

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **South Tyneside Council Adult Learning Service**

**25 February 2005**



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

## South Tyneside Council Adult Learning Service

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. South Tyneside Council Adult Learning Service (STALS) operates within the directorate of lifelong learning and leisure. The directorate's structure has recently been changed to include the newly formed lifelong learning section. The adult learning service operates within this section through an acting adult learning manager supported by four team leaders. There are 135 staff, including 89 tutors and 15 administrative support staff. South Tyneside Council provides a wide range of specialist support to the adult learning service, such as human resources, financial and marketing services. It provides education and training in 12 areas of learning in a range of community venues. These include community centres, employers' premises, schools, libraries and residential care homes throughout the borough. Many of the community centres are directly managed through the management committees of community associations and not through the adult learning service. Most provision is supported through Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funding, and includes work-based programmes mainly in care and business administration. A small amount of provision is funded through Jobcentre Plus. Inspectors reported on seven areas of learning. Work-based and Jobcentre Plus-funded provisions were too small to include in this inspection. In 2003-04, there were 12,567 enrolments by 6,924 learners throughout STALS. At the time of inspection, 3,750 were attending in one or more of the seven areas inspected. Community development provision was inspected within curriculum areas and as part of leadership and management.

2. South Tyneside is the smallest metropolitan borough in England and covers six areas, South Shields, Jarrow, Hebburn, Boldon, Whitburn, and Cleadon. The borough suffered from the decline of traditional coalmining, shipbuilding and heavy engineering industries in the 1970s and 1980s, leaving a legacy of significant social and economic deprivation. Nine of the borough's wards are among the 10 per cent least well off in the country.

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

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

3. Fifty-five learners are working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQs) in administration, of whom 45 are working at level 3 and 10 at level 2. All learners are employed. STALS has a contract to provide administration qualifications to the South Tyneside Healthcare NHS Trust. Information about the courses available to council staff is promoted in the annual course brochure. Learners can begin at any time throughout the year, but most start in September. All learners have an induction to the programme. This takes place either by attendance at a group workshop or on an individual basis at the learners' place of work. Assessors visit learners in the workplace every four weeks to carry out assessments. Administration programmes are also provided to young learners on work-based learning programmes and adult and community learning, but these were not included in this inspection.

### **Information & communications technology**

4. During 2003-04, 933 learners enrolled on 143 information and communications technology (ICT) courses. Since September 2004, 590 learners have enrolled on 81 courses, of whom 10 per cent have declared a disability, 24 per cent are men and 5 per cent are from a minority ethnic group. At the time of the inspection, 307 learners had enrolled on 35 courses. Courses range from beginner to level 3, with those above beginner level being accredited, and include computer literacy and an examination-based qualification in information technology. Courses range in length from six hours to 40 weeks, mainly in two-hour sessions. They are offered during the daytime and evening, and a very small number take place at weekends. Courses take place at learning centres, community venues, schools, libraries and residential care homes. The provision is directly managed and taught by a curriculum co-ordinator, assisted by two development workers and six part-time tutors. STALS also provides a small number of specific courses for learners from minority ethnic groups, including women-only sessions, which are managed separately.

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

5. Currently, 990 learners are divided among 54 courses in hospitality, sport and leisure. Most courses are non-accredited and include yoga, keep fit, swimming, kayaking, table tennis, climbing, boxing and a variety of martial arts. Accredited courses are offered at level 1 and 2 and include soccer coaching, pool life-guarding and the basic expedition leadership award. Courses take place during the day and in the evenings at 19 venues, which are schools and community centres. Some courses take place at weekends. Many classes are for mixed-ability learners and some are targeted at specific groups such as ladies keep fit and men's boxing. Seventy-one per cent of learners are women. Three per cent of learners are registered as disabled. Thirty-three per cent of learners are aged over 55. In 2003-04 there were 2,184 learners. Approximately 35 voluntary and part-time tutors generally work between one and four hours each week. Some tutors work at more than one learning centre.

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

6. STALS offers visual and performing arts and media courses in arts, crafts, music and dance. At the time of inspection, 216 learners were enrolled on arts courses, 646 learners enrolled on crafts courses, of whom 2 per cent are men, and 595 learners have enrolled in music and dance, 36.5 per cent of whom are men. The curriculum leader oversees this area of provision as well as two other learning areas. The curriculum leader is supported in specialist areas by two other members of staff. There are 43 tutors in this area of learning, of whom six are responsible for art, 16 work in crafts and 21 in other provision. Courses are delivered at 19 venues throughout the borough. The courses offered range from beginners' access, to level 1 and 2 accredited courses.

## **English, languages & communications**

7. STALS offers language classes in Bengali, British Sign Language (BSL), French, Italian and Spanish. There are 409 learners in these classes, of whom nine are studying Bengali at general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) level. Approximately 60 per cent of learners are studying modern foreign languages accredited by the Open College Network (OCN). The remaining 40 per cent are studying BSL. Most learners are women.

## **Foundation programmes**

8. Currently, 256 learners are on foundation courses, of whom 170 are on literacy and numeracy courses, and 86 are on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses. Forty literacy and numeracy courses and 18 ESOL courses are provided throughout South Tyneside. Thirty adults with learning difficulties and disabilities receive training in literacy and numeracy. Thirty-six per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups and 7 per cent of learners have a disability. Courses are provided in 10 venues, including community centres, schools, social centres and youth centres. Learners attend part-time. Many learners take other courses in subjects such as ICT. Courses are provided through daytime and evening provision. Foundation courses are managed by a full-time co-ordinator. Two full-time staff have developmental and teaching roles. Training is provided by 13 part-time staff. Accreditation is provided from pre-entry to level 2.

## **Family learning**

9. In 2003-04, 625 learners took part in 117 family learning programmes. Family learning covers a range of courses in which parents and carers develop their own knowledge and skills, as well as increasing their awareness of the ways in which they can support their children's development. Courses also provide the first steps into learning for parents returning to learn. Since September 2004, 276 learners have enrolled on family learning programmes, 37 being men. All courses are part-time and range in length from two-hour introductory sessions to courses lasting a total of 60 hours. All courses are aimed at families from disadvantaged groups. Courses take place mainly during the day and are offered in local nurseries, schools, community centres and libraries. All courses offer childcare facilities. Family literacy and numeracy courses are aimed at learners who wish to develop entry level and level 1 and level 2 skills alongside parenting skills. Separate sessions are included for the adults and the children, as well as opportunities for parents and children to learn together. Nineteen literacy and five numeracy courses are operating, as well as wider programmes focused on parenting skills and child development. The retention rate for learners in 2003-04 was 93 per cent and of 124 learners enrolled on accredited courses, 103 achieved a qualification. A family learning co-ordinator has responsibility for the management and development of family learning throughout the borough. She is supported by a team of full- and part-time tutors.

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	13
Number of inspection days	65
Number of learners interviewed	431
Number of staff interviewed	136
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	35
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	10

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

10. The overall quality of provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, provision is unsatisfactory in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, and in English, languages and communications. The provision in ICT, visual and performing arts and media, and in foundation programmes is satisfactory. Provision is good in business administration, management and professional, and in family learning. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory and quality assurance of the provision is very weak. Equal opportunities arrangements are satisfactory.

## GRADES

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

<b>Leadership and management</b>		<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality assurance		5
<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>		<b>2</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Business administration</b> - Adult and community learning	55	2
<b>Information &amp; communications technology</b>		<b>3</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Using IT</b> - Adult and community learning	307	3



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<b>Hospitality, sport, leisure &amp; travel</b>		<b>4</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b><i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i></b> - Adult and community learning	990	4

<b>Visual &amp; performing arts &amp; media</b>		<b>3</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b><i>Arts</i></b> - Adult and community learning	216	3
<b><i>Crafts</i></b> - Adult and community learning	646	3
<b><i>Other contributory areas</i></b> - Adult and community learning	595	3

<b>English, languages &amp; communications</b>		<b>4</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b><i>Languages</i></b> - Adult and community learning	409	4

<b>Foundation programmes</b>		<b>3</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b><i>ESOL</i></b> - Adult and community learning	86	3
<b><i>Literacy and numeracy</i></b> - Adult and community learning	170	3

<b>Family learning</b>		<b>2</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
- Adult and community learning	276	2

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievement and standards

11. **Achievement is good on most ICT courses** with satisfactory progression to higher levels of study. **Attainment is good in most other areas of learning.** In leisure, sport and recreation, learners improve their mental and physical well-being. Learners develop technical and creative skills very well in arts and crafts. The standard of work is very good. In music and dance, learners gain significant personal enrichment and, through dance, improve their level of fitness. In literacy and numeracy programmes, learners develop personal and learning skills very effectively. The standard of work is good and learners are very well motivated. In family learning, parents and carers make significant progress in the development of personal and parenting skills, and many progress to further training and employment.

