

INSPECTION REPORT

Stockton-on-Tees LEA

30 April 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

Stockton-on-Tees LEA

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Stockton-on-Tees Adult Education Service (SAES) is part of the Stockton-on-Tees Local Education Authority (the LEA). Stockton-on-Tees is a densely populated borough in the North East of England. SAES provides part-time learning programmes in science and mathematics; land-based provision; construction; information and communications technology (ICT); retailing, customer service and transportation; hospitality, sport, leisure and travel; hairdressing and beauty therapy; health, social care and public services; visual and performing arts and media; humanities; English, languages and communication; foundation programmes and family learning. The foundation programme includes literacy and numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). During the inspection the provision in ICT; hospitality, sport, leisure and travel; visual and performing arts and media; English, languages and communication; foundation provision in literacy, numeracy and ESOL; and family learning were inspected. There were few classes in other areas of provision, and these were not inspected. SAES works with a large number of partners from the statutory and voluntary sectors. There is no subcontracted provision.

2. SAES operates within the education, leisure and culture service of Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (SBC). The manager of community education has overall responsibility for strategic planning for adult and community learning. He is supported by three principal adult education officers (PAEOs). These four officers form the senior management strategy group, which collectively develops and monitors policies and action plans. Two of the PAEOs have responsibility for foundation programmes, adult and community learning and projects, and the third is responsible for student support and administration. The three PAEOs manage nine curriculum managers, and a support team which includes a projects officer, two office and management information system officers, an additional learning support development worker, an information advice and guidance development worker, a student support and examinations officer, and a team of seven staff who provide clerical and data entry support. The projects officer co-ordinates projects and the outreach team. The curriculum managers manage 176 tutors, 30 of whom are on fractional contracts and the remainder are employed as sessional staff. Staff are located at five main centres and a further 82 community venues throughout the borough, including schools, community centres, youth service premises, a public house, local technology centres, the international family centre and specialist venues such as a planetarium. The overall service for education, leisure and culture is accredited with the Investors in People standard, which is a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people.

3. SAES's learning provision is funded by the Tees Valley Learning and Skills Council (LSC). In March 2004, the unemployment rate for Stockton-on-Tees was 3.8 per cent, compared with 2.5 per cent nationally. The main areas of employment are the service industries, the construction industry, manufacturing, public administration, education and health, and distribution, hotels and restaurants. The 2001 census shows that the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups in Stockton-on-Tees is 2.8 per cent,

compared with 9.1 per cent nationally.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Information & communications technology

4. At the time of the inspection, there are 244 learners on 60 ICT courses. The cumulative total of learners participating in ICT in the current academic year is 1,454. Seventy per cent of the courses are in the daytime and 30 per cent in the evening. In 2002-03, there were 1,737 enrolments. Courses range from entry level to level 2. These include desktop publishing, word processing, computer maintenance, and other courses leading to external qualifications. Non-accredited courses are also offered in digital media and photo bytes. The ICT section works with other curriculum areas, including skills for life and family learning, and partners such as local multimedia companies and public houses, hotels, the youth service, a city learning centre, and an open technology centre which hosts a workshop for the visually impaired. Most classes are offered for two hours each week and are available throughout the week at morning, afternoon and evening sessions. A small number of classes are offered on a Saturday. The ICT provision is managed by a curriculum manager and is taught by a team of 17 part-time staff.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

5. SAES offers non-accredited sport and leisure courses in bridge, canoeing, ladies' keep fit, men's keep fit and soccer training, swimming for beginners and improvers, teach your child to swim, tai chi and yoga. An accredited healthy living course called 'feel good' is run in partnership with sports development and supported by projects. The service also offers a range of accredited and non-accredited hospitality courses in cookery, cake decoration and sugarcraft, and basic food hygiene.

6. Seven hundred and forty-four learners have enrolled on sport and leisure courses since September 2003. Twenty-eight per cent of learners are men, 1 per cent are from minority ethnic groups and 2 per cent have disclosed a disability. Seven per cent of learners are under 19, 38 per cent are over 60. Two hundred and ninety-eight learners have enrolled on hospitality courses since September 2003, 26 per cent of whom are men, 3 per cent are from minority ethnic groups and 2 per cent have disclosed a disability. Less than 1 per cent of learners are under 19 and 12 per cent are over 60.

7. There are 493 learners on 51 sport and leisure courses. A keep fit course is run in partnership with Sure Start as part of a weight management initiative. Three 'feel good' courses are running in partnership with sports development, supported by an SAES widening participation project. Six per cent of sport and leisure courses are accredited. All courses in the 'feel good' programme are accredited through the Open College Network (OCN) at level 1. Courses vary in length from one-hour tasters to 30 weeks. Classes usually meet once a week for one to two and a half hours. Swimming classes are one hour only. Twenty-six courses are run in the evening. Courses are currently running at two community and resource centres, three adult learning centres, five schools, a sixth-form college, a theatre and a women's institute.

8. There are 80 learners on hospitality courses. A new national vocational qualification (NVQ) in food preparation and cookery, and a healthy eating cookery course are supported by projects. Thirty per cent of hospitality courses are accredited. Courses vary in length from half-day tasters to 30 weeks. Classes meet once a week for two to two and a half hours. Forty per cent of courses are offered in the evening. Courses are currently running in an education centre and a secondary school.

9. A curriculum manager manages this area. There is one fractional tutor for cookery and one for yoga, and 29 sessional tutors across both areas of the provision.

Visual & performing arts & media

10. At the time of the inspection there are 475 learners in 51 classes. Twenty per cent are in art classes, 56 per cent in craft classes and 24 per cent are in dance and music classes. Since September 2003, 1,261 learners have enrolled on courses in visual and performing arts and crafts. Classes are provided across the borough, within local communities, and run at 26 sites in church halls, schools, education centres, community centres and a nursing home. Most of the present provision is non-accredited with learners working at different levels within the same class. Thirty per cent of learners have access to OCN accreditation, and of those who choose to enter, 90 per cent are successful. Visual arts and crafts courses include pottery, crochet, rocking horse craft, egg decoration, soft furnishings, painting, needlework skills, and parchment and stained glass crafts. Dance and music includes line dancing, Scottish dancing, guitar playing and keyboard skills. Sessions generally run for two to two and a half hours over 30 weeks, on weekdays and evenings. There are some one-day Saturday schools. In 2002-03, there were 901 enrolments, 69 per cent of whom completed their courses. Nearly 3 per cent are from minority ethnic groups and 5 per cent have disclosed a disability. Sixteen per cent are men and 51 per cent are over 55 years of age. During the week of inspection, attendance was 80 per cent in the classes that were observed. The area is co-ordinated by a curriculum manager and there are 20 part-time tutors who often teach in more than one centre.

English, languages & communications

11. SAES provides 32 courses in this area of learning. Accredited and non-accredited language courses are available in Spanish, British Sign Language (BSL), French, Italian, German, Urdu and lip-reading. Twenty-three per cent of learners are men, 7 per cent are from minority ethnic groups and 4 per cent have disclosed a disability. Four per cent of learners are under 19 and 16 per cent are over 60 years old. Spanish courses make up 37 per cent and British Sign Language (BSL), 44 per cent of provision. One Spanish course is offered for parents and children, and a new course in BSL is run in partnership with the youth service, for 12 to 18 year olds. There are no French courses currently.

12. There were 26 courses running during the inspection, some of which were still taking enrolments. Total enrolment at the time of inspection was 241. Sixty-eight per cent of courses are accredited. The qualifications are at stage one and stage two for BSL and OCN certification at level 1 and 2. Level 4 Spanish and German courses are non-accredited. There are no level 3 courses.

13. Courses vary in length from 20 to 60 hours, but most learners enrol each term for 10 weeks. Classes meet once a week, usually for two hours. Fifty-five per cent of courses are offered in the evening. Courses are currently run at five adult learning centres, four community centres, three schools and one church. The curriculum is managed by a curriculum manager and courses are taught by 14 sessional tutors. Most of the tutors are native speakers. This year there has been a 10 per cent increase in the number of learners overall, an increase in learners from minority ethnic groups, a 1 per cent increase in learners disclosing a disability and a 4 per cent decrease in male learners.

Foundation programmes

14. SAES provides foundation courses in literacy, numeracy and ESOL. Literacy and numeracy classes are offered under the title 'skills for life', and are the largest contributory area in foundation provision. In literacy and numeracy, the total number of courses held in the current academic year is 133, compared with 138 for 2002-03. At the time of the inspection there are 44 classes running, of which 11 are held in the evening. Learners may take literacy, numeracy or both. Since August 2003, 333 learners have enrolled on literacy and numeracy courses, and there are currently 271 learners. Two hundred and twenty four learners are on ESOL courses. In 2002-03, there were 411 learners in 33 ESOL classes.

15. Courses in literacy and numeracy are provided at 25 venues in the borough. This includes community centres, training centres, schools and a library. Forty-two per cent of learners are men, 18 have disclosed a disability, and nine of these receive additional learning support. Five per cent of learners are from a minority ethnic group. Classes range from pre-entry to level 2. Learners can work towards external accreditation in the national tests at levels 1 and 2, or an entry level external qualification. Courses vary in length from a three-hour introductory and assessment session, to a one-week residential course. Most learners enrol onto a weekly two and a half hour session and attend for a varying number of weeks. The provision is managed by a full-time curriculum manager, supported by one full-time, seven fractional and four sessional tutors, and a number of volunteer support workers. Two outreach workers develop new courses, recruit learners and hold awareness sessions.

