

# Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council

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**Inspection date**

16 November 2007

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**Inspection number**

316585

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## Background information

### Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

#### Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

### Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision in:

- Retail and commercial enterprise
- Leisure, travel and tourism
- Arts, media and publishing
- Preparation for life and work including literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and entry to employment (E2E)
- Family learning

## Description of the provider

1. Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council (DMBC) is one of four local authority districts in the Black Country region of the West Midlands. The adult and community learning (ACL) team, within the Directorate of adult, community and housing services (DACHS), manages the ACL provision, and Future Skills Dudley, another department within the Directorate of the urban environment, manages work-based learning (WBL). A further contract is held with the Black Country LSC for social care apprenticeship programmes. These are delivered by the Human Resources team, within the Directorate of the Chief Executive.
2. DMBC subcontracts some ACL provision to two local colleges: Stourbridge and Halesowen. Approximately one third of the WBL provision is subcontracted to a private training provider, Pertemps People Development Group. A wide programme of vocational and non-vocational courses is offered, in 12 sector subject areas, through a network of 15 centres. During this inspection, four sector subject areas and family learning were inspected and graded.
3. At the time of the inspection, there were 2752 ACL learners, 69 WBL learners and 20 on apprenticeship programmes in social care. More than half of the current learners were new to learning.
4. Dudley has a population of 304,500, 37% of whom have no formal qualifications. Thirteen wards in the borough have levels of literacy and numeracy which are poor in comparison to the national average rates. Most economically active Dudley residents work in service industries. The 2001 census gives the minority ethnic population in Dudley as 6.3% compared with 7.9% nationally.
5. DMBC receives its funding from the Black Country LSC. Other funding is secured from a number of sources, including Advantage West Midlands and European Social Fund co-financing for community regeneration projects.

## Summary of grades awarded

<b>Effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Satisfactory: Grade 3</b>
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3</b>
<b>Achievement and standards</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>Satisfactory: Grade 3</b>
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Satisfactory: Grade 3</b>
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
<b>Equality of opportunity</b>	<b>Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3</b>

## Sector subject area

<b>Retail and commercial enterprise</b>	<b>Satisfactory: Grade 3</b>
<b>Leisure, travel and tourism</b>	<b>Inadequate: Grade 4</b>
<b>Arts, media and publishing</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>
<b>Preparation for life and work</b>	<b>Satisfactory: Grade 3</b>
<b>Family learning</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>

## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

#### Satisfactory: Grade 3

Adult and community learning

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

6. Achievement and standards are good overall. Retention rates are generally high. There are examples of some high qualification success rates. Learners develop outstanding technical skills and creative ability in arts and crafts. In family learning programmes, employability and Personal and Community Development learning (PCDL) programmes, learners acquire good personal skills and confidence. Learners develop satisfactory skills and fitness levels in sports and leisure programmes. The standard of achievement for learners following music and dance courses is unsatisfactory.
7. The overall quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are mostly satisfactory. Teaching in arts and crafts subjects is highly effective but in sport and travel, there is too much unsatisfactory teaching. Overall, accommodation is fit for purpose; it is good for sport programmes. Information and communication technology (ICT) equipment is not sufficiently used in classrooms other than the well equipped IT suites. Programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners satisfactorily. However, progression routes are not always clear. Employability programmes meet employer needs satisfactorily. Overall support and guidance for learners is satisfactory.
8. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Elected members and senior officers of the authority provide clear strategic direction to promote learning. The activities of the ACL team and Future Skills Dudley, contribute to the achievement of a number of the stated corporate objectives of the Council. The ACL team work very effectively with a range of partners, including NHS Trusts, voluntary organisations and neighbourhood outreach workers to identify community projects and target provision. The management information system is adequate. Management of subcontracted provision is satisfactory.
9. DMBC's response to social inclusion is satisfactory. Specific actions help target recruitment of learners from within areas of socio-economic deprivation. Specifically designed programmes meet the needs of groups such as Asian women. However, too few learners are male. The ACL team's arrangements for implementing the five themes of *Every Child Matters* are satisfactory.
10. Curriculum management is weak. The introduction of the new structure has been slow. Quality improvement arrangements are underdeveloped. The quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent. Not all of the key aspects of the provision are commented upon during the observation process. Elements of good practice are not identified and shared across all areas.

#### Capacity to improve

#### Satisfactory: Grade 3

11. The ACL team demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve. It has made adequate progress in effecting improvements since the previous inspection. For example, the quality

of management information and accommodation for lessons has improved. However, some improvements have been delayed by the slow implementation of the new curriculum management structure and this remains an area for improvement.

