

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Hartlepool LEA

26 March 2004



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

## Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

## Overall judgement

Where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

- more than one third of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas, **or**
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory.

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Hartlepool LEA

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Hartlepool Adult Education Service (the service) was established following local government reorganisation in 1996, and provides adult and community learning for the people of Hartlepool. It is part of the education department of Hartlepool Borough Council's (the council's) local education authority (LEA). The assistant director for policy, planning and children's services has responsibility for the service which is managed by a full-time adult education co-ordinator. She is supported by a team of co-ordinators and administrative staff. Approximately 50 part-time tutors teach on a variety of courses.

2. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) provides funds for the service's vocational further education and adult and community learning provision, and also supplies separate funding allocations for family learning and family literacy and numeracy programmes. The service receives further funding from the Single Regeneration Budget, the Government Office for the North East, the European Social Fund, the New Opportunities Fund, and co-financing with other organisations.

3. The service has its headquarters at the borough's education development centre, with outreach bases in two voluntary-sector premises. Provision is delivered from a further 42 outreach venues. Provision is delivered in partnership with 120 organisations in total, including 20 private companies, 20 schools and many voluntary organisations.

4. Forty per cent of the service's learners attend vocational courses, 29 per cent attend non-vocational courses and 31 per cent attend leisure courses. Twenty-seven per cent of the learners are over 60 years old, 32 per cent are men, 2 per cent are from minority ethnic groups and 17 per cent have a disability.

5. Many wards in Hartlepool have high levels of social deprivation. Male unemployment rates in February 2003 were 7 per cent, compared with the regional average of 5 per cent. The proportion of school leavers in Hartlepool achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 46 per cent in 2003, compared with the average for England as a whole of 53 per cent. Just over 1 per cent of the population of Hartlepool are from minority ethnic groups according to the 2001 census.

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

#### **Business administration, management & professional**

6. At the time of the inspection, 64 learners were following business administration, management and professional courses. During this academic year, 216 learners enrolled on courses, representing 7 per cent of the service's total provision. In the 2002-03 academic year, there were 222 total enrolments, which made up 5 per cent of the total provision. Thirty-eight of the 64 learners are on teaching assistants programmes, 19 are

## HARTLEPOOL LEA

on accounting software courses at level 1 or 2, and seven are partially sighted learners on a touch-typing course. A number of courses which enrolled learners in September 2003 have now finished. These include a certificate in administration course and courses designed to develop key skills in numeracy and communication. Courses run for from six to 30 weeks, and are held every day except at the weekends at two centres.

### **Information & communications technology**

7. At the time of the inspection, 780 learners were attending 31 information and communications technology (ICT) courses running at 12 venues. Courses include taster sessions and leisure uses of computers such as digital imaging and researching family history on the internet. In addition, the service also offers courses leading to recognised qualifications in using common desktop applications. Intensive full-time courses leading to nationally recognised qualifications are run in the summer. Courses last for from two weeks to more than 20 weeks and are run during the day and in the evenings, generally for two or three hours a week. No courses are held at weekends. Half of the learners are on courses leading to qualifications. Some sessions are held in purpose-built centres. Others are held in local community centres, church halls and primary schools. Some sessions use fixed computers, while in others the service provides portable computers. Seventy-five per cent of learners are women. Seven contracted tutors and one part-time, hourly paid tutor work in this area.

### **Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**

8. The service runs courses in food and sports-related subjects, including food hygiene, microwave cookery, wheelchair aerobics and sports coaching. Ninety per cent of the provision is accredited. Food-related courses account for 66 per cent of the learners. In 2002-03, 543 learners were enrolled on food and sports-related programmes. At the time of the inspection, 377 learners were enrolled. Fifty-three per cent of learners are men and 18 per cent are aged 65 or over. Over 80 per cent of food hygiene provision is in the form of one-day courses. Sports coaching courses last for between four to 24 weeks. Courses take place during the week and at weekends. Some expedition courses run both during the week and at the weekend. There is no summer school provision. The service offers foundation and intermediate courses in food-related subjects and a non-vocational course in microwave cookery. In sport, foundation programmes are offered in coaching football and expedition and outdoor leadership courses. A non-vocational wheelchair aerobics class is also provided. Lessons take place at 23 venues across Hartlepool, including at colleges, schools and day centres. Most classes are for mixed-ability learners. A curriculum leader has the responsibility for the curriculum and for the line management of three part-time tutors.

### **Health, social care & public services**

9. At the time of inspection, 19 learners were enrolled on childcare programmes. Of these, 14 were participating in the 40-hour accredited parents and toddler care in Hartlepool (PATCH) programme that runs twice each year. Five learners are enrolled on the 20-hour accredited 'making choices' programme which outlines options in careers in childcare. In addition, 21 learners have completed childcare courses since September 2003. First-aid and health and safety courses are offered to employers and to the general public. They range from one-day courses for appointed first aiders to a five-day first-aid course. During the inspection 14 learners were enrolled on the one-day first-aid course and 16 learners were participating in a two-day accredited course in health and safety at employers' sites. Since September 2003, 254 learners have attended first-aid and health and safety courses. Courses are offered in the daytime in many community facilities such as sports centres and residents' association centres. Some take place in the employers' premises. In 2002-03, 77 per cent of the learners on first-aid and childcare courses were women and 1 per cent of learners were from minority ethnic groups. There are two childcare tutors, both of whom are also internal verifiers. Tutors from a specialist provider, approved by the service, teach the first-aid programmes.

### **Visual & performing arts & media**

10. Since September 2003, 475 learners have enrolled on visual and performing arts and media courses, making up nearly 15 per cent of the total provision. Of these, over 80 per cent are women and 49 per cent are aged over 60. Five per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups. At the time of the inspection, 10 courses were running. These courses are non-accredited and include dressmaking, needlecrafts, parchment crafts, stamp art and introduction to music. Classes take place at five local venues across the area including community centres, local libraries and schools. They usually run for two hours a week over 30 weeks and take place during the day. Some classes are run in partnership with other organisations. Three part-time tutors work from two to 12 hours a week. In 2002-03, 692 learners were enrolled on visual and performing arts programmes across Hartlepool.

## **English, languages & communications**

11. The service offers 23 courses in English, languages and communications, representing 6 per cent of the total provision. Thirteen modern foreign languages courses, one GCSE English course and nine British Sign Language (BSL) courses are available. Seven courses in this area take place during the daytime. Sixteen courses are run over 30 weeks. The remainder are very short courses run either in the summer or autumn term. Courses are offered at nine community venues in Hartlepool. No weekend or employer-based provision is offered. At the time of the inspection, 256 learners were enrolled, 193 of them on accredited courses. One hundred and fourteen learners have registered on modern foreign language courses at beginners to advanced levels. Twenty-one learners are learning French, 17 German and 76 Spanish. Seventy-five learners take part in language courses accredited by the Open College Network (OCN). Eighteen learners attend accredited GCSE language courses. Ninety-nine learners are enrolled on accredited BSL courses, with 22 on non-accredited courses and 20 learners on the GCSE English course. During 2002-03, 306 learners were enrolled on 30 courses. Approximately 75 per cent of the learners are women, and less than 1 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. Seventy-five per cent of the learners are in the age range of 26-59 and 12 per cent are over 60. Seven part-time staff teach on these courses. One part-time staff member is appointed for one day a week to manage the programmes.

## **Foundation programmes**

12. The service delivers foundation provision at six community venues and one workplace. Foundation programmes account for 10 per cent of the provision, and include courses for learners with learning difficulties, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), and ICT-linked courses and programmes at level 1 and 2. Provision is offered in the mornings and afternoons. Two hundred and five learners are currently enrolled, compared with 197 learners in the previous academic year. Thirty-eight per cent of learners are men and 8 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. Seventy-seven per cent of learners are aged between 26-59, 10 per cent are over 60 and 4 per cent are under 19 years of age. Twenty-nine learners are enrolled on ESOL programmes. Learners have the opportunity to work towards external accreditation on 15 of the 22 courses. Most classes run for two hours. Courses for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities include numeracy, ICT, performing arts, and citizenship. A recently appointed manager and seven part-time tutors deliver the courses.



## Family learning

13. The service has been directly providing family learning since the 2002-03 academic year, and family literacy and numeracy since January 2004. In 2002-03, 125 learners enrolled on short family learning programmes. Since September 2003, 160 learners have enrolled on family learning programmes, with a total of 114 on courses at the time of the inspection. The service offers two family literacy courses, two courses for parents supporting their children's learning, one course in storytelling and three wider family learning courses. The range of courses covers a number of curriculum areas including modern foreign languages, arts and crafts, and beauty. Courses run throughout the year and range from short taster sessions of two hours, up to programmes of 72 hours. They take place mainly in the daytime but with some evening and weekend provision. Programmes are provided in nurseries and primary schools and in a range of community venues throughout Hartlepool. One full-time and six part-time members of staff teach these courses. The service has offered OCN-accredited courses since the start of the current academic year, such as a level 1 certificate in storytelling and national literacy and numeracy qualifications. Twenty-eight per cent of courses offer accreditation. The curriculum manager and the family learning co-ordinator are responsible for developing provision in community venues, for example in partnership with Sure Start, a national family support programme. The LEA has appointed a member of staff to develop family learning provision in schools. This is a fixed-term post until 2005. Management of individual areas of learning are responsible for wider family learning programmes in their subject, including the quality of provision and line management of staff.

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	12
Number of inspection days	60
Number of learner interviews	339
Number of staff interviews	70
Number of subcontractor interviews	2
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	50
Number of partner/external agency interviews	7
Number of visits	58

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

14. The overall quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the service's leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Its approach to equality of opportunity is satisfactory, but its arrangements for quality assurance are unsatisfactory. Provision is good in business administration, management and professional; health, social care and public services; and visual and performing arts and media. Provision is satisfactory in ICT and hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, but unsatisfactory in English, languages and communications and family learning. Provision in foundation programmes is very weak.

