

Northamptonshire LEA Reinspection

Adult Learning Inspectorate Inspection Report 3 March 2006

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Inspection number 307239

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Background information

Inspection judgements

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 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 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.

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

Description of the provider

1. Northamptonshire City Council Adult Learning Service (NCCALS) is located in the cultural services and healthier communities' community services division as part of the learning and leisure subgroup. The services mission is to empower people in Northamptonshire to live more independent lives as active citizens helping to deliver safer communities and promoting a dynamic and prosperous economy. The provision is delivered within the context of the county's local area agreement (LAA). Adult learning in the county is funded by Northamptonshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC).
2. Over the last three years, NCCALS has seen significant planned restructuring and management of change. Following the previous inspection a project management approach to the post inspection plan was initiated and progress thoroughly monitored. The organisation has refocused its mission and initiated a seven phase change programme to enable the adult and community learning service to meet local and national priorities and ensure long term sustainability. Between April 2005 and August 2006 the service absorbed a 69% cut in its further education budget.
3. The provider offers learning programmes at a range of community settings and venues across Northamptonshire. In 2006-07, 4,532 learners were enrolled on courses. All the provision is directly delivered. Most of the provision is non-accredited learning. Cost recovery programmes form approximately 11% of the provision.
4. The adult and community learning provision is managed by the county adult learning manager. He is supported by four adult learning managers responsible for the first steps programme, the personal and community development programme (PCDL) and quality improvement. There are five curriculum managers/specialists in PCDL and four managers in the first steps programme. Operational delivery is supported by a finance team of 4.67 full-time equivalents, an administration team of 8.67 full-time equivalents, and a data team of 4.5 full-time equivalents responsible for co-ordinating curriculum areas and support functions. All PCDL tutors are part time.
5. According to the 2001 census, 5% of the population is from a minority ethnic group compared with 9.1% nationally.

Overall effectiveness

Reinspection Grade 3

6. The overall effectiveness of NCCALS is satisfactory. Leadership and management, and equality of opportunity are judged to be satisfactory. Arts media and publishing, and languages literature and culture are judged to be satisfactory. Preparation for life and work overall is satisfactory and contributory area literacy, numeracy and ESOL is satisfactory. However, independent living and leisure skills is judged to be good. Leisure travel and tourism is judged to be inadequate.
7. The inspection team had some confidence in the self-assessment process. The process has improved since the previous inspection, but not all curriculum areas include the views of learners, tutors and partners. Family learning and community development are an exception where staff understand the process and are included in further planning. The judgements and grades in the report broadly reflect inspection findings.
8. The provider has demonstrated that it has sufficient capacity to improve. The post inspection plan is managed well and judgements in the area of learning and leadership and management have improved. However, improvements in the use of data have been slow and systems to share good practice are not yet fully established.

Grades

grade1= outstanding, grade 2= good, grade 3= satisfactory, grade 4= inadequate

Grades awarded at previous inspection

Leadership and management		4
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		4
Quality improvement		4

Leisure, travel and tourism			4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Sport, leisure and recreation</i>		4	
Adult and community learning	1,942	4	

Arts, media and publishing		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Dance</i> Adult and community learning	187	4
<i>Music</i> Adult and community learning	50	4
<i>Fine arts</i> Adult and community learning	450	4
<i>Crafts</i> Adult and community learning	220	4

Languages, literature and culture		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Other languages, literature and culture</i> Adult and community learning	690	4 4

Preparation for life and work		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i> Adult and community learning	241	4 4
<i>Independent living and leisure skills</i> Adult and community learning	336	3 3

Family learning		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Adult and community learning</i> Adult and community learning	415	2 2

Community development		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Adult and community learning</i> Adult and community learning	680	2 2

Grades awarded at reinspection

Leadership and management		3
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality improvement		3

Leisure, travel and tourism		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Sport, leisure and recreation</i>		4
Adult and community learning	1,435	4

Arts, media and publishing		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Dance</i>		
Adult and community learning	310	3
<i>Music</i>		
Adult and community learning	39	3
<i>Fine arts</i>		
Adult and community learning	550	3
<i>Crafts</i>		
Adult and community learning	264	3

Languages, literature and culture		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Other languages, literature and culture</i>		3
Adult and community learning	766	3

Preparation for life and work		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i>		3
Adult and community learning	159	3
<i>Independent living and leisure skills</i>		2
Adult and community learning	114	2

Community development		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Adult and community learning</i>		2
Adult and community learning	61	2

About the reinspection

9. Eight inspectors carried out this reinspection over a period of five days. Provision is widely spread across Northamptonshire. Three preliminary visits were carried out by the lead, with accompanying area of learning inspectors to carry out observations of the areas graded inadequate at the previous inspection. The lead inspector attended a final day for a planning meeting.

Number of inspectors	8
Number of inspection days	48
Number of learners interviewed	292
Number of staff interviewed	120
Number of partners interviewed	25
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	49
Number of visits	5

Leadership and management

Grade 3

Strengths

- Good strategic direction
- Good partnership working
- Good actions to raise equality awareness
- Good widening of participation
- Well managed post-inspection planning

Weaknesses

- Poor use of data
- Slow implementation of equality procedures
- Insufficient promotion of culture and diversity
- Insufficiently established quality improvement

10. The county adult learning manager and senior managers have a strong vision and a clear strategy for NCCALS. The three-year development plan has a clear set of priorities that reflect well the County Council and LSC priorities. For example, there is a clear focus on sustainable provision and a strong determination to re-focus funded provision from clubs to provision that leads to learners' progression and development. Curriculum areas have a clearer idea of what is required of them. The service structure is changed to reflect new priorities. NCCALS manages well the constraints and challenges of reduced funding from the LSC and County Council restructuring. It has, for example, developed a business services unit to provide training to support and subsidise the adult learning provision. There is a strong and successful emphasis on attracting new learners to the provision. Currently, 43% of learners are new enrolments. There is a strong focus on ensuring that staff with management responsibilities are able to effectively manage change.