12. The self-assessment process is adequately inclusive of the views of staff and learners. The self-assessment report produced in December 2006 is the sixth report produced by the ACL team. The report recognised a number of the strengths identified by inspectors, but few of the areas for improvement. Self-assessment grades broadly reflect the findings of the inspection team, except for the sector subject area of leisure, travel and tourism

## Key strengths

- Good achievement of skills and confidence by learners
- High pass rates for learners on family learning programmes taking national literacy and numeracy qualifications
- Highly effective teaching in arts and crafts programmes
- Clear strategic direction to promote learning
- Very effective work with partners

## Key areas for improvement

- Too much unsatisfactory teaching in leisure, travel and tourism programmes
- Inadequate reinforcement of safe working practices in leisure, travel and tourism lessons
- Insufficient assessment and recording of learner progress
- Weak curriculum leadership
- Some aspects of quality improvement arrangements that are underdeveloped

## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

#### Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

13. Achievement and standards are good. This reflects the judgement made in the most recent self-assessment report. Retention is high on all programmes. Arts and crafts learners achieve outstanding technical skills and develop good creative ability. In retail and commercial enterprise, learners develop good practical skills. Some learners acquire skills to a good commercial standard that allows them to gain employment.
14. Adult learners on family learning programmes develop good skills and the confidence to support their children's learning. They effectively use their skills in a variety of situations to benefit themselves and others. Pass rates, for learners taking nationally accredited literacy and numeracy qualifications, for 2006/07 are high at 86%. Progression to further learning, employment and voluntary activities is good. Learners following employability and ACL programmes acquire good personal skills and confidence. They demonstrate improved self-confidence, better interpersonal communication and improved use of numeracy and literacy.
15. Learners develop satisfactory skills and fitness levels in sports and leisure programmes. Most learners progress satisfactorily. Punctuality and attendance is excellent for arts and crafts learners, but is poor for some learners on preparation for life and work courses. The standard of achievement for learners following music and dance courses is unsatisfactory.

### Quality of provision

#### Satisfactory: Grade 3

Adult and community learning

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

16. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching in arts and crafts subjects is highly effective and in other areas it is generally satisfactory. However, in sport and travel there is too much unsatisfactory teaching and the reinforcement of safe working practices is unsatisfactory. There is no explicit judgement on the overall standard of teaching and learning in the 2005/06 self-assessment report.
17. Induction arrangements in sport and travel are good while in other areas, they are satisfactory. Initial assessment arrangements overall are satisfactory but many staff make insufficient use of the resultant information in planning courses and lessons. In preparation for work and life, tutors make insufficient use of individual learning targets.
18. Overall, accommodation is fit for purpose and in sport and travel it is good. ICT equipment is largely confined to a number of well equipped IT suites and not sufficiently used in other classrooms.
19. Programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners satisfactorily. Strong partnership work is effective in the identification, targeting and development of provision,



particularly in preparation for life and work. While the provision complements that available in local colleges and elsewhere in the area, progression routes within and beyond ACL programmes are not always clear. Employability programmes and teaching assistant programmes satisfactorily meet employer needs.

20. Overall support and guidance for learners is satisfactory. Personal support for learners on employability programmes is good. Support within classes for those with additional support needs is satisfactory. Information about the courses and programmes available in the various centres is adequate but learners have little awareness of alternative venues or what is available elsewhere in the borough.

## Leadership and management

### Satisfactory: Grade 3

Adult and community learning  
Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3  
Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

### Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

21. Leadership and management is satisfactory; this differs from the self-assessment report where the provider judged leadership and management to be good. Elected members and senior officers of the authority provide clear strategic direction to promote learning. The activities of the ACL team and Future Skills Dudley, contribute well to the achievement of a number of the objectives in the local area agreement. Staff clearly understand the corporate objectives and how they can contribute to their achievement.
22. Learning is supported by very effective work with internal and external partners. The ACL team work closely with a range of partners, including NHS Trusts, voluntary organisations and neighbourhood outreach workers to identify useful community projects and activities. The ACL team has recently joined a network of similar providers to further improve the quality of the provision.
23. Communication is satisfactory. Meetings are scheduled well in advance to encourage attendance. Staff have access to an intranet, but the content is limited.
24. Initial assessment is sufficiently objective in defining learners' needs, but processes for recognising and recording progress and achievement are inconsistently implemented.
25. The management information system is adequate. Data is reliable but some staff find it difficult to understand. Reports are accessible to staff, but many have only recently begun to use them and some still rely on their own data.
26. Curriculum management is weak. The introduction of the new structure has been slow. The direction for most sector subject areas has yet to be defined and adequately communicated to staff. Curriculum managers are not fully effective in their roles. There is an over-reliance on centre managers to co-ordinate the provision.
27. Some aspects of quality improvement arrangements are underdeveloped. The quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent. Elements of good practice are not identified and shared across all areas. Improvements have been made to the systems for observing the quality of teaching and learning. Arrangements for moderation of observation results and

