

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Newcastle upon Tyne LEA**

**29 April 2005**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## **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 aged over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learnirect** 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.

### **Pre-inspection analysis**

The resources allocated to a cycle 2 inspection are primarily determined by the findings from the previous inspection. Account is also taken of information about achievement and retention obtained from the funding body, and any significant changes in the size or scope of the provision.

Where a provider has received good grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is relatively light. If the provider offers a number of areas of learning, a restricted sample is inspected.

Where a provider has received satisfactory grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is less intensive and it is possible that not all areas of learning are included.

Where there are significant unsatisfactory grades from cycle 1, the intensity of the cycle 2 inspection is broadly the same as cycle 1, and all significant areas of learning are inspected.

Providers that have not previously been inspected will receive a full inspection.

## Overall effectiveness

The grades given for areas of learning and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half of the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good training provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

A **satisfactory** provider should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and in at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than one third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

## Grading

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

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Newcastle upon Tyne LEA

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Newcastle Local Education Authority (NLEA) receives funding from Tyne and Wear Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to run adult and community education on behalf of Newcastle City Council. Since August 2003, there has been a single contract for all adult and community learning, further education, work-based learning, Entry to Employment (E2E) and employer training pilot (ETP) programmes.

2. Most training is delivered directly by NLEA in local schools, libraries and community centres. NLEA also subcontracts some training to the Newcastle Literacy Trust, Community Service Volunteers, Learning First, Interactive Development Ltd and Heaton Adult Association.

3. Responsibility for adult education in the city council lies with the head of libraries and lifelong learning, who reports to the director of children's services. He is supported by a head of adult learning, who has operational responsibility for managing the service. She is supported by a curriculum and quality manager, a family learning adviser, a basic skills adviser, an acting English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) manager and a unit manager. There are currently five vacancies for curriculum leaders, who will report to the quality and curriculum manager. There are two curriculum co-ordinators for family learning. The unit manager heads a small team which provides management information and administrative support to the whole adult and community education service.

4. A strategic adult learning group is made up of representatives from the subcontractors, the main training centres, the city council and tutors. It provides advice and support to the head of adult learning and is responsible for monitoring quality and assessing expenditure and business plans.

5. There are provision managers for each of the main delivery centres, for the libraries and for the subcontractors. The provision managers are responsible for the day-to-day management of training in their own organisations. The ETP and work-based learning programmes are available only to city council employees and are managed by the relevant departmental heads. Most vocational training and assessment on these programmes is subcontracted to local colleges and private training providers, but literacy, numeracy and language training is provided directly by NLEA.

6. Unemployment in Newcastle was 4 per cent, compared with the 5.2 per cent in Tyne and Wear and 3 per cent nationally. At the time of the 1991 census, the proportion of the population of Newcastle from minority ethnic groups was 4.1 per cent, compared with the national average of 6.2 per cent. The proportion of school leavers in Newcastle in 2001 achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C and above was 37 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent.

**OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS****Grade 3**

**7. The overall effectiveness of the service is satisfactory.** NLEA's leadership and management are satisfactory, as is its approach to quality improvement. Its arrangements for equality of opportunity are good. In construction, health, social care and public services, visual and performing arts and media, family learning, and foundation programmes the provision is good. It is satisfactory in humanities, information and communications technology (ICT), hairdressing and beauty therapy, business administration, management and professional, English, languages and communications, and hospitality, sport, leisure and travel.

**8. The inspection team had some confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment process.** The self-assessment report is currently the result of individual assessments completed by different parts of the service. It is often over-descriptive, rather than evaluative. It did, however, identify many of the weaknesses found at inspection and, in most cases, the process of trying to remedy these weaknesses had begun. The major weakness of insufficient curriculum co-ordination has been identified and new posts have been created to improve the situation.

**9. The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to make improvements.** NLEA has taken many steps to improve its provision, through intervention with subcontractors, better meetings structures and good survey work to identify problems across the service. Its action plans show steady progress through action points. NLEA is a complex organisation and actions to ensure improvement across the service are slower to show impact. The measures currently in place and those planned are adequate to drive improvement.

**KEY CHALLENGES FOR NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE LEA:**

- embed and develop curriculum management across all areas of provision
- improve the co-ordination of ETP across the service
- improve the sharing of good practice within the curriculum areas and across the service
- further develop quality assurance to drive improvement more systematically
- improve the effectiveness of planning for individual learners
- maintain and build on the good strategies to widen participation by learners not traditionally seen in learning
- improve the teaching and learning profile across the service

**GRADES**

*grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = inadequate*

<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	2
Quality improvement	3

<b>Construction</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b>Building services</b> Work-based learning for adults	33	2 2

  

<b>Business administration, management &amp; professional</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b>Teacher/trainer awards</b> Adult and community learning Employer training pilot	185 20	3 3

  

<b>Information &amp; communications technology</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b>Using IT</b> Adult and community learning	1,005	3

  

<b>Hospitality, sport, leisure &amp; travel</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b>Hospitality and catering</b> Adult and community learning	132	3
<b>Leisure, sport and recreation</b> Adult and community learning	962	3

  

<b>Hairdressing &amp; beauty therapy</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b>Hairdressing</b> Adult and community learning	14	3
<b>Beauty therapy</b> Adult and community learning	58	3

  

<b>Health, social care &amp; public services</b>		<b>2</b>
<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b>Early years</b> Adult and community learning	400	2
<b>Counselling</b> Adult and community learning	60	2

Visual & performing arts & media		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Arts</b> Adult and community learning	264	2
<b>Crafts</b> Adult and community learning	368	2
<b>Dance</b> Adult and community learning	348	2
<b>Music</b> Adult and community learning	149	2
<b>Media and technology</b> Adult and community learning	154	2

Humanities		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>History and genealogy</b> Adult and community learning	54	3
<b>Sociology and psychology</b> Adult and community learning	299	3

English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>English</b> Adult and community learning	136	3
<b>Languages</b> Adult and community learning	1,025	3
<b>Translating and interpreting</b> Adult and community learning	136	3

Foundation programmes		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>ESOL</b> Adult and community learning	996	2
<b>Literacy and numeracy</b> Adult and community learning	809	1
Employer training pilot	12	1
<b>Independent living and leisure skills</b> Adult and community learning	295	2



Family learning		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Adult and community learning</i> Adult and community learning	184	2

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

10. Of the 14 areas of learning given by NLEA, three were not inspected and reported on as they had too few learners. These were sciences and mathematics, land-based provision and retailing, customer services and transportation. The provision for learners in E2E was also not reported on and graded, as immediately before the single contract for NLEA was put into place, E2E had been inspected in its own right. Evidence was examined from E2E to support judgements about the leadership and management of NLEA. Two areas of learning were reported on and graded for ETP and evidence from health and social care in ETP was examined and used towards judgements in leadership and management.

Number of inspectors	24
Number of inspection days	120
Number of learners interviewed	636
Number of staff interviewed	366
Number of subcontractors interviewed	32
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	132
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	24

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievements and standards

11. **Retention and achievement rates in construction are good.** Of the 66 learners who have started on work-based learning programmes, 75 per cent have either completed their qualification or are still in learning. Of the 30 learners recruited to national vocational qualification (NVQ) programmes, only two have left the programme early. Learners obtain additional qualifications where it has been identified that they need specific skills to enhance their employment prospects.

12. **Pass rates on classroom and teaching assistants courses in business administration are good,** at 93 per cent in 2003-04. Current learners are progressing at a satisfactory rate to maintain this pass rate. Since 2001-02, the overall pass rates for the area of learning have been good and improving, from 74 to 86 per cent. Progression is good across all programmes. Many learners move to higher level courses. A good proportion of learners move into jobs. **Progression of learners on the ETP programme is good** and the programme is directly linked to career progression.

13. **Learners develop good skills in hospitality and sports.** In a variety of sports sessions, learners develop good levels of condition and fitness. The performance of exercise to music by learners, many of whom are in their 60s and 70s, is good. In hospitality, many learners are new to cooking and are developing skills in this area for the first time. They develop good skills in using small equipment as well as in a wide range of preparation and cooking methods.

14. **Learners develop good vocational and personal skills in health, social care and public services.** Learners in early years are knowledgeable about children's developmental needs. Those following learning disability awards demonstrate a good understanding of relevant topics. Older learners with visual impairment gain in confidence and learn how to manage stress through yoga. **On training for work courses, such as those in moving and handling and the management of epilepsy, there is 100 per cent achievement.**

15. **Learners' work is good in visual and performing arts and media.** In craft sessions, learners develop diverse skills and work on complex tasks. In media, learners produce high-quality images using traditional photographic processes and digital imaging. Art sketchbooks are used particularly well to show the extensive progress that learners have made. Learners in music and dance show good performance skills.

16. **Learners develop a good range of skills and knowledge in humanities.** Many learners respond to written assignments with enthusiasm and success, researching thoroughly and showing increasing skills in organising and presenting their ideas. **Retention rates are low on many courses.** Across the access to higher education courses, 29 per cent of those who enrolled failed to complete their course in 2004. Retention rates on GCE A, AS and GCSE level courses are low, averaging 60 per cent over the past two years.

17. **In English, languages and communication, attainment and achievement on most courses are very good.** Pass rates on accredited courses are good, averaging over 90 per cent. Many level 1 beginners courses have achievement levels of 100 per cent. In the best language sessions, learners are fluent in the target language. Standards of written work are high on all courses.

18. **Higher-level ESOL learners develop significantly in their confidence and personal skills.** Many of them produce good work and significantly improve the literacy and language skills that they need for their everyday lives at home and work.

19. **Learners very quickly show significantly improved literacy and numeracy skills** after they begin a programme. These improved skills enrich their quality of life, give them greater confidence and make a positive impact on everyday activities. Many learners improve their employment or promotion prospects significantly within a relatively short period of time. **Literacy and numeracy provision for ETP learners very effectively develops skills that improve their personal and working lives.** Opportunities for progression are good.

20. **There is good achievement of personal goals by learners who follow independent living and leisure skills courses.** Of 400 learners who started during the current year, 195 have completed their planned programme. Only 3 per cent have left without achieving their learning goal.

21. **There are significant gains in skills and confidence in family learning.** Some parents who have failed in the school environment become advocates to recruit new learners to family learning courses. They are much better able to support their children. Headteachers report better communication with parents and improved skills in the children. Some learners progress to higher-level literacy, numeracy or computer courses. Some have also trained as classroom assistants and have gained employment in a school.

22. Overall, retention and achievement rates are satisfactory in ICT. In 2002-03 and 2003-04, approximately 80 per cent of learners were retained. In 2002-03, success rates for CLAIT, CLAIT Plus and the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) were 82 per cent, 50 per cent and 52 per cent respectively.

23. Achievement overall is satisfactory in hairdressing and beauty therapy. Pass rates are improving. The rate for all beauty and holistic therapy courses was 89 per cent in 2002-03, 93 per cent in 2003-04 and rose to 97 per cent in 2004-05. Retention rates are satisfactory.

### The quality of provision

Grades given to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Business administration, management & professional	0	5	5	0	10
Construction	0	4	1	0	5
English, languages & communications	1	5	10	2	18
Family learning	1	7	4	0	12
Foundation programmes	5	16	11	2	34
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	0	2	4	0	6
Health, social care & public services	1	1	5	0	7
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	1	9	4	2	16
Humanities	1	5	3	0	9
Information & communications technology	0	7	12	0	19
Visual & performing arts & media	4	15	7	0	26
<b>Total</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>162</b>

24. **In construction, on- and off-the-job training is good.** Most teaching is good or better. Teachers use a good variety of teaching methods. Learners are moved between sites to enable them to experience a wide range of relevant vocational activities. Work supervisors are approachable and make good role models. **The induction process is particularly good.** It lasts for one week, and it is varied and well planned. Learners gain basic certificates of competence in first aid, health and safety and manual handling, which can be used as NVQ evidence. **Some more able learners make slow progress.** They are not given targets that challenge them to achieve earlier.

25. **Learners in ICT develop good practical skills.** Tutors provide good individual coaching and helpful advice to individuals or to small groups. Many learners attribute their good skill development and increased confidence to the secure learning environments in which they work and the teaching methods used. Learners' **literacy, numeracy and language skills are insufficiently developed.** Many centres do not formally assess learners' language, literacy and numeracy skills to diagnose any difficulties.

26. **Teaching and learning are generally good in hospitality and sport.** Sessions are well managed and routinely include strengthening, aerobic conditioning and stretching in their

formats. In hospitality, teaching is well planned and structured to make the best use of time on short courses.

**27. Teaching and learning are good in visual performing arts and media.** Sessions are well planned to take account of learners' abilities and to develop their skills in a logical sequence. Tutors work very effectively with individual learners to build their practical skills. They set challenging tasks. Learners respond well and participate fully.

**28. In humanities, teaching and learning are good.** Most tutors plan their sessions carefully to ensure that learning is varied and interesting, and that learners have good opportunities to contribute ideas and information. Tutors and learners work well together and enjoy the experience.

**29. Teaching and learning are excellent in literacy and numeracy.** Learning sessions are dynamic and interesting. Activities and projects are well matched to the needs and interests of learners. Seventy-three per cent of sessions observed were good or better. Learners are motivated by interesting activities such as making use of their personal interests to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Intensive courses for ETP learners are challenging and stimulating and very well matched to the development of specific vocational skills. Individual learning plans do not always include timescales for achievement. **Learners are not always challenged to achieve accreditation as quickly as they might do.**

**30. Tutors in independent living and leisure skills deliver challenging and stimulating sessions** in environments that are very suitable for learning. Most sessions are good or better and are well planned. Learners participate well throughout the sessions and are stimulated by the topics chosen and the methods of teaching. In a few sessions, tutors do not ensure that all learners are sufficiently involved.

**31. There is good teaching and learning on family learning programmes,** with 67 per cent of sessions observed graded as good or better. There were no unsatisfactory sessions. Most teaching sessions are well prepared and include a variety of activities to involve parents. Good use is made of practical sessions to 'hook' parents into first step learning. Learners enjoy the sessions and are challenged by them.

32. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in business administration and in hairdressing and beauty therapy. Tutors are well qualified and experienced. Better sessions are paced well and fully involve learners but poorer sessions do not sufficiently challenge or involve all learners. In the sessions for ETP business administration learners delivered by Newcastle College, the teaching and learning are satisfactory. In some of the poorer sessions in health, social care and public services, learners are insufficiently challenged. The activities rely too much on the tutor to lead them and learners' involvement is not always encouraged.

**33. In hairdressing and beauty therapy, accommodation at two learning centres is particularly good.** One centre has a purpose-built hairdressing salon and a beauty salon with the latest modern equipment. This enables a wide range of hair and beauty treatments to take place. Another centre has a purpose-built beauty salon with very good equipment.