12. **Achievement levels are low for accredited courses in literacy and numeracy.** Only a small proportion of learners is entered for national tests.

13. **Retention rates are good in three areas of learning.** For business administration NVQ courses, the rate is 93 per cent, and it is between 87 and 100 per cent on most ICT courses. In leisure, sport and recreation courses, retention is very good, at 97 per cent. However, attendance varies considerably from week to week and is poor overall.

**Retention is poor on 50 per cent of the modern foreign language classes.** The range of appropriate and stimulating activities is restricted.

### 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	1	7	5	0	0	0	13
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	1	1	2	10	1	0	1	16
Visual & performing arts & media	0	7	8	8	3	0	0	26
English, languages & communications	0	3	3	1	2	0	0	9
Foundation programmes	0	2	7	6	1	0	0	16
Family learning	1	9	1	1	0	0	0	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>92</b>

14. **Some of the teaching and learning on the programme is very positive.** Teachers use a good range of teaching strategies in art, including individual project work and challenging class-based tasks. Demonstration is used very well in crafts. In ESOL classes, teachers are particularly responsive to learners' ability levels and interests, making good use of local contexts, and checking learning frequently and thoroughly. Teaching and learning is good in family learning. Teachers take good account of learners' different backgrounds and cultures, and make very effective use of interactive teaching methods.

15. **Assessment in business administration uses a particularly effective range of assessment methods**, well linked to workplace activities and including reflective accounts, case studies and projects.

16. **Many teaching techniques used in foreign language classes are not demanding enough.** Too much emphasis is placed on simple repetitive exercises. Teaching and learning activities are not varied enough. In crafts, too much unstructured learning takes place in self-help groups. There are not enough challenging activities and critical feedback to help learners to progress. Insufficient attention is given to safe working practices in ceramics classes.

17. **Individual learning needs are poorly identified in business administration, ICT, and in leisure, sport and recreation.** Learners' progress is not monitored sufficiently in leisure, sports and recreation, or in ICT. On family learning programmes, individual learning plans are not used as working documents and progress is inadequately recorded. Initial assessment in business administration is inadequate. Staff do not formally assess learners' needs. The results of learners' discussions with their managers are not forwarded to relevant staff.

18. **In literacy and numeracy, information about the needs of adults with learning difficulties and disabilities is poorly recorded and is not used to plan the teaching or support for these learners.**

19. **The provision in languages reflects community needs well.** The range of modern foreign languages has been extended in response to a survey of local community interests. A Bengali GCSE class offers good opportunities for learners to improve their career prospects. Classes in BSL help local professional people to raise the quality of service they provide in areas such as nursing, retailing and youth work. The range of provision in family learning supports the council's aim to widen participation.

20. **Learners' attainments in dance and music classes are well recognised.** Opportunities are constantly created for learners to demonstrate their skills. Dance and music classes encourage and stimulate a very good level of learner involvement. Learners gain significantly from their courses in terms of personal development, they are able to increase their fitness levels and social skills.

21. **In sport and recreation, the programme offers too few opportunities for learners to move on to different courses or levels**, and many learners have been doing the same course for a number of years. STALS does not monitor safe working practices sufficiently. Community centre managers risk-assess venues and facilities, but not activities. Managers do not routinely check whether risk assessments have been completed and are up to date.

## Leadership and management

**22. Positive actions have recently been taken to improve the capacity of the provision.**

The council's values and objectives have been revised to include a stronger focus on widening participation and partnership. An interim management team is working effectively to implement these values and objectives, raise STALS's profile and develop new provision. Senior managers have introduced changes to improve collaborative working among staff teams and review less effective working practices.

**23. STALS has introduced good initiatives to widen participation.** A well-planned community development initiative successfully targets and recruits learners from minority groups, people with learning difficulties, refugees, and asylum seekers. Much of the provision is targeted towards areas of economic disadvantage and supported by free crèche facilities.

24. The provision of literacy, numeracy and language support is satisfactory on the specialist foundation courses. Arrangements are not adequate, however, to support the progress of learners on other vocational and accredited courses. There is no established system for identifying and assessing such needs and no clear lines of responsibility for establishing and implementing a system.

**25. Arrangements to provide additional learning support for those with learning difficulties and disabilities are weak.** Although this support is available, learners' needs are poorly identified in most curriculum areas. No formal system exists to identify learners with dyslexia. Individual responsibilities for implementing support are not made clear. Tutors have not been trained sufficiently in identifying and supporting additional needs. The venues used for foundation courses are conveniently located and easily accessible for learners. Facilities are good.

**26. Strategic leadership is not sufficiently established.** The council has not adequately defined STALS's role in the borough in a coherent strategy, and has not set sufficiently clear objectives for the provision of adult learning.

**27. Operational management is not developed sufficiently.** The senior management team has taken action to improve the provision, but the pace of change has been too slow. The working relationships between STALS and the community association centres is unclear and ineffective. The leadership and management of some curriculum areas are unsatisfactory. In some areas no one has overall responsibility for the leadership, co-ordination and planning of the curriculum. The co-ordination and links between the different aspects of provision are inadequate and there is not enough sharing of good practice. Staff recruitment has been slow in some areas.

**28. Target-setting for improvement is weak.** The council's strategic documents do not always set clear objectives for STALS. Some of STALS's targets are not thorough or specific enough, and are not monitored systematically. Target-setting for staff is inadequate and some targets are not followed up or monitored. Managers do not carry out enough formal reviews of targets for critical performance measures, such as

enrolments, attendance, and retention rates. Target-setting is weak in many curriculum areas, including ICT, hospitality, sport and leisure, and foundation programmes.

**29. Arrangements for collecting and using management information are weak.**

Managers and tutors do not have adequate access to accurate, detailed and timely learner performance data, and do not routinely use this information for curriculum planning, review and development. The self-assessment report has not used learner performance data to assess the quality of the provision. Data is not analysed sufficiently to compare the performances of different groups and of the provision at different venues.

**30. Equality of opportunity is not promoted sufficiently in the curriculum.** Staff have not received enough training in equal opportunities and diversity, and good practice is not shared between tutors. Teaching staff are not sufficiently aware of the resources available to support learners with disabilities. Data is not used sufficiently to help in curriculum planning. Improvements have been made recently in the availability of data, including the matching of learners against census information. However, this data is not accurate enough to help in the planning and promotion of equality of opportunity.

**31. STALS's approach to monitoring and improving its provision is not consistent or thorough enough.** The quality assurance arrangements are also not thorough enough and do not monitor the key training processes adequately. Teaching and learning observations do not consistently support improvements in the quality of provision. Course evaluations are not thorough and systematic, and do not contribute to the self-assessment process.

**32. The self-assessment report is not sufficiently self-critical and thorough, and is not adequate as a tool for continuous improvement.** It does not focus sufficiently on the impact of activities on learners. Many of the strengths identified in the report are no more than normal practice and there is insufficient evidence to support some of the judgements. The report does not use data to make sound judgements about learner performance in a significant number of curriculum areas. Staff are not fully involved in the self-assessment process.

33. Internal verification is satisfactory in business administration. Two qualified observers carry out observations of the team and interview the learners. Internal verification forms part of the overall quality assurance process. In ICT, assessment and internal verification are very thorough.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Strengths**

- positive actions to improve the capacity of the provision
- good initiatives to widen participation

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficiently established strategic leadership
- insufficiently developed operational management
- inadequate use of target-setting for improvement
- weak management information system
- insufficient promotion of equal opportunities in the curriculum
- weak arrangements to provide additional learning support
- inadequate quality assurance systems
- insufficiently self-critical self-assessment report

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

### ***Business administration***

#### *Strengths*

- very good retention rate on NVQ programmes
- particularly effective range of NVQ assessment methods

#### *Weaknesses*

- inadequate initial assessment

## **Information & communications technology**

### ***Using IT***

#### *Strengths*

- good retention and achievement rates
- very thorough assessment process

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient use of quality assurance procedures for improvement
- inadequate use of data for programme evaluation

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

### ***Leisure, sport and recreation***

#### *Strengths*

- good retention rate
- good enhancement of learners' health and well-being

#### *Weaknesses*

- poor attendance rates
- insufficient monitoring of learners' progress
- insufficient progression opportunities
- inadequate curriculum leadership, management and control of provision
- weak arrangements for the enforcement of safe working practices
- poor quality assurance arrangements

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

### ***Arts***

#### *Strengths*

- good development of technical and creative skills
- very good standard of work
- good range of teaching strategies

#### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient opportunities for progression
- inadequate programme management

### ***Crafts***

#### *Strengths*

- good development of creative and technical skills
- particularly good personal development
- good practical demonstrations by tutors

#### *Weaknesses*

- much unstructured learning in self-help groups
- insufficient attention to health and safety in ceramics course
- inadequate programme management

***Other contributory areas***

*Strengths*

- good recognition of learners' attainments
- very good level of learner involvement
- significant personal development