paired observations are now in place. However, not all key aspects of the provision are included and many lessons are overgraded. Feedback from learners is used to make appropriate improvements. Regular surveys are used to collect the views of learners. However, the questions are too general to inform improvement plans. Management of subcontracted provision is satisfactory. Action plans accurately identify a number of areas for improvement and strategies to improve the quality of the provision. However, SMART targets to allow effective monitoring do not support these.

28. The ACL team's approach to equality and diversity is satisfactory. The authority has a number of relevant policies and procedures in place, including those for child protection. The ACL team's arrangements for implementing the five themes of *Every Child Matters* are satisfactory. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Sufficient attention has been paid to the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, and other relevant legislation. Funding has been provided to improve access to community venues and most are now accessible to learners with mobility difficulties.
29. Data is analysed regularly to show the representation of learners by age, gender, ethnicity and disability. The ACL team also benefits from the broader intelligence about the local population available to the authority overall.
30. Specific actions help target recruitment of learners from areas of deprivation. Programmes are designed to meet the needs of particular hard to reach groups. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups is high. However, strategies to recruit more males have been unsuccessful. The proportion of men who participate in learning programmes is low.

## What learners like:

- The friendly and helpful staff
- The support provided for those who need it
- Choice of times and venues
- Lessons are very enjoyable
- The opportunity to keep mind and body active
- Developing more confidence and skills
- 'Understanding what my children are doing in school'

## What learners think could improve:

- More support workers
- Disabled access to upper floors
- More IT in classrooms
- A greater range of easily accessible venues
- Displaying artwork to celebrate what has been achieved and encourage others to join a class
- More space in the classrooms

## Sector subject areas

### Retail and commercial enterprise

#### Satisfactory: Grade 3

##### Context

31. There are 133 learners on programmes. The ACL team provides hospitality, hairdressing, and beauty therapy courses at five centres in the borough and subcontracts with local colleges and charitable trusts. Most courses run each term. Six tutors teach programmes in hospitality and hairdressing and beauty therapy, including nail art, cake decorating and beginners cookery.

##### Strengths

- Good skill development

##### Areas for improvement

- Insufficient assessment of learners' progress
- Insufficient curriculum leadership and management

##### Achievement and standards

32. Learners develop good practical skills. Learners on cake decorating for beginners courses develop good piping skills. Those with little, or no, previous cookery experience gain confidence in using kitchen equipment and go on to prepare and cook complex dishes. Learners enjoy using their newly acquired skills at home. Learners on nail art programmes use colour very creatively and a few produce work of a commercial standard. Learners on a beginner's cookery course are involved in choosing the dishes they wish to cook over the duration of the programme. Learners also develop good confidence and inter-personal skills. Learners' level of enjoyment in most classes is good. Attendance rates are good on most programmes.

##### Quality of provision

33. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better lessons, tutors use oral questions well to check learners' understanding and knowledge. Some good individual coaching, and use of demonstration techniques, helps learners improve. Learners work well in groups. Management of large groups of learners is good. In the weaker lessons, there is too little use of questioning to check learning and understanding. In a few lessons health and safety is insufficiently reinforced and hygiene practices are poorly demonstrated. Initial assessment arrangements are satisfactory in identifying individual learner needs. However, differentiation in a few lessons is insufficient to meet individual learner needs. Language, literacy and numeracy skills are not routinely included in lessons. For example, weights and ratios of ingredients are not used to reinforce the importance of numeracy skills.
34. Resources to support learning are satisfactory. Learners on hairdressing programmes learn in a salon which is adequately equipped for the requirements of the programme. Learners on beauty courses learn in classrooms or a dedicated hairdressing salon. Learners in some practical cookery lessons use domestic equipment. In one centre, learners share one stove top and there is insufficient small equipment to prepare food.