11. Partnership working is good. The partnerships have increased by a third since the previous inspection. NCCALS is also engaged in new strategic alliances, such as a project with Northampton University to develop video-conferencing classes. There are also good working relationships with other council services. For example, NCCALS is in partnership with the county mental health steering group to develop a project looking at GP referrals to adult learning. The first steps provision continues to have strong partnerships. Since the previous inspection it has extended substantially its links with relevant organisations. Family learning, for example, has increased its partnerships in deprived areas. The PCDL provision has also started to develop effective partnerships. Two new staff are employed to develop links with local rural communities and black and minority ethnic groups. New provision, in collaboration with voluntary organisations and parish councils, is in place and planned well.

12. Staff appraisal and staff development are satisfactory. The service has offered a wide range of provision since the previous inspection. At the previous inspection, only 30% of staff attended development events. This academic year 94% of staff attended the events held. The service makes extensive use of a software package that aids the creation of online courses. All staff have attended training on using this software and completed four compulsory modules covering induction, equality and diversity, bullying and harassment, and recognising and recording progress and achievement. Additionally, tutors have attended a range of staff development activities covering key aspects of teaching and learning. Appraisal continues to be carried out adequately for full-time and fractional staff. Part-time tutors have recently been incorporated into the appraisal system with all tutors at least once appraised over a two-year period.
13. Financial management continues to be satisfactory. Budgets are currently delegated for first steps provision and, from September 2007, will be for PCDL. Appropriate monitoring arrangements are in place. Senior managers monitor closely expenditure against budgets and delivery against contracts. Since the previous inspection the provider has turned a financial deficit into a surplus and is investing in new provision and resources.
14. Governance continues to be satisfactory. The cabinet member for community services is appropriately involved in management decisions. There are satisfactory arrangements for the monitoring of the provision and regular meetings take place between the head of community services and the head of the adult learning service.
15. Health and safety, a weakness at the previous inspection, is now satisfactory. All tutors are sent a subject and a venue risk assessment for the courses they teach. Tutors also fill in a pre-session checklist for each session they teach. Health and safety is covered adequately induction and is checked as part of the observation of teaching and learning process.
16. Resources are generally satisfactory. The provider has a database of resources. It has invested recently in laptop computers and assistive technologies. Additional equipment is hired if necessary. Accommodation is generally satisfactory, although some classes are held in rooms that are too small for the number of learners.
17. The provision of literacy and numeracy is broadly satisfactory. However, there is still no written strategy for skills for life within the overall curriculum.
18. Data was unreliable at the previous inspection and judged to be inadequate. The provider has been slow to improve the management and use of data. It has only very recently developed its current database, making it more reliable and able to produce a range of management reports. Since March 2007, curriculum managers have received monthly management reports on retention. Curriculum areas set targets for retention. However, reports and targets are not produced for

achievement, attendance or progression, and data is not used sufficiently to analyse or plan all aspects of the provision.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

19. Overall responsibility for equality and diversity is led by the head of the adult learning service. Three new fractional appointments have recently been made to promote equality, access and inclusion. This includes a learning support co-ordinator and two curriculum specialists in community development and partnership development.
20. NCCALS takes good action to involve staff and learners in awareness raising activities. Equality and diversity, and anti-bullying and harassment training was completed by 112 out of 113 staff in September 2006. The effectiveness of this training was evaluated well in a post induction learner survey. Most learners are aware of the complaints procedure. The staff handbook provides good tutor guidance on a range of equality issues, such as inclusive learning with checklists for implementation, and guidance for the learning support worker's role in the classroom. Useful websites and simplified equality definitions are also available on the intranet. Staff observing learning sessions receive training and guidance to monitor, assess and grade inclusive learning. Tutors in first steps provision have completed disability awareness and British Sign Language (BSL) basic training. In supported learning a learner forum advises on the accessibility of learning materials. However, barriers to learning are not consistently tackled. For example, in some skills for life math sessions, there is no language support.
21. The range of initiatives to reach new learners, a strength at the previous inspection is maintained. Family learning continues to initiate new programmes in targeted areas of identified deprivation and need, and staff have successfully engaged a high proportion of new learners for 2006-07. Work with one children's' centre in a deprived area is particularly successful in engaging hard to reach learners and disadvantaged isolated communities. For example, young mothers from minority ethnic communities learn how to help their children read while developing their own language skills. Over 50% of family learning learners progress to further courses or community activity. Designed to address imbalances in participation, a joint initiative between sports and family learning is the lads and dads annual summer sports programme. The new staff appointments in community development and partnerships are creating strong links with a diverse range of communities. Minority ethnic groups are better supported and good use is made of local community centres. Initiatives with parish councils and district councils are effective in engaging learners in isolated rural communities. Further innovative programmes are planned to target vulnerable families, older people, and people with mental health problems. Learners with a wide age range attend classes. Learners with financial difficulties benefit from reduced fees and bursary grants.

22. Response to the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 is satisfactory. The service has a very detailed disabled access audit that was last updated in July 2006. This is available on line at enrolment and enables staff to make appropriate arrangements for learners with a physical disability. The provider has improved its enrolment procedure to more speedily identify support needs for disabled learners. Learner support is checked three weeks into the programme to analyse the effectiveness and appropriateness of the support allocated. Additional adaptive technology or support is provided as required. However, this is not monitored well. For example, it is difficult for learners who are blind to access the music classroom on the first floor.
23. Equality data collection is satisfactory. The provider collects data on gender, ethnicity, disability and minority ethnic groups. The head of service monitors this data. Targets for the improvement of participation of minority ethnic and disability groups are set in the three-year development plan for 2006-09. Representation of minority ethnic groups in skills for life and family learning remain high at 14% and 21% for 2006 respectively despite funding cuts in family learning funding. PCDL figures for minority ethnic groups are improving from 1% in 2005 to 2% in 2006 against a national average of 4.9%. The service analyses data well to target minority groups and areas of deprivation. However, there is insufficient analysis of data to analyse the differences in performance of groups of learners.
24. NCCALS has been slow in implementing equality of opportunity procedures, a weakness identified at the previous inspection. There is no overarching document to implement relevant legislation. NCCALS follows the Northamptonshire County Council equality policy and guidance. The county council is addressing the equality standard and has a corporate equality scheme, a race equality scheme, and a disability equality scheme, in response to the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. A draft equality scheme is in place (2007-2010) in response to the disability equality duty. The council has a range of equality schemes and procedures, but these are not promoted adequately in a format accessible to all NCCALS staff and learners. Not all appropriate service staff have completed training for the safeguarding of vulnerable children and adults, although criminal records bureau checks have been completed.
25. There is insufficient promotion of cultural diversity to staff and learners. The post induction survey indicates that learners and staff are gaining an awareness of equality of opportunity and inclusive learning. However, it is not clear how their knowledge of broader issues of race, cultural diversity, and individual rights through legislation is further promoted, developed or checked. The effectiveness of equality measures are monitored and graded through the observation of teaching and learning process. Criteria for assessment relate to inclusive learning. The standards to identify appropriate grades are poorly detailed. Terminology used is unclear and staff do not understand what is being assessed or graded under equality of opportunity. Currently no internal or external training is planned to develop staff and learner understanding.