*Weaknesses*

- inadequate programme management

**English, languages & communications**

***Languages***

*Strengths*

- good work to meet community needs

*Weaknesses*

- poor retention rates for most modern foreign languages provision
- ineffective teaching techniques in a significant number of modern foreign language lessons
- ineffective quality assurance of provision

**Foundation programmes**

***ESOL***

*Strengths*

- particularly responsive teaching
- good venues for courses

*Weaknesses*

- unsatisfactory monitoring of learners' progress and achievement
- inadequate analysis and use of data



### ***Literacy and numeracy***

#### *Strengths*

- good development of personal and learning skills
- good venues for courses

#### *Weaknesses*

- low achievement rates
- insufficient recording of adults' learning difficulties and disabilities
- inadequate analysis and use of data

### **Family learning**

#### *Strengths*

- good attainment of personal and parenting skills
- good teaching and learning
- good use of resources
- very effective range of provision to widen participation

#### *Weaknesses*

- inadequate recording of progress
- inadequate action-planning in observations of teaching and learning

## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT SOUTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL ADULT LEARNING SERVICE:**

- 'the chance to prove myself without having to sit tests'
- the accessibility of the learning centres
- the provision of a crèche
- the friendly atmosphere and support of the tutors
- the chance to meet people with common interests and make new friends
- maintaining and improving fitness levels
- improving skills and sharing good ideas
- being able to make mistakes in a safe environment
- gaining the confidence to use a foreign language on holidays
- being able to use good English in everyday life
- learning strategies to manage children's behaviour more effectively

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK SOUTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL ADULT LEARNING SERVICE COULD IMPROVE:**

- the timing of some classes
- access to specialist resources in sports, arts and crafts
- access to computers for English language learning
- the number of people to work with in foreign language classes
- the use of local accents in English language teaching
- information about extra costs before joining classes
- the structure and price of BSL examinations
- car parking

## **KEY CHALLENGES FOR SOUTH TYNESIDE COUNCIL ADULT LEARNING SERVICE:**

- ensure a better match between the council's strategic priorities and STALS's provision
- improve the quality, accuracy and use of statistical information, particularly for learner recruitment and performance
- clarify the relationship between STALS and community associations
- clarify responsibility for all aspects of curriculum management and delivery
- develop the use of target-setting for improvements within STALS
- promote equality of opportunity and diversity in the curriculum
- develop a consistent and thorough approach to quality improvement throughout the provision
- improve the use of initial assessment to plan learning and review progress

## Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

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

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

## Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

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

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

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 4

#### Strengths

- positive actions to improve the capacity of the provision
- good initiatives to widen participation

#### Weaknesses

- insufficiently established strategic leadership
- insufficiently developed operational management
- inadequate use of target-setting for improvement
- weak management information system
- insufficient promotion of equal opportunities in the curriculum
- weak arrangements to provide additional learning support
- inadequate quality assurance systems
- insufficiently self-critical self-assessment report

34. Positive action has been taken recently to improve the capacity of the service. Within the past two years, the council's administration has gone through a period of significant change, overseen by a new senior management team. The council's values and objectives have been revised to include a stronger focus on widening participation, and partnerships. The interim management team, which was appointed in November 2004, is working effectively to implement these new values and raise STALS's profile within the council and throughout the borough. Improved partnership work has been developed to meet the diverse needs of those people less likely to be attracted to learning. STALS is using different funding sources and projects to develop new provision, such as accredited training for community volunteers. More recently, the senior managers, with the support of the interim director, have introduced changes to improve collaborative working among staff members and to review some of the less effective working practices.

35. Staff appraisals and development are generally satisfactory. Staff make good use of the council's extensive staff development opportunities. However, STALS does not provide sufficient opportunities for staff to develop their skills in teaching, learning and course development. For example, most tutors do not fully understand how to use individual learning plans.

36. Internal and external communications are satisfactory and have improved recently. For example, a regular internal newsletter is published, and the management team visits the staff more regularly than before the changes were implemented. A range of meetings is used to discuss relevant curriculum issues, but in some curriculum areas these meetings are not systematic. Most tutors' knowledge of curriculum and operational

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developments is adequate, but some staff are not kept sufficiently up to date. Some staff do not understand the rationale for change. Communications with external partners have improved significantly and discussions are taking place with other providers in order to offer better progression routes to learners.

37. Governance arrangements are satisfactory. The council's cabinet takes an interest in the development of adult learning and has recently approved the adult learning plan before submission to the local LSC. The scrutiny committee does not receive regular information about STALS's performance, however, and has not reviewed its self-assessment report.

38. Management of resources is satisfactory. A significant number of staff have appropriate experience, or teaching qualifications at level 1 and 2. Most accommodation is well maintained and there are some very well-equipped resources for learners in ICT and foundation programmes. The service carries out health and safety checks of most of its training venues. The risk assessments, however, do not sufficiently consider the health and safety risks for learners with learning disabilities or mobility. STALS does not systematically assess the health and safety implications for different courses. In some sport and leisure and craft sessions insufficient attention is given to health and safety matters.

39. The provision of literacy, numeracy and language support is satisfactory on discrete specialist courses. Arrangements are not satisfactory, however, for learners on other courses who may need this support to participate and make progress. STALS has no established system for identifying and assessing the needs of these learners. Tutors, managers and guidance workers do not know where to refer learners for assessment or to access support.

40. Strategic leadership is not established sufficiently. The council is fully committed to STALS and understands how STALS can support community regeneration, the ability of the individual to contribute to the regeneration of the area, and widening participation. However, the council has not adequately defined the role of STALS in the borough through a coherent strategy and has not set sufficiently clear objectives for delivery of the provision. The council has only recently started to evaluate the contribution of some of its programmes to its strategic aims. STALS is beginning to develop strategies to plan and co-ordinate individual courses more effectively across geographical areas.

41. Operational management is not developed sufficiently. The management team has taken action to improve the provision. For example, it has introduced the principle of learner entitlement and a system for producing individual learning plans, and set up a more consistent enrolment procedure. However, not all staff have been sufficiently engaged in the process of change, and the pace of change has been too slow. The working relationship between STALS and the community association centres is unclear and ineffective. STALS is responsible for the performance of the provision, but does not have sufficient influence to plan, manage and to quality assure this provision. For example, STALS's managers are not members of the community association management board, which is responsible for course planning. STALS is not provided with clear



information about the distribution of LSC funds for its courses. Budget accountability is weak. STALS does not implement its procedures consistently for courses in learning centres. For example, a service level agreement, developed in September 2004 to clarify roles and responsibilities between STALS and the community centres, has not been agreed and implemented.

42. The leadership and management of some curriculum areas are unsatisfactory. Some staff are unclear about their roles and responsibilities. In some areas no one has overall responsibility for the leadership, co-ordination and planning of the curriculum. The management of provision for a significant number of learners on sport and leisure, and those on ICT is weak. Co-ordination and communications among the different aspects of provision are inadequate and good practice is not shared sufficiently. STALS has identified this problem and is reviewing the staffing structure. Recruitment for staff vacancies has been slow. STALS operated without a manager for a number of months, and currently operates with an interim team of managers.

43. Target-setting for improvements is weak. The council's strategic documents do not always set clear objectives for STALS. Some of STALS's targets are not sufficiently thorough or specific, and are not monitored systematically. Target-setting for staff is inadequate and some targets are not followed up or monitored. Managers do not carry out enough formal reviews of targets for critical performance measures, such as enrolments, attendance, and retention rates. Some staff do not understand, or do not take adequate responsibility for, the improvements identified in the self-assessment report. Target-setting is weak in many curriculum areas, including ICT, sport and leisure, and foundation programmes.

44. Arrangements for collecting and using management information are weak. STALS does not have accurate, detailed and timely information about its learners' performances. Many curriculum areas are not able to provide comprehensive information about the performances of their learners. Managers and tutors do not have adequate access to accurate learner performance data and do not routinely use this information for curriculum planning, review and development. The self-assessment report has not used learners' performance data to assess the quality of the provision. There is not enough analysis of data to identify the retention and achievement of particular groups, or the effectiveness of different learning centres providing the same courses.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

45. STALS has good initiatives to widen participation. For example, a well-planned community development initiative was developed to reach learners in the more deprived areas of the borough. This initiative successfully targets and recruits learners from disadvantaged and minority groups. STALS consulted a wide range of community groups and provided support in making bid applications against clear criteria. Successful projects include support for young Bangladeshi residents to plan and perform a play about their cultural traditions. Another project has helped people with learning difficulties take on tutoring roles to help others. Seven per cent of the learners on these community development projects are from minority ethnic groups, compared with 4.3

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per cent for STALS overall and 2.7 per cent for the local population.

46. STALS aims to deliver much of its provision in areas of economic disadvantage. It uses venues local to these areas and in one case has built a new learning centre where no other suitable venue was available. STALS has 12 crèches, which are free of charge to learners.