16. Fifty-one per cent of the ESOL learners are men. Ten ESOL classes are held for two hours a week and six are offered three days a week to enable some learners to attend for six hours a week. Courses run for 10 weeks in three terms each year. ESOL classes are from entry level 1 to level 2. Most of the provision is at entry level 1 and 2. Women-only classes are offered in ESOL and computing, ESOL and digital media, and English for work. The two main venues are in the town centre, and some classes are held at an adult education centre and three community centres. There are three fractional tutor/assessors and 11 sessional tutors managed by the ESOL and modern foreign languages curriculum manager.

17. In foundation programmes overall, 17 per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups, compared with 4 per cent of the number of learners in SAES's provision.

Family learning

18. SAES provides family learning opportunities including family literacy and numeracy programmes, and courses designed to improve the understanding of learning and development for children and parents. The courses are offered during the school day and in the evening. There are also opportunities to attend a residential course. Forty-nine venues are used and these include primary schools, church halls, community centres, leisure centres, a butterfly centre and a bowling alley. There are 300 learners on 28 courses, including 'lets talk', 'story teller', 'keeping up with children', 'step drug awareness', 'helping in school', 'computers together', 'art and craft' and a wide range of numeracy and literacy courses.

19. Since September 2003, 582 learners have enrolled on 65 courses. Ninety per cent are women, 4 per cent are from minority ethnic groups and 20 per cent have disclosed a disability. During this period, the retention rate is 89 per cent, the attendance rate is 69 per cent and 167 learners have achieved a qualification. A further 127 learners are currently working towards a qualification at level 1 and 2. Most courses are accredited through the OCN.

20. Most classes meet once a week for two hours and vary in length from six to 24 weeks. The family learning team comprises one curriculum manager, one outreach worker, four fractional tutors and one administrator. Two part-time outreach workers are currently being recruited in the neighbourhood regeneration area.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	13
Number of inspection days	65
Number of learner interviews	580
Number of staff interviews	200
Number of employer interviews	4
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	50
Number of partner/external agency interviews	56
Number of visits	82

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

21. The quality of provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, SAES's leadership and management are good, as is its approach to equality of opportunity and quality assurance. The quality of learning in family learning is outstanding. The quality of learning in ICT, hospitality, sport, leisure and recreation, visual and performing arts and media, modern foreign languages and foundation programmes is good.

GRADES

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

Leadership and management		2
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		2
Quality assurance		2

Information & communications technology		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT		
- Adult and community learning	244	2

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Hospitality and catering		
- Adult and community learning	80	2
Leisure, sport and recreation		
- Adult and community learning	493	2

Visual & performing arts & media		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts		
- Adult and community learning	95	2
Crafts		
- Adult and community learning	266	2
Dance		
- Adult and community learning	70	1
Music		
- Adult and community learning	44	2

English, languages & communications		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Languages</i> - Adult and community learning	241	2
Foundation programmes		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Literacy</i> - Adult and community learning	180	2
<i>Numeracy</i> - Adult and community learning	91	2
<i>ESOL</i> - Adult and community learning	224	3
Family learning		1
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
- Adult and community learning	300	1

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

22. **Learners attain and achieve well in all areas of provision.** Standards of work are good. The success rate in accredited ICT programmes is approximately 80 per cent. In non-accredited provision, learners make good progress and attain well. In all areas there is good attainment of skills and understanding of background knowledge. Attainment of confident performance in music and dance is outstanding. Learners in modern foreign languages develop confident communication skills. Foundation learners increase their confidence and self-esteem. They are proud of their achievements and are positive about the impact that learning has on their lives. Family learning learners develop good parenting skills. Some have made particularly good progress and now work as tutors on the programme. They are able to effectively encourage and support new learners. Retention rates are in good in ICT, foundation programmes and family learning. In ESOL they are good and improving.

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
Information & communications technology	0	4	11	7	0	0	0	22
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	6	8	4	0	0	0	18
Visual & performing arts & media	5	5	9	4	1	0	0	24
English, languages & communications	0	4	2	2	0	0	0	8
Foundation programmes	0	4	11	6	1	1	0	23
Family learning	1	5	3	1	0	0	0	10
Total	6	28	44	24	2	1	0	105

23. **Teaching and learning are good or very good in most areas.** Lessons are well planned and learners respond with enthusiasm to their learning. In dance, teaching and learning is excellent. A wide range of imaginative, energetic and creative approaches to teaching is used, enabling learners of all abilities to succeed and perform in front of their peers. Good use of contextual materials is used to stimulate art and craft lessons. In modern foreign languages, imaginative sessions stimulate discussion, and effective partnerships enable the development of discussion opportunities with learners in other countries. Family learning tutors involve the learners in planning their learning to take account of their preferred styles. However, in a minority of provision there is some poor planning to meet individual needs. This impacted on just below 20 per cent of ESOL provision.

24. **Resources are good in many areas of learning.** The kitchen in hospitality has recently been refurbished and art and craft lessons benefit from specialist facilities. In dance and music, some tutors are professional performers. Most modern foreign languages tutors are native speakers. **Some accommodation is poor** and for ESOL courses, this impacts on most of the provision. In ICT some accommodation is cramped and poorly decorated and there are insufficient facilities. Computer problems inhibit learning in some ICT classes, and there is insufficient use of information and learning technology (ILT) equipment. Most ICT tutors are insufficiently well trained to use ILT resources to their potential.

25. Assessment is generally satisfactory. Tutors use a range of appropriate methods, but sometimes assessment is not well recorded. In ICT, assessment is good. The use of assignments is particularly well used to promote learning. In foundation programmes, evaluation and recording of learning are inadequate. In family learning, the individual learning plan records long-term group targets and those relating to a qualification, but short-term target-setting for individuals is weak.

26. **A broad range of programmes is available to learners.** There is good use of partnership arrangements to develop courses that meet the needs of communities. For example, ICT courses are used to engage new learners, and some courses are located in

public houses so that they are close to where people live. In family learning, the range of courses is particularly wide. Good use is made of local facilities, such as a butterfly house or bowling alley, to develop imaginative courses that promote literacy, numeracy and parenting skills.

27. **Support for learners is good across all provision.** Learners have good access to information, advice and guidance from qualified staff. Teaching staff are supportive in every area of learning.

Leadership and management

28. **Strategic management is good.** The adult learning plan produced by SBC sets out detailed plans and activities to promote adult learning and links closely with the education, leisure and cultural services strategic plan. There is a strong focus on increasing participation, improving achievement, and partnership working. Active involvement with a range of strategic partners across education and other agencies ensures that maximum benefit is gained and duplication is minimised.

29. **Curriculum management is good across most areas of learning.** Delegated strategic management decisions are encouraged at curriculum level. Curriculum managers have autonomy and generally manage their areas well. However, there are some weak aspects of management in BSL. In sport, leisure and recreation, the completion of health questionnaires is too late to enable tutors to plan for the learners' needs in advance.

30. **Communication is good within SAES and with external partners,** other agencies and learners. Regular meetings ensure a good flow of information between different groups. Most meetings are appropriately recorded, but record-keeping is weak on some occasions. SAES is well represented on steering groups for new initiatives.

31. **SAES supports new development through projects, and project management is good.** Curriculum managers work closely with the projects team and regard it as a resource to support recruitment and to help with curriculum planning. The team of five outreach workers is central to this.

32. **The management information system has significant potential to provide useful information.** Reports are generally available through administration support, and some are provided regularly and in a timely way. **However, curriculum managers have limited access to the system,** and there are some areas where the data are not used to their full potential.

33. The process for checking venues for learning is satisfactory. SAES's staff are subject to the council's appraisal process and most staff have an annual employee development interview. Managers, tutors and outreach workers participate in training activities regularly.

34. **There are good partnership arrangements to support widening participation in learning.** Recruitment to community-based learning is good for individuals who are often

hard to reach. Links to maintain and expand provision for priority groups are strong. Half the centres are in areas of high deprivation.

35. **SAES promotes access to learning well.** Trained staff offer very effective information, advice and guidance. Financial support for fees and free childcare are available and are well publicised. Information is available in a wide range of languages and a good range of specialist equipment is available. However, there are no fire alarms with flashing lights to warn learners and staff who have a hearing impairment.

36. Although SAES collects data to monitor equality of opportunity, **there is no analysis to compare the retention and achievement of different groups, or the effectiveness of the different centres.**

37. **Good practice in the observation of teaching and learning has developed significantly** and has impacted on the quality of teaching and learning across the curriculum. Detailed documents are linked to the 'Common Inspection Framework' and to the standards for the further education national training organisation. Tutors receive good developmental feedback, and mentor support or training is provided when needed.

38. **A wide range of methods is used to collect feedback from learners.** Regular sampling of feedback is analysed and action is taken when required. All learners are aware how to raise concerns, and a system of post-paid cards is available for them to raise issues or make compliments. Complaints are few and are quickly followed up within published timescales. Verbal feedback sessions are available for learners who are on ESOL courses, and literacy and numeracy courses, and a termly 'voice of the learner' group supports the consultation processes.