26. NCCALS has improved its marketing materials to learners. The programme brochure, which is available in Polish, Portuguese, Bengali, Somali and Russian, includes non-stereo typical images. In family learning, individual learning plans and course information is available in these five languages, and health and safety information distributed to centres is available in 14 languages. A learners' charter provides key points of contact and outlines learners' entitlements. Although available in Braille and a number of languages, it is not promoted well through the PCDL programmes. Induction surveys check if learners receive the information.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 3

27. The service managed and implemented the post-inspection action plan particularly well. Clear improvements to the quality of provision are evident in most curriculum areas. The quality of most provision has improved or at least been maintained since the previous inspection. Four of the six areas of learning inspected have improved by one grade; one has maintained its good provision, and one has remained inadequate. In family learning, not graded at this inspection, standards have been improved. Retention has also improved across the provider by 10% in the past year. NCCALS has made good use of a project management approach to systematically rectify many of the key weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Senior managers monitor closely the quality improvement plan for timely completion. Key processes directly affecting learners, such as induction arrangements, initial assessment, information, advice and guidance, and teaching and learning have been the focus of development. Languages, literature and culture, judged inadequate at the previous inspection, has piloted many of the developments. Improvements in sports are less developed. NCCALS has satisfactory arrangements for the internal verification of accredited and non-accredited provision.

28. Self-assessment is generally satisfactory. The process has improved since the previous inspection and now fully incorporates the views of managers. However, not all curriculum areas involve other key stakeholders. Most tutors, learners and partners are not directly involved in the process. The judgements and grades in the report broadly reflect inspection findings and there is slightly better use of data to aid judgements.

29. The provider has developed a comprehensive quality improvement policy that incorporates the key quality arrangements into one coherent system. It has an appropriate annual quality cycle based on the activities of learners, tutors and managers. A number of the quality improvement arrangements are not yet fully established. For example, NCCALS has improved its learners' surveys since the previous inspection. In 2005-06, all learners were surveyed through a questionnaire with a very high return rate of 80%. However, the results were not sent to the relevant curriculum managers, in a form that is easy to analyse or use for action-planning. There is no systematic monitoring of managers' responses to

the questionnaire and it is not clear what improvements have been implemented in response to the exercise.

30. NCCALS has improved its observation of teaching and learning. A new policy aims to observe all tutors at least once every two years. Curriculum managers and tutor specialists have been trained to increase the number of observers. There are clear guidelines for observation and an appropriate moderation process. Internal observation grades of good or better have improved slightly by 9% in the last year. Inspection observation grades of good or better have improved by 6%. Generally, inspectors' judgements match those of internal observers, but action plans arising from observations are not always sufficiently detailed or precise for improvements to be implemented. While inadequate sessions have prompt actions, there is little action to ensure that satisfactory sessions are improved. Good practice is not systematically shared. Within each curriculum area, and across the provider, there are areas of good and excellent practice. However, these are not used adequately to improve the provision as a whole.

Areas of learning

Leisure, travel and tourism

Grade 4

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Sport, leisure and recreation</i>		4
Adult and community learning	1,435	4

31. NCCALS offers learning programmes in yoga, pilates, keep fit, tai chi, aqua aerobics, golf, swimming and bridge. Most of the provision is non-accredited. An accredited course is offered in yachting. Since August 2006, 1435 learners have enrolled on programmes. Over 80% of learners are women, 4% are from minority ethnic groups and 2% have a declared disability. Currently 54% of the learners are new enrolments and 22% are over the age of 65. Courses are offered at 63 learning venues including village halls, libraries, schools, churches, sport centres and medical centres. At the time of inspection 57 courses were running. Most courses are in 10-week blocks and take place during the daytime, twilight and in the evening. A small amount of provision is also available at weekends. There are 21 part-time teaching staff, working between one and eleven hours a week. A curriculum manager and two part-time curriculum co-ordinators, are responsible for quality improvement and development.

Strengths

- Wide range of provision

Weaknesses

- Poor teaching in many learning sessions
- Inadequate target-setting and monitoring of learner progress
- Insufficient quality improvement arrangements

Achievement and standards

32. The development of learners' skills and well-being is satisfactory. Most learners achieve a satisfactory range of skills. They make significant health related improvements through attending courses. Learners' fitness levels are maintained or enhanced and they develop co-ordination of movement, balance and timing. Learners develop improved posture and body awareness, and some also increase their levels of Knowledge and understanding.

33. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Most learners improve their technique and performance to an adequate level. These include improvements in sequences and co-ordination. However, more able learners are not given sufficiently demanding activities to help them progress.

34. Retention is satisfactory. A large number of learners repeat courses throughout the year and some have been attending the same course for many years. Attendance is satisfactory on most courses. For example, the attendance rate during inspection was 74%.