35. The assessment of learners' progress is insufficient. Tutors rely on informal observations and monitoring of learners' progress in some lessons. Learning outcomes are often insufficiently challenging. There is little formal recording of progress by tutors. Tutors provide very effective verbal feedback on achievements. Learners have an appropriate understanding of their level of skills development overall. Most group goals are achieved during lessons. Learners in many lessons complete learner diaries and record the activities they have taken part in but they do not always recognise and record their progress towards achieving defined learning objectives.
36. Programmes satisfactorily meet the needs and aspirations of learners. Some progress to accredited training, or self-employment. The range of programmes offered has reduced since the previous 2006/07. Good working with partners including, outreach workers and managers in neighbourhood centres is used to identify the type and range of provision that interest members of local communities. Most provision is unaccredited. There is some accredited provision on hairdressing programmes, but none in hospitality or beauty therapy courses.
37. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory overall. Learners receive appropriate support during lessons. Some learners are referred for literacy and numeracy to local learndirect programmes.

### **Leadership and management**

38. Curriculum leadership and management are insufficient. This area for improvement was also identified at the time of the previous inspection. There is insufficient planning for these programmes across the borough. There is no formal plan for the development of the sector subject area and individual centres work autonomously. There is insufficient use of management information to support the planning process. A wide of range of data is collected and regular data reports are available to staff and managers but these are not used effectively to monitor and plan improvements to the provision. Following a period of restructuring, a curriculum champion was very recently appointed for the hair and beauty area. However, a curriculum champion has not yet been appointed in hospitality.
39. Communication between the ACL team, centre managers and tutors is satisfactory. All staff have access to the Council intranet and receive regular information about the provision during meetings. Regular performance management meetings are held between managers and staff, which focus on problem-solving and the recruitment of new learners.
40. Programme planning is late. Learners on hairdressing programmes are aware of potential progression routes, but many learners and tutors are unaware of the progression opportunities available in subsequent academic terms.
41. A team of trained staff carries out classroom observations of teaching and learning routinely. However, they are not always vocational specialists and judgements are focused on tutor activities rather than on the levels of learning and attainment. The ACL team's lesson observation grades are higher than those awarded during inspection. A number of tutors are new to teaching; a few have no teaching qualifications and have not yet been observed in practice. Some tutors have few vocational qualifications or limited vocational experience. Staff holding assessor awards have not updated their qualification to the new standard.

42. The self-assessment report is insufficiently self-critical. The report published in December 2006 does not contain judgements supported by sufficient evidence. It simply restates two strengths reported in the main inspection of 2003 that partially apply to the newly defined area of learning.
43. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Learners receive relevant information during their induction. Learners have an adequate understanding of the complaints and appeals procedures. Some accommodation is difficult to access for learners with very restricted mobility. Participation rates by male learners are low. In 2006/07 only 18% of learners are male. There is no effective strategy to engage more male learners.

## **Leisure, travel and tourism**

### **Inadequate: Grade 4**

#### **Context**

44. There are 762 learners on programmes. All courses are non-accredited. Courses are offered in yoga, tai chi, swimming, pilates and gentle exercise and fitness. Most courses are mixed ability. Thirty eight per cent of classes are offered during the day. Courses are offered in venues across the borough, including community and adult learning centres and school halls. Most sessions are one to two hours in duration. Twenty four tutors are employed in this area of learning. There are two specialist curriculum managers who support teaching staff and centre managers.

#### **Strengths**

- Good arrangements for induction
- Good accommodation

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Too much unsatisfactory teaching
- Inadequate reinforcement of safe working practices in lessons
- Undeveloped curriculum leadership
- Ineffective of quality assurance

#### **Achievement and standards**

45. Standards of learners work are satisfactory. Learners in sport classes develop good skills and fitness. In exercise to music classes, learners demonstrate good levels of stamina in the performance of step sequences. Pilates learners show good posture and balance and in yoga classes learners use breathing techniques to aid relaxation well. However, in a number of classes learners make slow progress and performed practices poorly. Performance of skills in these classes is inaccurate and learners are unable to complete more advanced exercises and postures.

46. Most learners achieve the learning goals identified for their group. Many group learning outcomes are not sufficiently challenging. Personal learning goals are not always identified or routinely assessed. Provider data shows that retention is currently 91%. Attendance in the observed classes is satisfactory.

#### **Quality of provision**

47. Monitoring and assessment of progress are satisfactory. Most learners have individual learning plans, although the quality of tutor comment varies. Learner goals are brief, but adequately understood by learners. Group learning outcomes are insufficiently challenging for many learners. Community learning goals are not routinely identified. This area for improvement is identified in the self-assessment report.