39. **Self-assessment** has taken place systematically over a number of years. Although it has shown improvement in style and structure, it is **insufficiently evaluative.** The report is written in a generic way, and area of learning reports contain very little detail. Key questions are not answered in sufficient depth, and do not make use of all available data. Tutors have been consulted about the self-assessment process, and have received some training, but their involvement beyond that is not clear.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good strategic management
- good communication
- good project management for new initiatives
- good partnership arrangements to widen participation
- good support to promote access to learning and information
- very good use of observation of teaching and learning to promote continuous improvement
- good collection and use of feedback from learners

Weaknesses

- inadequate analysis and use of equal opportunities data
- insufficiently evaluative self-assessment

Information & communications technology

Using IT

Strengths

- good retention and achievement rates on most courses
- good teaching and learning of practical skills
- particularly effective use of assessment strategy to promote learning
- very effective use of ICT to engage new learners
- good management of the area of learning

Weaknesses

- some inappropriate accommodation
- some computer problems
- insufficient use of information and learning technology equipment

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality and catering

Strengths

- good development of learners' skills and knowledge
- good teaching
- good resources
- very effective management of the curriculum area

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of accreditation

Leisure, sport and recreation

Strengths

- good development of learners' skills
- good teaching
- very effective management of the curriculum area

Weaknesses

- late completion of health questionnaires

Visual & performing arts & media

Arts

Strengths

- good attainment and achievement
- good teaching and learning
- very good specialist facilities
- particularly broad range of provision
- good management of the area of learning

Weaknesses

- inadequate opportunities for progression to more advanced courses
- insufficient pre-course information
- insufficient planning to renew, replace and provide consumable resources

Crafts

Strengths

- good attainment and achievement
- good teaching and learning
- very good specialist facilities
- particularly broad range of provision
- good management of the area of learning

Weaknesses

- inadequate opportunities for progression to more advanced courses
- insufficient pre-course information
- insufficient planning to renew, replace and provide consumable resources

Dance

Strengths

- outstanding attainment of skills
- excellent teaching and learning
- very good specialist resources
- good management of the area of learning

Weaknesses

- inadequate opportunities for progression to more advanced courses

Music

Strengths

- outstanding attainment of skills
- very good teaching and learning
- very good specialist resources
- good management of the area of learning

Weaknesses

- inadequate opportunities for progression to more advanced courses

English, languages & communications

Languages

Strengths

- good attainment of language skills
- good teaching and learning
- good resources
- good provision of courses to meet learners' needs

Weaknesses

- some weak aspects of curriculum management

Foundation programmes

Literacy

Strengths

- good retention rates on some courses
- very good development of personal and learning skills
- good range of provision to benefit learners
- good programme management

Weaknesses

- inadequate evaluation and recording of learning
- insufficient use of accreditation

Numeracy

Strengths

- good retention rates on some courses
- very good development of personal and learning skills
- good range of provision to benefit learners
- good programme management

Weaknesses

- inadequate evaluation and recording of learning
- insufficient use of accreditation

ESOL

Strengths

- good and improving retention rates
- good development of learners' confidence and self-esteem
- much good teaching and learning
- very effective curriculum development to meet the needs of the community

Weaknesses

- poor planning to meet the needs of individual learners in some sessions
- inadequate evaluation and recording of learning
- unsatisfactory accommodation in the main centre

Family learning

Strengths

- very effective development of parenting skills
- good retention rates
- good standards of work
- very good teaching and learning
- very good resources
- particularly innovative range of learning opportunities
- very responsive programme management

Weaknesses

- weak target-setting for individual learning goals

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT STOCKTON-ON-TEES LEA:

- friendly, approachable teachers and support staff
- lessons are informal but effective - relaxed atmosphere
- 'my confidence has improved - I enjoy coming'
- interesting work - 'I am learning without realising it'
- wide range of courses
- learning new things - skills learnt are very useful at home and in community
- meeting new people and making new friends
- non-threatening, accessible local centres
- good course publicity
- 'I really appreciate the crèche' (family learning)
- 'we enjoy knowing what our children are doing - it helps us to understand how the school system has changed' (family learning)

WHAT LEARNERS THINK STOCKTON-ON-TEES LEA COULD IMPROVE:

- the enrolment process
- classrooms are too noisy in ESOL classes - 'sometimes we can't hear'
- 'the room is cramped, and we would like to use computers' (literacy and numeracy learners)

KEY CHALLENGES FOR STOCKTON-ON-TEES LEA:

- improve the quality of some accommodation, especially for ESOL
- make better use of data for monitoring equality of opportunity and in self-assessment
- ensure that self-assessment becomes evaluative

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	
Provider	Provider	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
Learner	Learner	Includes those learning by participating in community projects, as well as those on courses. Learning, however, will be planned, with intended outcomes.
Teacher / trainer	Tutor	Person teaching adult learners or guiding or facilitating their learning.
	Mentor	Person providing individual, additional support, guidance and advice to learners to help them achieve their learning goals.
Learning goals	Main learning goals	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.
	Secondary learning goals	These may include planned-for gains in self-confidence, and inter-personal skills. These should also be included in learning plans where appropriate.
Personal and learning skills	Personal and learning skills	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
Unanticipated, or unintended learning outcome	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.
Subject-based programme	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.
Issue-based programme	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.
Outreach provision	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.
Neighbourhood-based work	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.
Community regeneration	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.

Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning	
Community capacity building	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.
Active citizenship	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 2

Strengths

- good strategic management
- good communication
- good project management for new initiatives
- good partnership arrangements to widen participation
- good support to promote access to learning and information
- very good use of observation of teaching and learning to promote continuous improvement
- good collection and use of feedback from learners

Weaknesses

- inadequate analysis and use of equal opportunities data
- insufficiently evaluative self-assessment

40. Strategic management is good. The adult learning plan produced by SBC sets out detailed plans and activities to promote adult learning in partnership with others. The plan focuses particularly on formal learning opportunities for adults, but links closely with the education, leisure and cultural services strategic plan and the plans for early years, schools, the youth service, health, children in need and leisure. SAES has eight key strategic objectives with a strong focus on increasing participation, improving achievement and partnership working. All of the SAES's provision is through direct delivery and much of it is in school buildings and community centres owned by the local authority. SAES is actively involved with a range of strategic partners across education and other agencies to ensure that maximum benefit is gained for adult learners and to maximise collaboration and minimise duplication. The strategy group of senior managers effectively directs developments on a day-to-day basis. A restructuring exercise was completed two years ago and the present curriculum management structure is very effective. The strategic decision to establish a dedicated learner support team centralises this essential function. SAES's strategy for literacy, numeracy and language support is satisfactory. The strategy to recognise and record progress and achievement in non-accredited learning across curriculum areas is in development. The strategy to introduce IT across the curriculum is at the early stage of implementation in some areas. Delegated strategic management decisions are also encouraged at curriculum manager level. Curriculum managers have autonomy and generally manage their own areas of learning well.

41. Internal communication is good. Regular meetings take place at senior management level and across the curriculum manager group. Useful staff meetings take place each term and sessional staff are paid to attend. All staff have a named curriculum manager

and most are well informed about SAES's activities and understand the requirements of their role in the organisation. The management style is open and staff value the support they receive, particularly from their curriculum managers. A comprehensive tutor handbook is given to all staff and recently they have also received some essential documents on CD-ROM. Tutors generally know their learners well and have a good rapport with them. They frequently make time outside the scheduled lesson to listen and respond to learners' needs. Most of the more formal meetings that take place are minuted, although sometimes minutes are poorly recorded and action points are not always clearly identified.

42. External communication is good. There is regular communication with strategic partners and other agencies, locally, nationally and internationally. SAES is well represented on steering groups for new initiatives and on committees for specific developments. A communications group effectively oversees most of the formal external communication relating to marketing. A comprehensive prospectus is circulated across the community each year and new courses are promoted as they are developed throughout the year. Good use is made of a learning bus, regular press releases, the website and local radio to effectively promote adult learning.

43. SAES has established an effective projects team that provides good management of new initiatives. The team is managed by a projects officer who currently co-ordinates over 20 projects. Dedicated administration staff provide the essential support to comply with contractual monitoring, audit and quality assurance. Curriculum managers work closely with the projects team and regard it as a valuable resource for recruitment and curriculum planning. The projects officer attends the regular curriculum managers' meetings and gives a detailed update on progress and potential. SAES is fully aware of additional funding sources and is successful in attracting money from a variety of sources locally, nationally and internationally. A team of five educational outreach workers is a central and very effective part of the projects team. The outreach workers have targets in relation to the particular projects they are attached to and are generally successful in recruiting learners and establishing new courses in new locations. Outreach workers also provide valuable market intelligence to plan for future developments in the curriculum areas.

44. SAES has developed a management information system that has significant potential to provide useful management information. Reports are generally available through administration support, and while some reports are provided regularly and are timely, curriculum managers have limited access. The main focus is on enrolment information to monitor class sizes, viability and returns to the LSC. Although the system has been developed beyond the minimum requirements, some of the reporting is done retrospectively and this has a direct impact on the learners. Often tutors are not provided with learner information in time for the first meeting of a new class. Attendance information is fed into the system each term but there is no regular monitoring of absence on the system. Tutors rely on the manual registers and follow up absences appropriately. SAES is actively developing online enrolment to be fully implemented by September 2004.

45. There is a satisfactory process for carrying out checks on venues for health and safety. All staff are given appropriate guidance on health and safety and some have attended appropriate training. Tutors and outreach workers are required to identify potential risks in the venues for the classes they teach, and are able to refer to specialist support in the learner support team when high-risk situations are identified or serious concerns are raised. Management decisions are made to move from venues or premises where health and safety risks are unable to be controlled.