The quality of provision

35. A wide range of provision is available to learners. Courses include aqua aerobics, golf and yachting. Learning sessions are taught at a wide range of venues across the county to ensure good access for learners. Some provision is targeted specifically at learners from under-represented groups. There are sufficient progression opportunities for learners.
36. Resources to support learning are satisfactory. Most venues have satisfactory access for people with restricted mobility, with adequate parking, lighting and signage. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. All teaching areas are safe and of an adequate size. However, in one class the room is not an adequate size for the number of learners. Risk assessments of venues are carried out. Most equipment is adequate, are generally supplied by learners or tutors. Learning materials overall are satisfactory.
37. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Learners have an adequate understanding of course information and can seek further guidance about course content. Learners are satisfactorily aware of the guidance and support available. Since the previous inspection detailed course information sheets have been produced. An appropriate induction is used at the start of courses on learners' rights and responsibilities. Initial assessment, including a health screening, is carried out satisfactorily at the first learning session. Most tutors use this to identify potential risks. Arrangements for assessing and supporting learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills are satisfactory.
38. Teaching in many learning sessions is poor. Almost 30% of the teaching sessions observed during the inspection were graded inadequate. Some courses are run as clubs with little teaching and learning taking place. A narrow range of teaching methods is used in most classes. For example, tutors stand at the front of the class giving instructions and demonstrations, with insufficient checks on learning. There is little group work or discussions. Teaching styles and techniques are inadequate to meet learners' individual learning needs and/or preferred learning styles. Learning materials such as handouts are infrequently used. More able learners are not sufficiently challenged in most learning sessions. Lesson planning in some classes is inadequate. Tutors have good subject knowledge and technical competence.
39. Target-setting and monitoring of individual learners' progress is inadequate a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. Most tutors have a poor understanding of how to set meaningful targets and monitor learners' progress. In some classes there is too much use of paperwork that is not fit for purpose. In a few courses satisfactory targets and monitoring of progress takes place. Plans

are in place to develop appropriate monitoring materials and provide relevant staff training. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of these measures.

Leadership and management

40. Curriculum management is improved. There is now sufficient expertise to plan, develop and co-ordinate the provision. Communication with and support for part-time tutors has significantly improved since the previous inspection. However, there are still insufficient opportunities for team meetings. Issues identified in weak curriculum management at the previous inspection have been addressed.
41. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Tutors and learners have sufficient awareness of the procedure to address any issues relating to bullying, harassment and other aspects of equal opportunities. However, some staff lack awareness of inclusive learning, for example, a learner was told to go home at the start of a class because they had recently had an operation. They were not offered any alternative or given the opportunity to observe the class.
42. Quality improvement arrangements are insufficient. Measures to improve the quality of provision are particularly ineffective. For example, development needs are not always identified or feedback used effectively to improve the provision. The observation of teaching and learning is infrequent. The moderation process is in its infancy. There is insufficient use of data for setting improvement targets. The review of courses has only recently been implemented. Good practices are not being identified and shared. The self-assessment report is incomplete. There has been some progress made since the previous inspection. However, the post inspection action plan has been slow at addressing issues identified. For example, three key weaknesses still remain since the previous inspection. A number of actions have been taken to make improvements, such as the introduction of course reviews, however, they are still too early to have made an impact.

Arts, media and publishing

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Dance</i> Adult and community learning	310	3
<i>Music</i> Adult and community learning	39	3
<i>Fine arts</i> Adult and community learning	550	3
<i>Crafts</i> Adult and community learning	264	3

43. Northamptonshire County Council Adult Learning Service offers programmes in visual arts, crafts, dance, music and creative writing to 1,163 learners. The arts represent 35% of the service's enrolments for the year. These courses are planned and managed by three part-time curriculum co-ordinators, each with a specific area of responsibility, and one curriculum manager. There are 56 sessional hourly paid tutors. Programmes are offered during the daytime, evenings and on Saturdays in 62 schools and other community venues throughout the county. Most of the courses run for two hours per week over ten weeks. There is no accredited provision. Since August 2006 out of 1,560 learners, 22% are men, 5.3% are from minority ethnic groups and 3.7% have a disability. Out of 207 classes offered in 2006-07, 79% are arts and craft, 17% are dance and 4% are music.

Strengths

- Good acquisition of creative and technical skills
- Good accommodation for some specialist courses
- Good access to learning in rural areas

Weaknesses

- Insufficient variety of teaching methods
- Underdeveloped assessment practices in many classes
- Insufficient leadership to consolidate provision

Achievement and standards

44. Learners acquire good creative and technical skills. Learners across all classes are developing a good level of creative awareness and, in many cases learners are given greater independence supported by a thorough technical grounding in the skills required. For example, in the pottery and ceramics classes work is created to a variety of scale. Learners with special educational needs are able to achieve to a good standard. Learners are producing complex, intricate work and large decorative pieces in the lace and upholstery classes. These are a mixture of new

and returning learners. Some learners perform demonstrations of their skills in local libraries. More mature and elderly learners are able to identify how the skills enable them to maintain their mental and physical dexterity, particularly in some of the art and craft classes. In the dance classes, learners are developing a dance vocabulary and demonstrate musicality and co-ordination of movement. Learners perform their work in dance shows, and self-select to engage in local craft days. Provider organised celebration of achievement is primarily through the virtual learning environment, Moodle.

45. Achievement and retention rates are satisfactory. Historically, data has been unreliable. Attendance at inspection is satisfactory at 85%.

The quality of provision

46. Good accommodation is used for some specialist courses. The pottery and ceramics classes are in well equipped purpose built workshops. Pottery classes have access to a kiln, and learners have access to a potter's wheel. The workspace is good, although storage and display areas are not available as the centres are not sole-use. Some dance classes take place in well lit spacious dance studios with mirrors, barres and a sprung floor.
47. In a small number of sessions rooms are cold, poorly lit and learners unhappy that the workroom is sometimes dirty before they arrive. A guitar class was relocated from an appropriate music room to a classroom not suitable acoustically to maximise the learners' experience.
48. Access to learning in rural areas is good. A wide range of community venues are used across the county, including church halls, village halls, schools, leisure centres and a bowling club. Learners appreciate this given the restricted access to public transport. Some learners are prepared to travel to attend specialist classes, including one learner on the lace making course who travels on a weekly basis from Wales to attend.
49. Progression is satisfactory, with learners able to move from beginners to improvers in some cases. Other classes are predominately mixed ability and these are managed satisfactorily. Additional progression for learners has been into cottage industries, selling some of their craft and art work. One learner in a dance class joined the performance team on a cruise ship. Planning of the spread presently follows a historical offer, although some work is being undertaken in community research to identify further need. The breadth of provision is satisfactory, but the offer of music courses is narrow.
50. Support for learners is satisfactory, with improved course information made available to prospective learners before starting courses. Appropriate on-course support is provided to learners with learning difficulties to enable them to integrate into mainstream PCDL classes. The facility to translate documents into

other languages including Braille is available, although one blind learner relies upon a family member to transpose the music into Braille for them.