**GRADES**

*grade 1= outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak*

<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	4

<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	2

<b>Information &amp; communications technology</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

<b>Hospitality, sport, leisure &amp; travel</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

<b>Health, social care &amp; public services</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	2

<b>Visual &amp; performing arts &amp; media</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	2

<b>English, languages &amp; communications</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	4

<b>Foundation programmes</b>	<b>5</b>
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	5

Family learning	4
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	4

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievement and standards

15. **Retention rates are good in sports, hospitality and leisure; visual and performing arts and media; health, social care and public services and on accredited family learning courses.** The retention rates are satisfactory in ICT. **However, retention rates are declining in business administration, management and professional, and are unsatisfactory in English, languages and communications and ESOL courses.**

16. **Qualification achievement rates are very good in business administration, management and professional; sports, hospitality and leisure; visual and performing arts and media; and health, social care and public services.** They are good in accredited courses in family learning, level 2 literacy qualifications and short intensive qualifications in ICT. **Achievement rates are unsatisfactory on most accredited courses in English, languages and communications and foundation provision.**

17. **Most learners in English, languages and communication develop good communication skills, as do some learners with additional learning needs. Health, social care and public services learners develop good volunteer skills** to support their communities. **ICT learners make good use of their new skills in their daily lives. Learners make good progress from childcare courses.**

18. **The standard of learners' work is very good in visual performing arts and media, and good in sport, hospitality and leisure.** It is satisfactory in other areas of learning.

## Quality of education and training

### Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Business administration, management & professional	0	0	3	1	0	0	0	4
Information & communications technology	0	0	4	4	2	1	0	11
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	2	0	1	1	0	0	4
Health, social care & public services	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	4
Visual & performing arts & media	0	2	4	1	0	0	0	7
English, languages & communications	0	0	4	2	1	1	0	8
Foundation programmes	0	1	1	4	5	0	0	11
Family learning	0	0	4	2	1	0	0	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>56</b>

19. **Teaching is good in visual and performing arts and media; health, social care and public services; business administration, management and professional; and on accredited courses in family learning.** Teaching is satisfactory in sports, hospitality and leisure. **However, much teaching is unsatisfactory in foundation and modern foreign languages courses.** The pace of learning sessions is slow in ICT. **ICT learners make slow progress.**

20. Resources, overall, are satisfactory. There are many locally accessible good-quality learning centres. Two of the centres are very well equipped and have good access for wheelchair users. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Staff development is satisfactory. Some staff are working towards teaching qualifications. However, some key staff have not been trained in the national adult literacy and numeracy skills core curriculum. Learning materials are satisfactory overall and are good in some areas of learning such as ICT, and business administration, management and professional.

21. Assessment, overall, is satisfactory. **However, initial assessment is weak in foundation provision and is used poorly to plan for individual learning needs in family learning and ICT. In sports, hospitality and leisure, monitoring of initial assessment is inadequate.**

22. **Tutors give good feedback on their progress to English, languages and communications learners.** Ongoing feedback is satisfactory in other areas of learning across the provision. **However, monitoring and recording of learners' progress is poor in foundation and family learning.**

23. The courses meet the needs of the current learners well. They meet the needs of the examining and validating bodies as well as the employers and sponsors. **However, the range of provision is narrow in sports, hospitality and leisure; English, languages and**

**communications; and visual and performing arts and media.**

24. **Pastoral and study support are good in ICT; English, languages and communications; and business administration, management and professional.** Support is satisfactory in the other areas of learning. **Information, advice and guidance for progression are ineffective in family learning and English, languages and communications,** but satisfactory in the other areas of learning. Satisfactory literacy, numeracy and language support is provided if needs are identified.

### Leadership and management

25. **The service has good strategic partnerships.** Some of these partnerships have been effective in providing the essential infrastructure for the development of the service. Learners' understanding is developed well in classes in practical ways. **Feedback from learners, staff and, in some cases, partners is used well to improve provision.**

26. Staff development is satisfactory, except in raising the staff awareness of equality of opportunity. Not all tutors have received appraisals.

27. **Curriculum planning and management is weak generally,** and especially in business administration, management and professional; English, languages and communications; family learning; and foundation provision. Most curriculum areas are narrow in the range of subjects and levels offered, and the method of delivery.

28. Lines of accountability are unclear in some areas of learning. Curriculum co-ordinators are not given sufficient time to develop the provision, especially in family learning and English, languages and communications. Staff do not have a clear sense of the direction of the service.

29. **The service's business planning is ineffective.** Some of its business plans are not coherent. Plans do not contain sufficient specific or measurable targets. The service's development needs are not identified. **The service does not place sufficient importance on community development.** Its range of provision is too narrow to develop local residents' potential or employability skills, or to encourage neighbourhood regeneration.

30. **The service does not refer learners effectively to other providers in some areas of learning.** Learners receive insufficient information on progression routes and have to find out information on further courses, either with other providers or with the service themselves.

31. **The service's quality assurance system is inconsistent** and does not effectively improve quality across the whole provision. **Data are not sufficiently used to analyse aspects of the provision,** such as take-up, gaps in the provision and outcomes for learners. Some communication is poor, and on occasions a deaf staff member who needs an interpreter has not been provided with one.

32. Staff have poor awareness of equality of opportunity. **Staff and learners' awareness**

**of equality is not sufficiently reinforced.** Staff have not received training in the use of appropriate language in the classroom. **However, practical development of equality of opportunity for learners is good.**

33. The quality of the provision is not sufficiently monitored in all areas of learning, including the subcontracted provision. Observation of teaching and learning has not taken place in all areas of learning. Observation has been introduced only recently and focuses on teaching rather than learning and attainment. The grades given to learning sessions by the observers were better than those given by the inspectors. Internal and external verification are satisfactory in all areas of provision apart from family learning.

34. The service's self-assessment process is not sufficiently developed. Not all stakeholders were involved in the development of the service's report. The report did not accurately identify strengths and weaknesses.

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

### **Leadership and management**

#### **Strengths**

- good partnership working
- good practical development of equality of opportunity for learners
- good use of feedback to develop provision

#### **Weaknesses**

- weak curriculum management
- ineffective management of learners' progression in some areas
- ineffective business planning
- insufficient systematic reinforcement of equality of opportunity awareness
- inconsistent quality assurance systems
- insufficient use of data

### **Business administration, management & professional**

#### **Strengths**

- very good achievement rates
- much good teaching and learning
- good pastoral and learning support

#### **Weaknesses**

- declining retention rates
- poor curriculum planning

## **Information & communications technology**

### **Strengths**

- good use of ICT skills at home and at work
- good achievement rates on short intensive courses
- good in-class support for learners with additional learning needs

### **Weaknesses**

- poor achievement of qualifications on longer courses
- slow progress in some sessions
- insufficient use of assessment in planning and monitoring of learning
- unsatisfactory curriculum management

## **Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**

### **Strengths**

- very good achievement rates
- excellent retention rates

### **Weaknesses**

- inadequate monitoring of initial assessment
- narrow range of courses
- poor monitoring of subcontractors

## **Health, social care & public services**

### **Strengths**

- excellent retention and achievement rates
- good development of volunteering skills to support vulnerable families
- good teaching and learning
- good progression from childcare courses

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient monitoring of quality of learning

## **Visual & performing arts & media**

### **Strengths**

- very good standard of work and achievement rates
- good teaching and learning
- good planning for individual learning objectives
- particularly good locally accessible learning venues
- effective targeting of priority groups

### **Weaknesses**

- ineffective advice and guidance on progression routes

## **English, languages & communications**

### **Strengths**

- good development of communication skills for most learners
- good feedback for learners
- good pastoral and learning support

### **Weaknesses**

- poor retention and achievement rates on most programmes
- much unsatisfactory teaching
- ineffective advice and guidance on progression routes
- weak curriculum management



## **Foundation programmes**

### **Strengths**

- good development of confidence and communication skills in performance arts sessions
- good environment at the main local learning centre
- good achievement rates on level 2 literacy courses

### **Weaknesses**

- unsatisfactory achievement and progression rates on many courses
- poor retention rates on ESOL programmes
- much unsatisfactory teaching and learning
- poor identification of individual learning needs
- poor monitoring and recording of learners' progress
- poor curriculum management

## **Family learning**

### **Strengths**

- good achievement rates on accredited courses
- very good retention rates on accredited courses
- good teaching and learning on accredited courses
- good partnerships to plan individual courses

### **Weaknesses**

- ineffective advice and guidance
- poor use of initial assessment to meet the individual learners' needs
- inadequate assessment of learning outcomes on non-accredited courses
- weak curriculum management

## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT HARTLEPOOL LEA:**

- the convenience of learning at local learning centres - 'drop-in centres are a lifeline'
- the crèche facilities
- the free courses
- gaining qualifications through short intensive courses
- the small groups and individual attention - 'better way of learning than at school'
- the opportunity to help the local community, especially young people
- the flexibility to work at an appropriate pace and at convenient times
- the friendly and supportive staff
- working with others and making friends
- the opportunities and support to return to learning
- not being conscious about being the oldest learner in the group
- the interesting courses - 'keeping my mind active'

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK HARTLEPOOL LEA COULD IMPROVE:**

- the planning of courses and exam schedules - learners would like to finish their examinations before starting new modules
- the amount of childcare facilities provided, including in the evenings
- the timing of classes - some classes finish at 4pm
- the communication between tutors
- the technical support for computer crashes
- the amount of fee remission for pensioners
- the quality of pre-course information
- the length of classes - some classes are too short
- the amount of celebration of previous learners' achievements to motivate others

## **KEY CHALLENGES FOR HARTLEPOOL LEA:**

- share good practice within the service
- improve the quality of teaching and learning
- facilitate effective progression advice and guidance
- improve curriculum management
- raise achievement levels of individual learners
- improve business planning
- develop learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills
- establish more effective community development
- improve partnerships to increase and improve opportunities for learners
- raise staff members' awareness of equality of opportunity
- increase the effectiveness of the quality assurance system

## Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

Terminology varies across the range of education and training settings covered by the *Common Inspection Framework*. The table below indicates the terms appropriate to Adult and Community Learning

Single term used in the framework	Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning	
<b>Provider</b>	<b>Provider</b>	Any organisation providing opportunities for adults to meet personal or collective goals through the experience of learning. Providers include local authorities, specialist designated institutions, voluntary and community sector organisations, regeneration partnerships and further education colleges
<b>Learner</b>	<b>Learner</b>	Includes those learning by participating in community projects, as well as those on courses. Learning, however, will be planned, with intended outcomes.
<b>Teacher / trainer</b>	<b>Tutor</b>	Person teaching adult learners or guiding or facilitating their learning.
	<b>Mentor</b>	Person providing individual, additional support, guidance and advice to learners to help them achieve their learning goals.
<b>Learning goals</b>	<b>Main learning goals</b>	Intended gains in skills, knowledge or understanding. Gains may be reflected in the achievement of nationally recognised qualifications. Or they may be reflected in the ability of learners to apply learning in contexts outside the learning situation, e.g. in the family, community, or workplace. Learners' main goal/s should be recorded on an individual or, in some cases, group learning plan. Plans should be revised as progress is made and new goals emerge.
	<b>Secondary learning goals</b>	These may include planned-for gains in self-confidence, and inter-personal skills. These should also be included in learning plans where appropriate.
<b>Personal and learning skills</b>	<b>Personal and learning skills</b>	These include being able to study independently, willingness to collaborate with others, and readiness to take up another opportunity for education or training.

## Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

	Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning
<b>Unanticipated, or unintended learning outcome</b>	Adults often experience unanticipated gains as a result of being involved in learning. These include improved self-esteem, greater self-confidence and a growing sense of belonging to a community. Gains of this kind should be acknowledged and recorded in any record of achievement.
<b>Subject-based programme</b>	A programme organised around a body of knowledge, e.g. the structure and usage of the French language or ceramic glazing techniques. Students could be expected to progress from one aspect of the subject to another, to grasp increasingly complex concepts or analyses or to develop greater levels of skill or to apply skills to a new area of work.
<b>Issue-based programme</b>	A programme that is based on the concerns, interests and aspirations of particular groups, for example members of a Sikh Gurdwara wanting to address inter-faith relations in their town, or parents worried about the incidence of drug abuse in their locality. Issue-based learning tends to be associated with geographically defined communities, but the increasing use of electronic means of communication means that this need no longer be the case. Progress is defined in terms of the group's increasing ability to analyse its situation, to access new information and skills which will help it resolve its difficulties and generate solutions and its growing confidence in dealing with others to implement those solutions.
<b>Outreach provision</b>	Provision established in a community setting in addition to provision made at an organisation's main site(s). Outreach programmes may be similar to courses at the main site(s) or be designed to meet the specific requirements of that community.
<b>Neighbourhood-based work</b>	The provider's staff have a long-term presence in a local community with a specific remit to understand the concerns of the local residents and develop learning activities to meet local needs and interests.
<b>Community regeneration</b>	The process of improving the quality of life in communities by investing in their infrastructure and facilities, creating opportunities for training and employment and tackling poor health and educational under-achievement. Community regeneration requires the active participation of local residents in decision-making. Changes and improvements are often achieved either directly or indirectly as a result of the adult learning activities which arise from this.

	<b>Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning</b>
<b>Community capacity building</b>	The process of enabling local people to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to take advantage of opportunities for employment, training and further education and to become selfmanaging, sustainable communities.
<b>Active citizenship</b>	The process whereby people recognise the power they have to improve the quality of life for others and make a conscious effort to do so: the process whereby people recognise the power of organisations and institutions to act in the interests of the common good and exercise their influence to ensure that they do so. Adult learning contributes to active citizenship.

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 4

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

#### Strengths

- good partnership working
- good practical development of equality of opportunity for learners
- good use of feedback to develop provision

#### Weaknesses

- weak curriculum management
- ineffective management of learners' progression in some areas
- ineffective business planning
- insufficient systematic reinforcement of equality of opportunity awareness
- inconsistent quality assurance systems
- insufficient use of data

35. The service is recently established and has few cultural barriers or resistance to change. It has been very responsive in certain areas, particularly in enabling the community groups to develop and establish community learning centres, and employing local mentors to find out the needs of the community. This has been achieved through joint bids securing funds from a variety of sources, particularly for ICT provision. A good infrastructure has been established. The service is providing satisfactory or better learning in business administration, care, and sport and leisure. The service has dedicated staff, good co-operation and direct control over provision in these areas. However, the quality of provision is inconsistent, and the standard is less than satisfactory where the service shares responsibility and relies on partnerships at a broader level.

36. The service's partnership working is good. The service is a member of many different groups across the borough with objectives such as regeneration of the area, improving provision for people with disabilities and widening participation. Hartlepool is a small town of 88,000 people. Several areas have high levels of social and economic deprivation. Statutory, community and voluntary groups have a long history of working closely together. Examples of this include local community forums, neighbourhood community centres, employment action teams, the adult providers' group and the council's housing department. The groups involved know each other well. The local LSC gives very clear direction to many groups and providers are well aware of their roles. The service is a strong member of the local lifelong learning partnership. It has developed a coherent strategy for the achievement of the skills for life initiative, the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language, through a partnership with the local college and other providers in the area. The partnerships operate on a strategic level and on an operational level with development workers. They

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help to support vulnerable learners. Much work is done in partnership with social services and other agencies like Sure Start. This effectively ensures a seamless service across boundaries, particularly for learners with learning difficulties and parents with young children. The service's development team actively identifies sources of funding and obtains support for community partners, for instance in having computers installed in various venues.

37. The service deals quickly with employers' requests. For example, the service helped 45 workers with learning difficulties and/or disabilities at one employer to gain food hygiene certificates in a short period. The employer was able to win a large contract in food packaging. This secured continued employment for many learners with disabilities and learning difficulties.

38. Communication is satisfactory. The service's staff know each other well and can respond to emerging problems. Partners are supported and lines of communication are clear. Many meetings are held and notes are circulated to keep everyone informed. These meetings are valued by part-time tutors as a method of sharing good practice and keeping in touch with colleagues.

39. Resources are satisfactory overall. Access to the venues used was recently audited, and many of the recommendations made have been acted upon. Most buildings are of a reasonable standard. Some are of a good standard and are seen as welcoming by the learners interviewed. Staff are adequately trained. The service sets aside specific weeks each year for training and development. However, training in equality and diversity is not delivered in a systematic way.

40. Literacy and numeracy support for the learners on longer courses is satisfactory. The learners assess themselves and any support needs they identify are met by the support workers in classes. In some cases, learners' needs are identified during initial assessment and appropriate arrangements are made to meet these learners' needs.

41. The service's curriculum management is weak. Most curriculum areas are very narrow in terms of the subjects offered, levels and the method of delivery. Only 15 per cent of classes are offered in the evening. These are delivered mostly in the traditional format of weekly two-hour classes. Some computer courses are run as short intensive courses in the summer, and one residential course has been held for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Programmes to import literacy or numeracy skills through ICT, intensive literacy or numeracy courses, interest-based literacy and numeracy and weekend courses have had little development. Staffing is very narrow; for example in visual and performing arts only two tutors teach. In many instances the courses offered are dictated by the staff available, rather than by the interests or needs of the learners. Staff and learners have no shared understanding of how provision could be developed. For instance, some learners have been identified and assessed as having very poor literacy or numeracy skills. These learners have not subsequently received the help they need, as staff believed that only learners at level 1 in the core adult learning curriculum could be targeted for additional support.



42. Insufficient progression routes are available to learners, and programmes include little systematic guidance on options for progress. Learners are left to find out about progression courses on their own. For example, some learners in craft subjects are able to progress, but have not been given any specific guidance about the next step they can take in the service or with other providers. Some good work is done with partners' staff to invite them in to discuss progress. For example, a partner worker regularly visits childcare classes to ensure learners are aware of the courses that will extend their skills. Some staff are appropriately trained as guidance workers and are aware of the need to provide systematic advice and guidance, but have not yet started visiting courses as they come to an end. Most of the curriculum managers are new to the service. Some have little experience or training in management.

43. The service's business planning is ineffective. It has many different strategy documents dealing with different aspects of the provision. For instance, it has a three-year plan, a one-year business plan, a one-year adult education plan, a separate strategy document for each area of learning, a three-year skills for life plan, and plans for widening participation and equality of opportunity. None of these plans are linked, and few actual specific or measurable targets are contained in them. Although the skills for life partnership's strategy is good, the individual partners involved have not been set any targets. The service's planning does not adequately identify its development needs, particularly the resource implications of staffing, training or equipment needs across the service. The service does little to assess risks to the business or to plan for emergencies like coverage for staff absence. Staff interviewed are unable to give clear accounts of how the service is to develop. While most can identify the target groups for widening participation, none are able to give a clear idea as to how the service is to attract them. Staff members have little understanding of how the service works as a whole. They are unsure as to how the component parts of the service, such as community development and the curriculum areas, work together. Aspects which are common across the entire provision, such as family learning or the management of literacy and numeracy, are not coherently managed.

44. The service makes insufficient use of data to plan provision. Data are used primarily for monitoring purposes. Little action is taken to improve provision. For example, the ICT training is supposed to attract learners from the designated deprived wards in the town. However, the service's management information system is unable to tell how many learners from the deprived wards are currently using the service. The service collects data on learners' ethnicity, gender and disability and knows which groups are under-represented, but has not yet taken steps to target those learners. Target-setting for achievement is also ineffective.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

45. The service's development of practical equality of opportunity for learners is good. Some reinforcement of equality of opportunity is good in lesson planning and delivery. In some observed sessions on safety in the workplace for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, much emphasis was placed on equality of opportunity. Learners were encouraged to understand their rights but also their responsibilities to

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other people coming into work. Visual arts learners with mental health problems are integrated well into mainstream provision. Support workers are funded by the NHS under a partnership to progress learners. In one observed business administration session, the tutor invited a learner who uses a wheelchair to talk about access issues and how her disability affects her. The learner reported that this made them feel valued, and the other learners were made more aware of the actual practical issues involved in having a disability. The service has introduced new courses specifically to help learners with visual impairments. One blind learner on this course who was interviewed, commented enthusiastically about the specific support he received and how motivating the class was for him. The service has a culture of support to help learners access the provision and develop good confidence and skills. Staff give out their home or mobile numbers so learners can contact them out of hours. They give extra time to learners in drop-in centres outside of their contracted hours.