46. SAES's staff are subject to the council's appraisal process and most staff have an annual development interview. Staff request training through the appraisal process and curriculum managers, tutors and outreach workers participate in training activities regularly. There is a strong focus on achieving teaching qualifications in partnership with a local college in some curriculum areas and many staff have recently attended training in information, advice and guidance. SAES has a good record of developing staff who start as volunteers and, through appropriate support and development, progress to employment in adult education. Many staff participate in the adult education classes which are scheduled each term.

47. Financial management is satisfactory. The council's finance officer provides monthly monitoring reports to the manager of SAES, who responds to issues and concerns on a regular basis. Objectives in the adult learning plan are appropriately costed.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

48. SAES has developed good strategic partnership arrangements to widen participation in learning. Recruitment to community-based learning is good for individuals who are hard to reach or would not usually consider this route. For example, in partnership with health centres, the 'learning on prescription' initiative has resulted in learners taking up courses that help to alleviate medical conditions. In another example, successful work with the prison service provides driving test theory training for prisoners before their release. Links to maintain and expand provision for priority groups are strong. The service has used its partnerships to establish a network of over 80 centres that include community centres, schools, public houses and sanctuaries. Most of these are not managed by SAES. Half of the centres have been opened in areas of high deprivation. Learning centres have been carefully chosen to minimise travel time. Successful partnership bids have taken place to enhance learning opportunities. In one case specialist electronic equipment has been purchased and used to celebrate the music and experiences of asylum seekers.

49. SAES provides good support for learners. Very effective information, advice and guidance are provided by well-trained and qualified staff. Learners know how to access support for childcare, financial support and support to meet specific needs. Policies on the arrangements to promote equal access to learning, for example to fee remission and childcare, are well publicised. Information can be quickly produced when required, in a wide range of languages, large print and Braille. All staff support learners sensitively when additional needs are identified. A good range of specialist equipment and resources is provided. For example, a learner who has a spinal problem was provided

with a customised chair which allowed continued attendance on a computer course. Special machine guards have been fitted to sewing machines to enable partially sighted learners to work safely. However, there is no fire alarm system which gives visual warning for hearing impaired learners. The arrangements for complaints are well publicised and understood. Learners are confident that any issues of concern will be dealt with sensitively and confidentially. SAES provides a post-paid card so that written complaints or concerns can be made without cost. When complaints are made, they are dealt with quickly and appropriately.

50. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equality and diversity. Equality of opportunity is adequately considered at learners' induction. An appropriate range of course literature is available in community languages and Braille. Staff training in equality of opportunity is satisfactory.

51. SAES has recently updated its equality and diversity policy. The policy makes appropriate reference to learners' rights, responsibilities and current legislation, and is integral to the achievement of borough-wide key strategic priorities that include social inclusion and neighbourhood renewal. Equality of opportunity is regularly considered at management meetings. The standards of behaviour expected of staff are clearly stated in a code of professional practice and ethics.

52. The service has taken appropriate action to meet the demands of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 and the Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001. Following a recent audit, the service has identified that some of its premises do not offer adequate access to learners with a range of needs. An action plan in response to this has been produced and implemented. In the interim period, where access is limited, suitable alternative provision is available.

53. There is inadequate analysis and use of equal opportunities data. SAES collects data on gender, ethnicity and disability, which it relates to the profile of the community. However, there is no analysis to identify the retention and achievement of particular groups for planning and making improvements. Data are not used to compare the performance of different groups or the effectiveness of different centres delivering the same courses. No trend analysis takes place. Data analysis is not used effectively to influence the recruitment policy or subsequently set appropriate targets. The service has recently developed plans to fully exploit the equal opportunities data. However, it is too early to make a judgement on proposed initiatives.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 2

54. Good practice in the observation of teaching and learning has developed significantly over recent years. SAES has invested in observer training and observation time for all tutors each year. In some areas, they are observed each term. Very good documents include guidance to tutors to support preparation, self-assessment and learner evaluation. A clear observation protocol has been written. The detailed observation report form has clear criteria that relate to the 'Common Inspection Framework' and the further education national training organisation standards. The

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completion of observation reports is detailed, rigorous and developmental. Action plans show clear links to tutor development, re-observation when required, and mentor support. Judgements are moderated by an external college. Curriculum managers review the process to ensure continuous improvement. Improvements in the teaching grade profile have been identified between first and subsequent observations.

55. SAES uses a wide range of approaches to collect learners' feedback. Regular and systematic sampling through end-of-programme questionnaires is analysed and action is taken when required. For example, one class size was reduced when learners complained about insufficient space, and another class was relocated. Curriculum managers hold verbal feedback sessions for ESOL learners and those who have literacy needs, if they are unable to complete written evaluations. Some tutors collect their own feedback for course planning and evaluation. A 'voice of the learner' focus group is held each term and is open to all learners, who are invited to discuss concerns. They are also consulted about planned developments and the programme offer. The programme for each term is available well in advance for consultation. Some participants attend as class representatives and ensure that others are made aware of key discussion points. Detailed notes from the meeting are circulated to all participants. The clear, open system for providing comments, compliments and complaints is well publicised and understood by learners. The process is explained at induction and in the learners' handbook. Post-paid cards are provided for learners to use. The service receives relatively few complaints, but all are responded to well within the published timescales.

56. The overall quality assurance framework has recently been reviewed and updated. It is closely matched to the 'Common Inspection Framework', and has clearly defined standards and outline procedures. Systems are in the process of being updated and some are now well developed, with clear processes and timescales. All tutors follow a consistent process for the induction of learners. Inspectors identified weaknesses in some key processes, such as in target-setting and the use of individual learning plans. SAES is working on some good developments in the assessment of non-accredited learning, but these are not fully established across provision. This was recognised in the self-assessment report.

57. Assessment and internal verification meet awarding body requirements. Internal moderators have been trained and the process of sampling is mostly recorded clearly. Administrative processes for externally certificated courses are sound, and a clear appeals process is in place. The guidance booklet for assessors and internal verifiers contains useful information, but assessors do not currently receive a copy. Assessors are given written and verbal feedback, but the record sheet is unstructured. Some of the feedback is detailed and developmental, but some is about teaching or resources rather than assessment. Informal follow-up on action points is made but not recorded. Internal moderators meet for standardisation, but meetings are not well recorded. All external moderator and verifier reports are satisfactory or better.

58. Self-assessment has taken place systematically over a number of years, and the report has shown steady improvement in style and structure. However, the report is not evaluative. It describes what is done rather than evaluates the impact of the actions

taken. Much of the report is written generically, with very little detail on individual areas of learning. Although data are available, only one year's data for retention and achievement is used and there is no analysis of trends over time. There is no mention of standards or the progress that learners make. Significant information from the observation of teaching and learning is not used. A number of priorities for improvement link into the service's action plan, but it is not clear if all weaknesses in the self-assessment report are dealt with. Progress on the action plan is monitored each month. SAES has carried out a number of consultation exercises over recent years. The information from these is used in best value procedures, but it is not clear how it has contributed to the self-assessment process or report. Tutors have had self-assessment training and most have been consulted about the report, but their involvement beyond that is not clear. SAES's self-assessment grades mostly matched those given by inspectors. Some strengths were identified in full or part, but fewer weaknesses were identified.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information & communications technology

Information & communications technology		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Using IT</i> - Adult and community learning	244	2

Using IT

Strengths

- good retention and achievement rates on most courses
- good teaching and learning of practical skills
- particularly effective use of assessment strategy to promote learning
- very effective use of ICT to engage new learners
- good management of the area of learning

Weaknesses

- some inappropriate accommodation
- some computer problems
- insufficient use of information and learning technology equipment

Achievement and standards

59. Achievement and retention rates are good. A sample over two years of the most popular courses shows retention and achievement at approximately 80 per cent.

60. Learners produce work to a good standard. The digital media which includes image manipulation and desktop publishing work shows artistic flare and the general standard of assignments is good. Good work is on show on notice boards. Letters and posters show good colour combination and effective use of clipart. The assignment work displays good knowledge of database techniques, spreadsheet cell manipulation and hyperlinks. Effective use is made of tables and a variety of charts.

Quality of education and training

61. Teaching and learning are good. Schemes of work are clear, well designed and include challenging tasks. Lesson plans are thorough and contain evaluative comments for improvement. Observed teaching was 68 per cent good or better. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers use oral questions effectively to check on learners'

understanding. Some teachers design handouts to extend the learners' level of skills beyond the course specifications. Learners respond to the enthusiasm shown by teachers and make good progress. Learners are encouraged to produce most of their assignments on the computer, which improves their IT skills.

62. Learners receive effective guidance during induction. Support is available for learners with financial and personal problems and those who have learning difficulties. Inspectors observed classroom assistants helping learners who have hearing and visual impairments. Translators assist learners who have limited use of the English language. There is sensitive support for older people's learning needs. Materials for independent learning in literacy and numeracy are available. Teachers provide good individual guidance and negotiate appropriate learning goals.

63. Good development of outreach centres helps to widen participation. These centres offer relaxed and flexible learning in venues which are close to the learners' homes and are suitable for adults. Free or subsidised learning is also available. Teachers are helpful and encourage beginners to persevere. The needs of the community are met with a good range of entry-level ICT courses. The views of local people are regularly sought to identify new courses which meet their needs.