47. An information advice and guidance officer has been seconded to STALS for one year from the local careers service. This is an effective strategy to support access and progression for learners, and a good range of strategies has been developed. However, no plans have been formulated to continue this project beyond July 2005, when the secondment ends.

48. The council is committed to an inclusive approach to providing its services. This is reflected in its policies and strategic plans. STALS uses the council's standard policies for equal opportunities, race and equality, and other relevant policies.

49. STALS has responded well to its responsibilities under the Disability and Discrimination Act 1995. Staff have received relevant training and an informative digital video disc (DVD) was produced to help staff understand their responsibilities. Audits have been carried out on all premises and the necessary improvements are in hand.

50. Advertising and marketing materials are satisfactory. Although all advertising material is produced in English, a telephone helpline number is supplied in four different languages for those for whom English is an additional language. Marketing materials are currently being produced in other languages, but these are not yet available.

51. Equality of opportunity is not promoted sufficiently in the curriculum. STALS does not provide enough training in equal opportunities and diversity. Some training in inclusion and literacy and numeracy skills awareness has been provided, but no more is planned. A range of adaptive technology, including large keyboard computers, portable hearing loops and adjustable-height tables is available from a central store. However, although these can be booked out by tutors, many of them are not aware of this facility. Equality of opportunity is not a central part of the curriculum in some areas of learning. Good practice in equal opportunities is not shared between tutors. In many cases, equal opportunities does not feature in lesson planning and most curriculum areas show no examples of reinforcement of equal opportunities.

52. Data is not used sufficiently to help with curriculum planning. Until very recently no data on equality and diversity issues was available. Recent improvements have been made to the availability of data, including the matching of learners against census information. However, this data is not accurate and is not used to help with planning.

53. Arrangements to provide additional learning support are weak. Although this support is available, the identification of learners' needs is poor in most curriculum areas. There is a tick box on the enrolment form for learners to declare any needs, but there is no system to ensure that these needs are met. No single person is responsible for

ensuring that the relevant support is provided. STALS relies heavily on the self-declaration of needs, in some curriculum areas no other system is available. STALS relies on tutors identifying learners' needs, but many of the tutors are not trained to identify these needs. There is no formal system to identify learners with dyslexia. Only 1 per cent of learners have identified themselves as needing dyslexia support and only 1 per cent have identified moderate learning difficulties. Overall, only 5 per cent of learners have been identified as having some form of learning difficulty.

## Quality assurance

## Contributory grade 5

54. STALS's approach to quality assurance is not consistent or thorough enough. Although much of the provision is satisfactory and some is good, the quality assurance arrangements do not contribute to improvements. STALS recognises this weakness and the need to develop a consistent approach. Quality assurance does not monitor the key training processes adequately. Teaching and learning observations are not helping to identify quality assurance priorities. Course evaluations are not systematic or comprehensive and do not contribute to the self-assessment process. Learners' performance data is not used effectively to evaluate course planning. Schemes of work are not always working documents and individual learning plans are poor. STALS is not aware of some of these weaknesses.

55. As part of a regional project, STALS has developed systems for the observation of teaching and learning. It uses a group of external subject experts to assess the teaching sessions. However, observations do not focus adequately on learning and a significant number of the strengths identified are no more than normal practice. In some observations the judgements are poor and there are no mechanisms to quality assure the observation findings. For example, in one session with a diverse range of learners' abilities, the use of a scheme of work for the group was identified as a strength. Following some of the observations, actions are agreed to improve the teaching skills, but there is no systematic monitoring of these action plans. No clear arrangements exist to ensure that the best practices from these observed sessions are shared.

56. Learners' views are collated through feedback forms and learners' forums. However, a significant number of learners do not make valid evaluations of their experiences. Some learners are not adequately informed about what they should expect from their courses. They over-value their experiences. Nevertheless, learners' suggestions are considered seriously and improvements are made. One community development initiative includes useful tutor and learner end-of-course evaluations, although these have not yet been used in summary form to report on and evaluate the overall effectiveness of the programme.

57. The self-assessment report is not self-critical or thorough enough. It does not focus sufficiently on the effects that activities have on learners. Many of the strengths that it identifies are no more than normal practice. The evidence provided is not sufficient to support some of the judgements. The report does not use data to make sound judgements about learners' performances in a significant number of curriculum areas. It is not an adequate tool for continuous improvement. The previous draft of the self-

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assessment report was significantly more accurate and effective. The process to engage and develop consensus around the strengths and weaknesses of that report changed it significantly. The report lost some of its objectiveness. Many weaknesses were removed and additional strengths added. Staff are not fully involved in the self-assessment process and some do not understand the strengths and weaknesses of their courses.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Business administration, management & professional

Business administration, management & professional		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Business administration</b> - Adult and community learning	55	2

#### **Business administration**

##### *Strengths*

- very good retention rate on NVQ programmes
- particularly effective range of NVQ assessment methods

##### *Weaknesses*

- inadequate initial assessment

### Achievement and standards

58. Retention of learners is particularly good at 93 per cent. Eighty-seven learners have begun learning programmes since 2003-04. Of these, only 7 per cent left their programmes before scheduled completion dates without achieving their learning aims. Achievement of qualifications is good. For example, all learners achieved their qualifications in 2002-03. For the period 2003-04, 33 per cent of learners have achieved their aims, and a further 54 per cent are still on programme. All the learners who began in 2004-05 remain on programme.

59. Learners have been working for the borough council or the local NHS Trust for many years and have a good range of knowledge and skills which they use effectively to progress through their assessments. Current learners are progressing well towards their learning goals and are achieving their NVQ units. Learners develop a greater understanding of administration roles through their learning programme. They increase their knowledge and understanding of the importance of good administration and how it affects their employer. For some learners, increased confidence in their own abilities has enabled them to apply for internal promotion. The learning programmes successfully help learners to understand their job roles more clearly.

## Quality of education and training

60. Assessments are particularly effective. STALS uses a range of appropriate assessment methods, including professional discussions, reflective accounts, case studies, projects, question and answer sessions and observation. Assessments are well planned and learners receive monthly visits at times convenient to their job roles. Assessment feedback is comprehensive. Learners' portfolios are particularly well presented, with well-written evidence clearly labelled and cross-referenced. Learners are fully involved in the identification and completion of their work. Learners use appropriate workplace activities to achieve their NVQ units. They carry out demanding research to complete case studies and are encouraged to compile reflective accounts to explain how their work activities meet the requirements of their NVQ. All learners are given an appropriate set of questions to complete. All written work is of a particularly good standard.

61. Resources are satisfactory. Staff are well qualified and competent, with extensive, relevant expertise. Training centres have well-equipped training rooms with industry-standard equipment. Information technology work stations are available to learners in portfolio-building workshops. All learners on NVQ programmes are provided with a dedicated support resource which is published nationally and developed specifically to support the administration qualifications. Most learners are able to carry out research and portfolio-building at work. Learners also attend off-the-job support workshops to help in compiling their written evidence.

62. Learners choose their learning programmes as part of their ongoing personal development. For some this is to achieve recognition and qualifications, and for others is to help them progress within their organisations. Some learners gain qualifications additional to their administration NVQ. One learner is working towards a national certificate in business studies. Another learner is working on an internal management training programme.

63. Learners are supported by their employers to apply for further training and development. Courses are promoted in the annual corporate training prospectus. A dedicated information and guidance support officer helps learners by discussing any aspect of their learning programmes or personal welfare issues with them.

64. STALS does not carry out any literacy, numeracy or language assessment of adult learners. It has no systematic method for identifying literacy, numeracy, language or other additional learning needs at the beginning of the learning programme. At the time of inspection there were no learners requiring additional support for literacy, numeracy or language skills.

65. Learners have no formal progress reviews additional to assessment visits. Learners' progress is reviewed annually by their line managers as part of their personal development plan. The results of these annual reviews are not linked with learners' NVQ programmes.

66. Initial assessment is inadequate. Learners do not receive any formal initial assessment of their needs by STALS's staff. Before learners begin their learning programmes, they discuss their training and development needs with their line managers at their annual performance development reviews. This information is not passed on to staff. There is no diagnostic assessment of learners' individual needs. Individual learning plans are not sufficiently detailed, do not contain targets, and are not used to plan the learners' programmes. Plans are kept by the assessor and used to record visits carried out and achievements of individual units of the qualification. Learners do not receive a copy. Revised assessment paperwork recently introduced ensures that learners and assessors have copies of assessment plans and written assessment feedback.

### **Leadership and management**

67. Staff meet with the head of their department on a monthly basis to review learners' progress. The curriculum co-ordinator attends monthly management meetings and shares information with the NVQ team. Learners receive handbooks at the beginning of their programmes, and complete evaluation questionnaires at the end of their learning programmes. The annual staff performance review is used well to identify training needs.