46. The service's policies on equality and diversity, disability and race relations are adequate. Most are the council's policies, with some amendments for the service. Action plans for the borough and for adult education exist for some areas. They adequately cover the council's statutory obligations. Staff training for equality and diversity is satisfactory, but is not systematically provided for all staff. Some staff have had a considerable amount of training in general equality of opportunity awareness, specific sessions on the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and on working with vulnerable adults. Some have been trained in literacy and numeracy support, and some are waiting to get onto courses. Many tutors cannot attend this training at the times given. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and its implications for the service, have not been communicated to the staff effectively.

47. Physical resources to support learners are adequate. Most centres are accessible by people with restricted mobility, including wheelchair users. A comprehensive access audit has been completed, and specific recommendations have been made for the upgrading of venues. Much work has been done to meet the requirements. Some specific equipment is available to support learners with particular difficulties or disabilities.

48. The service provides satisfactory support for learners. Staff members filling two full-time equivalent posts offer learners support, carry out initial assessment, arrange practical support such as crèche places or transport, and offer advice and guidance. Literacy or numeracy support is provided if necessary. This support arrangement has been in place for six months. Learners' needs are mainly identified through their self-assessment, through their enrolment form or by individual tutors as they get to know the learners. Some new initial assessment questions have been introduced to better assess support needs for learners who are starting courses. These questions are too new for their effect to be judged yet. The questions are narrow in scope and do not allow for fuller assessment of learners' needs. Some good use is made of community mentors trained to support learners and develop their skills. Eight mentors are now employed to work in individual centres where they can identify and support potential and existing learners. Mentors are also effectively used as general support in mainstream classes for learners with disabilities and/or difficulties. They give learners practical help, such as finding the

right bus route.

49. The service carries out insufficient systematic promotion and reinforcement of equality of opportunity. New learners are given a handbook which mentions equality of opportunity. They are not given any further information. Their understanding of equality of opportunity is not checked. New leaflets and brochures are being developed but are not yet in place. Tutors have a checklist to ensure they cover all key subjects at the induction session, but equality of opportunity is not mentioned on this. Equality of opportunity is not monitored during progress reviews or in tutorials. Inspectors observed some inappropriate behaviour such as a male tutor leaning over a female learner with learning difficulties with his arm round her shoulder. Some inappropriate language was used. Inappropriate calendars and screen savers were in use in one observed learning session. Staff interviewed do not feel confident to challenge such behaviour. No systematic check is made on employers to reinforce their equal opportunities practices. Staff development is not sufficiently structured to enable all staff to cover specific topics. One member of staff with a hearing impairment attends team meetings but is unable to participate fully at all meetings as an interpreter is not always made available.

### **Quality assurance**

### **Contributory grade 4**

50. The service uses feedback from learners and staff well to develop the provision. Learners' views are sought at several stages and taken into account to develop provision. The findings are effectively collated, tabulated and reported on. The service produces comprehensive reports on the findings and takes prompt, clearly recorded actions. Effective action taken includes resource purchases in information technology (IT), venue upgrades, sharing of resources by staff, introduction of subject-based team meetings and improvements in health and safety. Mentors effectively identify needs in the community and make regular proposals to meet these needs. Courses are developed promptly to meet these needs.

51. Internal and external verification are satisfactory in all areas of provision, except in family learning. Assessors' work is effectively standardised and standards are maintained. The service has recently introduced on-the-spot visits to the classes taught directly by itself and by the subcontractors. However, action points arising from these visits are not consistently followed up.

52. The service's quality assurance does not consistently raise the quality of learning across the service. The quality of learning in accredited and non-accredited family learning courses varies considerably. The service does not use data to develop the curriculum. For example, the service knows who accesses the learning but has not taken steps to target the under-represented learners. The quality of learning in care programmes is not sufficiently monitored. Much teaching and learning in two areas of learning is unsatisfactory, although teaching in some other areas is good. The service does not routinely identify and share good practice.

53. The service does not effectively observe teaching and learning. Until recently, the service graded observed teaching on a three-point scale. This system did not meet the

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needs of the service. A new observation system was introduced in December 2003. Great efforts have been put into improving observation, but the action taken is very recent and not all staff have yet been observed. The service did not identify any unsatisfactory teaching in its observations, but the inspectors observed much unsatisfactory teaching in three areas of learning. The service's observation focuses too much on teaching and not enough on learning and attainment. Much of the actions outlined by the service's observers apply to the staff members concerned rather than for the management. The service does not give sufficient guidance to staff as to how they could further improve their session grades. It is not clear who is responsible for the improvement process. Tutors read and sign records of their observation, but action-planning is not included in the appraisal process. The observations do not focus on learners' achievements. Tutors are given much helpful guidance on the criteria and process of observations.

54. Teaching staff have not been appraised, although appraisals are planned for after the inspection. The self-assessment process is not sufficiently developed and does not involve all the stakeholders such as staff, schools and other partners. The self-assessment report does not accurately identify the service's strengths and weaknesses, and the service does not fully recognise the effect of those weaknesses identified.

55. The service has recently devised a satisfactory development plan to deal with the most obvious weaknesses. The service has taken much effective action to provide learning resources and to audit premises for their suitability. A change of culture to one of continuous improvement of teaching and learning has not yet consistently been established. It is too early to judge the effect of the changes on the learners.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Business administration, management & professional

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	64	2

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

#### Strengths

- very good achievement rates
- much good teaching and learning
- good pastoral and learning support

#### Weaknesses

- declining retention rates
- poor curriculum planning

#### Achievement and standards

56. Achievement rates on vocational courses are good. The average achievement rates across 16 separate courses in 2002-03 was 75 per cent. On the two teaching assistant courses, achievement rates ranged between 82 and 88 per cent. The achievement rate on a level 2 learning mentors' course was 89 per cent. Seventy per cent of learners following a level 2 certificate in accountancy successfully achieved their qualification, as did 78 per cent of learners on a key skills level 2 qualification in communications. Eighty-three per cent of the learners on teaching assistants' courses have achieved level 2 literacy qualifications. The current group of learners are making good progress. Some teaching assistant learners are waiting for their certificates from the awarding body.

57. Retention rates have declined, from 82 per cent in 2001-02 to 68 per cent in 2002-03. In the period from September 2003 to March 2004, the retention rate for all courses in the area of learning was 64 per cent. Curriculum managers have identified reasons for this decline. For example, the content of one course was not clear. A number of learners left this course early. Measures such as improved course information and better targeting have been introduced to halt declining retention rates. These measures are satisfactory, but it is too early to judge their effectiveness.

58. The standard of work produced by learners on accredited courses is satisfactory. Portfolios are maintained well and completed work is marked and returned promptly to the learners. However, some of the written feedback on learners' work is insufficiently detailed and does not sufficiently inform the learner how they can quickly make further improvements.

### **Quality of education and training**

59. Much of the teaching observed was good and none was less than satisfactory. Learning sessions are carefully prepared with clear aims and outcomes. Teachers have good subject knowledge and involve learners in a broad range of activities that promote learning and maintain interest and motivation. For example, in one lesson for teaching assistants, learners were taught to count in Japanese to increase understanding of children learning numeracy skills for the first time. Learners are encouraged to bring their experience of the workplace to classes to be shared as a resource. Class discussion and learners' questions indicate a good level of attainment, with learners demonstrating the ability to relate theory to practice. Tutors are sensitive to learners' needs. In an observed touch-typing class for visually impaired learners, the tutor and support worker closely monitored learners' progress and introduced relevant software support to help maintain interest and progress.

60. The strategy for supporting literacy, numeracy and language skills is good. Since September 2003 all learners on teaching assistant courses have been accurately assessed to determine any literacy or numeracy needs. Separate classes have been established to provide support for identified needs. The support provided is good and builds the learners' literacy, numeracy and language capabilities.

61. The resources are satisfactory overall. Two full-time and two part-time staff teach in the area of learning. Staff hold appropriate qualifications in their specialist subject area, including in assessment and literacy, numeracy and language skills support. Accommodation is satisfactory with comfortable furniture and good lighting. Access to centres is good and includes ramps and lifts to accommodate learners with restricted mobility. Good resources are available to support the teaching of keyboarding and courses involving software packages. Software to support learners with visual disabilities is available. Classrooms and workshops are equipped with appropriate teaching aids, including flip charts, whiteboards and overhead projectors.

62. Assessment, including initial assessment, is satisfactory. All learning mentor and teaching assistant learners are screened for literacy, numeracy and language skills, and there are plans to extend this screening to all courses from September 2004. The results of initial assessment are used to prepare an individual action plan for each learner and help to identify additional support needs. Tutors use a satisfactory range of assessment methods to assess learning and to inform learners of their progress. Satisfactory records of learners' progress are maintained.

63. The courses effectively meet the needs of the learners, examination bodies and employers. Support for learners is good. Staff responsible for providing information, advice and guidance have achieved level 3 NVQs in this area of work. All learners receive a handbook that is an appropriate guide to the range of facilities and support available to adult learners. Specific examples of support available include special photocopying arrangements, and the use of a computer with spell-checker and specialist software for learners identified as dyslexic. Support for numeracy and literacy is good. A

decision taken in November 2003 to provide additional literacy and numeracy support for learners on the teaching assistant courses has been successfully implemented. Learners have the opportunity to join specific literacy and numeracy classes either at the start or during a programme. One student on an accounting software programme has a back injury. Following assessment by a physiotherapist, the service has provided a suitable chair and writing slope and made the tutor aware of the learners' needs. Good and effective use is made of support workers, who work closely with tutors to enable learners with identified support needs to integrate with other learners and maintain progress.