64. Assessment practices are good and meet all the awarding body requirements. Assignments are productively used to develop learners' skills. They are well designed and relate to the learners. Clear criteria for success are matched to the syllabus. Thorough and precise marking with constructive guidance, challenges learners and encourages them to work to a high standard. Teachers use topical and relevant examples to reinforce learning. Workbooks are well produced and good handouts, which include study notes and exercises, are available. Learners' attainments are recorded and regular individual tutorial sessions are held to monitor and review the learners' progress. Subject teachers use this information to create an action plan for individuals. Learners are fully aware of the assessment requirements and know what is required to achieve their target grade.

65. Most locations are at least satisfactory and many are very good. All teaching staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. They are confident enough to teach lessons involving office software and some have specialisations in hardware and computer systems or the manipulation of digital images.

66. Some centres have inappropriate accommodation. In some centres, there are no IT resources, access is not possible for learners with restricted mobility, computer chairs are not adjustable, and rooms are cramped and in poor decorative order. The management are aware of these problems and constant improvements are taking place.

67. In some centres there are problems with the computers. In one centre, learners had to use temporary space to store work for two consecutive weeks, after problems with logging on to the system. In another centre, learners waited 30 minutes before they could be connected to the network. Some of the systems are experiencing network problems and printers are not working. In one centre, there was no internet access and

learners had to disturb another class to get access.

68. Few observed classes use data projectors, although they are available in many classrooms. One interactive whiteboard could not be used because of a missing data projector. When ILT is used well, it enhances the learning experience. For instance, in one lesson a teacher demonstrated effectively how learners could make good use of software to make a presentation. However, most tutors are insufficiently trained to use the resources to their full potential.

Leadership and management

69. ICT programmes are well planned and well recorded in standardised lesson plans and schemes of work that are well written and thorough. Teaching resources are well managed. Effective partnerships enable learners to access a wide range of resources and locations. There are flexible learning opportunities for learners at different times of the day throughout the week. The use of assignments allows learners to study flexibly. For example, some learners have full-time jobs and are completing courses in the evening that they started on daytime courses.

70. Staff are observed and receive good, developmental feedback. The observations are carried out by staff from an adjacent local authority and are moderated by consultants. Managers and teachers quickly implement improvements which are identified by observations and staff meetings. Regular staff appraisals are carried out, during which staff training and development needs are identified. Teachers meet formally at least every two weeks and informally more frequently. Good practice is shared regularly at these meetings. Feedback from learners is collected systematically. Some courses have been developed in response to the feedback of learners and the wider community.

71. Equality of opportunity is included in the induction process. However, there is no assessment of equality of opportunity or reinforcement of it during lessons. The learner surveys are aimed at assessing competence in ICT, not an understanding of equality of opportunity. There are few equal opportunities policies on any of the centre notice boards.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Hospitality and catering</i> - Adult and community learning	80	2
<i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i> - Adult and community learning	493	2

Hospitality and catering

Strengths

- good development of learners' skills and knowledge
- good teaching
- good resources
- very effective management of the curriculum area

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of accreditation

Leisure, sport and recreation

Strengths

- good development of learners' skills
- good teaching
- very effective management of the curriculum area

Weaknesses

- late completion of health questionnaires

Achievement and standards

72. On the sport and leisure courses learners develop good skills. The programme enables the development of a range of sport and lifestyle skills. In specific courses such as canoeing, learners receive effective coaching that enables them to develop and improve their performance of canoeing skills. Keep fit classes develop and improve fitness levels, but they also include a significant dance component. This enables learners to improve their sense of rhythm as well as their balance, co-ordination and general movement abilities. Learners' demonstrate these with confidence.

73. Learners on all courses can identify a range of skills that they have improved. These

include movement routines, breathing, relaxation, balance and co-ordination. Some learners with joint and arthritis difficulties identify improved mobility after attending courses. In yoga classes, learners demonstrate good poses and good levels of body and breathing control. They also apply their improved knowledge and techniques to develop their ability to relax.

74. Swimming classes for beginners develop confidence in the water as well as swimming skills. Older learners, beginners and non-swimmers demonstrate good levels of performance.

75. Learners on catering courses develop good practical skills and knowledge which are relevant to their daily lives. Learners also develop good personal skills such as increased confidence and independent living skills. Many learners confirm that the programmes have increased their knowledge of healthy eating, combining various foods, and being more adventurous and experimental when cooking. One learner was unable to read and follow a recipe before coming onto the course, but this is no longer a problem. Others have increased their independent living skills, and are now cooking for family and friends. The learning has also increased learners' knowledge of nutrition, health, safety, hygiene, basic food science, handling equipment correctly, food storage and food costs.

Quality of education and training

76. Teaching and learning are good in both aspects of provision. In sport, 40 per cent of lessons observed were satisfactory and 60 per cent were good or better. The good or better teaching includes good planning of sessions where the needs of the learner are identified and responded to. Session objectives are clear and are being achieved. Good learning environments and good working relationships with the learners are created to reflect an understanding of how adults learn best. Learners are fully involved in the process and are allowed to make their own contribution. A range of teaching strategies is used including question and answer sessions, and individual, small and larger group work in activities where this is appropriate. There is a clear explanation given to support the purpose and outcomes of some of the activities in sessions which deal with more individual activity such as yoga and tai chi. Good supporting knowledge is provided as well as the practical activity.

77. In hospitality, all observed lessons were good or better. Lessons are well planned and well resourced and ICT is an integral part of some lessons. Lists of reference websites are provided where further information on healthy eating and recipes can be found. Tutors incorporate effective practical demonstrations and background knowledge for learners into the lessons. Learners are actively involved and work independently and collaboratively. Learners develop their own files of recipes and record their progress in sugarcraft using photographs.

78. Resources are good in hospitality. The training kitchen was refurbished in 2003. There is a good range of large and small equipment and much information is displayed in relation to the lessons taught. All tutors are experienced and most have a teaching

qualification. Resources in sport and leisure are satisfactory. All tutors are qualified and experienced. All venues are checked and the findings are recorded on a checklist.

79. Assessment of accredited programmes is satisfactory. Learners' work is marked effectively and meets awarding body requirements. Non-accredited courses measure attainment by a system of identifying learning goals and gaining subjective feedback at mid and end of course points, through questionnaires.

80. There is a range of courses in sport, leisure and fitness. The courses represent a wide choice of activity from canoeing, yoga, tai chi, keep fit and a range of swimming classes. In hospitality, some classes are targeted at particular wards and are offered in venues in these areas. SAES responds well to requests from the community and from learners for classes, often through a range of partnerships. There is an effective partnership with a local canoe club where the club gains access to pool time in return for providing canoes and equipment.

81. Guidance and support for learners is satisfactory. There are effective systems for learners where they can gain information, advice and guidance. Support includes concessionary fees, help with travel and equipment costs, as well as childcare and access to crèche facilities. For those learners who find it difficult to access the hospitality classes, special travel arrangements are made. Feedback is taken from the community on course content and flexibility of attendance times. The hospitality sector encourages wider participation through local community initiatives. Learners value the specialist skills and knowledge of the tutors and the very good flexible support provided.

82. Insufficient use is made of accredited courses in catering. Some learners are at very basic levels of learning, but entry level and progression awards are not used.

Leadership and management

83. Staff and managers provide very effective management of this curriculum area. Good use is made of the observation of teaching and learning to identify courses that have little or no learning taking place. Effective action is then taken to remedy the situation. Leisure swimming classes, for example, were removed from the adult education programme, but the manager negotiated and arranged for the classes to continue as a commercial enterprise with the tutors. Further review of the curriculum area takes place using a 'traffic light system' to identify areas of concern. This process recognises actions needed to continually improve the provision and also to devise and record action plans to allow this continuous improvement. Observation of teaching and learning is well established and staff recognise this as a positive contribution to their continued improvement.

84. Good partnerships are in place to broaden the appeal of the programme and to target known communities, as well as to achieve common objectives. Venues are selected in specific wards which have the highest levels of social and economic deprivation. Effective collaboration takes place with the council's sports development department on schemes such as 'Healthy Lifestyles' a level 1 accredited course, a well-

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established 'exercise on prescription' and a 'learn on prescription' programme where there has been some success in converting these courses into the mainstream adult education programme.

85. There is good support for staff. Their work and achievements are recognised and valued. Good communication takes place using a range of methods. Managers are available and spend time with staff when needed. Regular staff meetings are held and all staff who attend are paid. Attendance is monitored and recorded and followed up with staff. These meetings include a curriculum-specific break-out session to enable specific topics to be covered. There is good staff cover for injury or illness and few classes are cancelled. Support for staff development is good, especially in first aid and foundation health and safety. Further training in risk assessments is planned for the future.

86. Completion of health questionnaires takes place too late to allow tutors time to plan for specific needs. Questionnaires are customised to meet specific course needs, but are routinely completed at the first meeting of the class and sometimes later.