68. Assessors have attended external training events about using alternative forms of assessment activity, and have identified the need to improve the use of professional discussions. Digital recorders have now been purchased to enable these activities to be recorded. The internal verification strategy includes monitoring all aspects of assessment practice. Currently, the frequency of professional discussions is not monitored. Learners have a satisfactory awareness of health and safety and equal opportunities issues. Communications between staff are satisfactory. Standardisation activities take place in all departments providing administration qualifications, to ensure that good practices are shared.

69. Internal verification is satisfactory. It is carried out in partnership with another team within the adult service that also offers administration qualifications. STALS has two qualified internal verifiers, and another team member is currently working for an internal verifier qualification. The internal verifiers carry out observations of the team, and interview learners during training workshops. The internal verification strategy is part of STALS's overall quality assurance process.

**Information & communications technology**

<b>Information &amp; communications technology</b>		<b>3</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Using IT</i> - Adult and community learning	307	3

***Using IT****Strengths*

- good retention and achievement rates
- very thorough assessment process

*Weaknesses*

- insufficient use of quality assurance procedures for improvement
- inadequate use of data for programme evaluation

**Achievement and standards**

70. Retention and achievement rates are good and improving. The retention rate for the non-accredited courses is 100 per cent. In 2004, the rate was 87 per cent for the accredited computer literacy course. Learner retention on the examination-based course in information technology is satisfactory, at approximately 80 per cent. Pass rates on most courses are also good, ranging from 66 per cent to 100 per cent, and most beginners progress to level 1 courses. Between 2003 and 2004, pass rates have risen on the computer literacy course and the examination-based qualification in information technology, but have fallen on text-processing courses. Learners are provided with effective end-of-course advice to help their progression, and approximately 50 per cent of learners progress to higher levels of study. Learners are punctual and attendance levels are generally over 90 per cent. During inspection the attendance rate was 77 per cent.

71. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress. Some learners make rapid progress and produce work above the standard required by the awarding bodies. Learners on the short, six-hour course show greatly increased self-confidence with basic computer operations and most progress to the computer literacy course.



## Quality of education and training

72. The assessment and internal verification process is very thorough. All examination papers for the computer literacy course are marked twice. Only two second-markers are used to ensure a high level of consistency in checking. External verification has not identified any required changes. Papers for the examination-based qualification in information technology are marked by staff who are not involved in teaching in order to ensure objectivity in marking. Awarding body auditors have not asked for any changes to be made.

73. Standards of teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better lessons, tutors use an appropriate variety of teaching methods. They use interactive whiteboards for group demonstrations, enabling learners to see detailed software operations and to ask questions arising from the demonstration. Learners are able to work at their own pace and receive assessments when they are ready. In the poorer lessons all learners complete the same tasks at the same time. Assessments also take place at the same time. The more able learners are given more work, but it is not sufficiently demanding. Tutors do not allow learners enough opportunities to take control of their own learning and development.

74. In all sessions, tutors are adequately prepared and schemes of work and lesson plans are appropriately detailed. Working relationships between tutors and learners are effective in promoting learning. Individual learning plans are not sufficiently detailed. Plans do not refer to what learners can expect to learn and do not contain any time-related targets.

75. Resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory. Computer hardware and software are sufficiently up to date. Connections to the internet are fast and reliable. Laptop computers with printers are available to allow classes to take place in community venues that do not have dedicated computer suites. Furniture in learning centres is adequate and fulfils health and safety requirements. Interactive whiteboards are being introduced into learning centres and are used well. Paper-based resources are in adequate supply and fit for purpose. Tutors are adequately qualified vocationally and as teachers. STALS offers a good range of relevant continuing professional development opportunities to staff. Most staff attend appropriate in-house training events twice each year and part-time staff receive financial support to attend these events. A number of staff is also engaged in relevant external training.

76. Learners' work is assessed satisfactorily. Tutors provide clear supportive feedback, and set regular exercises to develop learners' ICT skills. These exercises are marked and recorded carefully. In many lessons all learners work on similar tasks and carry out modular tests at the same time. Most learners are aware of their own progress and what they need to do to improve. Tutors maintain a monitoring sheet. This sheet only records exercises or tests completed and not the skills developed by learners.

77. The range of courses available is adequate, ranging from beginners to level 3. The courses focus on office application software, digital photography and web page design

have been provided, but are not currently available. The courses provide a good progression route. A course is now offered to cover any shortfall between level 1 and level 2 courses. Approximately 50 per cent of the learners progress from level 1 to level 2. When courses offer a choice of modules, learners are not given sufficient opportunities to choose which module they would like to work on. Information is readily available to new learners, although not all of them are given sufficient detailed advice as to the most appropriate courses.

78. During enrolment, learners may request additional support for learning difficulties or disabilities, but STALS has no systematic procedure for checking the needs of those who do not make a declaration. A range of adaptive technology is provided to help learners with hearing or visual impairments, but not enough support is available for learners with other needs.

79. Tutors generally understand the abilities of their learners and provide appropriate support. Learners complete a short questionnaire during induction to identify their existing ICT skills and knowledge and this is recorded on their individual learning plans. These plans are reviewed each term, but are not used in each lesson to record progress or agree actions.

80. Initial assessment is inadequate. Learners are not given sufficient diagnostic testing initially to identify their existing skills and individual learning needs. Initial assessment is not used sufficiently to help learners choose appropriate courses or modules. Learners on short beginners' courses do not sit formal tests and are assessed in terms of how they complete the set task.

## **Leadership and management**

81. All venues visited were accessible to those with restricted mobility and have suitable facilities. There is no evidence of the promotion of equality and diversity within lessons.

82. The quality assurance system is not developed sufficiently. The questionnaire used to collect learners' feedback does not provide adequate information to help make improvements. Most tutors have been observed recently. However, the reports from these observations make no explicit judgements about the quality of learning taking place and many do not feature any action plans for improvement. The self-assessment report is generally descriptive. Inspectors' findings matched one of the strengths in the report, but found the others to be no more than normal practice. The report did not identify any of the weaknesses found by inspectors.

83. Data is not used adequately for programme evaluation. Targets are set for recruitment, but there are no targets for retention and achievement, or for individual tutors or courses. Although recruitment data is analysed, STALS has no system to analyse achievement and retention data using factors such as gender, ethnicity or age. Much of the management information is inaccurate, including timetable information for the week of inspection.

## Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b><i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i></b> - Adult and community learning	990	4

### ***Leisure, sport and recreation***

#### *Strengths*

- good retention rate
- good enhancement of learners' health and well-being

#### *Weaknesses*

- poor attendance rates
- insufficient monitoring of learners' progress
- insufficient progression opportunities
- inadequate curriculum leadership, management and control of provision
- weak arrangements for the enforcement of safe working practices
- poor quality assurance arrangements

### **Achievement and standards**

84. Retention rates are consistently good on accredited and non-accredited courses, at 97 per cent in 2002-03 and 96 per cent in 2003-04. This is particularly good as the courses are offered throughout the year, rather than termly.

85. All learners fully understand and appreciate improvements in their mental and physical health and well-being since beginning their courses. Many learners improve in self-confidence and value the social benefits of meeting people and making new friends. Some report improvements to their medical conditions, and are better able to deal with stress in their everyday lives.

86. Achievement rates on pool lifeguarding and level 1 football coaching courses are good, but most learners do not achieve the full basic expedition award. Some classes operate as clubs, which have good success rates in learners' achievements. For the older learners, attainment is perceived as preventing the deterioration of fitness associated with the ageing process, and maintaining their health. Many learners improve their confidence and competence in performing movements and exercises.

87. Attendance rates for many classes are poor, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. Attendance fluctuates considerably on a weekly basis. The average

attendance rate for classes observed during inspection was 59.6 per cent.

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

88. Overall, the standard of teaching is satisfactory. However, there is considerable variation in the standards of teaching and learning. The better classes are generally well planned and include a good range of activities to develop learners' skills, knowledge and understanding. Tutors make good use of a variety of effective teaching methods and strategies. They fully understand learners' health status and ability levels and put this knowledge to good use by suggesting suitable modifications or alternatives to exercises. The poorer lessons are characterised by insufficient planning, and a narrow range of teaching methods. Where the course operates as a club, learners teach each other without adequate supervision from tutors. Returning learners are not provided with sufficiently demanding activities.

89. Resources are satisfactory. Sufficient equipment is available to meet learners' needs such as belts, blocks and mats in yoga. Facilities are generally fit for purpose. Tutors are vocationally qualified in their specialist areas, but some have not attended recent in-service courses to update their professional competence and to maintain licences with their professional associations. Many do not hold recognised teaching qualifications.

90. Pre-course information for learners is satisfactory. STALS's funding policy provides good financial support to access courses. Each learning centre produces its own publicity materials, which are circulated to homes and posted on noticeboards in community associations and other learning centres. Newspaper advertisements publicise courses each year. STALS does not have a brochure which identifies all adult and community learning courses available throughout South Tyneside. Learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills needs are not checked as a matter of routine. Where these needs have been identified, not enough support or guidance is given to learners by tutors.