### **Leadership and management**

64. The service has taken positive measures to strengthen the nature and range of support for learners. Staff are encouraged and financially supported in acquiring further qualifications, such as in literacy, numeracy and language skills support. Much of the formal and informal communication between staff in the area is effective. Not enough teaching is observed. Not all staff have had the opportunity to contribute to the self-assessment process. The self-assessment report is not thorough and does not accurately identify strengths and weaknesses. Internal verification is satisfactory and meets the requirements of regulatory bodies.

65. Curriculum planning is poor. Courses are not formally reviewed to evaluate marketing strategies, teaching styles or the appropriateness of methods of assessment. No forum or strategy exists to identify and share good practice. Learners' views are sought to determine their level of satisfaction with the provision. It is not clear how these data are used to support and improve provision. No well-developed links exist between staff from the area of learning, and development staff who work with the local community and businesses. Measurable targets are not set and monitored to provide a curriculum that meets the community's needs. Not enough information about progression opportunities are available to learners. Some learners interviewed expressed disappointment at not receiving any further information or guidance.



**Information & communications technology****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	780	3

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good use of ICT skills at home and at work
- good achievement rates on short intensive courses
- good in-class support for learners with additional learning needs

**Weaknesses**

- poor achievement of qualifications on longer courses
- slow progress in some sessions
- insufficient use of assessment in planning and monitoring of learning
- unsatisfactory curriculum management

**Achievement and standards**

66. Learners who remain on courses and attend regularly make significant gains in confidence in the use of IT in their everyday lives and with community groups. Many learners use their new IT skills in local projects or to support their children's and grandchildren's education. They have the confidence to apply their skills to use the internet for family history research or for using online services such as reserving library books and online shopping. Other learners are using their new skills to keep the accounts for the family business, or simply to improve their knowledge of new technology. For others, greater confidence has enabled them to progress to courses leading to qualifications, and to improve their employability. Learners' achievement rates on short qualifications are good. For example, 82 per cent of 2002-03 learners on two-week intensive courses succeeded in achieving their target qualification. The proportion of learners completing their courses is satisfactory. Progression to further learning is also satisfactory. The proportion of learners gaining a qualification on the longer accredited courses that make up 40 per cent of the provision is satisfactory, at 58 per cent for 2002-03. Learners attend classes whenever their circumstances allow, but attendance on many courses is poor. For example, in a quarter of the classes observed, attendance was below 70 per cent. Some enrolled learners have not attended classes for more than four weeks.



## Quality of education and training

67. Learners receive good additional support. Sufficient reference material is supplied in most learning sessions, and learners are effectively encouraged and supported to study independently. The support is delivered in a way sensitive to learners' age, maturity and the high anxiety levels that some may have. Learners who identify themselves as needing extra support receive good support in the classroom from trained support specialists. However, learners' additional literacy, numeracy and language needs are not systematically analysed.

68. Resources are satisfactory. Specialist ICT equipment, such as computers and software, are usually up to date and fit for purpose. Projection equipment is not used enough for demonstrations. Tutors in some outreach venues effectively use sets of mobile ICT facilities including laptop computers and printers. These effectively extend learning opportunities. Tutors have produced learning resources of their own, which are usually well designed and produced. Most of the accommodation is satisfactory, although some is cramped, with insufficient workspace. In a minority of venues, accommodation and ICT resources are very good.

69. The range of provision on offer is satisfactory. A range of accredited and non-accredited courses are available from pre-entry to level 3 which provide clear progression routes.

70. Learners are given satisfactory advice to select the most appropriate course for themselves. A minority of learners receive poor advice and enrol on accredited courses where they find themselves studying topics in which they have no interest. For instance, one group of older retired learners were learning how to interpret and use the manuscript marks used by editors to give instructions to copy typists.

71. The pace of learning is slow in several classes. More-able learners are not sufficiently challenged by the work in classes. Many learners interviewed value the self-paced nature of their classes, the absence of pressure to make progress, the convenience of the location, the welcoming and non-threatening venues, the small class sizes, and the responsive, technically adept support from their tutors. This attracted most of the learners interviewed to the service. Many learners make slow progress. In some cases, learners experience poor technical support, equipment failures and difficulties in printing. In one observed session the pace was very slow as a tutor talked learners through individual keystrokes involved in changing text format, even though half the class could already do this. In the best learning sessions, learners work on exercises that are relevant to them, such as using the internet to view the Ofsted report on their children's school, or identifying job vacancies in which they might be interested. However, in other classes, observed learners worked through standard repetitive exercises in workshop sessions, which were not relevant to them and did not effectively motivate them. Some of these learners were also unable to transfer their learning to other contexts. Teaching rarely takes account of preferred learning styles.

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72. Not enough use is made of assessment to plan or monitor learning. Initial assessment is often insufficiently detailed, and does not identify learners' individual learning needs or personal learning goals. Literacy, numeracy and language support needs are not thoroughly identified. The results of initial assessment are not sufficiently used to support course or lesson planning. Many learners have several course-based individual learning plans, and it is not clear how each of these relates to the individual and helps him or her to progress. Not enough use is made of targets against which progress can be measured. Assessment of learners' progress on accredited courses is satisfactory. Assessment and recording of attainment on non-accredited courses is unsatisfactory. Many tutors do not record progress in sufficient detail. They often record task completion, but not the skills developed or obstacles overcome.

### **Leadership and management**

73. The curriculum management of this area of learning is unsatisfactory overall. However, managers use learners' feedback well to identify problems with venues and respond quickly. A written plan exists for ICT in the overall service strategy, but no evaluation of its success takes place.

74. Internal verification is satisfactory in maintaining the reliability and validity of assessment on accredited courses. Internal verifiers organise standardisation meetings and provide clear, supportive feedback to develop assessment practice.

75. Communications in the ICT curriculum area are satisfactory. Tutors meet regularly. Managers encourage tutors to share learning resources.

76. No staff appraisals have taken place. The observation of teaching and learning is a recent introduction and has not yet had an effect on the quality of provision. Grades given by the service during observations were better than those given by inspectors. Some of the service's observations were not carried out by ICT specialists, and observers paid insufficient attention to attendance, learning and attainment.

77. Technical support arrangements are unsatisfactory and learning is disrupted by equipment failures. Many venues have workstations which contravene health and safety guidelines on the use of computers for extended periods. Tutors provide insufficient advice to learners on avoiding the risks associated with poor posture.

78. Managers make insufficient use of data to monitor the provision. They do not analyse achievement levels on non-accredited courses, progression rates, or the numbers of new learners beginning programmes.

79. Staff receive no structured training in equality of opportunity. The service does not adequately monitor the equal opportunities practices of its partners. Inspectors observed some poor awareness of equality of opportunity in classes. For example, one room had an inappropriate calendar and screensaver. In another, a tutor did not challenge one learner's bullying sexist behaviour towards a support worker. Equality of opportunity is not effectively promoted to the learners at induction.

80. The self-assessment report is inaccurate. Inspectors did not identify the strengths proposed by the service in its report. The report does accurately identify weaknesses in the use of data, in poor achievement rates and in teaching and learning. Much action has been taken in recent months to improve provision, but it has had little effect on learners so far.

**Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	377	3

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- very good achievement rates
- excellent retention rates

**Weaknesses**

- inadequate monitoring of initial assessment
- narrow range of courses
- poor monitoring of subcontractors

**Achievement and standards**

81. Achievement rates are very good, averaging 83 per cent in 2002-03 for all vocational courses. The completion rates on the non-vocational courses are also very good, standing at 100 per cent for 2002-03. In basic food hygiene courses, the achievement rate for 2002-03 was 100 per cent. In sport-related courses achievement rates average, 78 per cent for all courses. The achievement rate on one of the two sports courses is good, at 89 per cent, and satisfactory on the other, at 56 per cent.

82. The quality of learners' work is good. Learners are producing work at or above the level expected. Learners in cookery classes develop effective skills which they use outside the classroom. Measuring, weighing and pouring skills were demonstrated well in an observed microwave cookery class. Many learners on the food-related programmes are updating qualifications to meet statutory requirements, improve their effectiveness at work and increase their employability.

83. Learners in an observed sport-related class developed effective skills in speaking and communicating that prepared them well for leading and instructing others. They were able to identify accurately the important requirements of group leadership and instruction and present these effectively to other members of their class. They used their voices to very good effect, employing the correct intonation, pitch and tempo during the presentation to effectively emphasise the key points of interest. Learners used humour well.

84. Retention rates are excellent, standing at 100 per cent for all vocational and non-vocational courses. Attendance rates are also good. These average 80 per cent for sports-related courses and 85 per cent for food-related courses. More than 90 per cent of provision in both sport- and food-related courses is in the form of one-day or short-

course programmes.

### **Quality of education and training**

85. The standard of teaching is satisfactory. Tutors in the better classes use a variety of teaching techniques including demonstrations, discussion and good use of a variety of images to illustrate points. In these classes the management of activity is good. Group activities are structured and controlled carefully so that learners are able to learn from one another and relate their personal experiences in classes. Good support is provided for learners. Staff encourage learners and use techniques and strategies to include all learners in classes. For example, in a cookery class for learners with particular needs, the tutor explained the activity and then had each member of the class perform part of the demonstration. This was effective in developing their skills.

86. The poorer classes rely too much on whole-group teaching, and do not include enough individual target-setting. Targets set are often inadequate because they don't meet the needs of most of the group. Some use of overhead projectors and acetates is inadequate. Rooms do not contain projection screens, and the image is projected onto uneven and badly lit surfaces. Learners are enthusiastic and motivated well. Tutors and learners have a good relationship in classes.

87. Resources are satisfactory. Rooms are adequate, with whiteboards, tables and chairs that are fit for purpose. Learning materials are adequate, available and used well, including microwave ovens, cooking utensils and practical sports coaching equipment. Some whiteboards used in classes are too small and inappropriately coloured board markers were used in some cases. Acetates used in some observed food hygiene classes were poor, with print too small to read, poor lighting and a screen that was too small.

88. Staff are appropriately qualified. All staff observed are occupationally qualified to deliver their classes. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Most learners are recruited from local employers and voluntary groups, including schools, children's activity groups and the council. Learners on the more advanced sports coaching course are recruited because they have completed a lower-level programme and are known to subcontractors. Most information and advice is adequate. Some learners are incorrectly placed on foundation food hygiene courses because they are unaware of the recently introduced, short updating workshops.