**34. Resources are good in health, social care and public services.** Learning centres are

bright and welcoming and rooms are good for the purpose for which they are used. Plenty of specialist equipment of industry standard is available for teaching first aid and moving and handling.

35. The larger learning centres have good resources and **some good specialist facilities for learners on visual and performing arts and media**, especially those centres that are based in schools. There are well-equipped photographic and digital imaging suites for media, and one centre has specialist cutting surfaces for stained glass. Dance classes are held in spacious studios or halls with good floors.

36. **Resources to support learning are good for humanities learners.** Most accommodation is good. The central public library contains excellent resources for people studying local history. Tutors take time to prepare resources that are stimulating and easily understood.

37. **NLEA's skills for life team have excellent resources.** Learners benefit from plenty of good-quality workbooks at appropriate levels. Learning is enhanced by the use of appropriate cards, puzzles and books as well as expert contributions from specialist volunteers. The internet is used well to enhance learning and a trained 'e-guide' directs staff and learners towards making best use of basic skills websites. Specialist dyslexia support is readily available in-house and requests for it are responded to very quickly. Learners are ably assisted with accessing benefits advice and other local services. A very strong partnership with the Literacy Trust enables individual support to be provided to learners with mental health illnesses or other specific additional needs.

38. **In English, languages and communications technology is insufficiently used to enhance learning.** Some equipment is unsuitable or not working. In other cases, equipment is available but tutors are not confident to use it. Some centres do not have enough equipment and staff are not trained sufficiently in its use.

39. **Some learning resources are unsatisfactory in ICT.** Some of the computing workshops are too small or noisy, or inappropriately heated and ventilated. In some rooms, insufficient attention has been given to the lighting. Some of the computers and operating programs are old and a few are not linked to a network.

40. **Strategies for widening participation are particularly good in those areas that NLEA has prioritised for development.** Its courses attract a wide range of learners, including many older learners. Specific provision is available for defined groups of learners. Good community provision is available for learners from minority ethnic groups. Minority language courses are organised in response to demand even when it is difficult to find specialist tutors. Progression routes are good especially in ICT and in English and languages, with courses ranging from entry to advanced levels. Courses in literacy and numeracy are provided in nursery schools to help learners progress to teaching assistant qualifications. **The range of out-of-school-hours courses in family learning is insufficient.** There is no evening provision for parents who are working and very few family learning opportunities at weekends or during holiday periods.

41. **NLEA works well to meet the needs of learners who speak English as an additional language, including asylum seekers and refugees.** There are good partnership arrangements with local voluntary groups and agencies. An outreach worker has

successfully identified a wide range of learning needs across the city. Childcare is provided and there are women-only groups.

**42. Learners on independent living and leisure courses have a good choice of programmes** that are relevant to their needs and interests. Programmes include performing arts, arts and crafts, ICT, independent supported living, sensory awareness, workshop skills and gardening. Providers' staff have very relevant experience of working with the client group. They anticipate, and cater for, learners' needs. Tutors not only understand the needs of their immediate clients but also offer guidance on family matters and advise on sourcing additional support where it is needed.

**43. Staff development is good in construction.** An annual staff appraisal accurately identifies areas for development. As well as subject specific training, staff are involved in many activities to enable them better to support learners.

**44. Provision in English, languages and communication is managed well at the main learning centre,** which accommodates around half of the learners in this area. Teaching resources are well managed. Tutors here are given good support by managers, who are on site whenever courses are run.

**45. In ESOL and family learning, management of the curriculum is good.** The management of change, with the departure of a key member of staff in ESOL, has been handled effectively and with much sensitivity. **NLEA has developed a comprehensive and coherent skills for life strategy.** There is good sharing of skills and resources within the team. The staff team for family learning is motivated and committed. Effective communication takes place between tutors and managers. The family learning manager has strong links with partners. Effective use is made of feedback from learners to evaluate courses and guide planning.

**46. There is insufficient individual target-setting in modern foreign languages.** Individual learning plans are simply records of prior experience. Learners work towards group objectives and have no individual targets outlined.

**47. Planning to meet the individual learning needs of ESOL learners is insufficient.** Reviews are carried out termly and progress is recorded on individual learning plans. Some tutors are relatively inexperienced at using individual learning plans and do not always record learners' progress well.

**48.** In one centre, initial assessment fails to identify learners' existing skills and abilities sufficiently for learners on independent living and leisure courses. Around 10 per cent of learners attend this centre. Initial assessment does not clearly influence each learner's plan.

**49. Pre-course information, advice and guidance on business administration courses are insufficient.** Centre administrators carry out recruitment and enrolment. They provide basic advice using the course information sheets but have no specialist knowledge of courses. Potential learners cannot get more detailed course information or more professional advice and guidance as tutors are not normally involved in the recruitment process.

**50. In construction and hospitality, sport and leisure the quality improvement**

**arrangements are insufficiently developed.** There is little sharing of good practice among partners. NLEA does not carry out observations of teaching at construction subcontractors, although the subcontractors themselves routinely carry out observations. In hospitality and sport, the teaching observation system is not standardised and some staff have not been observed teaching. Observation does not routinely result in staff development. Subject specialists do not always carry out observations.

**51. There is insufficient sharing of good practice in health, social care and public service.** Although there are very good quality assurance systems in some centres, there is no standardisation of systems. Good practice that goes on, such as thorough lesson planning, fully involving learners in activities and making the most of resources, is not shared.

**52. In business administration, ICT, hospitality sport and leisure, hairdressing and beauty therapy, visual and performing arts and media, humanities and English languages and communications there is insufficient co-ordination across the curriculum.**

Management of individual learning centres is usually satisfactory or good, but there is no overall planning across the curricula. Recruitment strategies are fragmented. Progression opportunities are not adequately planned. Resources are not routinely shared. Recruitment on some humanities courses is low. In the same geographical area, there are similar courses in the same subjects and no overall planning process to bring learners together into more viable groups. NLEA recognises this weakness and is in the process of recruiting curriculum leaders across these areas of learning.

### **Leadership and management**

**53. NLEA's strategies to develop service-wide provision are particularly effective.** A strategic management group provides sound guidance for senior managers and good scrutiny of corporate business plans. Co-operation between the subcontractors is good. The provision managers keep each other well informed about their work and the courses they provide. There is a collaborative annual planning cycle for the overall provision. NLEA's strategic priority is to concentrate on courses in literacy, numeracy, ESOL and family learning, which are seen as the service's main growth areas. This priority is understood widely across NLEA.

**54. NLEA manages resources well to support its priorities.** It has made particularly adept use of the ETP pilot to build its provision for literacy, numeracy and language development. A very effective partnership with union learning representatives promotes these learning opportunities. NLEA allocates resources effectively to support learning throughout the city. For example, libraries receive funding for textbooks and course materials that are directly relevant to courses being run in their areas.

**55. NLEA has developed a good range of initiatives to widen participation.** In some locations, NLEA has carried out an extensive survey of households where no-one is participating in its learning programmes to investigate their needs and identify and remove barriers to their participation. There is a particularly effective arrangement with the local information, advice and guidance contract holder to provide professional and impartial advice about learning and work opportunities to all learners. Some courses are particularly popular with people from black and minority ethnic communities and NLEA ensures that support tutors are available to act as interpreters. Courses provided in schools are carefully designed to encourage parents to learn about computers alongside their children.

**56. There is insufficient co-ordination in most curriculum areas and the ETP provision.**

The curriculum areas without a curriculum leader have no service-wide planning to improve the provision. Most of the provision for these curriculum areas is planned independently for each centre. Little progression is planned other than at the same centre. The ETP provision covers several areas of learning and co-ordination and planning of it across the service is poor. **Quality assurance arrangements for ETP are not fully developed.** Staff and learners involved in ETP were not sufficiently involved in NLEA's self-assessment process. There are few opportunities for sharing good practice in the ETP provision.

**57. Measures for quality improvement across the service have been implemented slowly.**

A new service-wide quality assurance system, incorporating NLEA's policies and procedures, was established when the new quality officer took up post last year. The implementation of this system has been delayed. Many part-time staff have never had an appraisal. Observations of teaching and learning do not take place at all centres and standard paperwork is not available to ensure consistency. Most of the existing quality assurance systems do, however, provide effective quality assurance of the learners' experience, particularly in the long-established parts of the service.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Strengths**

- particularly effective strategies to develop service-wide provision
- good management of resources
- very good range of initiatives to widen participation

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient co-ordination in curriculum areas and ETP
- slow implementation of quality assurance across the service

## **Construction**

### ***Building services***

***Grade 2***

#### *Strengths*

- good retention and achievement rates
- good on-and-off the job training
- very good induction
- good staff development

#### *Weaknesses*

- slow progress by more able learners
- insufficiently developed quality improvement arrangements



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

### *Strengths*

- good pass rates on classroom assistant courses
- good progression

### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient pre-course information advice and guidance for learners
- insufficient curriculum co-ordination

## **Information & communications technology**

### *Strengths*

- good development of practical skills
- good strategies for widening participation
- good range of courses

### *Weaknesses*

- some unsatisfactory teaching resources
- insufficient development of learners' literacy, numeracy or language skills
- insufficient curriculum management

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

### *Strengths*

- good development of skills
- much good teaching

### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient co-ordination of the curriculum
- insufficiently systematic quality assurance arrangements

## **Hairdressing & beauty therapy**

### *Strengths*

- very good accommodation at two centres

### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient co-ordination of the curriculum

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

### *Strengths*

- good achievement of skills
- good resources
- good initiatives to widen participation

### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient challenge for some learners
- insufficient sharing of good practice

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

### *Strengths*

- good standard of learners' work
- good teaching and learning
- good resources in larger centres

### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient co-ordination and leadership of curriculum

## **Humanities**

### *Strengths*

- good development of skills and knowledge by many learners
- good teaching and learning
- good resources to support learning

### *Weaknesses*

- low retention rates on many courses
- insufficient co-ordination of the curriculum

## **English, languages & communications**

### *Strengths*

- very good pass rates on most courses
- good range of courses
- good management at the main centre

### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient individual target-setting
- inadequate use of technology to enhance learning

- insufficient service-wide strategy for improvement of the provision

### **Foundation programmes**

#### ***ESOL***

***Grade 2***

##### *Strengths*

- good development of confidence and personal skills by higher-level learners
- good engagement of hard-to-reach groups
- good curriculum development

##### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient planning to meet individual learning needs

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

***Grade 1***

##### *Strengths*

- very good development of learners' skills
- excellent variety of teaching and learning
- excellent resources
- particularly effective additional support

##### *Weaknesses*

- some weak recording of targets

#### ***Independent living and leisure skills***

***Grade 2***

##### *Strengths*

- good achievement of personal learning goals
- well-planned and challenging teaching
- good range of relevant programmes
- very good use of provider expertise to enhance the learners' experience

##### *Weaknesses*

- ineffective initial assessment in one centre

## **Family learning**

### *Strengths*

- significant gains in skills and confidence
- good teaching and learning
- good curriculum management

### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient provision outside school hours

## **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE LEA:**

- the friendly, helpful, tutors and support staff
- the fact that it's not like school
- the smaller, more community-based venues
- the good individual tuition
- making new friends and gaining in confidence
- getting fitter, both mentally and physically
- the chance to get qualifications
- 'proving to friends and family that I can do it'
- the variety of activities and topics
- 'having fun!'
- being able to use the internet and computers

## **WHAT LEARNERS THINK NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE LEA COULD IMPROVE:**

- the space and standard of furniture in some of the teaching rooms
- signposting to rooms and providing staff on the reception at the start of evening classes
- the continuity of courses by not allowing new learners to join in the second and third terms
- the access to ICT and the reliability of equipment
- the opportunities for speaking in language classes
- the storage facilities for heavy work during the week between classes
- the quality of information about courses before enrolment

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

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 3**

#### Strengths

- particularly effective strategies to develop service-wide provision
- good management of resources
- very good range of initiatives to widen participation

#### Weaknesses

- insufficient co-ordination in curriculum areas and ETP
- slow implementation of quality assurance across the service

58. NLEA's strategies to develop service-wide provision are particularly effective. Since NLEA was given a single contract by the local LSC, which effectively joined many disparate services, managers have acted particularly effectively to build a more coherent service. The strategic management group provides sound guidance for senior managers and good scrutiny of corporate business plans. Views from staff of all the major training centres and subcontractors, and their learners, are represented effectively and given equal status. Co-operation between the subcontractors is good. For example, Interactive Development Ltd is researching the needs of learners with severe learning difficulties and disabilities throughout the city, on behalf of the Newcastle Learning Partnership. The provision managers hold regular meetings to keep each other informed about their work. There is a collaborative annual planning cycle for the overall provision. Local plans complement those of adjacent centres to minimise duplication in the same localities. The arrangements to verify that courses proposed at local level are in line with the priorities of the city council and funding organisations are good. For example, between 2003-04 and 2004-05, the proportion of learners following courses recognised as leading to a qualification by the local LSC rose from 74 to 84 per cent. There is a widely understood strategic priority to concentrate on courses in literacy, numeracy, ESOL and family learning, which are seen as the main growth areas.

59. NLEA manages resources well to support its priorities. It has made particularly adept use of the ETP pilot to build its provision for literacy, numeracy and language development. The wage subsidy has been used well to provide ample time for learners to attend intensive and successful one- or two-week training programmes in literacy, numeracy or language. These programmes have been well received by learners and employers. They have enhanced the status and perceived value of such training within the city council. A very effective partnership with union learning representatives promotes learning opportunities across the city council. This is a cost-effective way of promoting learning, especially to learners who have never been involved in adult learning. The representatives take a lead role in recruiting learners. They are good role models and give friendly, informal support. NLEA allocates resources effectively across the city. For example, the libraries receive funding for textbooks and course materials so that all learners can access relevant materials. Existing library facilities are used to provide convenient community-based locations and facilities for introductory and taster courses. Library staff are used well to promote provision in local venues and recruit learners. The city library has excellent resources for local history,

which benefit humanities learners greatly. Good use is made of three community schools to give adult learners access to resources not usually seen in adult and community learning. Resources are fairly distributed across the provision. Centre managers and managers of different parts of the provision put together proposals for course development based on assessed needs. These proposals are put forward to the management team. An open and transparent process is used to decide the funding allocation. All staff understand this process and value it. NLEA keeps an extensive and up-to-date database with details of learner numbers and achievement and retention rates. Managers across the service can easily access this information.

60. Arrangements for providing literacy, numeracy and language support for learners who follow vocational or leisure courses are satisfactory. NLEA has identified that needs are greatest on courses such as those that lead to classroom assistant and early years qualifications, access courses for entry to higher education and courses in counselling. Most learners on these priority programmes have an initial assessment of their literacy, numeracy and language skills and are referred to specialist training programmes or given support in the classroom.