48. The range of classes is satisfactory. Forty eight classes were running at the time of inspection. There are classes during the day and in the evening. Some provision is for

women only and for those aged over sixty. Forty per cent of classes are yoga, 21% are keep fit and 17% are Pilates.

49. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Arrangements for induction are good; which was identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. All learners receive a very effective induction at the first lesson of their course. Much information is provided about the programme and the centre. Learners are made aware of the learning nature of their programmes and that their progress will be monitored and assessed. Learners are aware of complaints procedures. Learners' understanding of equality and diversity is developed throughout and referral for support is arranged during induction.
50. Much teaching and learning is inadequate. This area for improvement was identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. In better classes, the content is well structured with a variety of activities where learners practice their skills in different situations. Group and partner work is used well in these classes. In weaker classes, tutors spend too long practicing exercises themselves rather than correcting learners. Alternative exercises, to accommodate the full range of ability in groups, are not offered. Tutors make few links with the wider health benefits that exercise can offer. In one class, less advanced learners had to wait for advanced exercises to be completed before they could continue. Most tutors have lesson plans and schemes of work that are fit for purpose. A number of tutors use their own form of lesson planning documents. In some cases planning is too brief. Where there are no specific plans for each lesson tutors refer back to the over-arching scheme of work.
51. Reinforcement of safe working practices is ineffective. Learners in high impact and fast moving activities are not asked to remove jewellery such as necklaces and earrings. Other learners took part in classes wearing socks. Their risk of slipping is higher. In a number of lessons, learners are not warned about the potential of some exercises to inflame pre-existing injuries. Risk assessment is a feature of the better lessons and centres, but physical activity hazards are not always identified.

### **Leadership and management**

52. The accommodation used by learners is generally good. Lighting, space and heating are good. Noise levels are controlled well to allow effective relaxation and meditation. Rooms are clean and classes have the benefit of specialist rooms in some circumstances. For example, one Pilates class is able to use the dance studio. A number of rooms are newly decorated. This strength was recognised in the self-assessment report.
53. Learner resources are satisfactory. Most learners have mats in exercise classes and there is adequate of buoyancy aids in swimming classes. Staff qualifications are satisfactory. Most staff have vocational and occupational qualifications in their teaching subject and a number have adult education qualifications. Partnership arrangements with groups such as the Dudley Autism Resource Team (DART) are good. Managers have worked effectively to make the swimming pool available to the group. Learners are supported by volunteers during the deliver of their programme.
54. Implementation of the process to recognise and record progress and achievement is satisfactory. Tutors have received effective support at some centres in the development of the process. However, identification of personal learning goals is weak and few learners identify community goals on their individual learning plans. This is identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report.



55. Promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. ACL team runs classes for women and groups from minority ethnic backgrounds. Communication is satisfactory. There are regular staff meetings and an annual conference. Part time, sessional staff do not have access to service email.
56. Curriculum leadership is underdeveloped. Two curriculum leaders have recently been appointed. However, there is no formal vision for the provision, linked to local or regional strategies. Sharing of good practice is not routinely carried out. A number of teaching staff are unaware of the specialist curriculum support available.
57. Quality assurance is ineffective. Judgements in the 2005/06 self-assessment report are not sufficiently supported with evidence. For example, the grade profile of observed sessions does not support the identified strength. Document control is weak as staff use a variety of versions of record documents.

## **Arts, media and publishing**

### **Good: Grade 2**

#### **Context**

58. This area is the second largest area of learning within ACL having 1917 learners. Most learners are between 45 – 65 years old, 146 have a disability and many are recruited from areas of socio-economic deprivation within the borough. There are 463 male learners. Nine hundred and ninety seven new learners registered at the beginning of this term. The background of learners broadly reflects the ethnic diversity within the population of the borough. Much of the provision is delivered after 6pm, with some daytime provision. Some classes are negotiated to be delivered at different times to suit the personal needs of learners. All the courses offered are non-accredited.

#### **Strengths**

- Outstanding skills development by arts and crafts learners
- Highly effective teaching in arts and crafts subjects
- Well-targeted provision to meet the needs of local communities

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Unsatisfactory development of skills in music and dance programmes
- Weak aspects of curriculum management

#### **Achievement and standards**

59. Outstanding skills development is evident in the work and portfolios of arts and crafts learners, who form the majority in this provision. This was recognised in the self-assessment report. Learners design and produce very attractive work and products. They demonstrate excellent technical ability and use craft tools safely and effectively. Learners who have only recently started have acquired technical abilities beyond those that might be expected. Sketches and paintings are of a very high standard and show a range of techniques and styles. One learner has been asked to illustrate a book following an exhibition of his work with the group.