91. Learners' progress is not monitored sufficiently. Initial assessment is not used sufficiently to develop individual learning goals. Most tutors prescribe the group learning outcomes, and individual learning goals are not negotiated and monitored sufficiently. Individual learning plans are not reviewed systematically to determine progress made or to set new goals. Many learning outcomes are not focused or detailed enough to be measured easily. Tutors generally rely on informal methods to inform learners of their progress and for learners to evaluate their own progress. Information about progress is not provided consistently to all learners by all tutors.

92. The range of courses is unsatisfactory. Most non-accredited courses provide the same curriculum at the same level to the same learners for consecutive periods of enrolment. Many learners have been doing the same course for a number of years. For example, one learner has attended the same course for over 20 years.

## Leadership and management

93. Curriculum leadership, and the management and control of provision are inadequate. A temporary manager was seconded to this area of learning for the period of the inspection. No single person is in charge of managing and leading curriculum development. Area of learning managers do not have job descriptions and do not understand their responsibilities. There have been no changes or improvements to the provision since these managers were appointed. Many classes are based on historical practices. The criteria used to distinguish between adult and community learning and non-adult and community learning classes are not well defined. Many of the courses operate as clubs, having children and adult learners in the same class. Clubs that have been operating in previous years are now funded as adult and community learning courses. The provider does have a definitive list of available courses, but several courses listed as being available were not operating and some were operating on days other than those specified.

94. STALS has no schedule of meetings to allow community association managers and staff to plan the provision. There are insufficient opportunities for staff in the same area of learning to meet to identify and share good practice. The courses are determined largely by individual negotiations between council staff and community association managers. STALS does not control the spending of budget allocations to community associations, and has no control over the terms and conditions of service of tutors engaged by community associations. Similarly, STALS has no control over fees policies adopted by these associations. Each association works independently and identifies its own terms and conditions for tutors and course fees. Community association managers and area of learning managers and staff do not fully understand the council's strategic aims. Participation levels by minority ethnic groups are low and STALS has no strategies to rectify this.

95. Safe working practices are not monitored sufficiently. Learning centre managers risk-assess venues and facilities, but not activities. Managers do not check as a matter of routine whether risk assessments have been completed and are up to date. Tutors' qualifications are not monitored to check their currency. Many tutors' individual professional development is not supported. Some learning centres use unpaid voluntary tutors to deliver courses. Staff are expected to take out their own public liability insurance cover, but this is not monitored. Tutors conduct their own initial pre-exercise screening which is inconsistent and not monitored. Staff contracted to carry out teaching and learning observations are not subject specialists and do not have the expertise to adequately identify safety issues. Some class sizes are too large to enable the tutor to adequately supervise all learners. One exercise class was held in a very cold hall with loose ceiling tiles and a door opening directly outside.

96. Quality assurance is weak. No observations have been carried out of sports tutors' teaching practice. The self-assessment report, which was compiled by STALS's managers, is not sufficiently detailed and does not accurately reflect the provision. There is no action plan to rectify identified weaknesses. Data is unreliable and not used sufficiently

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to identify targets and set performance indicators.

**Visual & performing arts & media**

<b>Visual &amp; performing arts &amp; media</b>		<b>3</b>
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Arts</b> - Adult and community learning	216	3
<b>Crafts</b> - Adult and community learning	646	3
<b>Other contributory areas</b> - Adult and community learning	595	3

**Arts***Strengths*

- good development of technical and creative skills
- very good standard of work
- good range of teaching strategies

*Weaknesses*

- insufficient opportunities for progression
- inadequate programme management

**Crafts***Strengths*

- good development of creative and technical skills
- particularly good personal development
- good practical demonstrations by tutors

*Weaknesses*

- much unstructured learning in self-help groups
- insufficient attention to health and safety in ceramics course
- inadequate programme management

### ***Other contributory areas***

#### *Strengths*

- good recognition of learners' attainments
- very good level of learner involvement
- significant personal development

#### *Weaknesses*

- inadequate programme management

### **Achievement and standards**

97. Learners' technical and creative skills are very well developed in arts and crafts. In art, learners confidently use different media such as pastels, oils, pens, watercolours and pencil, and experiment with various techniques to good effect. Work produced for portfolios is of a good standard for all the media used. Their life, portrait and landscape skills develop well alongside their observational skills. Learners in craft classes produce a good standard of work and new learners progress well. In card-making classes, learners produce work each week that demonstrates a new technique. In another class, learners produce detailed sewn patchwork. They then work with groups of children on a voluntary basis to teach them these skills.

98. Learners in crafts acquire significant personal enrichment and increased self-esteem. Those learners new to a subject make particularly good progress. Some returning learners have attended classes for several years and show good progression in their creative and technical skills. Almost all learners stated that their skills had improved significantly over time. Learners are confident in their approach to work and provide good peer support and criticism of other learners' work.

99. Learners' attainments in dance and music classes are well recognised. Opportunities are constantly being created for learners to demonstrate their skills in dance and music performances. The line-dancing classes visit several other establishments demonstrating their skills. One guitar class was preparing for a public performance.

100. STALS's learners are particularly involved in dance and music. Most teaching is energetic and learners are significantly involved in their classes. Learners attend promptly and are particularly keen to begin their lessons. All learners are well prepared and take every opportunity to work privately in class to practise steps or chords. In one neighbourhood-based music class the lesson was poorly managed and many individuals did not receive adequate attention. However, all participants were able to continue to work independently and made every effort to succeed.

101. Learners in dance and music classes also gain significantly from their courses. They increase their fitness levels and make good use of the classes to meet other people.



102. Retention rates are satisfactory for accredited and non-accredited courses. Retention rates have risen between 2002-03 and 2003-04, from 86.9 per cent to 89 per cent. Achievements on accredited courses in art and craft are not recorded separately, and not enough data was available to make judgements.

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

103. A good range of teaching strategies is used in art. The class activities range from individual project work to challenging class-based tasks. Tutors work well with the learners and understand their individual needs and abilities. Tutors make good use of a range of effective teaching strategies to help learners develop their work to a good standard, including discussions, and opportunities for practical applications. Tutors are constructive and positive, creating a safe but challenging environment in which learners fully engage with their work.

104. Tutors carry out good practical demonstrations in craft classes. Teaching of crafts is good. Sessions are well organised and carefully planned, with effective demonstrations and identified learning outcomes. Tutors are appropriately experienced and have good subject knowledge, providing the learners with good demonstrations of tasks and activities. In some lessons, learning aims and objectives are not clear enough.

105. Teaching and learning in music and dance is satisfactory overall. In one dance class a tutor was not equipped with a microphone and learners were not always able to hear the instructions. In most classes, learners attend on time and work well to practise and learn new steps. They are particularly keen to begin their lessons.

106. Accommodation for craft lessons is satisfactory. Some of the accommodation is purpose built and there are good community-based locations. Some rooms, however, are too small and are poorly lit. Resources are satisfactory, and a range of specialist equipment is supplied by learning centres. Many tutors provide their own resources to ensure that learners have access to a variety of specialist materials. Art accommodation is adequate and learners also invest in their own materials. Table-top easels have recently been purchased for the art classes. All the dance tutors observed provide their own music systems and one tutor also supplies a microphone. The dance rooms are adequate, but are often cold. For the 'introduction to keyboards' class, 10 new keyboards and headphones have been purchased. Support for learners throughout the area of learning is satisfactory. Learners receive on-course support with their work and additional support is available. Tutors provide good individual tuition, advice and guidance. Learners with physical disabilities are provided with good support.

107. Formal records are used adequately to identify and monitor progress. Tutors use the individual learning plans and monitoring grids in art classes well, although the learning plans are not always very effective. Music and dance have no formal processes to ensure that learners are sufficiently informed of their progress or development needs. In most of the non-accredited provision, learning goals are not identified sufficiently to measure

learners' progress. Some tutors use effective subject-specific methods to monitor and assess learners' progress and provide feedback. This good practice is not shared throughout the provision.

108. There are not enough opportunities for progression in art. Accredited learning is validated by a nationally recognised awarding body up to level 2, but learners can progress no further. Many of these learners return to level 1 and restart their courses. Although they are always developing new skills and techniques, many learners have requested progression opportunities to level 3, as opposed to sideways progression. There is too much unstructured learning in self-help groups. In some sessions the leaders do not provide sufficiently critical feedback to participants. A large number of self-help groups exist for learners to practise their crafts. These groups provide a social outlet, but insufficient organised learning. Set targets are not specific or measurable enough. Learners are not given enough critical feedback or challenging activities to help them progress. Unless the groups arrange their own exhibitions they have no opportunities to exhibit their work.

109. STALS does not ensure that sufficient attention is given to health and safety in ceramics courses. The kiln in the pottery suite has inadequate ventilation which has very serious implications for the health and well-being of all using the room during or after the kiln is fired.