61. Staff development and appraisal are satisfactory. Centre managers organise teaching and learning observations and carry out appraisals. There is not yet a systematic, service-wide approach but the various measures at a local level ensure satisfactory maintenance of standards. As council staff, all staff have access to a range of training organised by the training and development team, although not all part-time staff know enough about these opportunities. Communication across NLEA is satisfactory.

62. There is insufficient co-ordination in most curriculum areas and the ETP provision. In previous development plans, NLEA recognised the need for all areas of learning to have a curriculum leader. Approval was obtained for five new curriculum leader posts but these new posts are still vacant. The curriculum areas without a curriculum leader have insufficient service-wide planning to improve the provision. Little progression is planned other than at the same centre. There are few subject-specific training and development opportunities for tutors in the curriculum areas that do not have a leader. They have insufficient opportunities to share good practice in teaching and learning. Resources that may be available to tutors at one centre may not be available at another.

63. The ETP provision covers several areas of learning but the co-ordination and planning of it across the service is poor. The team overseeing ETP is fragmented and lines of accountability are insufficiently clear. Quality assurance arrangements are not fully developed, although in some areas such as literacy and numeracy, the provision is very good and is well protected by the curriculum quality assurance measures. Staff and learners involved in ETP were not sufficiently involved in NLEA's self-assessment process. There are few opportunities for sharing good practice in the ETP provision.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 2**

64. NLEA has made it one of its strategic priorities to give learners easy access to learning. It has developed a good range of initiatives to widen participation and encourage new learners. In 2003-04, of the 18,719 learners attracted, 8,000 were new to the service. The highest numbers of new learners joined strategic priority areas such as foundation programmes and ICT. Visual and performing arts and media, and hospitality, sport, leisure and travel also had many new learners. Reporting lines and responsibilities for managing

equality and diversity across NLEA are clear, up to the relevant portfolio holder in the city council. Data on the profile of learners by their gender, ethnicity, and disability, and their achievement and retention rates, is widely available. It is used to compare participation rates with demographic data about populations at local and city levels. In some locations, NLEA has carried out an extensive survey of households where no-one is participating in its learning programmes to investigate their needs and identify and remove barriers to their participation. A similar survey by the library service looked at the needs of people who use some of its services but not its learning programmes. Information from these surveys has been used well to widen the availability of learning options through more early-evening courses, better marketing and a good range of short taster courses, mainly in ICT, at local libraries.

65. There is a particularly effective arrangement with the local information, advice and guidance contract holder to provide professional and impartial advice about learning and work opportunities to all learners. This service is well established and used extensively. For example, between September 2004 and March 2005, approximately 70 learners each month received a free individual advice interview with a qualified advice and guidance worker.

66. NLEA has taken particular care to make its learning programmes accessible to learners who face barriers to participation. For example, aids such as magnifying software and Braille printers are used by learners with visual impairments. The arrangements for testing learners for dyslexia are very good. This is a full diagnostic testing rather than simply initial assessment. Where appropriate, this is followed by intensive individual support and coaching which draws directly on the results of the test. Some learners have experienced exceptional outcomes from this support. CSV has an effective programme to allow people with learning difficulties to learn alongside other learners from their local community. The learners work together well as a group and produce commemorative artwork, such as a mosaic plaque, to celebrate their achievements. NLT provides very flexible training for learners with literacy difficulties. For example, tutors meet learners at venues of their choice, such as cafes or other surroundings which are familiar to them. NLEA provides ample flexibility to develop specific course within curriculum areas to attract particular groups. For example, there are yoga classes for people with visual impairments and for ante-natal women, and outreach courses in nursery schools for new mothers. In ICT, there is a good range of adaptive keyboards and other equipment. Some courses are particularly popular with people from black and minority ethnic communities and NLEA ensures that support tutors are available to act as interpreters. Courses provided in schools are carefully designed to encourage parents to learn about computers alongside their children. In visual and performing arts and media, courses in Asian dressmaking are particularly relevant to the local community.

67. NLEA has fulfilled its obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA). Accessibility audits have been carried out at all locations in frequent use. At some large centres, extensive improvements have been made, such as installing a new lift. Where access for people with restricted mobility remains difficult, suitable alternative arrangements are made. Staff training in equality is satisfactory, although it is not given systematically across the service. Staff have received adequate training to understand their responsibilities under the DDA through attendance at a mandatory training course. NLEA also meets its requirements under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, largely through the subcontractors that offer specialist provision in this area. NLEA has a comprehensive

Race Relations Act policy and action plan. A programme of staff training in this area is currently being given. Learners are made aware of the complaints procedure through a learners' handbook. Complaints are dealt with satisfactorily.

68. Staff awareness of the wider aspects of diversity is adequate. They are sensitive to learners' individual needs. Few staff actively promote a greater understanding of equality of opportunity and diversity to learners during their teaching sessions.

### **Quality improvement**

### **Contributory grade 3**

69. NLEA uses learners' and tutors' evaluations of the provision adequately to improve its provision. Learners complete evaluation forms at the end of their programmes. The magazine that the service produces three times a year includes a lifelong learning survey. This gives learners and potential learners the opportunity to make suggestions about current and future provision. Prizes are awarded for completing the survey. Tutors complete course reviews at the end of their programmes. Feedback from tutors and learners is used to plan the provision. NLEA commissioned a 'Mystery shopper programme' from a local marketing and survey company. The results provided valuable information on the quality of learners' first contacts with adult learning centres.

70. A range of improvements has been successfully made since NLEA was re-organised into a single contract. Managers across the service meet regularly. Some planning of provision is now done jointly. Some improvements to the standardisation of teaching and learning observations have been made. A service-wide policy to accredit the provision across all curricula is helping to standardise practice. The NLEA uses a credit-based awarding body as part of this drive to improve quality. In the E2E provision, some good interventions have been made with subcontractors that operate nationally, to improve provision. Even though the learners represented are quite small, managers have been active in pursuing the subcontractor to ensure a good experience for the learners. Specialist subcontractors of NLEA are carrying out their own surveys to help improve the provision.

71. In 2004-05, 84 per cent of the provision was accredited. In 2003-04, 74 per cent was accredited. Internal verification and external moderation are satisfactory. Prompt action is taken in response to comments in the external moderation reports.

72. The separate organisations that merged to form the new adult learning service had their own quality assurance arrangements. Most of these existing systems provide effective quality assurance of the learners' experience, particularly in the long-established parts of the service. Although NLEA operates a diverse curriculum offer, including ETP and work-based learning in 11 curriculum areas, no area of learning was found to be inadequate. Lesson observation profiles show very few sessions to be inadequate. Local quality improvement measures are effective in maintaining the quality of provision. There has, however, been slow implementation of measures for quality improvement across the service. A new service-wide quality assurance system, incorporating NLEA's policies and procedures, was established when the new curriculum and quality manager took up post last year. This officer was redeployed almost immediately to cover a serious management problem in a curriculum area. Some part-time staff have never had an appraisal. Observations of teaching and learning take place at all centres but standard paperwork is not available to ensure consistency. Observers do not always have subject-specific knowledge. Action points from observations are not always followed up.

73. The self-assessment process is satisfactory and has involved most parts of this large adult learning service. Representatives from all the organisations in the new service, provision managers and some tutors were involved to some extent in preparing the self-assessment report. The self-assessment report is not, however, written in a consistent style for all parts of the service. Some of the self-assessment report sections relating to different parts of the service are not sufficiently focused on the quality improvements required. Judgements about the overall quality of the service are consistent with those found on inspection.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Construction

### Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Building services</b>		<b>2</b>
Work-based learning for adults	33	2

74. There are 33 construction learners on work-based learning programmes, covering five building trades. There are 11 in highways maintenance, 11 in gas servicing, six in wood occupations, four in brickwork and one in plumbing. Seven are advanced apprentices, 11 are apprentices and 15 are on NVQ programmes. Learners are recruited to programmes after referral from the Connexions service and through local advertising. Applicants undergo an initial screening test, followed by an interview. Those selected are employed on fixed-term training contracts with Neighbourhood Services, a department of Newcastle City Council. Numbers recruited depend on demand from the city council. Learners have a one-week induction at a training centre. Off-the-job training and NVQ assessment are subcontracted to a local college, Northumberland College, and one private training provider, Lomax Training. Most learners attend on day release, and a few on block release. The subcontractors are accredited assessment centres for the target qualifications. Key skills are taught and assessed during off the job training. On-the-job training is provided by NLEA. Learners are visited on site and at college by provider staff. Reviews of progress take place on site and at the training centre. Learners' workplace supervisors are invited to attend.

### **Building services**

### **Grade 2**

#### *Strengths*

- good retention and achievement rates
- good on-and-off the job training
- very good induction
- good staff development

#### *Weaknesses*

- slow progress by more able learners
- insufficiently developed quality improvement arrangements

### **Achievement and standards**

75. Retention rates on all programmes are very good. Of the 66 learners who have started on work-based learning programmes, 75 per cent have achieved their qualification or are still in learning. Retention and achievement rates on the NVQ-only programmes are very good. Of the 30 learners recruited to NVQ programmes, only two have left the programme early. The remaining 28 have either achieved their qualification or are still in learning and making satisfactory progress. Achievement rates of apprenticeship programmes are satisfactory. Only one learner has completed a full framework, but

learners are making satisfactory progress and 10 are due to complete later this year. Many of them are waiting to complete key skills awards.

76. Learners can obtain additional qualifications where it has been identified that they need specific skills to enhance their employment prospects. These include an abrasive wheels certificate, a lift truck licence, a 'working in confined spaces' certificate and qualifications from other short courses that are not part of their funded training. Learners work well, particularly in practical lessons. They develop their skills to good industrial standards.

The following tables show the achievement and retention rates available up to the time of the inspection.

<b>LSC funded work-based learning</b>																	
<b>Advanced apprenticeships</b>	<b>2004-05</b>		<b>2003-04</b>														
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	5		2														
Retained*	5		2														
Successfully completed	0		0														
Still in learning	5		2														

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

<b>LSC funded work-based learning</b>																	
<b>Apprenticeships</b>	<b>2003-04</b>		<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>												
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	8		7	100	10	100											
Retained*	8		5	100	5	100											
Successfully completed	0		1	100	0	100											
Still in learning	8		3	100	0	100											

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

<b>LSC funded work-based learning</b>																	
<b>NVQ Training</b>	<b>2004-05</b>		<b>2003-04</b>		<b>2002-03</b>		<b>2001-02</b>										
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	
Number of starts	13		8	100	6	100	2	100									
Retained*	13		6	75	6	100	2	100									
Successfully completed	0		4	50	6	100	2	100									
Still in learning	13		2	25	0	0	0	0									

\*retained learners are those who have stayed in learning for at least the planned duration of their training programmes, or have successfully completed their programme within the time allowed

## The quality of provision

77. The training is good, both on and off the job. Off-the-job training is well planned and structured. Most teaching is good or better. Lessons are well planned. The intended learning outcomes are shared and discussed with learners. In the better lessons, tutors use

## NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE LEA

a good variety of teaching methods. They integrate theory and practice in many lessons by drawing on learners' own experiences of work to promote discussion. One of the subcontractors has highways learners working on a real project laying a block-work entrance and driveway to a local historic building. Learners have work placements with Newcastle City Council. They are moved between sites to enable them to experience a wide range of vocational activities. Four of the brickwork learners are renovating council-owned properties. This gives them experience of a wide variety of brickwork jobs. Workplace supervisors act as positive role models. They help learners to develop vocational and social skills. There is particularly good health and safety awareness and compliance in all work placements. Neighbourhood services have a code of practice for managing the health and safety of young people.

78. The induction process is particularly good. It lasts for one week, and it is varied and well planned. It includes thorough and detailed sessions on health and safety matters, the grievance procedure, and how to deal with bullying or harassment. Specific sessions that require specialist knowledge and competence are delivered by subcontracted providers. This is done in the case of first aid, health and safety and manual handling. Learners gain basic certificates of competence in these subjects, which can be used as NVQ evidence. This early experience of success motivates learners enormously. During the induction, learners form good relationships among themselves and with training staff. Most learners have a clear recollection of what they learn during the induction period, including relevant information about equality of opportunity. All learners return to the training centre every three months for an induction refresher course. Equality of opportunity is well promoted. All learners and staff have specific equality and diversity training. The topics are covered well in the learners' and staff induction, and also at the induction refresher courses.

79. Support for learners is satisfactory. Support officers regularly visit learners at work and at subcontractors' sites to discuss their general performance and to talk about any personal problems they may be experiencing. Learners appreciate the level of personal support they receive, which helps them to remain confident and motivated.

80. The screening and selection processes and support for literacy and numeracy development are satisfactory. Learners take various tests to determine their suitability for training. Learners' additional support needs are identified accurately, and suitable support is given by the subcontractors.

81. Some of the more able learners make slow progress. NLEA does not have effective mechanisms to monitor learners' progress, although the subcontractors do. Much of the training is aligned to term times, and most targets for completion are set for the end of the academic year. Some learners' key skills training has been left to the end of the programme, and this too is due for completion at the end of term. There is no encouragement for more able learners to complete their apprenticeship framework early. The targets set at progress reviews do not sufficiently challenge more able learners. Targets related to unit achievement of NVQs are not specific enough. Reviews do not always involve employers' representatives or staff who can influence evidence collection and assessment opportunities.

### **Leadership and management**

82. Staff development is good. An annual staff appraisal accurately identifies areas for development. As well as subject-specific training, staff are involved in many activities to



develop their skills to enable them better to support learners across learning. All staff are following an NVQ at level 3 in advice and guidance, and some are taking an NVQ at level 4 in management. Some are also training towards health and safety qualifications. Most staff have had specific training on deaf awareness and dyslexia awareness as well as the mandatory equality and diversity training.

83. Quality improvement arrangements are insufficiently developed. There are few procedures for any of the key processes across the curriculum, although they are currently being written. There is little sharing of good practice among partners. NLEA does not carry out observations of teaching at the subcontractors, although the subcontractors themselves routinely observe teaching sessions. Self-assessment has taken place, but it did not correctly identify all the strengths and weaknesses of the provision. There is insufficient data available, and insufficient use of historical data to drive improvements.