Visual & performing arts & media

Visual & performing arts & media		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts - Adult and community learning	95	2
Crafts - Adult and community learning	266	2
Dance - Adult and community learning	70	1
Music - Adult and community learning	44	2

Arts

Strengths

- good attainment and achievement
- good teaching and learning
- very good specialist facilities
- particularly broad range of provision
- good management of the area of learning

Weaknesses

- inadequate opportunities for progression to more advanced courses
- insufficient pre-course information
- insufficient planning to renew, replace and provide consumable resources

Crafts

Strengths

- good attainment and achievement
- good teaching and learning
- very good specialist facilities
- particularly broad range of provision
- good management of the area of learning

Weaknesses

- inadequate opportunities for progression to more advanced courses
- insufficient pre-course information
- insufficient planning to renew, replace and provide consumable resources

Dance

Strengths

- outstanding attainment of skills
- excellent teaching and learning
- very good specialist resources
- good management of the area of learning

Weaknesses

- inadequate opportunities for progression to more advanced courses

Music

Strengths

- outstanding attainment of skills
- very good teaching and learning
- very good specialist resources
- good management of the area of learning

Weaknesses

- inadequate opportunities for progression to more advanced courses

Achievement and standards

87. Attainment in dance and music is outstanding. New learners achieve challenging targets and exceed their previous learning goals in both areas. Learners are very enthusiastic about their progress, and perform confidently in front of peers. Good teamwork and critical appraisal from peers encourages improvements in performance. Important personal and social gains make a significant difference to their lives. Dance

classes enabled one learner who has a disability to feel more independent in her everyday life. Quick progress is made by beginners in mastering complex techniques, dance floor etiquette and interpretation of the specialist language used. In Scottish dancing classes, new learners master intricate step sequences and are able to learn complete dances in each session to a very competent level. Many keep a detailed record of weekly learning. Learners accomplish skills which they thought were beyond them in a short space of time. In guitar classes, new learners are able to read music very competently after only 10 weeks on the course. They can follow notation and play melodies in accurate time and rhythm with others in their group. All learners find dance and music courses inspirational. They gain a range of additional benefits, such as social interaction, fitness in dance, mental stimulation and enjoyment of music. Some participate in the Stockton arts festival, and perform before audiences.

88. Learners on art and craft courses attain and achieve well. Good progress is made by learners who have no previous experience. For example, in one art class, beginners work on their own designs, colour schemes and media of their choice after a very short time. Many continue to develop their skills and interests as independent learners and produce work of a very high standard to take into the community or share with family and friends. In a card-making class in a primary school, parents make a birthday card for every child in the school to be individually presented on their birthday. Some work is of a professional standard, and combines technical competence with creative ability. Patchwork designs keep the craft relevant through the use of traditional techniques alongside modern design work. Comprehensive portfolios of work are used for reference and enable learners to progress at home. Learners develop social and life skills and many gain the confidence to join further courses or enter employment. In accredited courses, over 90 per cent of learners who choose to work towards accreditation gain a qualification, many of them for the first time.

Quality of education and training

89. Teaching and learning in dance is excellent. In music it is good, with some outstanding provision. A wide range of imaginative, energetic and creative approaches to teaching is used in group and individual work. Lessons are very well planned, and some tutors use detailed learner profiles when planning individual learning targets. Large group and ensemble work in beginners' music classes is particularly successful. Innovative handouts are used as music scores to enable learners to prepare for the next session. Dance tutors are sensitive when giving constructive guidance for learners who have missed a sequence. In all performance sessions, learners are able to perform in front of their peers. Scottish dancing is performed with accuracy and elegance, with excellent pacing of energetic and sedate dances. Learners develop good understanding of the historical background of each dance. Expert line dancing tuition enables every learner to take a full part in the lesson. Learners practise each step in detail before putting them together into well co-ordinated sequences. The music is exciting and every learner is totally involved in their dancing.

90. Teaching and learning in art and craft courses is good. Learners are challenged to

reach their potential and detailed feedback is fair and constructive. Learning plans are reviewed and updated to take account of learners' progress. In a parchment decorating class, some learners completed tasks in short periods of time and were able to develop ideas and designs of their own to sell at charity fairs in the community. Tutors create a safe environment in which learners feel confident to take their first steps back into learning. Good, differentiated lesson planning allows tutors to develop learners' varied levels of skills, in the same class. Tutors encourage creativity, design and colour awareness and the use of a wide range of quality materials. In a soft furnishing class, a laptop computer was used to show images of home interiors, and the group has visited show houses to develop ideas. An understanding of the wider aspects of historical and cultural background to art is promoted. For instance, in an art lesson on tonal values, reference was made to a local art exhibition.

91. Very good specialist facilities and resources are available to learners. Local centres are situated over a wide area of the borough and many are within walking distance for learners. They are all maintained to a high level and have good parking facilities. All rooms are specialist craft areas and have spacious working surfaces, good lighting, storage facilities and equipment for visual and performing arts and crafts. For example, there are good sewing machines, pottery wheels, cutting-out tables and woodwork facilities. Clerical and caretaking staff in all venues are welcoming and helpful, for example, setting out rooms and equipment ready for the learners' use. There are good resources for dance and music. Rooms for dance are large and light, with good floors for dancing. Keyboards are supplied for learners' use. Dance and music tutors are particularly well qualified and work professionally in their field. One tutor is nationally recognised for her expertise and knowledge.

92. The range of provision in all visual arts and crafts is particularly broad. Courses include traditional subjects such as patchwork and embroidery, rocking horse making, watercolour painting, and pottery, as well as modern applied arts such as interior design. In a stained glass course, the current trend in lamps was being developed. Art classes use a wide range of techniques and experimentation with a variety of media such as acrylics and pastels as well, as the more traditional oils. The range of provision in dance includes Scottish and line dancing, and in music, guitar and keyboard are offered.

93. There are inadequate opportunities for progression to more advanced courses. Most courses are non-accredited and those which do offer a qualification are at a low level. Learners are able to study at different levels in the same class, but there is little awareness by tutors and learners of progression to other providers in the area.

94. Most tutors carry out thorough, in-depth initial assessment to establish learners' starting points and make detailed recordings of regular assessment with constructive feedback. Individual goals are reviewed. In a beginners' guitar class, the tutor and learners reviewed progress after four weeks and then periodically throughout the course so that individual skills could be developed fully. However, in some classes, tutors' recording of assessment is minimal and learners do not know whether they are reaching their learning goals.

95. There is insufficient pre-course information for learners in visual arts and crafts. New learners are not aware of the course content, materials required or their likely cost, before attending the first session. Tutors do not have learner numbers before the first class and are not provided with pre-enrolment lists to plan materials.

Leadership and management

96. Staff are well supported by managers, and communication between staff is effective. There are regular meetings between tutors and managers, and they often share good practice. Problems and requests are dealt with promptly. Good teamwork ensures that the progress of current and new courses is regularly discussed and evaluated. Useful, well-attended staff development sessions are carried out on a regular basis. Classes are regularly visited by managers to give advice and encouragement to tutors and learners. Most tutors have been observed in learning sessions over the past two years and action plans with clear timescales are used to improve tutors' performance. There has been appropriate staff training in writing schemes of work, lesson plans and learning outcomes for non-accredited classes. Feedback from learners is collected and analysed regularly, and is particularly positive.

97. The provision attracts learners of different ages and abilities. Access for learners with restricted mobility is particularly good, with ramps, wide doorways, lifts and a chairlift. Five per cent of learners have disclosed a disability. They are well supported to be successful in their learning. For example, in a line dancing class, a learner with restricted mobility joined in the sequence without the aid of her walking stick, for the first time in many years. Partially sighted learners have had a successful adaptation of safety guards on sewing machines. The number of learners from minority ethnic groups reflects the population profile of Stockton-on-Tees. However, most learners are women.

98. Although the area has good facilities and resources, there is insufficient planning to renew, replace or provide consumable materials for arts and crafts. There is no policy or documents for expenditure on consumable materials for tutor demonstrations. Learners do not have access to trial materials for their own experimentation in arts and crafts.

English, languages & communications

English, languages & communications		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Languages</i> - Adult and community learning	241	2

Languages

Strengths

- good attainment of language skills
- good teaching and learning
- good resources
- good provision of courses to meet learners' needs

Weaknesses

- some weak aspects of curriculum management

Achievement and standards

99. In most modern foreign languages classes, learners make progress towards achieving their learning goals. Over 50 per cent of learners are new to language learning but can communicate confidently at an appropriate level and pace. In a few cases, there is insufficient consolidation for learners to use dialogue with fluency. Most of the learners aim to complete one-year externally certificated courses at levels 1 and 2. In accredited classes, achievement rates have risen from 74 per cent to 79.5 per cent over the past three years. However, the numbers registering for accreditation have decreased by 10 per cent over the same period. SAES outreach workers have introduced planned growth in 10-week non-accredited beginners' courses in areas of high deprivation.

100. In level 4 classes, learners' language skills are of a good standard, and some reach good standards in all four language skills. Pronunciation, fluency and intonation are particularly good. Learners understand and use complex tenses and an extensive range of vocabulary. Many can participate in unscripted conversation, and participate in lessons which are almost entirely in the target language. Older language learners have developed very positive attitudes and skills for lifelong learning.

101. Learners who are working towards BSL at level 1 are very motivated and purposeful. They are able to communicate on subjects related to everyday activities and can exchange information, often at a good speed without sacrificing accuracy. Many attain key personal goals such as communicating with their tutor, deaf friends and family.

In many classes there are learners who use their new language for work purposes. Attendance and retention are good in BSL classes. There are wide variations in achievement between classes, from 41 per cent to 61 per cent at level 1 in 2002-03. The average for the year is 55 per cent. In the stage two achievement varies between 7 per cent and 83 per cent. The average is 27 per cent. An action plan has been prepared to look at unit-based accreditation to improve achievement.

Quality of education and training

102. Teaching is good or very good in 75 per cent of all language classes observed. In modern foreign languages, tutors plan courses and lessons diligently. They set clear objectives and many devise very imaginative stimuli and activities to involve all learners. For example, one session was planned around a gardening theme. The tutor had encouraged the group to bring in specimens, stories and oral histories and to learn new vocabulary by means of a demonstration of flower arranging. The best lessons are characterised by a high level of effort and commitment by learners. Many of the best learners are able to use language spontaneously at near-native speed or can communicate using complex grammar and structures. Some achieve both.