### **Leadership and management**

110. Programme management is inadequate. Considerable changes have taken place in curriculum management and staffing during 2004. The post of curriculum leader is filled by a manager who is also responsible for two other curriculum areas. The new manager is supported by two colleagues with specialist backgrounds. Communications are poor between management and tutors. Some long-term tutors effectively operate independently of management. One tutor was unaware of an inspection taking place. Many tutors are unclear about the current management structure or the role of management. They are also unclear about departmental strategies, including the content of action and development plans, or the rationale behind them.

111. New processes for session planning have been introduced. Although tutors were trained in the implementation of these systems, they consider that the processes were imposed arbitrarily rather than introduced to answer specific needs.

112. Formal actions and long-term development planning are too generalised. These measures do not include specific methodology, risk analysis, health and fitness checks in dance classes, targets, milestones or completion dates. Accurate data is not used efficiently in curriculum management and planning. Most of the data collected by STALS is not accurate. For example, achievement levels are satisfactory to good, but the management information system indicates that it is unsatisfactory. Cultural diversity is not given sufficient attention within the curriculum and teachers do not include cultural diversity sufficiently when planning their schemes of work.

113. Equality of opportunity is not promoted sufficiently. Some part-time staff have had no equal opportunities awareness training within the past two years. Equal opportunities training is often offered at times when staff are unavailable. During the inspection there were no learners from minority ethnic groups and insufficient representation by other groups. Learning sessions and associated paperwork are not quality assured enough. Where teaching and learning visits are observed there are inconsistencies in the grading of sessions.

114. The self-assessment report does not analyse the area of learning adequately and it is too descriptive. Inspectors did not agree with the judgements in the report. Quality assurance arrangements are incomplete. In particular, progress in the observation of teaching and learning has been very slow, and the health and safety concerns in the pottery suite were not identified.

**English, languages & communications**

English, languages & communications		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Languages</b> - Adult and community learning	409	4

**Languages***Strengths*

- good work to meet community needs

*Weaknesses*

- poor retention rates for most modern foreign languages provision
- ineffective teaching techniques in a significant number of modern foreign language lessons
- ineffective quality assurance of provision

**Achievement and standards**

115. Many learners studying BSL demonstrate satisfactory knowledge and understanding of their subject. Most participate enthusiastically in class work and use appropriate lip and hand shapes. Tutors emphasise the importance of accuracy, and correct learners in a sympathetic and supportive way.

116. The retention rate is poor for much of the modern foreign languages provision. STALS identified this as an issue, and made a strategic decision to change to OCN accreditation from September 2004, to allow learners to work through formative assessment rather than take a final examination. However, current registers show clear trends towards poor retention in approximately 50 per cent of classes at both levels. In some cases, class numbers have dropped from 15 learners to one or two learners. In several classes, this trend started in the early stages of the provision, but there has been no effective monitoring of the situation to determine the cause. In some cases, learners have left courses for valid personal reasons, but in many cases the reason has not been adequately investigated.

**Quality of education and training**

117. STALS carries out good work to meet the needs of the community. Bengali classes for speakers of Sylheti take place in a local community centre. Learners take GCSE Bengali, and pass rates are very good. Many of these learners use their new skills to improve career prospects, for example, to train as interpreters, outreach workers, social

workers, teachers and classroom assistants. Many people also attend English courses at this learning centre or receive advice and guidance on a number of other issues. The council offers classes in BSL at level 1 and 2. These classes attract a wide variety of learners, many of whom use their skills to benefit the local community, for example, within nursing, retailing, teaching, social work and youth work. Most learners make good progress, and some take the appropriate examinations. Three years ago, the council was offering some beginners' classes in Spanish. Following a survey of the local learning community, it began to increase its provision, and now offers Spanish, French and Italian at level 1 and 2. Learners who wish to progress to higher levels are directed to the local college provision. Information about courses is available in several languages and in different formats.

118. Ineffective teaching techniques are used in a significant number of modern foreign language sessions. In these classes, learners repeat simple exercises and drills many times with not enough variation. Activities are not sufficiently demanding. When learners have questions, some tutors do not answer them at all, or answer them inadequately. Learners cannot make progress because they do not know what mistakes they are making. In some classes there are insufficient opportunities for learners to use language creatively. Many of these classes have been affected by poor retention and attendance, and it is difficult for the remaining learners to communicate effectively with so few in the class. Many learners are meeting lesson objectives, but these objectives are often not challenging enough. The language being learnt is used very well by some tutors, but others oversimplify, and learners become confused. In the better classes, a good range of interesting and stimulating activities is used, with good scope for differentiation, but this good practice is not shared enough to ensure that all learners have a good experience of learning. Tutors do not always correct learners' mistakes to help them to improve their communication skills. In some classes, activities are poorly planned and managed. These classes are poorly paced, have unclear objectives and do not set clear targets for learners.

### **Leadership and management**

119. STALS has a system of lesson observations which has identified some of the weaknesses in the provision. However, the process is not evaluative enough and does not identify and rectify many of the weaknesses found during inspection. STALS does not have an action plan to help tutors develop their teaching techniques, or an adequate system for sharing good practice and materials. Tutors' development needs have not been met.

120. Many learning centres have good resources and facilities, but some classes are held in centres that are not suitable for language teaching and learning. These centres have no video or audio equipment, no computer facilities or interactive whiteboards, poor seating arrangements, and some are dirty, noisy or have poor heating facilities. Currently, no checks are employed to ensure that tutors have adequate facilities and know how to use them. ICT is not used in the classroom, but some tutors give useful information sheets to learners so that they can work independently with ICT. Feedback is gained from learners, but the forms used employ tick boxes which do not give sufficient useful

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information to the provider. The self-assessment report does not analyse trends effectively or identify actions to rectify weaknesses.

## Foundation programmes

Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>ESOL</b> - Adult and community learning	86	3
<b>Literacy and numeracy</b> - Adult and community learning	170	3

### **ESOL**

#### *Strengths*

- particularly responsive teaching
- good venues for courses

#### *Weaknesses*

- unsatisfactory monitoring of learners' progress and achievement
- inadequate analysis and use of data

### **Literacy and numeracy**

#### *Strengths*

- good development of personal and learning skills
- good venues for courses

#### *Weaknesses*

- low achievement rates
- insufficient recording of adults' learning difficulties and disabilities
- inadequate analysis and use of data

## Achievement and standards

121. Literacy and numeracy learners develop good personal and learning skills. Learners are highly motivated to complete work and many do homework. The standard of learners' work is good. Work in portfolios is structured and shows good progress made against individual learning plans. Learners are very pleased with their rate of progress. Learners are confident in applying their skills and work well independently and with other learners. They develop and extend their literacy and numeracy skills, which increases their ability to help their children with school work. Many learners attend courses with clear employment goals, such as learning mentors and crèche workers.

122. Achievement rates for accredited courses are low. During 2003-04 only 27 per cent of learners who began courses passed national tests at level 1 and 2. This figure also includes a small number of ESOL learners who gained literacy and numeracy qualifications. Of those entered for national tests, pass rates are good, at 87 per cent. External tests are available on demand, dependent on whether learners have reached appropriate skill levels.

123. Attainment levels in ESOL are satisfactory overall. Some higher-level learners are particularly fluent and develop a wide vocabulary which they use effectively in listening or reading comprehension tasks. Although retention rates are good in foundation programmes, attendance in literacy and numeracy is no more than satisfactory for this type of community provision.

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

124. ESOL teaching is particularly responsive to learners' levels and interests. Tutors make regular use of local contexts to help learners share their own ideas and experiences. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives. Learning is checked frequently and effectively, and high levels of individual support ensure that learning is acquired in small, manageable stages. Tutors adjust the pace and content of lessons to learners' needs. Tutors use visual, audio and authentic materials effectively, and have responded to requests for greater exposure to the local accent. Learners participate confidently in a range of activities. Reading skills are well developed at higher levels, but there is not enough focus on sustained oral skills or error correction to improve accuracy and pronunciation.

125. Learning venues are easily accessible and are located close to where learners live. Good partnerships provide courses in venues such as schools, community centres and learning zones. Learners have access to crèche facilities at all ESOL classes. Some learners on literacy and numeracy courses also use these facilities. Learning centres are well resourced and accommodation is good. Most have ICT resources with internet access. However, insufficient use is made of ICT in the delivery of ESOL programmes. Although interactive whiteboards have been installed, staff are not yet trained in their use. Storage is adequate for the wide range of learning resources for literacy, numeracy and ESOL. Flexible arrangements exist for enrolling learners into the most convenient provision, or where there is a crèche vacancy. The introduction of accredited provision has reduced the number of groups that include learners with varying skill levels. A drop-in session in one project provides an effective focus for social interaction and language development in a women-only environment. Resources are used to promote independent study.