**Business administration, management & professional****Grade 3**

<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Teacher/trainer awards</i></b>		
Adult and community learning	185	3
Employer training pilot	20	3

84. NLEA currently offers 14 courses for classroom and teaching assistants at levels 1 and 2. One hundred and eighty-five learners are on these courses. Five courses are offered in bookkeeping, to 45 learners. Text and word processing courses have been inspected under ICT. Twenty learners are on an ETP pilot programme, of whom 19 are taking the team leader certificate and one is working on a level 2 NVQ in administration. These learners are all employed by the city council. All the current provision is accredited. To date this year, 493 learners have enrolled on 62 courses offered across 16 venues, many of which are local schools, colleges, adult learning centres and the premises of two franchise providers, Learning First and Community Service Volunteers. Seventy-three per cent of courses are offered during the day. Seventeen per cent of learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds, 5 per cent have a disability and 19 per cent are men. Eighty-three per cent of learners are between the ages of 20 and 49. Sixty-one per cent of learners receive concessionary fees. This area of learning currently represents just under 2 per cent of NLEA's total provision. Most courses last between 10 and 40 weeks although some shorter courses are offered. Sixteen part-time tutors work between two and 12 hours per week. The curriculum leader post is currently vacant. ETP is separately delivered, managed and monitored by the training and development department of the city council, although staff from NLEA, particularly from the skills for life team, give most of the training. One subcontractor, Newcastle College, is used for some of the administration programme.

*Strengths*

- good pass rates on classroom assistant courses
- good progression

*Weaknesses*

- insufficient pre-course information advice and guidance for learners
- insufficient curriculum co-ordination

**Achievement and standards**

85. Pass rates on classroom and teaching assistants courses are good, at 93 per cent in 2003-04. Current learners are progressing at a satisfactory rate to maintain this pass rate. Standards of work are good. Pass rates on bookkeeping courses are satisfactory, at 70 per cent in 2003-04. Since 2001-02, the overall pass rates for the area of learning have been good and improving, from 74 to 86 per cent. All learners develop at least satisfactory skills and knowledge. In the better sessions, learners actively participate in sessions and volunteer answers to some complex questions related to child development. They draw on previous sessions to formulate answers and contribute effectively to discussions. ETP learners on team leader courses use their personal experiences from work to illustrate the development of good practice in management. They confidently share experiences in

group activities.

86. Progression is good across all programmes. Many learners move to higher-level courses. For example, since 2003-04, nine learners have progressed from entry level to level 1, 67 from level 1 to level 2 and two from level 2 to level 3. Some learners have progressed through more than one level. Eight learners have progressed from entry level to level 2, four from entry level to level 3 and two from level 1 to level 3. One learner has gone on to take a degree and one to take a postgraduate certificate in education. A good proportion of learners move into jobs. Of the 47 learners who completed a classroom or teaching assistants course in 2003-04, 19 are now employed in the sector. Of the learners who have started in 2004-05, two are now employed and two have been offered jobs to start in September as classroom assistants. One learner who achieved first class passes at levels 1 and 2 in computerised accounts has an interview for an accounting position.

87. Progression of learners on the ETP programme is good. The programme is directly linked to career progression. The team leader course specifically leads to better pay and, sometimes, more responsible roles. One administration learner has moved into a much more fulfilling job role since taking part in the programme, with a complete career change from catering to administration.

### **The quality of provision**

88. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Tutors are well qualified and experienced. The better teaching sessions are well planned, with a good variety of activities to meet learners' needs. Tutors make appropriate use of interactive whiteboards and other learning materials in many sessions. Health and safety, and equality and diversity, are incorporated well into most classroom and teaching assistants courses. Good use is made of learners' experiences from their placements on many classroom and teaching assistants courses. In many sessions, tutors question learners effectively to prompt and confirm learning, but their written feedback does not always help learners know what they need to do to improve. In the less effective sessions, tutors do not adequately facilitate discussions to ensure that all learners get the chance to make a contribution. In the sessions for ETP learners given by Newcastle College, the tutors are appropriately qualified and experienced in the subject area. Some sessions are held in small rooms where working conditions are cramped, particularly around computer workstations.

89. Support for learners is satisfactory. Diagnostic screening tests are carried out for all learners on classroom and teaching assistant courses and for those on the ETP programme. Learners on other courses are not screened. Tutors are not always routinely informed of the results of initial screening. Their ability to plan adequately to meet particular needs is inhibited. Where literacy and numeracy needs are identified, most learners take up the offer of additional support in discrete sessions given by qualified basic skills tutors. Links between these sessions and the learners' main course are weak. Learners who attend literacy and numeracy classes make good progress and many of them achieve national qualifications. Satisfactory language support is provided where necessary in some classroom and teaching assistant classes and learners benefit from this. In bookkeeping classes, language support is inadequate. One learner in each of two classes observed had language support needs which were not being met. Both learners struggled to understand accounting terminology as well as more common financial terms, such as direct debit. Both learners have taken unit examinations, which they have failed, although one learner passed one unit after taking the examination again. Diagnosis and support for learners with dyslexia

are good.

90. Pre-course information, advice and guidance are insufficient. This was not recognised in the self-assessment report. Centre administrators carry out recruitment and enrolment. They provide basic advice using the course information sheets but have no specialist knowledge of courses. Potential learners cannot get more detailed course information or more professional advice and guidance at some centres, where tutors are not involved in the recruitment process. Centre managers and tutors identify that some learners are not ready for the courses for which they enrol. Significant numbers leave their programmes during the very early weeks. Centre staff contact learners to find out their reasons for leaving. Some learners have said that the class was not what they expected, or was the wrong level for them, or that they had language difficulties. Some of the learners interviewed were surprised by the amount of written work involved in the course. Some learners on classroom assistant courses had not expected to arrange their own school placement, which is a requirement of the course. One centre has recently piloted a two-week induction before the classroom assistants courses, at which learners are given more detailed information, advice and guidance as well as completing diagnostic tests. The pilot worked well and the centre hopes to secure funding to continue the induction.

91. On the ETP programme, workplace managers and union learning representatives provide satisfactory pre-course information advice and guidance. An information, advice and guidance adviser is also assigned to this programme.

### **Leadership and management**

92. Curriculum co-ordination is insufficient. NLEA recognises the need for a curriculum leader in this area. Centres are responsible for their own curriculum development but this has not been extended into a detailed service-wide plan for the area of learning. Internal communication between centre provision managers is satisfactory, through monthly meetings as well as more informal channels. Few level 3 courses are provided and the variety of courses is narrow. Provision managers liaise to avoid duplication of courses. Targets for courses are set by centres and approved and monitored by NLEA. No targets are set for tutors. Regular management information reports are provided for each learning centre and these are used adequately to monitor retention and achievement. NLEA provides little training for tutors in specialist areas, although tutors attend awarding body events and generic staff training is offered at the annual staff conference. Tutors have few opportunities to meet and share good practice within their specialist areas.

93. Co-ordination of the ETP programme is also insufficient. Management is fragmented and there is insufficient strategic planning of the provision. Management information is not used sufficiently to set and monitor targets. The city council does, however, give a high priority to learning. It has clear aims and objectives to target learners who have weak literacy, numeracy and language skills and areas where there are skill gaps. Partnerships with the Trades Union Congress and union representatives are strong and well established. Relationships between partners and providers are good. Communication between the ETP co-ordinator and the head of adult learning is satisfactory.

94. Quality assurance procedures and practice are satisfactory, although they vary between learning centres and providers. A variety of paperwork, such as lesson plans and course information sheets, is used and the quality is not always good. Some working groups have been set up to improve standardisation and share good practice. Assessment and

internal verification are satisfactory and meet awarding body standards, but they are not standardised across the service. Provision managers carry out satisfactory lesson observations. Actions identified through internal verification and lesson observations are not followed up sufficiently. NLEA's monitoring of partners and subcontractors is insufficient. The collection and use of feedback from learners and staff are satisfactory. Staff involvement in the self-assessment process is satisfactory. The self-assessment report is somewhat unrealistic but recognises some of the weaknesses identified during inspection. Very little formal quality assurance is applied to the ETP programme, although the informal arrangements that exist work satisfactorily.

95. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. NLEA offers staff training in equality and most learners have a good awareness of the subject. Some good initiatives to widen participation have been implemented. For example, one classroom assistant course was set up at an outreach centre for learners from minority ethnic groups, in response to local demand. Nine learners started at level 1 and seven of them progressed to level 2, which they also achieved. In partnership with a local school, an NVQ teaching course is in the final stages of development and is closely linked to the local Jewish Ladies Academy, from where most of the initial learners will be recruited.

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

<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b>Using IT</b> Adult and community learning	1,005	3

96. Most ICT courses begin in September and end in July, with learners attending for two, two-and-a-half or three hours a week. Some shorter, 10-hour, courses last for five weeks. Although most learners begin in September, they can usually join a course at any time of the year if there are spaces available. Courses include word processing, using spreadsheets, databases and business presentations, e-mailing and surfing the internet. Over 41 per cent of courses lead to a nationally recognised qualification.

97. There are currently 1,005 learners in this area of learning, enrolled on 536 courses, of which 386 are daytime courses. Approximately 37 per cent of learners are men. Seven per cent of learners are aged 25 and under and 45 per cent are aged 55 and over. Approximately 10 per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups and approximately 9 per cent of learners have a disability.

98. Courses are held in 41 venues throughout the city. These include schools, community centres and libraries. Of the 201 courses running at the time of inspection, 58 are up to 20 hours long, 68 are between 21 and 60 hours and 65 are over 60 hours. There are 71 tutors. ICT courses are advertised in local newspapers, local learning centres and libraries, through learners' personal recommendations and by NLEA sending course information to residents. The individual prospectuses of centres also advertise the courses.

*Strengths*

- good development of practical skills
- good strategies for widening participation
- good range of courses

*Weaknesses*

- some unsatisfactory teaching resources
- insufficient development of learners' literacy, numeracy or language skills
- insufficient curriculum management

**Achievement and standards**

99. Overall, retention and achievement rates are satisfactory. In 2002-03 and 2003-04, approximately 80 per cent of learners were retained. The statistics show that learners aged 16 to 18 were the most difficult to retain, with annual retention rates for the two years of just over 60 per cent. In 2002-03, success rates for CLAIT, CLAIT Plus and ECDL were 82 per cent, 50 per cent and 52 per cent respectively. These are higher than the achievements for the same qualifications in 2003-04, which were 36 per cent, 10 per cent and 50 per cent. The achievement statistics are incomplete because they do not include learners who have been accredited with individual units.

100. Learners produce good work in a range of computer applications. Many learners are relatively new to computing and they are proud of the skills they acquire and the work they produce. For instance, during the first lesson in a basic word processing course, learners produced text showing different styles and sizes of print. They also underlined and bolded text, inserted and centred headings, varied the width of margins and changed the line spacing. Most tutors keep detailed records of learners' progress, showing what they have completed and what they still need to do to complete the award that they are working towards.

### **The quality of provision**

101. Learners develop good practical computer skills. They are given as much time as possible to practise these skills by working through a series of graded practical exercises. Tutors provide good individual coaching and helpful advice to individuals or to small groups. Learners appreciate tutors' patience, encouragement and guidance. Many learners attribute their good skill development and increased confidence to the secure learning environments in which they work. Learners use their new skills in many ways. These include voluntary administrative work, e-mailing relatives, helping children with their homework and improving their own career prospects. All the teaching observed was at least satisfactory, with 37 per cent being good. Some tutors provide good demonstrations of how to carry out particular functions, although a few demonstrations lack precision and are unhelpful to learners.

102. Strategies for widening participation are good. The courses attract a wide range of learners, including many older learners. Twenty-two per cent of learners are aged over 65. Many learners like to learn with other older learners and said that they would have been less comfortable learning with younger people, many of whom are very familiar with computers. Specific provision is available for defined groups of learners. For instance, there are word and text processing classes for learners with visual impairments. The computers have large display screens, software that will enlarge and describe what is on the screens and keyboards that have been specially adapted. Good community provision is available for black and minority ethnic learners. When necessary, support tutors act as interpreters. Most centres are very welcoming and close to learners' homes. Some offer good family learning opportunities and many courses run in schools for the benefit of people who have children or grandchildren in the school.

103. There is a good range of ICT courses to meet the needs and interests of learners. They include popular applications such as word processing, spreadsheets, databases, desktop publishing and digital photography. Progression routes are very good, with courses ranging from entry level to intermediate and advanced levels. Progression through levels and across provision is good. The self-assessment report identifies the well thought-out curriculum and clear progression routes for learners as a strength. Most learners have very good opportunities to work towards recognised qualifications, such as CLAIT and ECDL. Learners' opinions about new courses are actively sought. Publicity materials accurately describe the content of courses and inform learners when and where they are held.

104. Some learning resources are unsatisfactory. Insufficient attention is given to providing all learners with healthy and safe working environments. Some of the computing workshops are too small or noisy, or inappropriately heated and ventilated. In some rooms,

insufficient attention has been given to the lighting. In one learning environment, for example, the computers were placed directly in front of very large windows, which induced eye strain. Many work areas are too small, with inadequate space for books and handouts. Some of the computers and operating programs are old and a few are not linked to a network. As identified in the self-assessment report, there are insufficient e-learning resources. Heavy reliance is placed on handouts, some of which are poorly reproduced. On the other hand, some computing workshops provide good working conditions and some have appropriately designed work areas and computer-based projection facilities. Some tutors have produced very good instructional books that introduce learners to the basics of computing or prepare them for external accreditation. For instance, in one centre, a tutor has produced seven instructional manuals that are co-ordinated with seven modules of an external awarding body. Most teaching staff are appropriately qualified and experienced.

105. Learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills are insufficiently developed. Learners who have difficulties with spelling and punctuation are not given enough support. Many centres do not formally assess learners' language, literacy and numeracy skills and diagnose their difficulties. Too little attention is given to informal literacy tuition as part of the ICT training. There are insufficient practice materials for simultaneously developing learners' ICT skills and their literacy, numeracy and language competences. ICT tutors have had insufficient training to help them assess and develop these competences. There are too few literacy, numeracy and language support workers.

### **Leadership and management**

106. NLEA is insufficiently involved in managing the ICT provision across the service. The self-assessment report identifies poorly co-ordinated strategic planning and development of physical resources as a weakness. There is no ICT manager to lead this curriculum area and to liaise with the ICT staff employed by NLEA and the subcontractors. As recognised in the self-assessment report, there is no staff appraisal system. There is insufficient staff development. Although the quality of teaching and learning is monitored in most centres, NLEA does not check the rigour and accuracy of the observations and take action to improve the quality of teaching, learning and attainment. There is insufficient sharing of good practice across the service. Although the grading in the self-assessment report matched that of inspectors, the strengths and weaknesses were not accurately identified.