89. Monitoring of initial assessment is weak. In sport classes, the service has no formal requirement for any of its subcontractors to screen those participating in exercise classes before they join programmes. In vocational classes, where good levels of fitness are needed, new learners' fitness is not assessed. Programmes of activity and learning plans are not individually structured to accommodate the individual needs of learners. For example, one programme includes a 10-mile endurance event early in the programme, but learners' fitness levels are not formally assessed. In non-vocational programmes health screening is conducted by the subcontractor before exercise. However, it is not monitored by the service.

90. Initial assessment is inadequate in food hygiene classes. In most cases it takes place on the first day of the class. The assessment of the particular needs of learners is limited to that which can take place on the day of the programme. Support needs and literacy and numeracy skills are not assessed. Programme materials and teaching do not reflect the individual needs of the learners in groups.

91. The range of courses is narrow, but it meets the needs of the current learners. Twenty-seven courses are running at the time of inspection, including cookery, food hygiene and sports coaching. A wheelchair aerobics class developed for priority groups does not run all the year round, and yoga classes have been removed from the provision because those attending are not regarded as a priority group.

92. The provision for learners with particular needs is very narrow. No provision is offered for the over 60s, who make up almost a quarter of the Hartlepool population, nor is there any weekend or summer school provision beyond that which is part of existing programmes. Not enough progression opportunities exist in the current provision. Opportunities exist in food hygiene courses to progress to an intermediate course organised by the service. The service runs advanced sports coaching and leading awards, but no lower-level awards. New provision is planned for next year to fill this identified gap in the provision.

### **Leadership and management**

93. The service is responsive to identified needs in the community. The provision is the product of initiatives by the subcontractors and the local community. The expedition leadership and coaching sport provision is the direct result of proposals of outside agencies, and many of the learners on the food hygiene courses come directly from employers.

94. The service has planned new provision in food hygiene well to expand the narrow progression opportunities. The process of formal design, development and planning of the curriculum is a new one for the service and is not yet sufficiently developed.

95. Some monitoring of the standard of teaching on the service's direct food hygiene provision has taken place. The monitoring system is a very new one and is not yet sufficiently developed. The service does not request the reports held by its subcontractors on the quality of their teaching.

96. The service's monitoring of its subcontractors is poor. No monitoring takes place of the standard of teaching in the sports programme taught by subcontractors. Quality assurance procedures are not monitored. The service does not request copies of the subcontractors' verification and assessment reports. Curriculum leaders make on-the-spot visits to classes but do not formally monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Subcontractors are supported well by the service.

**Health, social care & public services****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	49	2

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- excellent retention and achievement rates
- good development of volunteering skills to support vulnerable families
- good teaching and learning
- good progression from childcare courses

**Weaknesses**

- insufficient monitoring of quality of learning

**Achievement and standards**

97. Retention and achievement rates are excellent on all courses. Most of the first-aid, and health and safety learners updated their proficiency and achieved their learning goals, by becoming the appointed first aider at work or completing a certificate of proficiency to practice. Only one learner on the childcare programmes, and six out of the 254 beginning all courses since September 2003, did not achieve their certificate in first aid.

98. Volunteer learners on the PATCH course develop a range of good skills to work with vulnerable families. The programme was introduced in 1994 in a particularly disadvantaged area of Hartlepool. This course is always fully subscribed. It has trained many learners to support parents of very young children. A number of retired people have completed the course and this has enhanced the experience of the learners and the families they work with. The qualified volunteer learners are highly valued by health and social care professionals. They refer many families to the volunteer learners. At the time of the inspection, 180 families were using the service. Fourteen support groups are available. All are run by 40 qualified PATCH volunteer learners.

99. Progression rates from childcare courses are good. During the inspection two of the current learners gained employment. One previous learner works as group support officer for PATCH. Many learners progress to a level 2 NVQ in early years care and education, which a local college delivers in the same venue. Good childcare facilities for the learners are provided. Many of the PATCH volunteer learners are previous users of the support PATCH provided.

100. A new 10-week pilot course, 'making choices', has been introduced to rectify the insufficient course provision identified in the self-assessment report. This successfully

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attracts individuals interested in childcare and enables them to explore the opportunities available to them. For example, one learner is qualified at level 3 in childcare and has used the course to build her self-confidence after a break in employment. An experienced youth and play worker is learning about the many options available in working with teenagers. Learners meet with the tutors to discuss progression. This course is planned to be repeated after Easter. The first-aid, and health and safety training courses are mandatory for all learners on 'making choices' courses. The learners' employability and effectiveness at work in travel consultancy, and care and early years care settings are enhanced.

### **Quality of education and training**

101. All the learning sessions observed during inspection were good. Methods of teaching are good and are adapted to suit most of the learners' needs. Learning sessions are planned well and have clear and concise timing with interesting activities. A variety of teaching methods are used to maintain the interest of learners. Sessions link theory and practical work well. Some childcare sessions include specific activities to carry out with children. The PATCH course prepares learners particularly well for work in the community. Learners identify and explore their own preconceptions and attitudes to, for example, domestic violence and parental drug misuse.

102. Learners are enthusiastic and enjoy the learning sessions. Learners on childcare courses complete good portfolios of evidence for accreditation. These are organised very well and reflect the hard work put in by the individual learners. Many social and health care professionals contribute to the teaching on childcare courses. Attendance at learning sessions is good, standing at 100 per cent for many courses. All absences are routinely followed up by the course tutor. Tutors evaluate each session critically. However, the learning session plans do not cover how differentiation is to be covered in the lessons.

103. Resources are satisfactory. Well-furnished and comfortable designated training rooms are used in community venues across the town. Learning resources are also satisfactory and readily available to tutors. An adequate number of appropriately qualified and experienced assessors and internal verifiers work on the programmes.

104. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Learners on childcare courses self-assess their progress weekly. They produce good portfolios of evidence of their learning. These include weekly diary accounts of their learning from each session. Successful learning and attainment on first-aid, and health and safety courses is confirmed with ongoing and immediate oral feedback to the learners. This oral assessment is reinforced through a practical and written test. Childcare learners self-assess their progress weekly, with a tutor-led assessment of their achievement at the end of their course.

105. Initial assessment is satisfactory. The service identified initial assessment as a weakness in its self-assessment report. This has been partially rectified and is now satisfactory. The enrolment form for learners joining the 'making choices' and PATCH



courses includes the opportunity for self-disclosure of any specific needs. However, this takes place at the beginning of the one-day first-aid courses and does not give tutors prior notice of learners' specific needs. A small number of learners did not pass the written test for their first aid certificate. Some had poor literacy skills.

106. The range of programmes available is adequate for attracting adults into learning and meets the strategic objectives of the service. Tutors and learners are aware of the specialist support for literacy, numeracy and language skills needs available to them. So far there has not been any take-up of it.

### **Leadership and management**

107. The quality of the provision is not monitored enough. Monitoring of teaching and training in this area of learning is not sufficiently developed to assure the quality of the learners' experience. Observation of teaching and learning does not take place often enough to be effective. Staff make unannounced visits to all classes to scrutinise registers, learning session plans and related documents, but do not check the quality of teaching in the classes. Good arrangements exist to deliver this provision through an effective partnership with a specialist first-aid, and health and safety training provider. Tutors are matched well with the group of learners. For example, a tutor with childcare experience teaches paediatric first-aid. The partnership keeps good records and scrutinises documents, but these are not examined by the service.

108. Staff appraisal, training and development are satisfactory. The range of training offered includes management training. For example, the tutors on PATCH programmes have recently completed a management training course. Tutors have a narrow view of strategic objectives, focusing to their own programme and not the wider targets of the service. Internal verification is satisfactory and meets the demands of the awarding bodies. Overall, equality of opportunities is satisfactory in terms of access to the provision. Tutors show satisfactory understanding of equality of opportunity as it relates to the use of the language. However, one tutor used inappropriate gender-related language during an observed learning session.

**Visual & performing arts & media****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	475	2

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- very good standard of work and achievement rates
- good teaching and learning
- good planning for individual learning objectives
- particularly good locally accessible learning venues
- effective targeting of priority groups

**Weaknesses**

- ineffective advice and guidance on progression routes

**Achievement and standards**

109. Learners consistently achieve a very high standard of work in visual and performing arts, combining technical expertise with a wider creative ability and background knowledge. For example, in an embroidery class observed, learners were imaginatively involved in a demonstration about the history of needles which made their own work seem part of the tradition of an ancient craft.

110. Learners collate comprehensive, well-presented portfolios of work and files to demonstrate the standards achieved and distance travelled in terms of attainment. For instance, in a class creating greetings cards, learners' portfolios demonstrated a range of techniques and skills which they now use in producing cards of a consistently professional standard.

111. Many learners exceed their own initial learning goals and surpass their teachers' expectations. Learners recovering from mental illness have been integrated effectively into classes which they would never have been able to access without support. Their fellow learners have gained a broader understanding and have welcomed every new learner into the group with enthusiasm. In a needlecraft class run in partnership with a national association for mental health, learners recovering from mental illness had gained the self-esteem and confidence to access a mainstream class, independent of their support worker, for the first time ever.

112. Learning from peers, particularly in mixed-level classes, reinforces good, critical appraisal and evaluation of learners' own work. Learners benefit from good teamwork, achieving challenging targets together and gaining independent learning skills. Learners celebrate their work during class time in an atmosphere of mutual support and

continuing, growing success. Beginners in an observed dressmaking class, having chosen their own materials and colour schemes, were encouraged to try on their stylish garments in front of the class.

113. Many learners produce work for family and friends and sell or donate their work in the wider community at craft fairs, church events and local exhibitions. This strength was not identified by the service in its most recent self-assessment report.