60. Certificates designed by tutors are used to celebrate completion of courses in some instances. These tutors have also organised exhibition of learners work.

61. There is insufficient development of technical skills in music and dance programmes. Lesson aims are not clearly understood by learners. Insufficient emphasis is placed on the development of appropriate skills. Music learners do not have a clear understanding of elementary chord progressions and hand positions.

#### **Quality of provision**

62. Teaching in arts and crafts programmes is highly effective. Lessons are well planned and enjoyable. The aims of each lesson are clearly stated with a very good focus on the

development of skills. Tutors are very enthusiastic and motivational. Additional staff provide good support for technical skills. Very detailed, helpful advice and tips on techniques are given to learners. Tutors give critical, constructive feedback. Learners fully engage in lessons and provide very effective, informal support to each other. Learners are very effectively supported in completing the planned tasks. However, some music tutors are untrained and do not communicate basic instructions sufficiently clearly.

63. There are some very good examples of the embedding of skills for life subjects in the delivery of a number of subjects. In particular, language, numeracy and literacy skills are effectively delivered within craft activities carried out in the Asian Women's Craft project. The project also engages women who have mental health problems, with low self-esteem and living in isolation. Improved self-confidence and sense of community are also promoted. The learners are not always aware of these outcomes.
64. Initial assessment is satisfactory in identifying the support needs of most learners. Several tutors in arts subjects have created their own documents to record learner achievement. Many learners do not accurately recognise their learning targets. Physical readiness questionnaires are not always evident in dance tutors' or music tutors' records.
65. Resources to support learning are adequate. Rooms are generally clean and well lit, with appropriate range of small equipment for learners to use. Arts and crafts tutors provide additional resources to enable learners to complete tasks. Some dance lessons are held in cold rooms with restricted floor space.
66. Support for learners is satisfactory. Arts and craft learners are well supported by tutors and additional support staff. Music learners however, have poor recollection of their induction and support arrangements.

### **Leadership and management**

67. The curriculum management team are highly supportive of the staff and learners. Communication between the curriculum managers, adult learning centre managers, community workers, learning champions and the extended school network is effective.
68. The provider targets the provision well and widens participation through working in deprived communities. Good awareness of equal opportunities is evident and there is a good balance of gender, ethnic and socio-economic background, as well as learners with disabilities. In one area, the number of males participating has risen to 30% and the number of learners from minority ethnic groups has doubled this year from 3% to 6%. Many projects are new and so it is too soon to judge their effectiveness.
69. Aspects of curriculum management are weak. The area has a large number of part time tutors. Many do not have teaching qualifications. Tutors who receive an unsatisfactory lesson observation are observed again within three months. Good practice is not effectively shared across the provision. Many tutors do not fully understand the procedures for recognising and recording progress and achievement and the reasons for its' introduction. Curriculum managers have offered some training opportunities but these have not reached all tutors. The new paperwork has not been successfully established in the teaching process although tutors provide much good, informal feedback and brief notes in individual learning plans.

## **Preparation for life and work**

### **Satisfactory: Grade 3**

#### **Context**

70. Dudley MBC has 13 preparation for life and work ACL courses, three independent living courses for learners with learning difficulties, four literacy or numeracy, four ESOL courses and two pre-employment programmes. Adult and community learning courses are delivered in seven venues by nine part time tutors. A full time tutor is also the curriculum leader. There are 145 learners enrolled on the provision at the time of the inspection.
71. The council also holds a contract for employability programmes for unemployed learners. Future Skills Dudley, a training provider within the borough council, manages this provision with delivery sites in Dudley, Smethwick and West Bromwich. Twenty-five learners currently access provision delivered by two tutors at Future skills Dudley, and 44 learners access the subcontracted provision by Pertemps People Development Group. Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) staff provide initial advice and guidance to the learners in Sandwell.
72. There are two levels to the programme. The foundation programme for learners at pre-entry, or Entry Level 1, concentrates on language, literacy and numeracy skills requirements. The full Employability Programme is for learners assessed at Entry Level 2, or above. All learners work towards improving literacy (or ESOL) and numeracy, and those on the employability programme also work towards an accredited employability award and undertake a work-placement.