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

<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Hospitality and catering</i></b> Adult and community learning	132	3
<b><i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i></b> Adult and community learning	962	3

107. The hospitality, sports and leisure courses on offer include yoga, tai chi, Pilates, swimming, bridge, hill walking, cake-decorating and Chinese or Indian cookery. There are currently 310 courses, of which 60 are not accredited. Some of these courses are targeted at specific groups such as women, people aged over 50 or people with disabilities. Courses are offered at different times of the day and evening at venues throughout the city, such as schools, village halls, community centres, colleges and homes for elderly people. Most courses are run on a termly basis over 10 to 12 weeks. Sixty-eight part-time tutors currently teach up to eight hours a week, of whom 14 teach on hospitality programmes. There are currently 1,094 learners enrolled, of whom 962 are taking part in sports courses and 132 in hospitality courses. Eighty-four per cent are women and 50 per cent are aged over 50. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups is 8 per cent, and 4 per cent of learners have a disability.

*Strengths*

- good development of skills
- much good teaching

*Weaknesses*

- insufficient co-ordination of the curriculum
- insufficiently systematic quality assurance arrangements

**Achievement and standards**

108. Learners develop good skills. In a variety of sports sessions, they develop good levels of condition and fitness. The performance of exercise to music by learners, many of whom are in their 60s and 70s, is good. Movements are well timed to the rhythm and tempo of the music and participants show good co-ordination and balance. Learners in Pilates classes show good strength and muscular endurance. They hold poses for extended periods of time and show flexibility above that expected in non-exercising groups. In yoga, learners perform postures well. They show good control of breathing and the ability to control tension.

109. Learners in sports classes report that exercise has helped them considerably to alleviate injuries and minor health problems. Learners in a number of yoga, Pilates and exercise classes reported that ailments such as back and neck injuries had improved after they had taken part in the sessions.

110. In hospitality, many learners are new to cooking and are developing skills in this area for the first time. Some gain accreditation of their skills. Learners develop good skills in

using knives and dealing with small equipment as well as in a wide range of preparation and cooking methods. They work to budgets and timescales and ensure that dishes have a good nutritional content. Learners gain the confidence to experiment with more complex dishes at home. They can extend their repertoire of meals by, for example, adapting meat-based dishes to make them vegetarian. Food preparation becomes easier for many learners. Learners are knowledgeable about safe working procedures and hygiene practices in kitchens. In a sugar-craft lesson, learners produced pansies and roses to a high commercial standard after just 10 weeks. In bridge classes, bidding techniques were applied flexibly in different settings and contexts.

111. Retention and achievement rates are satisfactory. In 2003-04, the retention rate was 76 per cent and the achievement rate was 69 per cent. The current rates are 79 per cent for retention and 73 per cent for achievement.

### **The quality of provision**

112. Teaching and learning are generally good, as identified in the self-assessment report. In sport, good correction of poor techniques and detailed explanations of the link to better health are features of the best sessions. Tutors manage sessions well and routinely include strengthening, aerobic conditioning and stretching activities. They give good individual and differentiated guidance that engages and inspires learners. Learners with particular needs are often advised of alternatives before the session starts. In one session, the tutor set aside a specific area for new students. They were able to ask questions and have their performances corrected in a small, separate group. Tutors provide good demonstrations. Activities such as step sequences in exercise to music and performance of tai chi are very effectively presented. There is, however, some poor practical teaching in sport. In these sessions, tutors fail to sufficiently accommodate the individual needs and abilities of learners. The music is too loud and the tutor cannot be heard. The management of activities is unsatisfactory.

113. In hospitality, teaching is well planned and structured to make best use of the time on short courses. All learners are extremely enthusiastic about the training. Tutors help learners to build their confidence and develop communication skills and teamwork. They give learners useful technical information about health and safety, such as the reasons for blanching vegetables and the use of wires in flowers. Lessons are motivational, fun, and very sociable. Many learners progress to other courses. Tutors use their industry experience to clarify points and create interest. Demonstrations in cooking and sugarcraft are good, with clear explanations, advice and guidance. Learners receive good individual support. Assessment is generally satisfactory, with some good use made of a credit-based awards structure to standardise practise.

114. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Learning materials are sufficient and rooms are adequate. Staff are occupationally and vocationally competent, although some have not had the relevant specialist training to work with groups such as over 50s. The systems for monitoring progress and achievement are adequate. Arrangements for literacy and numeracy support, where it is required, are satisfactory. In multi-lingual pool-based exercise classes, language support is inadequate.

### **Leadership and management**

115. The co-ordination of curriculum planning and development is inadequate. The

provision lacks coherence across the city. The mechanism for strategic development of the curriculum is unclear. Individual centres plan their own courses, taking into account their area priorities and prospective learners' needs, but there is no overall area of learning planning. There is no curriculum leader for this area of learning, although NLEA is in the process of appointing one.

116. A programme of professional development is available to tutors, but there are currently no authority-led opportunities for staff to come together to share ideas, resources and best practice.

117. Quality assurance arrangements are insufficiently systematic. The teaching observation system is not standardised and some staff have not been observed teaching. Observation does not routinely result in staff development. Subject specialists do not always carry out observations. Weaknesses in teaching identified by NLEA have not been dealt with adequately. Some tutors do not produce learning session plans or schemes of work, while others produce them to a good standard. Good practice is not routinely shared. Some tutors use their own paperwork for teaching, planning and health assessment. There is no system for checking the quality of these important documents. The health of learners is sometimes not assessed effectively because assessments are not completed until the first session. There is little standardisation of the three centres that offer accreditation.

**Hairdressing & beauty therapy****Grade 3**

<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>Hairdressing</i></b> Adult and community learning	14	3
<b><i>Beauty therapy</i></b> Adult and community learning	58	3

118. NLEA provides beauty, holistic therapy and hairdressing courses in and around Newcastle. Beauty and holistic therapy courses make up 3 per cent of NLEA's total provision. Learners attend on a part-time day and evening basis. There were 565 enrolments in 2003-04. Currently there are 72 learners on beauty therapy, make-up, nail extension, aromatherapy, reflexology, Indian head massage, and hairdressing courses. Eighty-nine per cent of courses are accredited. Thirteen learners are men and 19 are from minority ethnic groups. Five per cent of all learners have a disability. Seventy-one per cent of learners are aged over 25. NLEA uses eight sites, including community venues, to deliver its courses. There are 17 vocationally qualified tutors and a vacant post for a curriculum leader.

*Strengths*

- very good accommodation at two centres

*Weaknesses*

- insufficient co-ordination of the curriculum

**Achievement and standards**

119. Retention and achievement rates are satisfactory overall. The retention rate for all courses was 64 per cent in 2002-03, 70 per cent in 2003-04 and 69 per cent in 2004-05. Those learners that are not retained generally leave in the first few weeks. Achievement rates in 2004-05 stand at 69 per cent. Most current learners are making satisfactory progress and are on target to achieve within their planned completion date.

120. Learners' work is satisfactory, and some of it is good. It is only the second week of most courses and learners are just beginning to develop practical skills. For example, in one practical session on massage, learners showed satisfactory competence by using appropriate techniques when completing body massage treatments. They showed satisfactory understanding of the sequence of movements and the pressure required to complete the treatment. Other learners showed good practical skills when working with long hair. They completed currently fashionable 'hair up' styles to a good standard. At the time of the inspection, learners had not yet produced portfolios or written work.

**The quality of provision**

121. The accommodation at two learning centres is particularly good. One centre has a purpose-built hairdressing salon and a beauty salon with the latest modern equipment. This allows a wide range of hair and beauty treatments to take place. Another centre has a purpose-built beauty salon with very good equipment. The accommodation at other

centres is satisfactory. Most rooms are modern and multi-purpose. They have good lighting for hair and beauty treatments and are appropriate for the size of groups. One session was held in an unsuitable room but NLEA has recognised this and is changing it for the next session.

122. Assessment and verification are satisfactory and meet the awarding body's criteria. Target-setting and the monitoring of learners' progress are satisfactory. Satisfactory planning of internal verification and moderation takes place.

123. NLEA provides a range of courses to meet the local community's needs. Learners can progress from entry level to level 2. Most of the learners observed intended to move to a higher level. Sessions are planned to offer flexibility in attendance. There are insufficient courses to attract male learners and NLEA has no strategy to remedy this.

124. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Learners benefit from crèches in daytime centres. Learners also receive good support from their tutors. Additional support is provided through effective individual coaching. Support for learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills development is satisfactory. Learners' needs are identified by individual tutors. This process is not co-ordinated centrally. Most activities are practical and do not require writing skills. Learners are aware of how to ask for support if they need it.

125. Teaching and learning overall are satisfactory. 33 per cent of sessions were judged to be good or better and the rest were satisfactory. The teaching profile has significantly more satisfactory sessions than usually seen in this area of learning, but fewer good or better. There are insufficient methods to engage learners in some lessons. Learners are not always sufficiently challenged. Tutors use flip charts and white boards but do not use a sufficient variety of teaching aids to enhance learning. In the better sessions, tutors use good demonstrations and questioning techniques. They encourage learners to take an active part in the learning process, which many of them do. Tutors have a good rapport with learners, which helps to develop a productive learning environment in which learners feel supported.

### **Leadership and management**

126. There is no curriculum leader in post and insufficient central co-ordination or quality assurance of learning. For example, systems for sterilising equipment for certain treatments are left to individual tutors. There is no vocational expert to advise on best practice and monitor the system. There is not enough centralised contingency planning for cover to ensure that sessions take place when staff are absent. The quality assurance that takes place at individual centres is satisfactory. Staff meetings are satisfactory. Staff are enthusiastic and have a strong sense of purpose. They take part in continual professional development at their own learning centre, but this is not co-ordinated centrally. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory, but there are not enough courses to attract male learners. Staff have been observed and graded on their teaching. The teaching observation system is comprehensive and identifies agreed actions for improvement. The grades awarded during this observation process are generally higher than those given during the inspection. The self-assessment report is generally accurate, but over-generous on the grade. Inspectors found some weaknesses not identified by NLEA.

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

<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b>Early years</b> Adult and community learning	400	2
<b>Counselling</b> Adult and community learning	60	2

127. Currently, 460 learners are enrolled on health, social care and public services programmes. NLEA works with several partners and training providers under franchise agreements to provide training and assessment. The biggest franchise holder is Interactive Development Ltd. Literacy and numeracy support is given by NLEA's own skills for life service. Courses are taught in 32 venues including leisure centres, training providers' premises, adult education centres, community colleges, and schools across the city and surrounding areas. Courses range from entry level to level 3. The length of courses varies from half a day to 36 weeks. About 24 per cent of courses are accredited. They include those in counselling, early years, a learning disabilities award and drug awareness. Examples of non-accredited courses are those in confidence building and first aid. Courses run during the daytime and evening to suit learners' demand.

*Strengths*

- good achievement of skills
- good resources
- good initiatives to widen participation

*Weaknesses*

- insufficient challenge for some learners
- insufficient sharing of good practice

**Achievement and standards**

128. Learners develop good vocational and personal skills. Learners in early years are very knowledgeable about children's developmental needs and talk confidently about them. The standard of work in portfolios is good. Learners following learning disability awards demonstrate a good understanding of relevant topics. Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well integrated with the groups. Their confidence and self-esteem is developed particularly well. Their oral skills show good improvement. They use initiative in classes and work well with more able learners. In ante-natal yoga sessions, learners develop good flexibility and learn relaxation techniques. Older learners with visual impairment gain greatly in confidence and learn how to manage stress through yoga. They value these skills and talk confidently about how important these skills are to them. In the past year, 85 per cent of learners who took literacy or numeracy courses at levels 1 and 2 as part of an introduction to an NVQ in care achieved the qualification. On training for work courses, such as those in moving and handling and the management of epilepsy, there is 100 per cent achievement. On longer counselling courses, achievement rates range from 61 per cent, which is satisfactory, to 100 per cent over the past two years.

129. Retention rates are satisfactory on most courses over the past two years. The retention rate on most one- to four-day courses is 100 per cent. On counselling courses it ranges from 50 to 100 per cent, with better retention on the lower-level courses. Retention rates, at 46 per cent, are poor on confidence-building courses.

### **The quality of provision**

130. Resources are good. Learning centres are bright and welcoming and rooms are good for the purpose for which they are used. For example, a yoga room is bright and spacious and the mats are of good quality. A room used for confidence-building is comfortable and laid out well. Plenty of specialist equipment of industry standard is available for teaching first aid and moving and handling. Hoists are of good quality, as are the first-aid materials. Teaching equipment is good and all centres have smart boards which tutors routinely use. Books and handouts are of good quality. Learners have ready access to computers in a resource centre used by care learners. Tutors have appropriate vocational qualifications and a good breadth of experience. Most have, or are working towards, teaching qualifications.

131. Initiatives to widen participation are good. Courses in literacy and numeracy are provided in nursery schools to help learners progress to teaching assistant qualifications. NLEA has provided similar courses for learners who work for social services. These courses are intended to prepare learners for NVQs and most learners have gone on to achieve a qualification. The yoga sessions for elderly learners with visual impairment are in great demand. Learners who have taken part in ESOL courses can join a confidence-building course. Specialist support is provided for learners on early years courses who have visual impairment. Some courses attract few learners. For example, learners on a first aid at work course were sent home because of insufficient numbers.

132. Assessment and verification procedures meet awarding body requirements. Most learners have individual learning plans and their progress is monitored satisfactorily. Learners' achievements are celebrated with displays in learning centres.

133. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Most learners are able to discuss course requirements with tutors before they start. Learners know what to expect in terms of course content but learners in some classes, such as yoga, were unaware of assessment requirements. Marketing materials are satisfactory and are free from stereotypes and discriminatory images. Learners' literacy and numeracy skills are assessed before they start a programme. Satisfactory support is available to learners who choose to take it up. Learners who have physical disabilities are given additional support during sessions. Most learners are aware of the available progression opportunities.

134. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Forty per cent of observed sessions were good or better and the rest were satisfactory. In the better sessions, planning is thorough and involves learners in a wide range of activities. Learners enjoy their work and are enthusiastic. Service users are effectively involved in sessions for the learning disabilities award framework. Planning for individual needs is evident in the better sessions and tutors adapt activities where necessary. For instance in a yoga class for older people the tutor adapted floor exercises for use with chairs. Tutors use appropriate methods for dealing with different learners. For example, in the first session of a confidence-building course for 12 learners of mixed ages and experience the tutor was particularly welcoming and used humour to good effect to relax the group.

135. In some of the poorer sessions, learners are insufficiently challenged. The activities rely too much on the tutor to lead them and learners' involvement is not always encouraged. Tutors do not always give sufficiently clear direction about note-taking or their expectations of learners. Questioning is sometimes too general and does not sufficiently challenge learners' understanding.

### **Leadership and management**

136. There is insufficient sharing of good practice. Quality assurance systems differ between centres. Although they are very good in some centres, there is no overall standardisation of systems. Quality improvement measures, such as observations of teaching and learning, are not standardised, although all staff are included in at least one system. Good practice in teaching, such as thorough lesson planning, fully involving learners in activities and making the most of resources, is not shared. Support and performance appraisal for part-time tutors are inconsistent. Managers of individual learning centres are good at managing and supporting their staff.

