improvement

- Inadequate recording of progress and achievement in non-accredited learning

Achievement and standards

82. Success rates on accredited family learning courses are very good and these have shown a steady rise over the past three years. In 2005-06, 90% of the family learners who started courses leading to national literacy or numeracy tests or portfolio-based accreditation were successful.

83. Local schools identify significant improvements in reading skills for children whose parents attend classes. Improvements begin after quite short periods of family learning activity. Some children who showed early signs of disruptive behaviour are now relating to adults much better since their parents have started working with them at home through family learning.

84. Learners' progression is good. Many learners start family learning with low skills levels and significant barriers to learning. Many improve in self-confidence and gain skills which motivate them to enrol on higher level courses and seek employment. They are very enthusiastic about developing their own skills and those of their children. Many learners progress onto skills for life and IT

programmes. Several learners have successfully trained as teaching assistants or childminders and subsequently gained employment in local schools.

85. Although few learners withdraw from courses without good reason, regular attendance is low in some classes.

Quality of provision

86. Teaching and learning are good. Most the sessions observed were graded good or better and no sessions were inadequate. Session planning is thoughtful and detailed, incorporating a wide variety of interactive fun activities. Learning materials are attractive and of good quality. However, tutor and learner use of ICT is not sufficiently used to extend the range of learning activities or promote independent learning.
87. There is a satisfactory range of family learning courses to meet the needs of parents, grandparents and carers of children throughout the county. Many parents attend courses held in their children's school, but children's centres, leisure centres and libraries are also popular venues. Some courses are run in response to local need. For example, in Knaresborough, following a healthy eating workshop for parents and their children from a Travellers' community a further course in food hygiene was arranged in response to requests from the learners.
88. The service adequately provides for learners who require additional support. For example, tutors are equipped with hearing loops and magnifying sheets for use by learners with sensory impairment. One-to-one support is arranged on request. Tutors regularly refer learners to skills for life provision, where appropriate. Most classes are visited by an advice and guidance worker towards the end of the course.
89. The recording of progress and achievement in non-accredited learning is inadequate. The tutors for most classes do not set clear and detailed individual learning goals. Goals relate largely to the requirements of the course and awarding body criteria rather than those of the learner. In some classes, the recording of the findings of initial assessment is poor. Many learners identify their own skills and record their own aims and objectives for enrolling on the course. However, tutors make little use of this information when negotiating and agreeing personalised targets. Record-keeping about progress towards targets is weak.

Leadership and management

90. There is good strategic direction in the management of family learning. Area co-ordinators and all tutors are fully aware of strategic priorities in planning the curriculum. Communication between team members is frequent across the wide region with team meetings held twice a term in a different venues. Between meetings, the family learning manager has one-to-one keep in touch meetings with each tutor. Provision of classroom resources is very good. Every tutor has their own standard set of equipment to help ensure consistent quality at each centre. This includes a portable interactive whiteboard, a laptop, a data projector

and a digital camera. Tutors are enthusiastic, but do not make maximum use of these resources in the classroom.

91. Family learning has developed very effective partnerships to support the enrolment and retention of hard-to-reach families. Close links with SureStart, extended schools clusters, libraries and leisure centres have led to increased recruitment of targeted groups of learners. Taster courses in libraries across the county earlier this year were successful in attracting men. At a leisure centre a promotional offer to learners to use the swimming pool boosted recruitment. The effectiveness of tutors has been improved through the provision of specialist training from partner organisations. The provision of shared resources has benefited teaching.
92. Most accommodation is satisfactory and it provides spacious and attractive learning environments. However, in some schools the child-size furniture is unsuitable for use by adult learners.
93. Quality improvement systems are generally satisfactory. Tutors and learners are involved in the self-assessment process. Tutors complete course reviews, which incorporate tutor and learner feedback, and these reviews are fed into the manager's self-assessment log, which informs the annual self-assessment report. Teaching staff have yearly appraisals and formal observation once every three years. Most observation records are appropriately judgemental. However, action points for improvement are often not measurable, time-bound or systematically followed up. All tutors are adequately experienced and qualified, although few have yet completed the level 4 skills for life accreditation. Staff development opportunities are frequent and relevant to tutors' work.