#### **Strengths**

- Good development of learners' confidence and skills
- High retention rates
- Strong partnerships to target provision
- Good personal support for learners on employability programmes
- Good quality improvement arrangements on employability programmes

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Poor punctuality and attendance in adult and community learning
- Insufficient use of individual learning targets in sessions
- Insufficient access to ICT in classrooms
- Insufficiently developed curriculum management in adult and community learning

#### **Achievement and standards**

73. Learners' develop good confidence and skills. Learners, with low self-esteem and qualifications, improve their motivation, confidence, and communication skills. They

improve their numeracy and literacy skills. Their acquisition of social and workplace skills is good. Learners work well together and are proud of their achievements. Learners' progression on to higher-level courses or employment and their achievement of nationally recognised qualifications is satisfactory. The standard of learners' work in relation to their learning goals is satisfactory.

74. Retention rates are high. On the employability programme, retention is 87% and on adult and community learning courses retention rates range from 85% to 100%.
75. On some adult and community learning programmes, punctuality and attendance are poor. The late arrival of some learners in sessions is disruptive to both their learning and the learning of others. On a few courses, attendance levels are very poor at 53% and 55%.

### Quality of provision

76. Partnerships with other providers, colleges, and voluntary and community groups are strong and used well to develop the provision. Partners communicate well and effectively share information and resources. The flexible delivery of programmes suits the learners' needs. Partnerships support the strategic aim of targeting the deprived areas of the borough and tackling unemployment.
77. Very effective personal support is provided for learners on employability programmes. Staff have a good understanding of the difficult personal and social issues learners face. They offer practical support, such as providing clothes for interview. Tutors are able to offer advice on many issues; such as benefits and welfare advice. A support officer is available to assist learners with portfolio-building. The quality and accessibility of information, advice, and guidance to learners in relation to courses and programmes is satisfactory. Some learners benefit from the advice provided by **nextstep** accredited advisers located in neighbourhood learning centres.
78. The quality of teaching and learning overall is satisfactory with some well planned and motivational teaching on employability programmes. There is good use of practical resources in some ACL sessions. However, insufficient use is made of individual learning targets to plan lessons that accurately meet the needs of learners. Although initial assessment and individual learning plans are satisfactory, they are insufficiently used to plan learning activities. Some sessions focus too much on group activities and not sufficiently on individual learning outcomes.

### Leadership and management

79. The quality improvement arrangements for employability programmes are good with effective use of data to improve the provision. This provision benefits from the good range of quality improvement strategies used for its Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) provision. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. Management information is accurate, understood by the provider and used well to improve the provision. Strong service level agreements and rigorous quality monitoring of the subcontracted provision drive forward the improvements in the provision. Learner feedback is used well to bring about improvements to the quality of the provision. Observations of teaching and learning and the self-assessment process are effective. Staff development is satisfactory. Most tutors have or are working towards subject specific Level 4 qualifications in literacy or numeracy.

80. The promotion and monitoring of equality of opportunity so that all learners achieve their potential is satisfactory. Processes to recognise and record achievement in non-accredited learning are sufficiently established.
81. There is insufficient provision of ICT in teaching rooms. Learners do not have enough opportunity to work independently using ICT in literacy and numeracy sessions. Electronic whiteboards are not available in most classes and tutors sometimes use poor quality flip charts which learners find difficult to read. Accommodation is satisfactory although some teaching rooms are cramped. There are too few stimulating and interesting books provided to promote reading.
82. Curriculum leadership and management of the ACL provision is insufficiently developed. There is insufficient use of management information to improve the provision. Analysis and use of data on learners' achievements and progression is insufficient. Monitoring of provision in centres does not sufficiently focus on the curriculum area and action plans are insufficient to improve the provision. The skills for life strategy is not fully implemented or impacting on the delivery of the provision. For example, there is little established provision in other curriculum areas and although signposting to other provision is a key aspect of the strategy, there is little monitoring of the effectiveness of this activity. The observation of teaching and learning does not adequately cover all aspects of the provision. Some observations have insufficient focus on learning. There is insufficient sharing of good practice. The self-assessment process is satisfactory although the report did not identify the areas for improvement found on inspection.

## Family learning

### Good: Grade 2

#### Context

83. The ACL team offers family literacy language and numeracy (FLLN) and wider family learning (WFL) programmes in schools, nurseries, children's centres, and community venues. At the time of the inspection, 895 learners were on family learning programmes.

84. FLLN is directly managed by the family learning manager. Management of WFL is split between the family learning manager, cross-service community learning co-ordinators, and adult centre managers through service level agreements. On intensive FLLN programmes learners may work towards national literacy or numeracy qualifications. WFL offers courses from ten areas of learning. There are currently 9 adult tutors for the FLLN programme and 28 for wider family learning.