51. The variety of teaching methods used is insufficient in too many classes. In the better classes, learners are engaged and there is a creative, vibrant buzz. In other classes, the pace is often too slow, and teaching is too reliant on learner independent study with some facilitation. Session planning overall is satisfactory although little recording and planning for differentiation is evident. In one pottery and one guitar class, however, attention to the recording of differentiation is excellent. In one art class, the learners had to wait 45 minutes before doing any artistic work. The use of learning styles to plan learning is too generic with little adjustments made to accommodate specific learning preferences. In the better classes, tutors do employ a range of challenging and inventive activities to promote and inspire learning. However, there are too few opportunities for good practice to be shared in teaching and learning, although training sessions are offered.
52. Tutors are generally well qualified and include some practising professionals. One art tutor has won the regional heats of the televised Watercolour Challenge, and one of the script writing tutors won an award at the New York Short Film Festival.
53. The assessment practices in many classes are underdeveloped. Few classes have tangible or meaningful initial assessment records, and the individual learning plans are not used well to negotiate individual goals and SMART targets. The accuracy of measuring achievement and identifying distance travelled is inconsistent. There is some implementation of recognising and recording progress and achievement, but this is yet to be fully established. In the better classes, tutors have accurate records. One upholstery class made particularly good use of achievement monitoring sheets and photographic evidence. Some music and creative writing tutors have completed forms on how they implement assessment, but this has not been shared with other tutors in the area of learning.

Leadership and management

54. Focused leadership of arts, media and publishing is insufficient to consolidate the provision. Although operational management of the three aspects, music, dance and arts is satisfactory, the area lacks any strategic overview and there is no shared vision or consolidated identity to the area of learning. Formal meetings between the curriculum co-ordinators are too few and cohesive planning of the curriculum is not in place. Some planning to develop partnership working through the local arts forum and other regional organisations has taken place but it is too early to formulate a judgement on the effectiveness of these initiatives.
55. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Access is good for learners with restricted mobility and this was demonstrated in a couple of arts classes. The observation of teaching and learning is not yet sufficiently robust to improve subject specific teaching and learning. Often reports are written with a view to generic teaching

points. Action plans often reflect changes to be made in the use of documentation, and do not provide appropriate support in developing the subject teaching beyond a satisfactory grade.

56. The grade profile of the service is similar to that of the inspection. The self-assessment process is beginning to be more inclusive, but few tutors are aware of their involvement and much of the data used is unreliable.

Languages, literature and culture

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Other languages, literature and culture</i>		3
Adult and community learning	766	3

57. Languages represent 13% of the service's overall enrolments for this year. The number of learners has increased from 690 in 2005–06 to 766 in 2006–07. NCCALS offers eight languages through part-time courses. The more commonly taught languages are offered at initial, intermediate and advanced levels. No courses are accredited and most last for two hours a week over periods ranging from four to 20 weeks. Classes are held in 23 locations throughout Northamptonshire. Most classes are held in the evenings. Of all current learners, 4% are from minority ethnic groups, 2.3% have a declared learning or physical disability and 37% are men. The provision is co-ordinated by the curriculum co-ordinator for languages and general studies, and line-managed by the PCDL curriculum manager. There are 36 part-time, hourly-paid tutors delivering the service.

Strengths

- Good curriculum leadership and management

Weaknesses

- Insufficiently effective teaching techniques in many classes

Achievement and standards

58. Most learners have broadly satisfactory levels of attainment for the point they have reached in their programmes. Most are able to apply their learning to some extent in relevant contexts. In-year retention has improved from 47% at the previous inspection to 85%, which is satisfactory.

The quality of provision

59. There are insufficiently effective teaching techniques in many classes. This has improved since the previous inspection, but remains a weakness. The service has invested heavily in training its tutors over the last year, and the effects of this are starting to show in lessons. However, even in some cases where tutors have implemented elements of this training in their teaching, there is still a lack of understanding of how this can benefit learners. For example, most tutors now adopt the good practice of using the target language almost exclusively in their classes, but relatively few structure their lessons well enough to make this as beneficial as possible to learners. In some cases they use language that is too complex when explaining activities, leaving learners confused and frustrated, and sometimes they do not model the language well enough for learners to imitate

and manipulate. The service has also run training on how to present grammar effectively, and some tutors are now making much better use of exemplification and language modelling. Some, however, continue to present grammar didactically and out of context, sometimes to the exclusion of active language learning.

60. The curriculum co-ordinator has liaised with tutors to produce standardised, adaptable, language-specific materials for initial assessment. All learners have an initial assessment now; this was not the case at the previous inspection. This assessment gives tutor's good information about their learners. However, some tutors have difficulty in translating the results of initial assessment into realisable, incremental targets for their learners, and individual learning plans continue to be used ineffectively in some cases. Some learners do not see the point in keeping these records and do not understand how they can measure their progress by using them. Tutors are now correcting learners' mistakes more often, but this is not always done systematically to eliminate specific errors.
61. The range of provision was a weakness in the previous inspection, but the offer has been rationalised to ensure better progression opportunities for learners. The range remains small, but is now better structured, and language levels are much better defined. The provider has helped individuals to set up clubs so that people can maintain their language skills outside classes. Tutors are given a list of progression opportunities to pass on to their learners. In some cases there has been joint training with partner organisations to which the service directs its learners. Pre-course information is still largely in written format, but the information is now much clearer.
62. Accommodation was a weakness in the previous inspection, but this has been largely rectified. Unsuitable accommodation is no longer being used, and school rooms are adapted to suit the learners' needs. Tutors have a range of portable resources available to them now, including laptops, CD players and video players. The service also provides flipcharts and board markers where required.

Leadership and management

63. There is good curriculum leadership and management. This is a new strength for the service. The new system of observations of teaching and learning introduced shortly before the previous inspection has accurately identified strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning, and actions are now much more closely monitored. Monitoring of the provision was a weakness in the previous inspection. The observations of teaching and learning are linked to appraisal and to professional development. However, action-planning is not always comprehensive. Training has been given to tutors on a number of generic issues such as how to teach through the medium of the target language, how to teach grammar and how to incorporate equality and diversity into lesson content and in intra-class relations. The procedure for recruiting tutors has been revised, and now tutors are asked to demonstrate aspects of teaching as well as being interviewed in the language they wish to teach.