### **Quality of education and training**

114. Teaching and learning are good in visual and performing arts. All the learning sessions observed during inspection were good or better. The tutors are experienced specialists in their subject areas and are now working towards teaching qualifications. Tutors use a wide range of interactive teaching methods, including group and individual tuition. Teaching is organised well with challenging tasks, and tutors successfully integrate beginners through to advanced learners with skill and patience. In a guitar playing class, the tutor reinforced a learner's skills and confidence by repeating suitable short practise pieces with him before proceeding with the more advanced group to a longer Spanish tune. Clear, constructive, ongoing feedback lets learners know where they stand and how to progress to new targets. Learning session planning is adaptable enough to respond to requests from learners, who enthusiastically enter into discussion, and debate to clarify skills and technical practices.

115. Individual learning objectives are planned well. In-depth, verbal, initial assessment is used to set learners' goals at the beginning of a course. Comprehensive learning plans with attainable targets are used, updated and reviewed regularly. Learners know what they have mastered and what to do next. Many learners are able to make their own decisions about developing their craft skills, and the regular course review develops learners' evaluation skills which they can practise at home. Many learners in a stamp art class worked in their own time between sessions to produce professional-quality cards and imaginative decoupage. Learners are challenged to reach their potential in primary learning objectives as well as in additional learning outcomes; for instance, teamwork and participation in community projects such as helping in primary school classes.

116. Particularly good, locally accessible learning venues attract learners who are not able to travel or have restricted mobility. Learners interviewed value centres having ramps, wide doorways and lift access to classrooms. Classes take place in craft rooms with good light, plenty of space and large working areas. These are conducive to the showing of learners' work and create a good display area for tutors' demonstrations. Learners get to know their tutors, who understand the anxieties of learners returning to learning, perhaps for the first time in many years. Learners bring their own materials but some larger equipment, such as sewing machines and a heat gun, are provided so that learners are never disadvantaged by not having expensive tools.

117. Priority groups are effectively targeted. In visual and performing arts, 49 per cent of learners are aged over 60. Learners interviewed appreciate daytime courses,

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especially in winter, and many are able to walk to their local centre in schools, libraries and community halls. The third term of 30-week courses has been shortened to allow for those learners who have retired to complete their course before going on holiday in early summer. Retention is excellent at 93 per cent. The partnership with the national association for mental health is working successfully in three observed classes, and the learners are sensitively integrated into classes with encouragement and support from tutors and fellow learners. For example, interviewed learners making peg bags and beadwork regarded the class as a lifeline back to normality and escape from agoraphobia and nervous breakdown.

118. Verbal assessment of learners' work is carried out efficiently and regularly. Records are kept so that tutors and learners know what has been learnt and what must be practised further to develop skills and appreciation of the subject. All attainment is recorded and photographic evidence is exceptionally good.

119. Advice and guidance on progression is ineffective. Learners are able to study at varying levels of skills in the same class. However, in effect, only two subject areas are offered: paper-based crafts and needlecrafts with no other subject-based choice for sideways progression. No progression to accredited courses in the service is possible, and no advice is offered on progression to other providers such as the local art school or private clubs recently set up.

### **Leadership and management**

120. Staff receive good support, and communications are effective. Regular meetings are held, and staff development sessions on schemes of work, learning session planning and individual learning plans have been well attended. Learners' views are collected at the end of their courses and provision is adapted to meet the learners' needs.

121. Staff and learners are aware of equality of opportunity. They have knowledge of topics such as access for learners with restricted mobility, fee remission for learners on means-tested benefits or for those who are aged over 60, and the integration of learners with mental health problems in mainstream classes. Courses take place in convenient, local venues but only during the day.

122. Observations of teaching and learning have been carried out and documented, but no systematic action plan for improvement has been formulated or carried out. Staff appraisal is not yet in place. Not enough succession planning has been carried out in the craft area of learning, where all nine courses each week are delivered by only two tutors.

123. The self-assessment report for visual and performing arts underestimates some of the strengths of the provision: most notably, the attainments of learners. The grade given by inspectors was higher than that given by the service.

**English, languages & communications****Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	256	4

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good development of communication skills for most learners
- good feedback for learners
- good pastoral and learning support

**Weaknesses**

- poor retention and achievement rates on most programmes
- much unsatisfactory teaching
- ineffective advice and guidance on progression routes
- weak curriculum management

**Achievement and standards**

124. Most learners attain good communication skills. They gain confidence, improve their self-esteem, and are able to develop new knowledge. For example, learners can communicate better with others both in their private and work lives. They work well in groups and welcome collaborative work. They are more confident in self-study, such as by using the internet to access learning materials in their private time. However, in some modern foreign languages classes, learners are hesitant in using the taught language spontaneously.

125. Most learners' portfolios are presented well and contain work at appropriate levels of learning. The standard of learners' written work is satisfactory. Their use of vocabulary and language structures is appropriate, but some inaccuracies are present in grammar and spelling. Oral work is sometimes grammatically inaccurate, and pronunciation and intonation is often weak.

126. Retention and achievement rates are poor on most programmes. In 2002-03, 71 per cent of learners completed their courses. In the current year, approximately 52 per cent of the learners on 30-week accredited courses are still attending programmes. Only 44 per cent of learners achieved accredited qualifications in 2002-03. However, when learners stay on programmes, they achieve well. For example, pass rates in 2002-03 were 100 per cent in German levels 1 and 3, Spanish level 2, French level 1 and GCSE English courses, with a total of 30 learners completing their programmes.

### **Quality of education and training**

127. Tutors give good feedback to learners. Homework is regularly set and marked well. Learners welcome the opportunity to work outside the classroom environment. For example, some learners on BSL and German classes are given audio or video cassettes to do further practise at home. Others are set written work that is effectively assessed by tutors and shared with their peers, such as essays on presentation skills for the GCSE English course. This helps learners develop their oral and written skills and builds their confidence. In the best classes observed, tutors are encouraging and give constructive feedback to motivate learners.

128. Learners receive good support from staff, both in and outside classes. Tutors are thorough in giving help with the building of portfolios, and offer useful comments to improve work. Learners are supported well with personal issues. Mentors with counselling expertise are at hand in venues to provide immediate support to learners. However, learners are offered few enrichment activities to develop and use their skills outside the classroom. Although learners on some BSL courses regularly visit the local centre for the deaf following their tutor's advice, no visits to the theatre are arranged for GCSE English learners, and few activities are organised for modern foreign languages learners.

129. Most tutors are appropriately qualified and have good subject knowledge. Others are developing their teaching skills. Most language staff have good oral fluency in the target language.

130. Teaching in BSL and GCSE English courses is satisfactory or better. However, too much of the teaching in modern foreign languages is unsatisfactory. Twenty-five per cent of learning sessions observed in this area were judged to be unsatisfactory. This proportion significantly exceeds national averages for other adult and community learning providers inspected. Too many activities in these sessions are teacher-led, and not enough opportunities for active learning are available. Learners make poor progress. Errors are not systematically corrected. The range of activities offered is poor and learning is not made sufficiently relevant to in real life. In some instances, learners are not sufficiently encouraged to use the target language during activities and tutors mainly use English to both give instructions and convey meaning.

131. Not enough use is made of audiovisual aids across all programmes. Tutors do not use resources at hand sufficiently to provide cultural input and stimulate learning. Appropriate specialist and IT resources are not always readily available to learners. No computers are provided in classrooms for learners to use software during lessons.

132. Tutors do not sufficiently identify the background skills learners need to achieve their individual goals. Individual learning goals are not recorded thoroughly in individual learning plans so learners can use them as active learning tools and monitor progress against them. Individual learning plans are not complete and have only recently been introduced. The initial assessment is carried out as self-assessment of goals and prior

knowledge. However, no records of specific steps to take are kept, and no timescales are set out.

133. Advice and guidance do not effectively guide learners to progress to the next level of learning. For example, learners are not fully aware of learning opportunities offered by other local providers. Learners are placed on inappropriate courses in the absence of any systematic initial assessment. For example, some learners were incorrectly enrolled on a GCSE because no other course was available in the service. No courses are offered in the workplace, and no level 3 Spanish classes are provided for existing level 2 learners to move on to.

### **Leadership and management**

134. Curriculum management is weak. The recently appointed curriculum co-ordinator does not have enough contract time allocated to develop the area of learning. A deaf staff member does not always have an interpreter available to help her participate effectively in staff meetings, which are infrequent. Individual teams work well together, but not enough sharing of good practice and dissemination of ideas takes place. Insufficient in-house development occurs. Authentic learning materials are not adequate. Access to training for part-time staff is inadequate. Not enough analysis of data is carried out to support planning and development of the area as a whole. However, much recent action has been taken to accurately identify strengths and weaknesses, and appropriate individual action plans for staff development have been devised. It is too soon early to judge their effect on teaching and learning. The self-assessment process is not sufficiently developed, and management did not identify most of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors.

**Foundation programmes****Grade 5**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	205	5

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good development of confidence and communication skills in performance arts sessions
- good environment at the main local learning centre
- good achievement rates on level 2 literacy courses

**Weaknesses**

- unsatisfactory achievement and progression rates on many courses
- poor retention rates on ESOL programmes
- much unsatisfactory teaching and learning
- poor identification of individual learning needs
- poor monitoring and recording of learners' progress
- poor curriculum management

**Achievement and standards**

135. Learners with additional needs and learning difficulties and/or disabilities develop good confidence and communication skills in performing arts sessions. Learners work on developing communications with the aim of delivering public performances. Learners work in very animated groups where they mime to music and express themselves through choreographed movement and singing. Learners support each other well and improve their communication skills.

136. The achievement rate for the level 2 certificate in adult literacy course for teaching assistants is good. Of the 24 learners who started the course in 2002-03, 83 per cent of learners successfully achieved the qualification.

137. Achievement and progression rates are poor on most courses. For example, in 2002-03, 50 per cent of learners on adult literacy level 1 programmes successfully completed their qualification, as did 33 per cent of learners on the key skills level 1 communication programme. No learners successfully achieved the entry level certificate in adult literacy. Achievement of external qualifications on ESOL programmes is very poor, and in some classes no qualifications were achieved. During the 2002-03, 36 per cent was the best achievement rate for learners across all classes at intermediate or higher level. Achievement and progression on non-accredited courses are poorly monitored and recorded. Many learners with learning difficulties have achieved one or



more units of accreditation. However, many of the learners have attended programmes for a number of years and continue to achieve similar unit accreditation, but make little progress.