#### Strengths

- Good development of learners' skills and confidence
- High pass rates for learners taking national literacy and numeracy qualifications
- Very effective partnership working to increase participation in priority neighbourhoods
- Good progression of learners to further learning, employment and voluntary activities

#### Areas for improvement

- Inadequate curriculum management in some centres
- Low and declining participation by men

#### Achievement and standards

85. Learners develop good skills and confidence. Parents learn to support their children by integrating learning into games and everyday activities that they can use at home. For example, parents help their children learn mathematics by applying their improved understanding of mathematical principles. In a resuscitation session, parents demonstrated good skills of dealing with choking. In wider family learning classes parents and children enjoy developing skills together, such as arts and crafts, and music. The increased skills and confidence of parents have positive impact on children. Tutors recognise enhanced attainment and behaviour of children of parents on the programmes.

86. Pass rates for learners taking national literacy and numeracy qualifications are high in 2006/07 at 86%. Pass rates have increased since the ACL team started offering national qualifications in its own right. Retention levels are good at 92% and attendance at 84% in 2006/07.

87. There is good progression of learners to further learning, employment, and voluntary activities. 80% of FLLN learners go on to further study. At one centre, 70 learners have progressed to teaching assistant training over the previous three years. Many have subsequently gained employment. At one primary school, parents from family learning courses are now running after-school clubs and three have become parent governors.

#### Quality of provision

88. Teaching and learning are good overall. Imaginative activities are effectively used to engage parents and children in learning. A teach your child to swim course includes imaginative number and colour recognition activities in the pool. Joint sessions with children are well planned and structured. For example, parents discuss the value of establishing household routines, and support their children in activities linked to meal and bedtime routines. In the better joint sessions, there are separate learning outcomes for parents and children. Information from initial assessment and individual learning plans is used effectively in session planning. However, in the weaker wider family learning classes a narrow subject focus limits opportunities for broader learning.
89. Initial assessment and monitoring of learning progress are satisfactory. Learners are given appropriate feedback as they practise skills, and in turn give praise and encouragement to their children. In the better sessions there is good collection of evidence of achievement. For example, on a music programme parents produce a booklet with photographs of their child, song words and record what they have learned. In weaker sessions, recognising and recording progress and achievement is not adapted for particular contexts. Initial assessment was recognised as an area for improvement in the self-assessment report.
90. Resources are satisfactory. Resources for FLLN are good. ICT equipment is provided from the council resources centre. FLLN teaching and learning resources are shared between tutors.
91. The good range of wider family learning activities provides non-threatening starting points for learning for parents and grandparents with few or no qualifications and negative experiences of school. Programmes are developed through consultation with parents and partner organisations.
92. Support for learners is satisfactory. In FLLN sessions differentiation is effectively built into activities. Tutors give additional support where needed. In some courses, a support worker provides additional support.



## Leadership and management

93. Very effective partnership working increases participation in priority neighbourhoods. The family learning strategy group includes a wide range of partners such as schools, libraries, children's centres, museums and public health. Partners help the ACL team to reach priority learners and consult on their needs and interests. Partners also recruit learners, often through word of mouth. The extended schools partnership supports the *Every Child Matters* agenda. A partnership with Dudley Asian Women's centre is used to identify learning opportunities for Asian women.
94. Equality of opportunity is good with positive action taken to engage new learners from minority ethnic groups. In Halesowen, Yemeni parents now participate in family learning courses and this has enhanced integration within the community. The ACL team definition of family is inclusive and recognises the many different types of family. Promotion of diversity in the curriculum is stronger in FLLN than in wider family learning. Retention and achievement rates by different groups are not effectively analysed.
95. Quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory. Learner feedback and course data is collected and used for quality improvement. Contracted staff have annual performance reviews. Support for tutors is particularly good for directly managed staff. The self-assessment report is appropriately evaluative and corresponds with many of the findings of inspectors.
96. Curriculum management in some centres is inadequate. In wider family learning the quality of the provision is inconsistent. Strategic planning and integration of wider family learning with FLLN is good. However, in some centres wider family learning is managed within a centre or subject context, and integration with family learning is inadequate. Most tutors are part-time and have little contact with other family learning tutors. Not all WFL tutors attend training.
97. Participation by men is low and numbers have declined from 16% in 2004/05, to 11% in 2006/07. This is recognised as an area for improvement in the self-assessment report, and some action has been taken to attract more men through technology based activities, such as making and launching a rocket, and 'Dads and lads' programmes.