64. Communications have improved since the previous inspection, and tutors are now networking better with each other and have a much better awareness of opportunities available to them from the service. Tutors who cannot attend training sessions are given the relevant information to keep them up-to-date. Sometimes this is in the form of training materials, and sometimes materials are supplemented by one-to-one support from the curriculum leader.
65. Retention rates are monitored monthly by managers, and continuously by tutors. Tutors are required to follow up withdrawals to establish why learners leave, and this information is analysed by managers and used in their planning.
66. Resources to support the curriculum area were a weakness in the previous inspection, but they are now adequate. The curriculum leader now has administrative support, giving her more time to lead and manage the area. Some tutors have been trained to observe teaching and learning, and there are plans to train more people. A mentor and buddy system is now in place to support new tutors. The service's intranet is being developed by tutors to share resources and good practice as well as to provide support and materials for learners.
67. Promotion of equality and diversity was a weakness in the previous inspection, but this is now satisfactory. This is now monitored through the observations of teaching and learning. All tutors now use much more of the target language in their classes, making learning easier for people who do not have English as their first language.
68. The most recent self-assessment report presents a largely accurate analysis of the provision. Tutors' views were taken into account in compiling the report.

Preparation for life and work

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i>		3
Adult and community learning	159	3
<i>Independent living and leisure skills</i>		2
Adult and community learning	114	2

Literacy and numeracy

69. Skills for life is part of the First Steps provision offered by NCCALS. Since August 2006, 313 learners have enrolled on skills for life courses. At the time of the inspection there were 159 learners on skills for life programmes in literacy, numeracy and ESOL, with 16 on literacy courses, 49 on numeracy courses and 94 on ESOL courses. Courses are mainly offered in the daytime for two hours a week, with a small number offered in the evening. Courses take place in schools, family centres and a range of community venues. Learners can work towards national qualifications from entry level to level 2. The skills for life provision is co-ordinated by a full-time curriculum manager. A full-time ESOL tutor, a part-time numeracy tutor and five hourly paid tutors teach on the skills for life programmes.

Strengths

- Good initial assessment
- Effective arrangements for advice and guidance on progression and learning opportunities

Weaknesses

- Insufficient use of ICT
- Insufficiently established quality improvement

Achievement and standards

70. Most learners are making satisfactory progress. All learners are enthusiastic about their studies and many report increased confidence in using the literacy, numeracy and language skills they are developing in their daily life. For example, learners who were poor at mathematics use their understanding of percentages to calculate the value of supermarket special offers. Many ESOL learners describe progress in speaking to colleagues at work and in social communication. Advanced ESOL learners can discuss aspects of language such as context and formality. ESOL learners are now making satisfactory progress in developing oral language skills. This was a weakness at the previous inspection.

71. In 2005-06, 88 learners achieved a national qualification in literacy or numeracy. This year, 35 learners have achieved national qualifications and 11 more are waiting for their results. Many more are planning to take the national tests in the

next few months. Overall, the standard of learners' work is satisfactory. The achievement of learners who are not working towards external accreditation is marked through the award of internal certificates on the successful completion of a course. Processes for following up poor attendance and for recording withdrawal of learners have been made more thorough and, in the current year, retention is good and attendance is satisfactory overall. Punctuality is poor, in some classes with late starts to lessons.

The quality of provision

72. Learners receive a good initial assessment of their literacy, numeracy or language skills. The process is systematic and thorough. Personal barriers to learning and educational background are explored as well as specific strengths and weaknesses in their chosen subject. Further diagnostic assessment in class checks the accuracy of the initial assessment. Learners are referred to external specialists for a formal dyslexia assessment. An experienced tutor now provides specialist support for dyslexic learners and advice to tutors.
73. Arrangements for advice and guidance on progression and learning opportunities remain effective. This was a strength at the previous inspection. Visits from advice and guidance staff are arranged for each group in every centre. Learners also have an opportunity to request an individual interview and discussion about their goals and further learning opportunities. The take-up of this service is good and it is valued by learners.
74. Teaching and learning remains satisfactory. Tutors' preparation is thorough. In the better sessions, tutors take account of the individual needs of learners when planning, delivering and managing lessons. They provide clear explanations and demonstrate good subject knowledge. Tutors set appropriate targets for learners and use a range of learning methods, resources and differentiated learning materials. In the less effective lessons, activities to meet the different levels of learners' abilities and needs are not sufficiently well planned, the range of teaching techniques is too narrow and the better learners are not sufficiently challenged.
75. Learners are not always given enough written feedback during their programme. Learners' record activities at the end of a session, but tutors do not concentrate sufficiently on identifying achievement with learners. Tutors give clear, verbal feedback to learners in lessons but this is not formally recorded in the recently revised individual learning plan. Mid- course reviews have not been completed on a few courses.
76. Resources are satisfactory. Courses take place in a variety of community venues and accommodation and facilities are generally adequate. Tutors are suitably qualified or are working towards specialist qualifications and have good access to staff development opportunities. Learning resources have improved since the previous inspection and include a wide range of learning aids, games, exercises and activities. However, in some classes, there is still too much reliance on paper-

based resources which are not adapted to meet individual learners' needs. A few handouts are poorly copied and difficult to read.

77. The overall planning of provision has improved and is now satisfactory. Provision is targeted to areas of deprivation with low levels of literacy and numeracy. ESOL classes are provided where there are many new migrant workers and also where longer established ESOL learners live. The geographical spread of skills for life courses largely reflects the relative population size of different parts of the county. Classes are offered in local centres at times that suit learners. Crèche provision supports some daytime classes. Learners are able to progress within mixed level groups and do so. However, the range of progression opportunities and short courses remains limited.

78. There is insufficient use of ICT. Laptop computers are available to tutors but very little use of is made of computers in lessons. Tutors make little use of internet websites and CD-ROMs as a resource for teaching materials or for learners to practise their skills in class or in their own at home.

Leadership and management

79. Communications and support for staff remain satisfactory. Staff continue to use e-mail and telephone to communicate and to share information and resources. These informal arrangements are supported by regular team meetings, which have provided good opportunities for staff briefings and training on new initiatives. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory with staff having an appropriate understanding of diversity issues and how to work with learners.