103. The team of qualified and experience tutors, most of whom are native speakers, is a considerable resource. Tutors are an important source of information, not only on a particular language, but also on questions of culture. SAES has been able to offer staff cultural awareness and deaf awareness courses with this resource. The centres are welcoming, with good accommodation. Tutors who used to supply their own resources now have access to appropriate equipment.

104. In modern foreign languages, assessment takes place in many forms on most courses for written and oral work, and is well recorded by tutors. In almost all cases it is used for course planning and especially to build in further revision or consolidation time. Assessment is very carefully recorded by some tutors who clearly monitor individuals' progress very closely even on non-accredited courses. However, some of the assessment is perfunctory and opportunities are not taken to monitor progress and create an individual learning plan. Initial assessment is carried out by tutors and by the curriculum manager, who suggest alternatives if learners are not in the level of class they need. There is no recording of assessment or progress in BSL courses.

105. Programmes have been developed to meet the needs and interests of new and less-traditional learners. In one case an outreach worker had identified an interest in basic holiday languages and successfully attracted new learners for Spanish and Italian beginners' classes. One programme set out to attract men in a local community to start a language course by encouraging friends and couples to enrol together. The close-knit bonds in this group of Italian learners clearly helped them to support each other and encouraged them to travel and try out their language in the country. One class is run in partnership with the youth service and other classes are located in areas of deprivation. Many run with small class sizes. SAES's staff listens to learners who request specific times and locations. Managers and tutors are very responsive to learners' needs.

Leadership and management

106. Tutors value the open style of management. Communication is effective and there is clear evidence of continuous improvement. Equality of opportunity is promoted and staff and learners are aware of their rights and responsibilities. Tutors and the manager plan and manage the modern foreign languages curriculum effectively. Learning sessions are very well planned and learners are clear about the progress they make. Observation of teaching and learning is very thorough and many tutors have now been observed and have discussed an action plan with their manager. The well-devised training programme is appreciated and has clearly led to improved techniques in the classroom. It offers considerable opportunities for tutors to enhance their teaching, IT and presentation skills. Tutors have appreciated the language-specific training in particular. Some BSL tutors now use a wider range of visual stimuli and techniques.

107. A strong strategic lead is given by SAES to additional activities with European partners. An innovative learning partnership has been set up to expand and encourage awareness of the wider European dimension for all staff and learners and to raise the profile of languages. Nine staff have participated in exchanges and new teaching ideas have been developed. Evaluations are very positive and the experience has already had significant impact on participants.

108. BSL comprises almost half of the programme, and is delivered by a very small team of tutors. Tutors have access to a communicator when they attend SAES meetings and information sessions, and an interpreter with an educational background for training sessions. They are mostly able to attend meetings, but there are few subject-based training opportunities for them. It is not clear how tutors can discuss and report their own needs and development as a team. The BSL curriculum is not sufficiently differentiated and there are few documents. Some of the tutors have literacy support needs and written communication is not always appropriate for them. Some of the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report, such as the failure to meet deadlines for future development of BSL, are not followed through. It is not clear what the policy is in respect of class size, which is usually larger in BSL than in modern foreign languages. The inspector identified concerns about BSL tutors' safety in the event of fire. Just one of the centres used for BSL has flashing lights for the fire alarm. On one site, no specific health and safety briefing took place as part of the induction. Only one number is given in the prospectus for access to text phones, although these are available on the other main sites used for BSL.

Foundation programmes

Foundation programmes		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Literacy - Adult and community learning	180	2
Numeracy - Adult and community learning	91	2
ESOL - Adult and community learning	224	3

Literacy

Strengths

- good retention rates on some courses
- very good development of personal and learning skills
- good range of provision to benefit learners
- good programme management

Weaknesses

- inadequate evaluation and recording of learning
- insufficient use of accreditation

Numeracy

Strengths

- good retention rates on some courses
- very good development of personal and learning skills
- good range of provision to benefit learners
- good programme management

Weaknesses

- inadequate evaluation and recording of learning
- insufficient use of accreditation

ESOL

Strengths

- good and improving retention rates
- good development of learners' confidence and self-esteem
- much good teaching and learning
- very effective curriculum development to meet the needs of the community

Weaknesses

- poor planning to meet the needs of individual learners in some sessions
- inadequate evaluation and recording of learning
- unsatisfactory accommodation in the main centre

Achievement and standards

109. The retention rates are good and improving on ESOL programmes. They have improved from 56 per cent in 2001-02 to 66 per cent in 2002-03. For 2003-04, retention is measured on a termly basis and averages 73 per cent. The retention rates averaged 94 per cent on basic ESOL programmes for 2002-03, and 32 per cent of learners sought external accreditation, with a pass rate of 89 per cent. Attendance during the current year is 65 per cent. The retention rate for some literacy and numeracy courses is good. In 2002-03, the retention rate was 72 per cent and 31 per cent of the provision had over 90 per cent retention.

110. Development of learners' confidence and self-esteem is good. Literacy and numeracy learners are very positive about the impact learning makes to their lives. For example, one learner who was unable to write a birthday card before coming onto a literacy course, was proud of being able to write to their family. Two learners have been on a creative writing course and have had their work published. ESOL learners are proud of their professional photographs displayed in an exhibition in the town centre museum. They have increased confidence in their ICT and language skills, which are used to produce an ESOL newsletter and a CD-ROM. High-profile, imaginative celebration evenings are held each term where learners and guests participate in an awards ceremony and in cultural performances such as singing and musical events. Displays of good work are a feature in many of the centres. Learners work well together and many progress on to more advanced courses. For example, some learners go on to become trained volunteers or support assistants. In 2002-03, 56 per cent of retained literacy and numeracy learners achieved an external qualification.

Quality of education and training

111. Teaching and learning on ESOL programmes is mostly good. In 73 per cent of sessions observed, teaching and learning was good or better. There is good individual and group teaching. Tutors and volunteers carefully support learners and effectively

promote learning. Tutors encourage learners to work independently through the use of bilingual dictionaries. They are sensitive when correcting learners' pronunciation and grammar. Learners develop good English oral skills and are able to contribute well to group and pair work. Learners gain confidence in using their skills and are able to describe their own experiences and talk to each other in English. In one class learners held a lively discussion about cultural differences and in another, learners used prompt cards to ask and answer questions about leisure activities.

112. All literacy and numeracy classes observed were satisfactory or better and just over half were good. In the better lessons staff use a variety of teaching techniques and methods including games, topic work and outside visits. Staff take account of individual learning styles and plan effectively with careful reference to the core curriculum. However, in some classes there is an over-reliance on handouts, and some lessons are insufficiently planned for the differing ability of learners. Volunteer workers support many sessions, but some tutors do not include them when planning their lessons. Laptop computers are used in some lessons to access the internet, but ICT is not sufficiently used to promote learning.

113. Very effective curriculum development in ESOL, and a good range of literacy and numeracy provision, meet the needs of the community. A wide range of partnerships enables a broad range of ESOL provision. Women-only groups are offered in local and community venues. Additional funding supports delivery in community groups or with learners who have a disability, in their homes. Good links with colleges help learners to progress onto mainstream and other college courses. Close links with interpreting services enable some provision of interpreters and translation of documents into English. Effective links with minority ethnic community groups help to widen participation by increasing recruitment of women and young men. Staff development in English language teaching methodology through an international teacher exchange, has improved the curriculum offer. Participation on literacy and numeracy courses is widened through course availability in a wide range of venues. Learners progress onto other programmes and through the levels. Staff identify and respond to new opportunities for developing courses; for example, a one-week residential activity is used to develop skills in creative writing, drama, digital photography and national tests. Literacy and numeracy staff work effectively with partners to develop a range of skills; for example, there are driving theory classes for offenders. Core curriculum standards are matched with the basic IT course, driving theory and beauty skills courses. One tutor has worked with a group of learners from a local arts project to improve confidence in their literacy and numeracy skills.

114. Guidance and support is good. All literacy and numeracy learners have extensive individual interviews and their initial and diagnostic assessments ensure that their prior experience is considered carefully. All staff are trained in advice and counselling and three are trained to give advice and guidance to level 2 or above. They deal effectively with the diverse needs of the learners. Dyslexia support is co-ordinated within additional learning support, and there are two qualified tutors for dyslexia. ESOL learners have good access to information, advice and guidance through effective partnerships with a refugee service, joblink and the Citizens Advice Bureau. Tutors and volunteers are supportive and can refer learners to services provided by the Stockton International

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Family Centre. Tutors are allocated half an hour at the end of their session to offer support to learners. Learning programmes include specific strategies such as acceptable conversational openings for making friends with local residents.

115. Most learning venues for literacy and numeracy are satisfactory or better, and many of the rooms are bright and airy. However, some premises are cramped for the number of learners who attend. SAES is aware of the problems and has a plan to deal with them. Some venues has good IT facilities on the premises in a separate room, but these are sometimes inaccessible to learners, such as during evening classes. Not all classes have IT facilities. Fractional tutors have a laptop for use in the classroom, and there are a number of laptops which can be taken to sites. Staff are aware of the booking system for these. There is a strategy to use IT for learning, to deal with the problems.