126. Teaching on literacy and numeracy courses is satisfactory. Tutors are appropriately experienced and hold qualifications in teaching. Sixty-three per cent of teaching on literacy and numeracy courses is good or better, and 87 per cent is satisfactory or better. In the better lessons, tutors plan a good variety of activities to develop a range of reading, writing and speaking skills. Working with other learners develops learners' speaking and



listening skills. Tutors regularly reinforce learning through a variety of learning activities. In good lessons, tutors use specifically designed learning resources related to learners' interests and work, such as gardening and cooking. Effective use is made of ICT as a learning resource to develop reading, writing and numeracy skills through research into local history using maps on the internet. Paired work discussions develop learners' confidence in speaking and listening skills. Learners work well together and provide good peer support. Tutors develop very effective and productive working relationships with learners. In workshops, tutors effectively differentiate work, devising schemes of work for individual learners. Some tutors evaluate learners' progress after each lesson, clearly indicating learning needs for lesson planning. There are not enough staff resources to cover for staff absences.

127. Initial assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy levels is satisfactory. An individual learning plan is produced from this, which tutors use to plan appropriate programmes. Good support is provided by volunteer tutors in literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses. ESOL learners have good access to interpreters and other support through a local project involving asylum seekers.

128. ESOL provision has an effective process of initial assessment which places learners in classes at a suitable level and contributes to target-setting in individual learning plans. The outcomes of assessment are recorded in detail and learning priorities are identified. Tutors are developing strategies to devise individual learning plans with learners at the lowest levels of entry. However, tutors find it difficult to carry out target-setting and progress reviews in class time with learners who have very low levels of English or poor independent study skills.

129. Assessment and monitoring of progress is carried out regularly on literacy and numeracy courses. Tutors regularly check learners' progress throughout lessons. Formal progress reviews take place once each term. However, details are not recorded consistently in reviews and some progress review details are missing, such as learners' comments, dates and signatures. Assessments meet awarding body requirements and are accredited where appropriate.

130. The monitoring of learners' progress and achievement in ESOL is unsatisfactory. Insufficient information was recorded about learners' achievements before the start of the current year. STALS has no system for the moderation of non-accredited achievements for the period 2004-05. Learners' portfolios of work are not organised to show progress in learning.

131. The information obtained by STALS about learners' learning difficulties and disabilities is inadequate. Adults with learning difficulties and disabilities are not given appropriate support when completing enrolment forms. Many learners' health and support needs are not adequately recorded. Tutors do not have sufficient information regarding specific issues relating to learners' health and learning needs to allow them to give appropriate support and to plan programmes. Staff are aware of the need to extend procedures to enable more information to be collected.

## Leadership and management

132. Communications between tutors are satisfactory and staff have confidence in the management of the curriculum. Assessment practices meet awarding body requirements. Staff development programmes are satisfactory, although staff's progress in gaining specialist qualifications at level 4 has been slow. Only a few staff have attended the available diversity training.

133. ESOL staff use regional and national networks to keep up to date with developments in the subject area. They are piloting the draft citizenship learning materials. STALS's participation in local projects, such as a cultural event for asylum seekers, raises local awareness of ESOL learning opportunities.

134. Tutors promote understanding of equality of opportunity. Learners are encouraged to share information and cultural experiences. For example, in one lesson, learners listened to material about anti-discriminatory legislation in the workplace.

135. Surveys of learners are used effectively to help continuous improvement in provision. For example, resources are improved in response to feedback from staff and learners. Observations of teaching and learning take place throughout the provision, but there are not enough such observations in literacy, numeracy and ESOL. An action plan is produced following observations, but this is not specific enough to the area of learning to ensure a consistent approach to teaching and learning.

136. The analysis and use of data is inadequate. Some difficulties have recently been encountered in collating data from different funding sources into one central system. A small number of inaccuracies were identified during the inspection regarding numbers of learners reported to be in learning, compared with numbers of learners appearing on registers. Learners on ESOL programmes are double counted. Data systems do not record data about learners' progression in learning. Data is not used to set individual staff and curriculum targets for improving retention and achievement rates.

## Family learning

Family learning		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
- Adult and community learning	276	2

### Strengths

- good attainment of personal and parenting skills
- good teaching and learning
- good use of resources
- very effective range of provision to widen participation

### Weaknesses

- inadequate recording of progress
- inadequate action-planning in observations of teaching and learning

## Achievement and standards

137. Parents develop good self-confidence and a good understanding of the way their children are taught in school, especially in reading, writing, listening and mathematics. They are able to help their children at home and at school. They learn and use a variety of techniques to work effectively with their children and promote enjoyable learning. For example, in one literacy support class, a visiting drama tutor joined parents and children in imaginative story telling and miming to promote confidence in a group situation. Most parents also take part in school and community activities. Many parents work through and achieve entry level and level 1 and 2 in literacy and numeracy. Some use these achievements to progress to further training or employment. Parents and children attend the courses separately and together and share the learning activities. Some parents gain the motivation to return to learning. They also enjoy the social benefits of being able to meet people with similar interests and backgrounds. Head teachers have a good commitment to the programmes and fully understand and support the benefits to parents and children.

## Quality of education and training

138. Standards of teaching and learning are good. Well-qualified tutors use a good range of interactive teaching methods and resources. For example, in a numeracy session, parents and children developed and produced counting games and were able to laminate them in the class ready to take home. Tutors have clear aims and objectives for each session and individual learners' progress is monitored. Tutors' and learners' feedback is used in programme planning. Tutors use learners' different backgrounds and cultures effectively during lessons. Learners are fully involved in the frequent discussions

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and tutors understand learners' individual needs. In one class where computers were being used, the tutor paired up those who were experienced with others who were not confident, until the latter were able to work with their children on their own. Classroom teachers join in classes with children and parents, providing an ordered yet busy atmosphere for all learners.

139. Resources are used well. In one school, a computer suite has recently been modified for use by parents and young children. The whole group is able to work together on projects and interact with story writing and listening. All learning centres have good, spacious accommodation. Two laptop computers, a printer and a laminator are provided in each learning centre. Tutors use a good range of effective strategies to maintain the interest of teachers and learners. Parents and children are able to build up comprehensive portfolios of work to use at home. Effective arrangements are made with other organisations, such as libraries, to help learners work independently. All learning materials are provided free of charge to learners. Work is displayed and presented to a very good standard throughout the learning centres.

140. The range of provision is very effective in widening participation. All venues are within walking distance of learners' homes and most courses take place in their children's schools during school time. A good range of wider family learning courses is provided alongside those leading to qualifications. Some parents from minority ethnic groups stay at their school to learn basic English skills. They are also learning parenting skills in classes run by and for women from minority ethnic groups. Several languages are spoken and an interpreter is always available. Parents with particular needs are able to attend specific short courses to improve their self-esteem, and to help them with management of children's behaviour and family living.

141. Pre-course guidance is detailed and easily accessed in schools, libraries and in the local newspapers. Information leaflets are available and the learners' handbook is evaluated by learners to ensure that it is kept up to date. Advice and guidance about accreditation is given as courses progress and learners are encouraged to have work assessed for qualifications. Translators are available in schools, together with home school liaison officers to provide additional support. Learners' attendance is monitored and followed up if necessary.

142. The recording of learners' progress is inadequate. Initial assessment is thorough and learners are placed on appropriate programmes. All learners have a copy of their individual learning plans. However, some of these plans are not used and some have only a brief description of learners' goals and aspirations. There is no further evaluation or development of what the learner has achieved and would like to achieve next. Some individual learning plans are used regularly as working documents to help plan learners' progress. For example, in a family support class, learners complete a form giving their attainments and aspirations at the end of each session. These forms are stuck into the individual files and build a record of progress that is reviewed and acted on at the end of the course. Some learners, who find difficulty in articulating their goals, do not fully understand their own achievements without input from their tutor.

## Leadership and management

143. Family learning programmes are managed effectively. Staff are developing the provision to widen participation by hard-to-reach learners. Tutors have frequent access to training days, which are well attended. Good practice is often shared between learning centres. Successful partnership arrangements exist with other community organisations such as libraries, museums, a primary head teachers' forum and an extended schools action group.

144. Equality of opportunity is promoted in schools on a daily basis through leaflets, posters and in the learners' handbooks. Schools and learning centres are local and fully accessible to learners with disabilities. Crèche and nursery school facilities are provided. All learning materials are free of charge to children and parents.

145. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths identified in the self-assessment report. However, they identified additional weaknesses. Inspectors gave the same grades as those in the self-assessment report.

146. The action-planning following observations of teaching and learning is inadequate. Most tutors have been observed over the past two years. Observations are recorded in detail and grading is compatible with those given at inspection. However, although good feedback is given about tutors' strengths, no action plan is drawn up for areas of improvement. The monitoring of any actions, or setting of timescales for improvements are not considered. There is no way of knowing whether improvements have taken place.