80. Quality improvement is not sufficiently established to bring about continuing improvements in the provision. Quality improvement was a weakness at the previous inspection. Appropriate documents for planning and assessing learning are now used consistently by tutors. However, NCCALS does not effectively monitor the use of documents such as individual learning plans to ensure that there is an appropriate focus on learning outcomes. The lesson observations system is established but some tutors have not yet been observed. Action points are agreed but these are not being monitored and weaknesses identified through observation have not been addressed. Observations carried out by NCCALS and by inspectors found most teaching to be satisfactory, but insufficient that was good or better. Good practice identified during observations is not being shared with other tutors effectively enough to bring about improvements in the less successful aspects of teaching practice. Data collection has improved but it is not used sufficiently to monitor and evaluate provision.

81. Tutors were consulted on the self-assessment report but do not contribute sufficiently to the evaluation of provision. The recently updated self-assessment report does not identify the key weaknesses identified during the inspection.

Independent living and leisure skills

82. Supported learning offers provision to adults with learning difficulties across the county in 26 venues including community centres in deprived areas, community services day centres, residential homes and private care homes, age concern and church halls. From September 2006 to March 2007, 274 learners have accessed the provision with 110 of these learners enrolled on leisure courses. At the time of the reinspection 114 learners had enrolled on 19 courses. Black and minority ethnic communities are represented in 4.5% of learners. Most courses run for 10 weeks for approximately 2 to 5 hours per week. Most courses run during the daytime. Courses include dance, cookery, digital photography, preparation for work and discovering the local community. Most courses are pre-entry with 2 courses offering entry-level national literacy and numeracy qualifications. Support workers and care staff work alongside 17 part-time tutors to deliver the provision. A full-time curriculum specialist manages six part-time specialist tutors and sessional staff and has countywide responsibility for the area of learning.

Strengths

- good achievement of learners' personal goals
- much good teaching and learning
- good partnership working to meet needs and interests of learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient attention to the development of literacy, numeracy and communication skills

Achievement and standards

83. Learners achieve challenging personal goals. Attendance is very good. Learners are motivated to attend and their continued attendance is well supported by tutors and partner agencies. At the time of reinspection attendance was 94%. Learners are set relevant and achievable goals to enable them to take more control of their lives. Such goals include increasing their self-confidence, working in groups or learning to give change for working a till. In one dance class, learners developed their abilities to work with others as they allowed space for others to move safely and enjoyed developing a group dance. In other sessions, learners gain understanding of basic food hygiene so they can work safely in the day centre cafeterias. Progress and achievement is celebrated through displays, photographs, videos and talking books. Some learners progress on to work experience and employment.

The quality of provision

84. Much of the teaching and learning is good. In the best sessions, learners fully understand the group aims of sessions and work effectively towards their individual goals. The curriculum is carefully negotiated with learners. Tutors develop individual tasks with clear steps to build learners' confidence and encourage independent learning. Learners work at their own pace on specifically negotiated, individual tasks. Learners have good opportunities to use laptops and tutors make effective use of digital photography and widget software to develop interesting learning materials to support learners. Specialist tutors in areas such as photography, dance, art and child development work closely with learners to stimulate their thinking and practical skills' development and broaden their horizons. Learning opportunities are further enhanced by carefully planned visits to places of work, local community venues and shops. One group visited a local fire station and then composed a letter of thanks to the firemen. One learner practised using a phone book and then telephoned the fire station to ask for the address. Then one of the learners led the way to the post office where other learners bought an envelope, stamped and posted the letter. The tutor took photographs for the visit for use in future sessions. In a dance session, learners practised their counting skills in a complex step sequence.
85. Some tutors are unaware of the opportunities to develop literacy, numeracy and communication skills and development of these essential skills is often not included in learners' records of learning. In poorer sessions, tutors over-emphasise completion of practical activities and miss opportunities to give learners time to improve these skills. They are insufficiently skilled in developing these skills appropriately and lack awareness of the need to embed opportunities for skills for life within practical sessions. Targets focus on the development of practical skills. Tutors sometimes record learners' targets and reviews of progress in illegible handwriting and make limited use of signs, symbols and photographs. Learners are unsure what their targets are and are unable to fully access their own records of learning. Staff receive training in basic sign language but many learners are unfamiliar with this language.
86. Advice and guidance is satisfactory. The service has a good process for learners to discover the wide range of learning opportunities on offer through the adult learning service. This is available on CD-Rom and courses are run for groups to help them decide on learning opportunities. Some learners contribute to a supported learning forum to lessen barriers to learning opportunities; they make suggestions on new courses and changes to paperwork and procedures.
87. Support for learners is satisfactory. Support workers are well trained and have clear guidelines on providing effective support for learners. However, there are insufficient large keyboards and tracker balls and other adaptive technology is not generally used in sessions other than specific IT classes. The service has purchased 3 large digital cameras to support the specialist digital photography

course but other cameras are too small and often difficult for learners to operate. They have to rely on tutors to take photos to record their work.

Leadership and management

88. Partnership working remains good. NCCALS has further developed effective partnerships to deliver accessible learning opportunities. Since the previous inspection, the curriculum manager has introduced service level agreements with partners on provision of appropriate accommodation and effective joint working arrangements. Care staff work alongside tutors and share good practice and support the accurate assessment of learners' needs and progress.

89. Curriculum management is satisfactory. The use of ILT is much improved and staff training is impacting positively on learning sessions. Specialist tutors provide good mentor support workers and new sessional tutors. There are some good, informal networks and support for tutors but some poor communication with part-time staff that are not always available for meetings. Staff have a good understanding of equality and diversity issues in relation to disability. These issues are not actively promoted with learners

90. Quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory. Weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been addressed. Good arrangements are made for identifying learners' needs, setting pertinent targets, and monitoring and monitoring progress. The curriculum manager carries out most of the observations of teaching and learning. The effectiveness of the training on changes in teaching practice is insufficiently monitored. Good practice is not shared systematically. Tutors and support workers evaluate provision and contribute to the self-assessment report but are not always sufficiently involved in planning the training programme or action plans for quality improvement.

Community development

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Adult and community learning</i>		2
Adult and community learning	61	2

91. The community development provision in Northamptonshire is run by the Neighbourhood Learning (NL) team and is funded exclusively through a Neighbourhood Learning for Deprived Communities (NLDC) contract with the LSC. The aim of NLDC is to support local voluntary and community sector organisations to develop their capacity to deliver learning opportunities for residents of disadvantaged communities. NL works with residents, community workers, community organisations and other stakeholders in five designated areas of deprivation across the county. The provision consists of a range of short courses designed to attract a wide range of new learners. It includes craft and leisure activities, taster sessions, skill sharing and other community-based activities. Most courses are non-accredited. During the period from August 2006 to March 2007 a total of 480 potential learners were contacted of whom 216 took part in activities. During the week of the inspection 61 learners were involved in the neighbourhood learning programme.