137. The self-assessment report is satisfactory. It is over-descriptive in parts but identifies the main weaknesses in the area of learning. Not all staff were consulted in the compilation of the report, although their views were considered through centre manager meetings.

138. Equality of opportunity is taken into account appropriately. Strategies to widen participation are good. Learners with diverse needs are supported well. Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities are well integrated with mainstream provision. A range of adaptive equipment is in use by learners. Staff are trained satisfactorily in equality and diversity.



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

<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b>Arts</b> Adult and community learning	264	2
<b>Crafts</b> Adult and community learning	368	2
<b>Dance</b> Adult and community learning	348	2
<b>Music</b> Adult and community learning	149	2
<b>Media and technology</b> Adult and community learning	154	2

139. Visual and performing arts and media is the largest area of learning offered by NLEA. At the time of the inspection there was a total of 1,283 learners. There are 45 art courses, 83 craft, 29 media, 18 music and 25 dance courses, making a total of 200. Just over half the provision is in art and craft. This includes courses in watercolour, oil painting, mixed media, life drawing, stained glass, paper crafts, embroidery, needlecraft, photography and digital imaging. There is a small amount of dance and music provision, including courses in ballroom dancing, salsa, belly-dancing, electronic keyboards, community singing, line-dancing and guitar. Seventy-five per cent of the learners are women, 6 per cent have a disability and 5.5 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. Three per cent are aged under 20 and 29 per cent are over 60 years old. There are 75 tutors. Venues include schools, libraries, community colleges and community centres. Courses are from five weeks to 30 weeks in length and take place during the day and in the evenings.

*Strengths*

- good standard of learners' work
- good teaching and learning
- good resources in larger centres

*Weaknesses*

- insufficient co-ordination and leadership of curriculum

**Achievement and standards**

140. Learners' work is of a good standard. In craft sessions, learners develop diverse skills and work on complex tasks. For example, learners were completing ambitious and creative stained glass door panels and windows. In media, learners produce high-quality images using traditional photographic processes and digital imaging. This work is particularly strong because it encourages the development of a creative process rather than simply an end product. Learners make good use of portfolios to record their new skills and techniques. Art sketchbooks are used particularly well to show the extensive progress that learners have made. Learners in music and dance show good performance skills, demonstrating a wide range of techniques and styles. For example, a community concert that celebrated world music was varied and vibrant. It attracted a large audience from across the city.

141. Retention and achievement rates are satisfactory. In 2004-05, retention rates on accredited courses, which make up 80 per cent of the provision, were between 72 and 79 per cent. On non-accredited courses, the retention rate ranged from 66 per cent in dance to 93 per cent in art. Achievement rates on accredited courses ranged from 86 per cent in dance to 98 per cent in media. Attendance and punctuality are good in most classes.

### **The quality of provision**

142. Teaching and learning are good. 68 per cent of sessions were judged to be good or better, with 26 per cent satisfactory and 6 per cent inadequate. Sessions are planned well to take account of learners' abilities and to develop their skills in a logical sequence. Tutors work very effectively to build learners' practical skills. They set individual, challenging tasks. Learners in a soft tailoring group made jackets and coats of professional quality. Tutors give good demonstrations of techniques that inspire learners to extend their skills. There is some good use of learning aids. In a media class, for example, the tutor devised a simple visual aid to illustrate a highly complex process. Learners are very keen to learn and they support each others' learning. They contribute positively to the group, ask questions and share information. Many learners work at home to complete and further their work. They are proud that they make things for their families and some sell their work professionally. In music classes, tutors encourage learners to extend their performance techniques as they gain confidence. The teaching of practical skills is mixed effectively with that of theory and knowledge. A rehearsal for a community singing performance was particularly focused and dynamic.

143. The larger learning centres have good resources and some good specialist facilities, especially those centres that are based in schools. There are well-equipped photographic and digital imaging suites for media, and one centre has specialist cutting surfaces for stained glass. Dance classes are held in spacious studios or halls with good floors. Music resources include percussion instruments and a wide range of electronic keyboards. Rooms are accessible and well lit, with good displays of work to stimulate learners. In one smaller centre the craft tutor displays learners' greetings cards to celebrate their achievement. In one dressmaking class, learners, some of whom are elderly, had to set up their own sewing machines before they started. Tutors are well qualified in their specialist fields and many have professional experience which they share well with learners.

144. NLEA has developed a wide and varied range of courses in art, craft and media in response to learners' needs. Music and dance provision is more limited, making up just over a third of the courses. Sessions are offered at different times to suit learners' needs. Enrichment derives mainly from activities outside the courses, such as groups of friends visiting exhibitions or joining other groups. An exception to this is the additional rehearsal and performance work at one learning centre. Support for learners' literacy, numeracy and language development is satisfactory. Initial assessment and monitoring of learners' progress are satisfactory.

### **Leadership and management**

145. The curriculum is insufficiently co-ordinated. Courses are not systematically planned across NLEA, although centre managers have met to begin some planning together. There are insufficient progression opportunities to levels 2 and 3. Observations of teaching and learning identify areas for improvement but actions to address them are sometimes slow.

Management at centre level is effective and most learners use the main centres. The larger centres, in particular, have many procedures to assure quality. At one centre, for example, a very good handbook outlines tutors' responsibilities and sets them against the centre's vision for its learners. Three of the larger centres are working together to improve provision. They have developed an externally validated programme that forms a useful introduction to accredited provision for learners. Credit-based accreditation is used well to maintain standards and ensure that learners' work across courses is of a similar standard.

146. Equality of opportunity is managed satisfactorily. Some initiatives in the curriculum reflect the needs of certain sections at the local community, for example, Asian dressmaking courses. There is, however, insufficient focus on cultural diversity in the curriculum.

147. The self-assessment report was generally accurate in its description of the strengths in this area. Although the weakness in curriculum management was not identified in the report, NLEA is aware of the problem and is taking some action in this area.

**Humanities****Grade 3**

<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b><i>History and genealogy</i></b> Adult and community learning	54	3
<b><i>Sociology and psychology</i></b> Adult and community learning	299	3

148. Humanities courses provided by NLEA include GCSE and GCE courses as well as access to higher education courses accredited by a national awarding body. In addition, level 1 courses, mainly to do with local history and genealogy, are offered. Most of the accredited provision is given in three centres. The non-accredited, community-oriented courses are held in these centres as well as in a range of community and library venues across the city. One-year courses at GCSE and GCE A level in sociology, law and psychology are run, as well as AS level philosophy. Units in psychology, sociology and social welfare form part of the access to higher education provision. Until August 2004, access courses were managed by Newcastle College under franchise but are now managed directly by NLEA. There were 353 learners on humanities courses at the time of the inspection, almost all of whom were part-time learners. Some GCE AS level courses include pupils from local high schools, who are extending the range of subjects they are taking.

*Strengths*

- good development of skills and knowledge by many learners
- good teaching and learning
- good resources to support learning

*Weaknesses*

- low retention rates on many courses
- insufficient co-ordination of the curriculum

**Achievement and standards**

149. Learners develop a good range of skills and knowledge. Learners contribute well to sessions, using recently acquired knowledge to make valuable and often well-articulated comments. In access psychology lessons dealing with phobias, several learners clearly described their fears of flying, heights and various small creatures, and their attempts to overcome these fears. Learners' presentations to their groups are given with flair and expertise, with learners fielding questions from tutors and peers with confidence. Many learners respond to written assignments with enthusiasm and success, researching thoroughly and showing increasing skills in organising and presenting their ideas. Many learners, particularly those on access to higher education courses, make considerable progress in developing broader skills. Some learners emphasised that they were reading broadsheet newspapers for the first time and understanding key aspects of the current general election campaign. Many have developed skills in using computers and the internet.

150. Retention rates are low on many courses. Across the access courses, 29 per cent of

those who enrolled failed to complete in 2004. NLEA did not manage the provision at that time. It has plans to remedy this weakness now that it directly manages the courses. Retention rates on GCE A, AS and GCSE level courses are low. They have averaged 65 per cent over the past two years. Many of these learners were 16 to 18 year-olds who left education altogether. Some of the adult learners who left early found that the pressures of family life meant they were unable to continue their courses.

### **The quality of provision**

151. Teaching and learning are good. Most tutors plan their lessons carefully to ensure that learning is varied and interesting, and that learners have good opportunities to contribute ideas and information. In a GCSE psychology sessions, the male tutor and the learners, who were all women, debated in a very lively fashion their perceptions of typical gender roles and behaviour. In many sessions, good learning resources are used well. There are many well-produced study guides and worksheets to help learners study in a structured and informed manner. Good use is made of ICT. In an access class on social welfare the tutor used slides and an interactive board very effectively to present crucial information about the scale of the need for care of elderly people in our society. In these and in many other sessions, tutors and learners clearly worked well together. In a few sessions, tutors did not plan so successfully. Learning was less stimulating and relied too heavily on tutors talking and learners listening.

152. Resources to support learning are good. Most accommodation is good. At the main sites, classrooms are well furnished and well equipped, often with interactive whiteboards. The central public library contains excellent resources for those studying local history. At another centre adult learners share a comprehensive sixth form library and resources centre, which is open and staffed during evenings. At two other centres the libraries are whole school libraries, and less suited to adult learners' needs in the range of resources and the times at which they are available. Tutors are knowledgeable about their subjects and prepare resources that are stimulating and easily understood. They support learners well and take time to give specific support to individual learners. All learners are assessed for literacy and numeracy needs. Additional support sessions are arranged to enable learners to get the help they need.

153. Assessment is satisfactory. On the level 1 and 3 courses accredited by a national awarding body, what is being assessed and how this is done are carefully defined. Learners receive good written feedback on most of their work, but what they need to do to improve the standard of work is not always clearly stated. Learners' aims are expressed vaguely in their individual learning plans, and it is difficult to measure progress towards their goals. Learners value the considerable help they receive from their tutors. Many maintain regular e-mail contact with learners between sessions to help with preparing and writing assignments. Learners on access courses appreciate the help they get from tutors in selecting and applying for degree courses. Some course information gives potential learners insufficient information about the demands of study.

### **Leadership and management**

154. Co-ordination and management of the curriculum are insufficiently developed, although management at individual centres, and of individual courses, is satisfactory. Most schemes of work and lesson plans are good, for example. Learners of all ages, backgrounds and previous experience are welcomed and integrated fully in learning. There is insufficient

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co-ordination of planning and review processes across the centres. Some courses operate with very small numbers of learners when similar courses are running in nearby locations. There is no overall planning mechanism to recruit across the curriculum and avoid duplication and small group sizes. Achievement and retention data is not analysed sufficiently to reveal trends in specific areas of the curriculum. The self-assessment report for humanities states very little about achievement or teaching and learning. A detailed analysis of teaching and learning in the 30 sessions observed in the past year is used wholly to identify the support needs of individual tutors, which are often met effectively. For example, some less experienced tutors receive advice from others, who have expertise in marking work to the approved standard and are familiar with the examination requirements of syllabuses.

155. Equality of opportunity is promoted satisfactorily. In some sessions there is good exploration of wider equality and diversity topics and learners show a good grasp of the issues. They can apply them to their own lives. Learning materials are suited to the needs of adult learners. Appropriate measures are taken to ensure that they fully represent the diversity of learners on courses.

**English, languages & communications****Grade 3**

<b>Contributory areas:</b>	<b>Number of learners</b>	<b>Contributory grade</b>
<b>English</b> Adult and community learning	136	3
<b>Languages</b> Adult and community learning	1,025	3
<b>Translating and interpreting</b> Adult and community learning	136	3

156. NLEA offers 354 courses in English, languages and communications across 18 venues, mainly local schools. This represents 13.5 per cent of NLEA's total provision. Thirty per cent of the provision takes place during the day. Seventeen modern foreign languages are offered, many from beginners through to advanced levels, in addition to some courses in English, British Sign Language and lip reading. Almost two-thirds of the provision is in Spanish, French and Italian. At the time of inspection there were 1,297 learners enrolled. Of these, 37 per cent are men and 4.4 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. Almost 5 per cent of learners disclosed a disability or learning difficulty. There are 73 part-time tutors.

*Strengths*

- very good pass rates on most courses
- good range of courses
- good management at the main centre

*Weaknesses*

- insufficient individual target-setting
- inadequate use of technology to enhance learning
- insufficient service-wide strategy for improvement of the provision

**Achievement and standards**

157. Attainment and achievement rates on most courses are very good. Pass rates on accredited courses are good, averaging over 90 per cent. Many level 1 beginners courses have achievement levels of 100 per cent. Attainment in the best sessions is above what is expected. In the best language sessions, learners are fluent. Standards of written work are high on all courses. Large numbers of learners progress to higher level courses and to new areas of learning.

**The quality of provision**

158. A good range of accredited courses is offered. NLEA has responded well to community demand for courses. Minority language courses are organised even when it is difficult to secure specialist tutors. The language courses are offered at a good variety of levels. Internal progression routes for most languages are good, with the most popular being offered at beginners through to advanced conversation. There is a variety of English courses and levels, with creative writing offered from beginners to advanced. Enrichment

activities are good, particularly on some Spanish courses, where learners visit the cinema together to watch Spanish films and visit Spanish restaurants.

159. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Thirty-three per cent of teaching and learning sessions were judged to be good or better, with 57 per cent satisfactory. Ten per cent were unsatisfactory. The profile has less good or better sessions than is usually seen in this area of learning and a greater number of satisfactory sessions. Most courses and sessions are thoroughly planned. In some sessions the target language is used well and learners quickly learn to understand instructions and conversations. Activities are varied and paced well. In the best sessions, challenging tasks such as discussions on current affairs are interspersed with more fun activities such as bingo. There is, however, inadequate development of speaking skills in some sessions, where learners are not given enough time to practise the foreign language. In one session, learners in their second week of a beginners course were subjected to a lengthy and irrelevant paragraph of writing and a complex and inappropriate explanation of grammar. Some learners have to spend time on activities such as translation and grammar, which do not meet their purpose in learning. There is too much emphasis on written language, when learners have come mainly to learn speaking skills. In creative writing sessions, learners are given a wide variety of material to work with and are encouraged to experiment with different genres and forms. They produce some good work, much of which is published in the local press and in an anthology published by NLEA.

160. Guidance and support for learners are adequate. Promotional material and pre-course information are clear and informative and learners are signposted to specialist information, advice and guidance services where applicable. Initial assessment of learners' ability is satisfactory overall, although most learners are not interviewed by subject specialists to determine an appropriate level of study before joining a course. There is appropriate support for learners' individual needs, including literacy and numeracy support. In one session, a learner who had transferred from a beginners to an improvers course because of a course closure was given individual help to catch up. Another advanced learner in the same group was given support to extend his knowledge.