138. Retention rates on ESOL courses are poor. Fifty-nine per cent of learners were retained in 2002-03, and the rate for the current academic year so far is 61 per cent.

### **Quality of education and training**

139. The learning environment is good in the main community venue where much of the provision is based. The venue provides convenient access to learning near learners' homes. The accommodation provides a spacious and attractive learning environment with good-quality furnishings. Some centres have crèche and café facilities that help learners attend courses all day.

140. Much teaching is unsatisfactory. Forty-five per cent of the sessions observed were unsatisfactory. In these sessions, planning to meet the individual needs of learners is poor. Tutors do not use appropriate learning resources adequately, and use worksheets too much. For example, insufficient practical resources are provided to help learners develop an understanding of numerical concepts. Not enough appropriate adult software is available for use in literacy, numeracy or ESOL sessions. While some skills for life resources are available, tutors are not using them sufficiently. Tutors use a narrow range of teaching methods and some learners are not challenged. Learning in the unsatisfactory sessions was poor with learners making little progress in the development of skills. In some literacy sessions teachers do not adequately correct poor letter formation, spelling and grammar, and not enough links are made between different aspects of the sessions. In poorer sessions, time is spent with one learner to the detriment of others, who are given unchallenging activities to occupy their time.

141. Monitoring and recording of progress is poor. Tutors in some sessions do not adequately monitor and record learning and progress, to help plan further teaching and learning. Individual learning plans are poorly completed and objectives are frequently the same for all learners and insufficiently specific. Learning plans do not detail learners' differing starting points or any specific support they may need to achieve their learning aims. Tutors are unclear about the compilation and use of individual learning plans. Progress reviews are inadequate. Tutors are given little guidance regarding the frequency and conduct of reviews.

142. The current programme offer is poor. According to the Basic Skills Agency, in the Hartlepool area 28 per cent of people have poor levels of literacy and 30 per cent have poor numeracy levels. At the time of the inspection very few dedicated sessions for literacy or numeracy were provided. Most of the programme is provision specifically for students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and the curriculum framework is not coherent. Some learners have attended classes for six years with no clear progression routes. No evening provision is offered. Four ESOL classes are running, which is adequate to meet the needs of the learners.

143. Individual learning needs are poorly identified. Staff are unclear about the initial assessment process. Many tutors rely on their own methods of initial assessment and there is no consistency in approach. Some tutors base their initial assessment only on a conversation with the learner. Tutors are instructed to use the Basic Skills Agency initial assessment, although some staff recognise that it is not appropriate for some learners and some programmes. No diagnostic assessment is used. Tutors do not carry out enough formal assessment of learners' social or life skills, or their familiarity with ICT. Little use is made of information gained from learners' previous experiences and learning from their attendance on other courses. Initial assessment is inadequately used to develop individual learning plans and to set specific learning targets.

### **Leadership and management**

144. Curriculum management is poor. The service's literacy, numeracy and language strategy has no clear objectives, few timescales for its achievement and no review mechanisms. Quality assurance of provision is inadequate. Staff have insufficient understanding of the quality assurance arrangements. Staff have not received appraisals. Recently introduced observations of teaching and learning are not thorough enough, and focus on teaching rather than sufficiently on learning. Learning session observations do not identify any unsatisfactory teaching. Staff were not sufficiently involved in self-assessment and planning. No course reviews are carried out. Staff do not receive enough support in the development of an appropriate curriculum, and some communication between managers and staff is poor. The recently introduced staff meetings do not work to a comprehensive agenda. Matters discussed are largely reactive. Some staff are not trained in the core national curriculum for adult literacy and numeracy.

145. The service has recognised a number of the concerns identified by inspectors, and actions have been agreed in the council's action plan. These actions relate to initial assessment, learners' progress reviews, session observation and quality assurance. However, where agreed actions have been completed, they have not yet had a positive effect on learners' experience.

146. Equality of opportunity is insufficiently promoted and monitored. Some staff effectively reinforce learners' understanding and encourage learners to support each other. However, some staff have a poor understanding of appropriate behaviour and attitudes to adults with learning difficulties.

**Family learning****Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	114	4

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good achievement rates on accredited courses
- very good retention rates on accredited courses
- good teaching and learning on accredited courses
- good partnerships to plan individual courses

**Weaknesses**

- ineffective advice and guidance
- poor use of initial assessment to meet the individual learners' needs
- inadequate assessment of learning outcomes on non-accredited courses
- weak curriculum management

**Achievement and standards**

147. Achievement rates are good on accredited family learning courses. At the time of the inspection, two out of seven accredited courses had finished and all of the learners on these courses had achieved their qualification. In other sessions observed, learners make good progress towards achieving their accreditation aims. Learners produce good-quality evidence in well-laid-out and comprehensive portfolios.

148. Learning outcomes are not clearly established at the start of non-accredited courses. Learners do not know how much they have learnt. However, learners achieve soft skills satisfactorily, gaining confidence and developing skills to work with their children more effectively. On some courses, the needs of adult learners are poorly met and are secondary to children's needs. Some learners at the end of their course were unable to identify any new skills they had acquired, but could identify skills their children had gained.

149. Retention rates are very good on accredited courses. The retention rates for all courses average 90 per cent in the current academic year so far. Ninety-six per cent of the learners on accredited and 79 per cent on non-accredited courses remain on the course. Retention rates are satisfactory on short courses. For example, all learners on the nine, short taster sessions completed the course.

### **Quality of education and training**

150. Teaching and learning are good on accredited courses. Tutors use a wide range of teaching techniques to engage learners. All learners are fully involved in activities. For example, one group following a writing course offered in conjunction with Sure Start are producing leaflets that will be distributed in the local community. The leaflets cover sensitive subjects such as domestic violence, isolation and postnatal depression. Subjects are covered sensitively and confidentially in the group. A graphic designer has been engaged to assist in the production of the leaflets. All the learners are proud of the leaflets and feel they are contributing to their community. Tutors work well with learners and encourage peer support among the groups. Feedback on progress is given appropriately to learners. Learners are able to identify their learning and can demonstrate increased skills throughout the learning sessions. For example, learners are able to identify skills they have developed on the course such as better planning, teamwork and communication. They demonstrate their understanding of literacy concepts, such as persuasive text, by producing a poster to advertise the next family literacy course.

151. Teaching on non-accredited courses is broadly satisfactory. However, tutors use a narrow range of teaching methods. Time management is poor and the pace of learning is slow in sessions. Opportunities for adults to develop other skills, for example weighing and measuring in a cooking class, are not taken.

152. Resources are satisfactory. Well-equipped community rooms are used in schools and local residents association centres. These are generally accessible and based in local communities. For example a community room at a local football club, with an interactive whiteboard and laptops, was used well for a joint family literacy session. Teaching resources are generally good, with a wide range of appropriate resources including dictionaries, craft materials and well-produced handouts and worksheets. Staff are appropriately qualified and most have attended staff training in the national literacy, numeracy and language core curriculum and family learning.

153. Poor use is made of initial assessment to meet the needs of individual learners. All learning sessions observed had group session plans, but not enough focus is placed on individual learning needs. Activities to meet the diverse needs of learners with different abilities are not planned. For example, in one session observed, a dyslexic learner's identified needs were not being met. Instead of large print worksheets he was working from the normal handouts. The results of initial assessment are not recorded in individual learning plans. Most learning plans identify the same learning targets for all learners. Group learning targets, such as 'improve spelling' are often too general to be measured. The literacy and numeracy needs of learners are not routinely assessed, although all programmes aim to improve adult learners' literacy and numeracy skills.

154. Assessment of learning outcomes is inadequate on non-accredited courses. Learners do not know how much they have learnt. Monitoring and recording of learners' progress is poor. In some sessions, no written records are kept to monitor and record

learning to plan further teaching. Individual achievement of learning outcomes is poorly recorded, and judgements are often based on the completion of tasks, such as cooking a dish.

155. Advice and guidance are ineffective. The service has a clear aim to engage learners in wider family learning and to help them progress onto literacy and numeracy courses. However, planning in the service to achieve this is poor. The service has no strategy to jointly plan progression routes. Learners do not receive clear information on progression routes. At the time of inspection, plans for the summer term were not finalised and the learners were not clear what they could progress to. Progression routes from short taster sessions, for example in arts and crafts and music, are not clear.

### **Leadership and management**

156. The service has good partnerships to plan some individual courses. It works in partnership with other organisations such as Sure Start to provide opportunities to adults who are not currently participating in education. The service has developed an effective process to plan new provision in response to requests. From initial identification of need for a course, to resource implication as well as progression, opportunities are clearly thought through and provided for. This process has resulted in Hartlepool offering new family learning courses in the borough.

157. Schools interviewed report that the family learning provision has been successful in engaging parents in school life since it was introduced in January 2004. However, the service has refused some requests for family ICT and arts and crafts courses in schools.

158. Curriculum management is weak in this area of learning. Lines of accountability are unclear. Several members of staff are responsible for developing provision, and the overall provision is not coherent. Teaching staff are managed by area of learning co-ordinators, and tutors are confused about the overall strategic direction of family learning in the borough. Staff do not have enough time to do development work, support others and plan and teach courses. The family learning strategy has clear aims and objectives, but this strategy has not been implemented. The strategy includes no targets to monitor the effectiveness of the provision.

159. Quality assurance procedures are inconsistently applied. Some tutors have been observed in a family learning context, and the grades given by the service closely match those given during inspection. The accredited courses in family learning had not been internally verified. Teaching staff and partners, such as schools, have not been involved in the self-assessment process. The judgements in the report do not accurately match the judgements in the inspection.

160. The service's approach to equality of opportunity in family learning is satisfactory. The programme has expanded this year to target provision effectively. Induction for learners makes adequate reference to equality of opportunity, although this is not followed up at progress reviews. Learners make good use of childcare facilities to enable them to access learning.