Strengths

- Good improvements in transferable skills
- Much good teaching & learning
- Good partnership working to engage and meet the needs of disadvantaged communities
- Good team work

Weaknesses

- Poor recording and monitoring of personal goals

Achievement and standards

92. Learners show good improvements in transferable skills such as confidence, self-esteem, improved interpersonal skills and raised aspirations. They are more confident about the work they are doing and value the opportunities the NL team provide. Examples of improvements in these skills include a learner who started a programme wishing only be an observer. She moved on to join in the class and in a subsequent workshop was happy to demonstrate to the rest of the group. Improvements in these skills have enabled a number of learners to do things that they would not otherwise have considered. For example one learner said that she felt much better about herself-and, with help from the NL team, applied for and secured a job. She now feels confident enough to consider applying for promotion. Another learner joined a book writing group as a result of improved

confidence. A number of learners are members of their local community group committee as a result of improved confidence and skills.

93. The standard of learners' work observed is generally satisfactory, although in some classes it is better than would normally be expected on such short courses. NL sessions are primarily designed to engage new learners and remove barriers to learning.
94. Progression rates are good. Of the 480 people contacted by the Neighbourhood Learning team between August 2006 and March 2007, 45% became involved with NL activities. Of these, 26% progressed onto more formal education such as a PCDL course, a college course or a skills for life course and in addition 10% moved into either voluntary or paid work.

The quality of provision

95. At the previous inspection good teaching and learning was identified as a strength. The overall teaching grade profile has improved with more good sessions seen and some outstanding. There is still much good teaching and learning. All lessons were effective in engaging learners who would otherwise not have become involved in education. One learner commented, "it's alright when the lessons are fun like this". The better lessons were lively, friendly with a great deal of laughter, engaging all learners. They were well planned, with much attention to the needs of both the individual and the community. Learners with a range of personal problems were dealt with sensitively. The good levels of staffing enabled all learners to receive an appropriate amount of personal attention. While the less good lessons had a similarly caring and supportive atmosphere there was less attention to teaching skills.
96. Support for learners who have literacy or numeracy needs is appropriate for the very short programmes offered. All staff are trained in to identify literacy and numeracy needs and help learners to enrol on skills for life programmes with other providers. In one centre the local college provides introductory sessions in the learning centre to make the progression to the college courses easier.
97. Learners' personal goals are not effectively recorded or monitored. Goals on individual learning plans are almost exclusively concerned with the courses that the learner would like to take. Staff are aware of other personal goals such as improved confidence, communication skills or staying on the course, but these are not recorded and neither is progress towards them. However, although achievement of these goals is not formally recorded it is well celebrated with learners receiving certificates at award ceremonies to recognise their success in, for example, improved confidence. This weakness is recognised by the NL team and a recently developed document to address this weakness is due to be implemented shortly.

Leadership and management

98. Good partnership working a strength in the previous inspection remains and is improved. The neighbourhood learning team works effectively with a very wide range of organisations to provide new learning opportunities for the most disadvantaged communities. Partner organisations include church groups, local community groups, pubs, organisations which help those with or recovering from mental health problems, those who are homeless, unemployed or have substance abuse problems. The provision is also offered in a number of community cafes and in some schools. At the time of the previous inspection the total number of partner organisations was 34. At the time of the reinspection it was 51. Most of these are new to offering learning opportunities. The programmes offered are determined through consultation with community groups, community workers and other stakeholders to ensure that the provision meets the needs of learners and the broader community. Just under 70% of learners are new to learning.
99. The NL team is effective in enabling partner organisations to be more self-sustaining in their communities. It supports groups to become independent and then finds new partners. In this way the number of learning opportunities for the residents of these deprived areas is continually increasing. For example NL was running IT courses in a pub. It arranged for another provider to take over and develop the provision in line with the needs and wishes of the local community. The recent appointment of a member of staff in the PCDL team to link with the NL team provides effective progression links.
100. There is significant evidence that the provision has a positive impact on social cohesion. Programmes are offered to help improve the effectiveness of small community groups. This includes short courses on roles and responsibilities of committee groups, how to arrange and run a public meeting and action-planning. NL has also provided direct assistance to groups on writing a constitution. Some of these groups are now partners working with NL to offer learning opportunities. These groups speak of how helpful the training has been. The NL provision has also acted as a catalyst for further actions. On one estate the NL funded programmes prompted local residents to have a litter picking day which brought local residents together for the benefit of the community. In a several other areas new groups have been set up as a result of the work done through NL.
101. Team work is strong. Leadership and management of the team are effective. There is a clear strategy for the development of NL which the team understand and support. Communications within the team are good and there is effective team working. There are regular "Keep-In-Touch" meetings (KIT) every two months which all staff attend. These are effective in sharing ideas and good practice within the team. There is, however, limited sharing of good practice with other curriculum areas within the service. Other meetings ensure that all members of the team are kept up-to-date with developments. All meetings are appropriately recorded with action points being monitored. Data is used effectively. The LSC requires 6-monthly reports on performance but the progress towards targets is monitored monthly. All members of staff have personal targets

and are aware of the overall targets. Other data such as the number of people progressing to other more formal education or employment is also collected and used to monitor the effectiveness of the provision.

102. At the previous inspection inappropriate accommodation was identified as a weakness. This is no longer the case. The NL team have good systems to ensure that all venues are appropriate and that there are no health and safety risks. Venues are selected to be welcoming and non-threatening to learners.

103. There is an ethos of quality improvement within the team. The implementation of the post inspection action plan has been effective. All members of staff contributed to the SAR and understand and accept its key findings. The SAR is generally accurate. However, implementation of more general systems to improve the quality of the provision is informal.

104. Equality of opportunity is appropriately addressed during lessons. There is and an atmosphere of mutual respect between learners. NL monitors the contacts by ethnicity to ensure that no groups of learners are being excluded. All staff are CRB checked and have undertaken a safeguarding course.