161. There is insufficient individual target-setting in modern foreign languages. Individual learning plans are no more than records of prior experience. Learners work towards group objectives and have no individual targets outlined. They have no negotiated targets and no recorded reviews of their own progress. On one English course, the tutor sets differentiated targets and tasks for individuals, the achievement of which is recorded at every session.

162. Technology is used insufficiently to enhance learning. Some equipment is unsuitable or not working. In other cases, equipment is available but tutors are not trained sufficiently in its use. Some learning centres do not have enough equipment. Some school classroom equipment cannot be accessed by tutors. Other equipment is not suited to its purpose, for example, cassette recorders without revolution counters to allow repetition of phrases in listening exercises. There are very few computer-based teaching materials and most tutors have little awareness of new developments in the use of technology for language teaching.

### **Leadership and management**

163. Provision is managed well at the largest learning centre which accommodates around half of the learners in this area. Teaching resources are well managed. One member of the teaching staff has responsibility for resourcing the department and recommending and



trailing new teaching materials. Several rooms are set aside for adult learning. Tutors at this centre are given good support by managers, who are on site whenever courses are run. Staff development opportunities are promoted well. A variety of curriculum-specific presentations and opportunities for networking is offered. These opportunities are open to all NLEA's staff. The other learning centres manage their own provision satisfactorily.

164. The strategy to improve the provision across the service is insufficient. Good practice is seldom shared and there is very little sharing of resources between centres. There is little awareness of national and local priorities for language teaching and little evidence of service-wide initiatives for quality improvement. The monitoring of teaching and learning is inconsistent in approach. Observers have not had specialist training in the observation of teaching and learning languages. Targets for observing teaching and learning are not always met.

165. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. A good range of languages is on offer, some of which represent minority languages. Courses are held across the city, to attract learners from many of the deprived areas of the city. Promotional literature has adequate representation of learners from black or minority ethnic communities. Information is available in Braille and in community languages.

166. The self-assessment report is satisfactory. It is over-descriptive in places and does not fully identify all the strengths and weaknesses found at inspection, but it does recognise the main problems in the area of learning. Some actions to remedy the weaknesses are already taking place, with more joint meeting between centre managers.

## Foundation programmes

## Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>ESOL</b> Adult and community learning	996	<b>2</b> 2
<b>Literacy and numeracy</b> Adult and community learning Employer training pilot	809 12	<b>1</b> 1 1
<b>Independent living and leisure skills</b> Adult and community learning	295	<b>2</b> 2

167. ESOL courses are offered at adult education centres and at a range of community venues in the east and west of Newcastle . NLEA delivers 63 ESOL courses to 996 learners at 20 locations. Sixty-eight per cent of learners are women. Almost 4 per cent of learners are of Chinese origin and 28 per cent are from Asian backgrounds.

168. Courses run four days a week at main sites and two days week in the community. Learners can choose to study for between two to 12 hours a week during the day or evenings. They can also attend open learning courses. Courses are organised on a termly basis, with a range of levels from pre-entry to level 1. An assistant manager, who is supported by the head of adult learning and the quality manager, is temporarily leading the ESOL team. There are 24 permanent tutors, of whom six are fractional workers. Fifteen volunteers provide support to learners. An outreach worker is responsible for identifying learning needs across the city.

169. There are 821 learners on literacy and numeracy courses at three main centres and 31 other locations throughout Newcastle. This includes 12 from an ETP programme who are from NLEA's own Neighbourhood Services, a department of the council, who are released on block release for one week at a time to attend venues linked to their workplaces. Accreditation is available to all literacy and numeracy learners, from entry level through to level 2. Sessions are held at various times of the day. All learners complete an initial assessment and agree an individual learning plan. Literacy and numeracy is the responsibility of a basic skills adviser, who is supported by nine principal tutors and five tutors.

170. NLEA offers courses for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities through franchise arrangements with three providers. These are Interactive Development Ltd, Learning First, and Community Service Volunteers (CSV). The skills for life team of NLEA also delivers some provision. Learners have mild to severe learning difficulties and many have recurring and debilitating illness. Most courses are offered during the day but there is some evening provision. Venues include community centres, schools, day centres and libraries. Learners can gain accredited qualifications on many courses. These include units from a nationally recognised, credit-based awarding body in subjects such as construction, painting and decorating, ICT, art and lip-reading. Courses vary in length from four hours to over 250 hours, with most courses being of 60, 90 or 150 hours duration. The head of adult learning is responsible for contractual arrangements. Each provider carries out its own operational management. At the time of inspection 295 learners were enrolled, of whom

47 per cent are women and 6 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. Nine per cent of learners are under 25 years of age and 5 per cent are over 65.

## **ESOL**

## **Grade 2**

### *Strengths*

- good development of confidence and personal skills by higher-level learners
- good engagement of hard-to-reach groups
- good curriculum development

### *Weaknesses*

- insufficient planning to meet individual learning needs

## **Achievement and standards**

171. There is good development of confidence and personal skills by higher-level learners, many of whom produce good work. Higher-level learners represent around 65 per cent of the total learners. Learners work well together to support each other. Many significantly improve the language skills that they need for their everyday lives at home and work. For example, learners use their new communication skills during visits to health centres and children's schools. They gain good understanding of language structures. Many learners use their bilingual skills effectively to increase their understanding and improve their English. Learners are very motivated, take pride in their work and are deeply involved in their learning. They develop good study skills, using bilingual dictionaries and writing key words and spellings in note-books. In the open learning sessions, learners' independent study skills grow as they use audio equipment and computers. In the better sessions observed, the context was relevant and meaningful. In one session, the tutor skilfully mixed the theory of yoga and practice with English language structures. This allowed learners to use the language structures they had learnt to talk to the group about the effect of yoga on their personal well-being. Lower-level learners develop satisfactory skills overall. There is some good use made of projects based on different cultures. Work in portfolios is good. Progression from lower levels to higher levels is satisfactory.

172. Retention rates on many ESOL courses are good, at 92 per cent. There is, however, a high turnover of learners who are refugees or asylum seekers and the data provided does not reflect a true picture. Attendance was satisfactory at the time of inspection, at 78 per cent. Achievements for attendance on courses are recognised and celebrated regularly.

## **The quality of provision**

173. NLEA has been very successful in engaging hard-to-reach learners. NLEA has responded particularly well to the needs of the local community. It has good partnership arrangements with local voluntary groups and agencies. In all local communities there are examples of provision being targeted to meet the needs of a particular area. NLEA has created effective routes into learning for people traditionally excluded from learning. The outreach worker has successfully identified a wide range of learning needs across the city. Provision at the community centres and at the adult centres is good. Staff create a good and purposeful learning environment. Courses are offered across the city at a range of venues suitable for different minority communities. Courses are available at all levels of the national core curriculum. To encourage women to participate, childcare is provided and

there are women-only groups. Open learning sessions provide flexible courses for learners who are employed or do not want to learn in a group. NLEA has responded well to the needs of asylum seekers and refugees. It has produced promotional material in Russian and Czech to meet the needs of new arrivals from the European Union.

174. Accommodation is welcoming, and adequate in most settings. The outreach worker carries out risk assessments of the community centres and negotiates appropriate use of the facilities. Some learning centres and community venues do not have access for learners with restricted mobility. Overall, learning resources are satisfactory and reflect current life styles. There is, however, insufficient access to ICT equipment and videos. Some materials used in the open learning centres are outdated. For example, some stories about Asian families are from 1981.

175. Individual advice and guidance are satisfactory. An advice and guidance system is used to identify learners' needs through individual interviews, during which learners also take an initial assessment. Learners who need additional personal support are referred to appropriate agencies. Tutors informally monitor learners' health and well-being, and do this well.

176. Planning to meet individual learning needs is insufficiently developed. Reviews are carried out termly and progress is recorded on individual learning plans. The targets on some individual learning plans are generic and relate mainly to group goals or the schemes of work. The use of individual learning plans to set specific individual goals is relatively new to some tutors. Learners are not always sufficiently involved in evaluating their learning. Many tutors do record progress meaningfully and there is some good practice where learners consider in depth what they have learnt, rather than simply naming the activity. Teaching and learning overall are satisfactory, with 50 per cent of sessions being good or better and 42 per cent satisfactory. One session was unsatisfactory. Tutors who speak a range of community languages are particularly helpful for learners who have little English.

### **Leadership and management**

177. There has been good curriculum development in ESOL since October 2004. The management of change with the departure of a key member of staff has been handled effectively and with much sensitivity. NLEA has developed a comprehensive and coherent skills for life strategy. The curriculum is currently being refocused to offer accreditation at all levels and at all venues, while continuing to value the rich backgrounds and experiences that learners bring to courses.

178. NLEA recognises the need to focus on the quality of the provision to improve retention and achievement rates and staff development. The new management team has redesigned the individual learning plans and given clear guidelines to tutors on how to draw up effective plans. The setting of time-based, measurable and realistic targets is particularly emphasised. An identified member of staff is responsible for monitoring the individual learning targets. This is a new quality improvement process. Some improvements have already been seen as staff begin to change their practices.

179. The team spirit in the ESOL team is extremely good. Course planning is coherent within different levels and there is good sharing of skills and resources within the team. The links between the east and west teams and across levels are currently being developed by the management team. The team has contributed to all aspects of planning. The role of the

outreach worker has being redefined to conduct risk assessments, negotiate use of facilities and identify community needs. The outreach worker is now a key member of the team. The volunteer tutors are well qualified and many are bilingual. They are used effectively in the open learning centres.

180. The observation of teaching and learning is well established in this area of learning. Tutors are observed on a regular cycle and given clear feedback. Staff development is organised to meet the continuing needs of tutors. All learners are asked to evaluate their course at the end of the term. These evaluation are starting to be used to further improve provision.

181. Overall, equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The team's understanding of equality is good and many tutors incorporate equality considerations in their teaching. Some learners are not aware of their rights in this country. There has been no staff training in the Race Relations Amendment Act 2001, although this is planned. All staff attended the DDA training. Monitoring of learners by race, gender and disability is done by the ESOL team and centrally. Census information, together with local information collected by the city council to identify asylum seekers and refugees, is used to target groups and assist in planning. Comparisons of achievement by different groups have not yet been made.

182. The self-assessment report recognises the need to provide training in the effective use of initial assessment and in recording learners' progress. Few of the key strengths and the weakness identified by the inspection team were highlighted in the self-assessment report.

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

***Grade 1***

#### *Strengths*

- very good development of learners' skills
- excellent variety of teaching and learning
- excellent resources
- particularly effective additional support

#### *Weaknesses*

- some weak recording of targets

### **Achievement and standards**

183. Learners very quickly show significantly improved literacy and numeracy skills after they begin a course. These improved skills enrich their quality of life, give them greater confidence and make a positive impact on their everyday activities. All learners benefit from accurate and thorough initial assessment of their skills as part of a confidential interview. They are also given a nationally recognised paper-based assessment of their literacy and numeracy. In the first learning sessions, good additional assessments are made including some computer-based testing and free-writing assessments. Based on the results of these assessments, and in discussion with the learner, detailed individual learning plans are written up. Regular reviews are held, again agreed with the learner, where the achievement of targets is discussed in detail. Good use is made of national test papers to measure progress. The core curricula are used very effectively to measure progress.

184. Learners quickly gain the skills they need to learn. Examples of this include a learner achieving, on time, a target of being able to pay her own bills for the first time. Other learners have seen their employment or promotion prospects improved significantly relatively quickly. These include teaching assistants who have completed level 2 mathematics to qualify in their vocational area, a home care assistant whose better literacy skills help meet the demands of an NVQ and a long-term unemployed adult who became an assistant manager in a shop. Specialist diagnosis and tuition for learners with dyslexia are given, by specially trained staff. Learners recognise the life-changing effects this tuition has in terms of understanding their problems, finding strategies to cope and gaining skills very rapidly. One learner who had attended three separate colleges over a period of five years had made little progress. Within two months of attending the literacy and numeracy provision, following successful diagnosis of his dyslexia, his colleagues at work were commenting on his improved skills. He felt confident in his ability for the first time.

185. Literacy and numeracy provision for ETP learners very effectively develops skills that improve their performance in their personal and working lives. Progression is good. Some learners work towards higher-level certificates in literacy and numeracy and others progress to vocational or other interest programmes. Accreditation is available from entry level through to level 2. More learners are taking advantage of these opportunities each year. In the most recent full year, 2003-04, about half the learners took some form of accreditation. Achievement rates across programmes are good, at 84 per cent. Many courses have 100 per cent achievement. Retention rates, at 96 per cent, are high. The ETP programme attracted an additional 127 learners in 2003-04, who between them achieved 148 accredited outcomes. Some achieved more than one certificate. Learners' progress on non-accredited programmes is good. Tutors meet regularly to discuss target-setting and to standardise practise.

### **The quality of provision**

186. Teaching and learning are excellent. Learning sessions are dynamic and interesting. A wide range of activities and projects is well matched to the needs and interests of learners. Seventy-three per cent of lessons observed were good or better and 27 per cent were satisfactory. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. In a numeracy session on square numbers, the tutor effectively used a flip chart to demonstrate a point, then distributed beer mats for learners to place in shapes and discuss square metres. This activity was clarified by using a mixture of scientific and non-scientific calculators. Learners could calculate square numbers on paper and electronically almost immediately. Learners are motivated by using their personal interests to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. Projects from personal interest themes as diverse as history, the universe and horse riding are very well researched. Learners' presentation skills improve alongside their literacy and numeracy at appropriate levels. Sessions are well planned. Tutors use a variety of methods and good resources to stimulate and encourage learners. The pace of lessons is often challenging but always encouraging and this helps learners to make progress. Learners' individual learning styles are well catered for and tutors are adept at ensuring any barriers to learning are minimised. Learners can choose the venue that is right for them. Some learners have individual tuition.

187. NLEA provides unusual and diverse opportunities for learning through involvement in excellent project-based initiatives, which link well with important local and national events. A major project is currently underway relating to the Tall Ships visit to the Tyne in Newcastle at the end of July. Learners across the city are collaborating to produce information for visitors to the area via a website and publications. This is already attracting

external media interest. Participation in this initiative is providing very innovative and interesting opportunities for learners to gain new skills and enhance their personal development, as well as encouraging them to make a positive contribution to the community. A previous project resulted in the publication of a Geordie songbook and CD, which is now sold to the public.