116. Accommodation in the main centre for ESOL is unsatisfactory. This affects many of the learners as most classes are held in the town centre venues. Two groups, working with different tutors or with a tutor and a volunteer, use some rooms at the same time, and one room is also used as open access to IT. Noise from these arrangements distracts learners and reduces their ability to listen carefully. There are inadequate arrangements for carrying out initial interviews and assessments. They take place in rooms where there are other users and there is insufficient confidentiality. Learning resources are satisfactory, although too many photocopied worksheets are used in sessions. Staff are mostly experienced and appropriately qualified, although some sessional tutors do not have advanced skills, experience and qualifications above level 2.

117. Planning to meet the needs of individual learners in some ESOL sessions is poor. In some sessions tutors do not use diagnostic assessments sufficiently to plan learning. Learners in these sessions make poor progress. Language used by the tutors is too difficult for the learners and they do not understand what they are required to do. Learning resources are not appropriate for the development of learners' skills. In one session a pre-entry learner who had very little understanding of English was asked to read and repeat written numbers for a substantial part of the session, while the remaining three learners worked on a reading comprehension exercise without tutor support.

118. Evaluation and recording of learning in all aspects of foundation provision are inadequate. The activities are recorded but learning and progress are insufficiently monitored to enable the measurement of progress. The evaluation and co-ordination of learning for some learners who attend multiple sessions are inadequate. There is insufficient collection of learners' work to demonstrate their achievement. Monthly reviews are not consistently completed. Some are irregular, and many reviews for foundation learning lack specific individual short-term targets for learners. Records lack detail or are incomplete. It is not clear from some documents whether individual targets have been met.

119. Although tutors develop some imaginative approaches to learning at different levels, for example, in creative writing and residential courses, the range of opportunities for accreditation is limited. Some learners work towards the level 1 or 2 national tests in

adult literacy, or an entry level 1 qualification, but they are unable to evidence their learning through a range of externally accredited qualifications at entry level and level 1.

Leadership and management

120. Programme management and communication in skills for life is good. The curriculum manager holds a meeting every two weeks which is well attended by full-time, fractional and sessional staff. Targets for attendance, retention and achievement are set and are regularly discussed. Staff benefit from effective formal and informal communications where they share good practice. Skills for life resource centres are particularly effective in enabling staff to share a good, wide range of resources. Staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities and benefit from staff development. Regular observations of teaching and learning, the employee development scheme and the national skills for life strategy are used well to plan staff development. New tutors are very well supported and mentored. There are very good relationships with a wide range of local organisations, which directly benefit learners, such as the prison service. Partners work effectively together to recruit learners and to plan the programme. Standard lesson plans and schemes of work are used to ensure a consistent staff approach to planning. Information and training are shared between partners. For example, the skills for life team hosted a good practice event in a local hotel.

121. Regular communication between tutors and with the curriculum manager takes place through formal team meetings, informal contact and an e-mail group. Fractional tutors are involved in the employee development interview programme and sessional tutors have the choice to have individual or group meetings to identify their training needs. Most tutors have attended the ESOL curriculum training. International links give opportunities for tutor exchange and staff development in other countries. After feedback from learners, women-only groups and examination practice groups have been introduced.

122. Systems to internally verify achievement are inadequate. Internal moderation sampling arrangements are not clear. The arrangements to formally monitor some key learner processes such as reviews, induction and initial assessment are weak.

Family learning

Family learning		1
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
- Adult and community learning	300	1

Strengths

- very effective development of parenting skills
- good retention rates
- good standards of work
- very good teaching and learning
- very good resources
- particularly innovative range of learning opportunities
- very responsive programme management

Weaknesses

- weak target-setting for individual learning goals

Achievement and standards

123. All family learning courses are very effective in promoting the development of good parenting skills. Parents are more confident and skilled in being able to help their children at home and at school. They learn a variety of techniques that they use with their children to promote enjoyable learning. Relationships with children improve, and parents value the way that classes help them to understand how children learn, and what they do at school. Many feel better equipped and confident to take part in school activities. Parents develop resources for 'story sacks' and 'chatter matters' that make reading with children fun. One grandparent noted that her grandson has become very creative as a result of the skills she has learnt and the support she can now give. Three parents who previously attended family learning courses are now tutors with SAES.

124. During 2002-03, family learning had 1,280 learners on 138 courses. The retention rate during this period was 87 per cent. Two hundred and fifty-eight learners achieved a level 1 qualification and 55 achieved a level 2. Since September 2003, there have been 582 learners enrolled on 65 courses. The retention rate is slightly higher at 89 per cent. One hundred and five learners have achieved OCN accreditation during the first term. Twenty-five have taken a national test in numeracy and 19 have achieved levels 1, 2 and entry level 3. There are currently 127 learners working towards a qualification.

125. Standards of work are good. Parents produce a range of resources as part of their courses that are later used in school by teachers, and at home by other parents. For

example, packs to support story telling include well-made games, models and puppets that parents produce. Attractive carry bags are designed to complement the story and make it easy for children to recognise. Learners' files include good work that they have completed with their children.

Quality of education and training

126. Teaching and learning are very good. Ninety per cent of lessons observed were good or better, and 60 per cent were very good or outstanding. All lessons are well prepared, recorded and resourced. Changes to the national curriculum are considered during planning to ensure its continued relevance to the key stage for the children involved. Tutors involve learners effectively in planning their learning, to take good account of preferred learning styles. Parents discuss the skills for life agenda, and are provided with packs of information and a self-assessment tool which is used to help the tutor establish their starting points. Good use is made of exercises to develop confidence and raise awareness of literacy and numeracy, for instance in the use of icebreaker games. Learning is checked in a non-threatening way by the use of quizzes. Tutors effectively integrate practical demonstrations and background knowledge into the lessons. Learners work independently and collaboratively. Some parent groups have organised school activities for children and other parents. Without exception they are engaged and interested. They particularly enjoy the practical aspects of their learning.

127. Teaching and learning resources are very good, and excellent in some cases. Learners use ICT in the production of support materials for work on 'story sacks' and 'chatter matters' resources. Some of the learners use computers to work with their children or to develop research skills using lists of website addresses to find further information on educational issues. Good use is made of interactive whiteboards, and ICT equipment is to a high specification. Large screens are available for people who have a visual impairment. All buildings are fully accessible, and some schools have dedicated rooms for family learning which are bright and spacious.

128. There is a particularly wide and innovative range of programmes to meet learners' needs. Most learning opportunities are delivered in a creative way that appeals to adults and children. The programme range includes family literacy and numeracy through art and craft, ten pin bowling, outdoor games, visits to a butterfly centre, drama, puppet workshops, a family history workshop and a special summer programme. A national ten pin bowling company has set up and piloted a numeracy programme with a lane set aside for curriculum-based activities. A visit to a butterfly centre for a reception class promoted much reading and preparatory work on the theme of caterpillars and butterflies. Parents effectively supported their children to develop observational, reading and writing skills through the use of a trail booklet which provided many things to look for. Some sessions specifically support parents' own personal development. Learning sessions are offered during the day and after school with crèche facilities for those who need it. A wide range of venues is used for courses and learners can negotiate what they do on the learning programmes. Topics include drug awareness, healthy eating, digital media and many more. An outreach worker works closely with the community to

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identify areas for development. A tutor from a minority ethnic group has been effective in encouraging parents from similar backgrounds to enrol. Four per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups, which is above the Stockton-on-Tees figure for this group.

129. Assessment is satisfactory. Most tutors assess literacy and numeracy needs regularly, and learners are given homework activities each week. Work in files and on assignments is reviewed regularly by tutors during tutorials and good feedback is given. Tutors regularly check learners' understanding through a range of informal methods in class, and review portfolios of work regularly. Internal moderation and standardisation takes place at the end of the course.

130. Individual short-term target-setting is weak. The design of individual learning plans captures and monitors progress against long-term objectives and collective group objectives, but not individual short-term targets. Some individual learning plans record the learning activity rather than the objectives or targets. Although learners progress well within family learning, opportunities are not taken for learners to progress to other learning and activities outside of family learning. The full range of skills they develop as individuals are not recorded.

Leadership and management

131. The family learning management team is very responsive. Curriculum development is supported by strong local partnerships with schools, local businesses, community centres and advisory groups. These have been successful in meeting the needs of learners and the wider community. Effective negotiations between partners have enabled some creative and inspiring courses to be delivered. Regular meetings with partners allow the sharing of good practice in the borough. The partnership aims to promote a greater understanding of how literacy and numeracy are taught and to find innovative ways of enabling parents to become more involved in their children's schools activities. All partners make good contributions to achieving this goal. One local business has helped to design a numeracy programme that involves parents and children using a designated area for curriculum-based activities on their premises. Their own staff are well prepared and supportive of parents and children who use the facility.

132. The family learning team targets areas of deprivation and hard-to-reach learners. Bilingual tutors provide good support to parents for whom English is a second language, and free crèche provision is available. The programme range has started to attract fathers, and most classes observed had a good mix of participants. Schools often target the parents of children who are low achievers, and the team sometimes makes home visits to encourage parents to get involved. Schools comment favourably on the impact that the courses have on parents and children. The role of the family learning auxiliary was particularly noted in gaining the trust of parents.

133. Programme management is good. Tutors meet regularly and communications are good. Termly observation of teaching and learning takes place and is supplemented through drop-in visits by the family learning manager. Tutors receive good developmental feedback about their teaching practice. The use of peer observation

promotes the consistent use of good practice in the team. Resources are reviewed regularly to ensure their relevance. Feedback is collected from learners at the end of each course and is used for course reviews.