188. Tutors on the ETP programme are very conscientious in ensuring that the content of sessions is relevant to learners' work. They research the needs of employers as well as learners to enable programmes to be customised. The suitability of the programmes is recognised and valued by union learning representatives, who promote them at work and encourage others to participate. Initial assessment outcomes are used well to shape individual learning plans. Well-prepared sessions are designed that relate effectively to learners' individual aims and targets on their plans. Good use is made of intensive courses for ETP learners before NVQ training.

189. NLEA's skills for life team have excellent resources. Learners benefit from plenty of high-quality written materials and workbooks at appropriate levels. Other materials are purchased and shared among staff as required. Learning is enhanced by the use of appropriate cards, puzzles and books as well as demonstrations from specialist volunteers such as a media expert who is assisting with the weblog for the Tall Ships project. Resources are easy to access for all staff and learners. Staff are encouraged to apply for the purchase of extra resources that they feel are necessary for learners' development NLEA approves most of these requests. All learning centres have access to computers. Most make full use of the internet to get interactive learning materials. A trained e-guide promotes the use of ICT to enhance learning and directs staff and learners towards making best use of basic skills websites. A hallmark of the resources is the use of locally produced materials that reflect events in the learners' immediate area. Staff are well qualified. Most have level 4 qualifications as well as a range of other certificates. They are very experienced in a wide range of literacy and numeracy contexts, such as matching literacy and numeracy to the needs of the workplace.

190. Additional support is highly effective. Tutors give sensitive support to help learners gain maximum benefit and participate fully in learning. Specialist dyslexia support is readily available in house and requests for this support are responded to very quickly. Learners are often directed to dyslexia testing and support through the involvement of skills for life tutors at other events. One employee was attending a training day about a new NVQ in her workplace when the tutor suggested she might benefit from dyslexia support to enable her to cope with the vocational NVQ. Crèche facilities are offered and taken up.

191. Learners are ably assisted with accessing benefits advice and other local services. The very strong partnership with the Literacy Trust enables individual support to be given to learners with mental health illnesses or other specific additional needs. Libraries offer good central accommodation for some sessions. Library staff have been well informed about the adult literacy and numeracy service by basic skills staff. This enables them to provide more effective support and have a greater understanding of learners' needs. NLEA's helpful links with other organisations further broadens access for some learners who might otherwise not engage in learning. The ETP programme allows learners to attend for literacy and/or numeracy during their normal working hours on a block release arrangement. Full pay is received during the learning hours. Union learning representatives from the workplace have been trained by skills for life tutors to support learners. They promote ETP very effectively.

192. There is some insufficient target-setting. Individual learning plans do not always include timescales for achievement. This is usually a weakness in recording rather than a failure to set timescales since most learners are well aware of what they are aiming for. This year, NLEA is encouraging more learners to work towards accreditation. Learners who have been attending for over a year are now taking a national test. Some learners who particularly want to achieve accreditation do not have this recorded as an aim on their individual learning plans. Tutors do not work towards individual targets. Managers set team targets, which are discussed at regular staff meetings. NLEA is on track to achieve these targets in the current year.

### **Leadership and management**

193. Management of the curriculum is satisfactory. All staff are qualified to teach literacy and numeracy and there is a suitable staff appraisal system. Quality improvement measures are satisfactory. A well-established system to observe teaching and learning exists. Staff are given appropriate feedback and their training is directly linked to the outcomes of observations. Learners evaluate their courses termly and NLEA uses this information to plan and improve provision. Examples of improvements include changing the timing of courses and using alternative venues. Training is given to meet the needs of shift workers. Staff have developed efficient networking systems to enable them to support each other. Resources and good practice are shared across the service. Staff are valued. They take responsibility for their own work and provide good care and tuition to all learners. NLEA has a clear skills for life plan that is used effectively to develop provision. Equality of opportunity is promoted satisfactorily. Learners use the crèche facilities. Materials are monitored to ensure they represent the gender and ethnicity of learners. Promotional material is well produced and has good representation of black and minority ethnic groups.

194. The self-assessment report is satisfactory. It identified most of the strengths and weaknesses in the provision, although it did not fully recognise the extent of the strengths.

### ***Independent living and leisure skills***

**Grade 2**

#### *Strengths*

- good achievement of personal learning goals
- well-planned and challenging teaching
- good range of relevant programmes
- very good use of provider expertise to enhance the learners' experience

#### *Weaknesses*

- ineffective initial assessment in one centre

### **Achievement and standards**

195. There is good achievement of personal goals by learners. Of the 400 learners who started during the current year, 195 have completed their planned programme and only 3 per cent left without achieving their learning goal. Learners achieve personal targets relating to confidence, social interaction and independent living. One group of learners are preparing to perform street theatre and have already gained the confidence to act in front



of their peers. A group of visually impaired learners can communicate through e-mail as a result of their programme. Other learners can cook simple meals with minimal supervision. Attendance rates are high. During the inspection, many sessions had 100 per cent attendance and overall the attendance rate is 75 per cent, a very high proportion in view of the health difficulties experienced by many learners.

### **The quality of provision**

196. Tutors offer challenging and stimulating activities in environments that are very suitable for the learning topic. Most sessions are good or better. Most are well planned. Sixty-three per cent of teaching and learning was good or better, 27 per cent was satisfactory and only one session was graded unsatisfactory. The pace of learning is good and learners are actively challenged. In the better sessions, learners participate well throughout the sessions and are stimulated by the topics and method of delivery. Learners' needs are accurately identified and the information is used to construct helpful individual learning plans. A characteristic of the initial assessment system is the identification of learners' capabilities so that the process is one of identifying positive attributes rather than just areas for development. One delivery partner identifies how each session will develop subject-related skills as well as helping learners to achieve their personal goals and improve their basic literacy or numeracy. Resources and supportive aids are chosen well and used routinely to assist learning. In the best sessions, the contribution of support assistants is identified on the session plan. In two sessions, learners were insufficiently involved in active learning. There was insufficient opportunity for them to reflect on and describe what they had achieved. Some learners did not always maintain or develop their speaking skills to their full potential.

197. The range of programmes is good, and relevant to the needs and interests of learners. Programmes include performing arts, arts and crafts, ICT, independent supported living, sensory awareness, workshop skills and gardening. Learners speak positively of the benefits they have gained, such as how to manage their personal finances. Learners are developing skills directly related to independent and supported living, such as health and safety awareness, food hygiene and budgeting. Many learners go on to take external qualifications which give them a further sense of purpose and achievement.

198. Providers' staff have very relevant experience of working with the client group. They can anticipate, and cater for, learners' needs. A senior manager in one provider formerly managed a care centre for people with learning disabilities and another has several years' experience in commissioning support services through local authorities. Another manager has worked with learners with moderate to profound learning difficulties. Among the tutors, experience and qualifications extend from dealing with disturbed behaviour in children to exercise for the older person. Some tutors have personal experience of disability, including loss of vision. Tutors use this wide expertise very positively. They not only understand the needs of their immediate clients but can also offer guidance on family matters and can advise on sourcing additional support. Learners can access professional support quickly and discreetly. For learners with multiple difficulties, the ability to gain the right information and support quickly has significant benefits, especially in keeping stress levels lower.

199. Information relating to courses is provided in extensive, attractively produced literature for potential learners and their carers. A very good promotional DVD featuring learners with difficulties and disabilities has been produced. The commentary is read by a learner. There are sufficient assistant tutors to ensure that appropriate support is given in

learning sessions. Risks are very carefully assessed in each training location. This is particularly important given the mobility difficulties of many learners.

200. In one learning centre, initial assessment fails to identify learners' existing skills and abilities sufficiently. About 10 per cent of learners attend this centre. Weaknesses relating to literacy and numeracy are referred to only generally. There is little indication of the level at which the learner is performing. Initial assessment does not clearly influence each learner's plan and, on occasion, tutors are unable to say what barriers to learning a learner might experience. Learners' reviews at this centre are very general. They do not focus on the achievement of specific skills or identify clearly what should be worked on to achieve a specific target.

### **Leadership and management**

201. The management of the programme is satisfactory. The head of adult learning meets regularly with all service provider managers as part of the monthly managers' meeting. In this regard, the provider managers are treated as part of the council and take part in continuous development activities, such as management development sessions and sessions on budgeting, funding, the DDA and health and safety. NLEA's recently established staff conference includes provider managers. All managers see themselves as very involved in quality improvement. One provider is researching the needs of learners with difficulties and disabilities in the Newcastle area. There is also a provider-led redesign of the existing learners' handbook to make it more suitable for the client group. All partners have a teaching and learning observation system. These systems are used well to develop tutors' practice. Although the systems are different, they are effective in maintaining quality. There are plans to further share good practice in teaching and learning through joint training. The self-assessment process involved all four partners and was evaluative. The report identified the areas of strength although they were expressed differently. The self-assessment grade was matched by the inspection team.

**Family learning****Grade 2**

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<b>Adult and community learning</b> Adult and community learning	184	2

202. At the time of the inspection, 184 learners were enrolled on 26 courses in 22 locations. Ninety-two per cent are women and 10 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. Some courses take place in libraries and community centres but most take place in schools. Family literacy language and numeracy (FLLN) courses range from two-hour workshops to 60-hour courses. Seventy-one per cent of the provision is wider family learning which covers a broad range of courses such as 'making games and language', family crafts, gardening and healthy eating as well as linking to other curriculum areas such as ICT. Some of the activities take place with the children present. Most courses take place during the day in the school term. Childcare is provided for daytime courses when required. Some courses enable learners to gain a qualification. A family learning adviser oversees the provision, working with 10 part-time staff.

*Strengths*

- significant gains in skills and confidence
- good teaching and learning
- good curriculum management

*Weaknesses*

- insufficient provision outside school hours

**Achievement and standards**

203. There are significant gains in skills and confidence in family learning. Parents help children with their school work. One parent said that she is now able to understand computers, to communicate better with her child and to help him with his learning. A head teacher spoke about the benefits for schools in terms of greater parental involvement, improved communication with the children and improved achievement. Some parents who have failed in the school environment have gained enough confidence to become advocates to recruit new learners to family learning courses. There is some good progression. Some learners progress to higher-level literacy, numeracy or computer courses. Some learners have also trained as classroom assistants and have gained employment in a school.

204. Literacy and numeracy tests have been introduced in the past year. There have been good achievement rates in these tests on longer FLLN courses. Eighty-five per cent of learners on longer courses have passed tests in the year 2004-05 and 36 per cent of learners on short FLLN courses have done so. There were good retention rates on some courses in 2004-05, for example 92 per cent on 60-hour courses. Retention rates fell on shorter courses, to 69 per cent from 86 per cent the previous year. Learners on the wider family learning courses have also achieved a variety of accreditations, such as ICT and art and craft courses accredited by a nationally recognised credit-based certificating body.

Several learners commented on how proud they are to achieve accreditation.

### **The quality of provision**

205. Teaching and learning on family learning programmes are good. Sixty-seven per cent of sessions observed were graded as good or better. There were no unsatisfactory sessions. Most teaching sessions are well prepared and include a variety of activities to involve parents. Good use is made of practical sessions to 'hook' parents into first step learning. On one arts and craft short course, parents made a model of a television and then wrote and presented a television script. Parents and children had fun making the model. In the better sessions, tutors give regular and helpful feedback to learners and reinforce learning activities through challenging tasks. In parent and child sessions, some good use is made of literacy and numeracy learning to reinforce grammatical and spelling points with both adults and children. Classroom tutors are fully involved, both in the adult and child sessions. Teaching is not patronising. Learners enjoy the sessions and are challenged by them. Many sessions are prepared jointly with teachers from the child's school and time is allocated for the adult and child's tutors to plan together. Initial assessment takes place at a beginning of a course. On longer FLLN courses, a more detailed diagnostic assessment takes place. Individual learning plans are used on all courses. Those for the longer courses contain detailed and relevant targets for the learner for each learner. They are less detailed for short courses but are generally used effectively alongside a record of work for each session.

206. Most tutors are responsive and provide good learning support, including language support where it is needed. There is a speedy response to learners' needs and most learners receive individual support within a couple of weeks. One learner who has recently lost her sight is receiving individual help. Adaptations are being made to enable them to take a national literacy test. One learner who speaks English as an additional language did not have enough individual attention and had difficulty keeping up with the rest of the group.

207. Resources are satisfactory. Most classrooms have adequate facilities for learners. Several computer courses take place in rooms that are extremely well equipped with computers and interactive whiteboards. Some classes, however, take place in cramped conditions and the tables and chairs are unsuitable. Tutors can borrow laptops and other equipment and books from a central resource base. Most tutors use high-quality worksheets and guide learners to relevant internet websites. Most staff are well qualified. They have access to, and many take up, an extensive range of training opportunities. Several staff are working towards a level 4 skills for life qualification.

208. Links between family learning and the skills for life service are effective. Guidance about progression opportunities is given by representatives from the literacy, numeracy and language team and information, advice and guidance services at the end of the longer FLLN courses.

209. The range of courses is insufficient. There is no evening provision for parents who are working and very few family learning opportunities at weekends or during holiday periods. Very few, only 8 per cent, of fathers enrol on family learning courses and NLEA does not focus sufficiently on this particular target group. There are, however, many opportunities during the school day for parents and carers who are not working. Workshops, short and longer courses are targeted at schools in areas of most need. Learners can work towards

accreditations up to level 2.

### **Leadership and management**

210. Curriculum management is good. The staff team is motivated and committed. Effective communication takes place between tutors and managers. There are termly staff meetings and staff meet informally at the main base to share news and good practice. Staff also communicate regularly through e-mails.

211. The family learning adviser has strong links with partners. A family learning advisory group has been set up, which is attended by key partners such as head teachers and representatives from voluntary groups. This group is a good forum for exchanging good practice and is focused on meeting targets and widening participation. Involvement in the national skills for families project is an example of this group's work to enhance the service and promote good practice.

212. Regular newsletters are produced to publicise family learning programmes. The family learning team makes effective use of feedback from learners to evaluate courses and guide planning. An example of this is a forum which brings parents together to discuss how courses can be improved. Evaluations take place at end of each course, during a teaching session. Feedback from learners showed that parents did not realise that the learning experience was for them as well as their children. An information sheet for parents was introduced. Guidance to parents was improved as a direct result of this feedback.

213. Quality assurance is satisfactory. Systems are in place to improve quality. All tutors are given a handbook with information about policies and procedures. They use standard paperwork, which includes individual learning plans and forms for recording achievement. Observations of teaching and learning take place regularly. Actions from these observations are followed up either individually or in staff meetings as appropriate. A model for setting up family learning courses with partners has been developed. Tutors, staff and partners were involved in the self-assessment process. The self-assessment report was partly successful in identifying the strengths and weaknesses identified during the inspection.

214. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. A development group has been set up to look at the needs of bilingual learners and to develop materials which can be used effectively with bilingual families. Ground rules are set in most classes to ensure that all learners are treated with respect.