

Cumbria Adult Education Service

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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.

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), 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:

- Sport, leisure and recreation
- Arts, media and publishing
- Languages, literature and culture
- Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages
- Independent living and leisure skills
- Family learning

Description of the provider

1. Cumbria Adult Education Service (CAES) is part of the Children's Services Directorate of Cumbria County Council. CAES receives funding from the local LSC to provide adult and community learning (ACL), further education (FE), and work-based learning. CAES directly manages its Train to Gain programme, and provision for family learning and skills for life. Most FE and ACL is delivered through adult education centres based in schools and community development centres which are mostly based in small village schools or community centres. CAES also contracts with one college of FE, and four private organisations.
2. Cumbria is the second largest county in England. Much of the county is sparsely populated. The major centres of population are separated by long distances. In 2005 the population of Cumbria was 498,900, of whom 80% were economically active. In economic terms, Cumbria is the worst performing sub-region in the UK. Currently 24 localities are in the most deprived 10% areas in the country, and within that seven areas are in the bottom 3%. Unemployment rates vary widely across the county. Eden district has the lowest unemployment rate in England, at 2.1%. Overall the unemployment rate is 4.3% which is slightly below the regional average of 5.2%, but in some areas, such as Barrow in Furness, it is above the regional and national averages. The minority ethnic population of Cumbria is very small. At the 2001 census 98% of residents were white British, compared with 92% in the North West region and 87% in England. In recent years some areas have experienced a growth in the number of migrants from the new EU countries.
3. The management arrangements for CAES have been restructured since the previous inspection. The service is led by a head of service supported by a senior education officer and a management team of five which includes managers with responsibility for data and quality. The sector subject areas are each led by a part-time adult subject leader. Teachers are managed by the subcontracting adult education and community development centres.
4. The inspection covered provision in six sector subject areas, with almost 9,000 learners at the time of the inspection. Other sector subject areas, and the Train to Gain programme, were sampled through the paired observation process and information from all areas was used to inform judgements.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Sector subject area

Sport, leisure and recreation	Good: Grade 2
Arts, media and publishing	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Languages, literature and culture	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages	Good: Grade 2
Independent living and leisure skills	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Family learning	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

5. The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory, as are the service's arrangements for equality of opportunity. The quality of provision and support for learners are satisfactory. The range of courses is good. The quality of provision in art, publications and media, languages, literature and culture, preparation for life and work, and family learning is satisfactory. The provision in leisure, travel and tourism and literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) is good.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

6. CAES demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve. The service improved the overall quality of its provision after its inspection in 2003, when it was judged inadequate, to adequate at the 2004 reinspection. Since then, it has restructured its management to address changing priorities. Considerable changes to the curriculum have been made to meet new government targets. The service has managed the period of change well. The collection, use and analysis of data has improved, though it is still insufficiently used at course and programme level. Many improvements to quality arrangements have been made, although not all of these have made a significant impact so far. The quality improvement plan contains sufficient detail and actions to resolve weaknesses but does not focus on improving satisfactory or better provision. Satisfactory arrangements have been introduced for the observation of teaching and learning but implementation is still in progress and in some areas the system has yet to produce improvements in teaching. Similarly, procedures for recognising and recording learners' progress and achievement (RARPA) are in place but not all teachers are using them to improve learning. The service acknowledges that the quality of implementation of some of its new procedures varies considerably and is working to improve consistency. Since the previous inspection, CAES has maintained the quality of its provision overall. Provision in leisure and tourism and literacy, numeracy and ESOL has improved since the previous inspection, but provision in art, media and publishing has declined from good to satisfactory. All other areas remain satisfactory.
7. Self-assessment is satisfactory. The self-assessment process is inclusive and takes into account the views of learners, tutors and partners. The self-assessment report accurately identifies the main strengths and areas for improvement, but is insufficiently evaluative and self-critical in the sector subject areas. Data is not used sufficiently to inform judgements. Inspection grades were generally lower than those proposed in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- Good standards of learners' work in many areas
- Good range of provision

- Clear strategic direction and management of change
- Good partnership working
- Good support for learners

Key areas for improvement

- Success rates
- Planning and recording of learner progress
- Sharing of good practice
- Implementation of quality assurance procedures
- Use of data by managers

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

8. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. Retention rates are good. On personal and community development learning (PCDL) courses in 2006-07 overall retention was 87%, while on FE courses it was 86%. Success rates on FE courses declined to 71% in 2005-06, but improved to 73% in 2006-07 according to CAES data. Learners achieve particularly high standards of work in arts and sports classes, and develop good skills and confidence in most curriculum areas. Success rates on accredited courses are generally satisfactory, and are high in some areas such as outdoor recreation. In PCDL learners' progress is measured through the RARPA process. However, this process is not fully effective. Some sector subject areas have implemented it successfully, while in others target-setting and recording are ineffective.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

9. The quality of education and training is satisfactory. There is much good teaching. In the best lessons, teachers use resources well, inspire learners and encourage a high level of participation. Some lessons, however, lack variety and rely too heavily on the use of handouts. Many lesson plans do not sufficiently take account of individuals' learning needs. Initial assessment results are not always used effectively by tutors to plan learning. Insufficient use is made of information and learning technology. Assessment is satisfactory on accredited programmes. Training and assessment on vocational programmes are good. Resources and classrooms are generally satisfactory and in some centres they are good. Facilities in community learning venues have improved since the previous inspection. Specialist workshops are well resourced. Partnerships with other organisations are increasingly well used to share teaching resources.
10. CAES's provision of programmes to meet the needs of learners, employers, and the local community is good. Curriculum planning has improved since the previous inspection. Good use is made of short courses to target learners who would not otherwise enrol. Learners value the extensive range of provision and the varied locations and timings of community programmes. Progression opportunities are good in most sector subject areas. Centre managers review programmes regularly, taking into account learners' feedback, the county strategy, and local research. Joint planning with partner organisations has improved the range of community based programmes. Planning of Train to Gain programmes to meet the needs of local employers is good.
11. Support and guidance are satisfactory. Centres provide detailed pre-course information, which is well used to help learners choose appropriate courses. Learners value the support and encouragement they receive from teachers. Some teachers provide additional support, such as help with numeracy for accountancy learners. Good use is made of volunteers in some classes, for example, for entry level literacy learners with complex and diverse needs. Advice and guidance are satisfactory. Information on progression routes for most learners is generally satisfactory, though not enough learners on family learning programmes progress to accredited courses.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

12. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The management of change has been particularly good. Managers have set clear strategic priorities for curriculum development to meet local skill shortages, community priorities and the national skills agenda, during a period of changing national priorities and diminishing funding. CAES has reduced management posts, and expanded provision for accredited courses, work-based learning, and skills for life. Non-accredited provision has significantly reduced, but CAES has preserved a broad range of programmes in most curriculum areas across the county.
13. The planning and co-ordination of county-wide provision is good. CAES works well with a diverse range of partners to widen participation, and improve the quality of teaching accommodation and resources. This collaboration has also helped to identify local needs and reduce duplication of provision. CAES recognises the gaps in provision for entry level and pre-entry level programmes in rural areas and is working to address this. Curriculum management is satisfactory. The quality of provision in all sector subject areas is satisfactory or better, and achievements are in line with national averages. Current learners are making satisfactory progress. Health and safety arrangements are satisfactory. The management of provision delivered directly by CAES is good. The skills for life strategy has been well-implemented. Train to Gain provision is well-managed, with good retention and a high success rate of 83%.
14. CAES monitors the performance of the 44 subcontracting centres well against detailed service level agreements. Curriculum leaders work with centre managers to support improvements in teaching. However, in many sector subject areas, curriculum leaders have insufficient time to cover all the centres. Communications are good. Regular bulletins are sent to all centres, regular curriculum and centre manager meetings are held, and the CAES website provides good access to a wide range of information, policies and documents.
15. Quality improvement mechanisms are insufficiently effective. The quality framework has been revised and updated and the new procedures for the observation of teaching and learning and RARPA are thorough and comprehensive. However, the observation of teaching and learning process is not sufficiently critical. Grades awarded to teaching sessions are sometimes overgenerous, and key areas for improvement are not always identified and discussed with tutors. Although all tutors have received RARPA training, practice is still weak in most curriculum areas. Arrangements for self-assessment are satisfactory, but most self-assessment reports are not sufficiently self-critical.
16. Data collection has improved since the previous inspection, but data is insufficiently used to inform decision-making. Centre managers do not have online access to data and have not received enough training in using it, for example in the self-assessment process. Data returns from centres are often late. Data analysis is not systematically carried out to identify under-participating or under-performing groups, although work on this has recently started.

17. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. CAES works well to engage marginalised and vulnerable adults in learning. Partnerships with employers support the provision of workplace skills for life and vocational training. The service is successfully reaching new learners. Some 70% of learners in 2006-07 are new to learning and 46% of PCDL and 24% of FE learners receive fee concessions. The recruitment of learners from Eastern European countries has significantly increased. Most centres are accessible to learners with mobility difficulties. CAES works hard to recruit more men into learning, but their representation remains low.

18. Promotion of equality and diversity is insufficient. Few tutors have received recent updates in diversity issues. Equality and diversity are not routinely discussed at team meetings. CAES meets the five outcomes of *Every Child Matters* adequately. Checks by the Criminal Records Bureau are completed routinely for all staff who work with children or vulnerable adults. Arrangements for recording disclosures are satisfactory.

What learners like:

- ‘Tutor support and guidance – explanations at your level’
- ‘The teachers will support you to go as far as you can’
- Good friendly atmosphere
- Mutual support
- ‘I can get a nationally-recognised qualification’
- ‘Learning new skills’ (numeracy learners)
- Access to computers on a drop-in basis
- Teachers make learning fun
- The social and health benefits (on sports courses)
- Accessibility of courses
- Courses for families – learning new sports for parents and children
- Being encouraged to speak a new language
- Friendly administrative staff in centres

What learners think could improve:

- 'Earlier start time' (for an evening class)
- 'More free courses'
- 'Information about information and communication technology (ICT) as a skill for life'
- 'More volunteers for individual support' (Entry level literacy learners)
- 'Shorter summer holidays!'
- 'Two hours is too short for craft classes'
- Car parking at some centres
- 'Some of the accommodation is cold and uncomfortable and I don't like having to change rooms and venues either'
- The county adult education brochure needs to be more user friendly
- Excessive paperwork
- Changing venues when exams are on

Sector subject areas

Sport, leisure and recreation

Good: Grade 2

Context

19. CAES currently offers 234 courses in fifteen sport and recreation subject areas. In 2006-07, 97 learners enrolled on 14 accredited programmes. These include canoeing, mountain leadership, water safety and access to sports studies (outdoor education). On non-accredited programmes, 2,490 learners were enrolled on courses such as yoga, tai chi, pilates, boxercise, keep fit, golf, rock climbing, and tennis. In 2007-08 a total of 1,649 learners enrolled on sport and leisure programmes. Courses are offered at all times of the day, evening and weekends and most run for between five and thirty weeks. The provision is delivered in 22 centres which include church halls, schools, colleges, adult education centres, community centres, and specialist outdoor education centres, covering the whole county. In 2006-07, 17% of learners were male, 0.4% had a disability or learning difficulty, 0.03% were from minority ethnic groups, and 16% were over the age of 65. In sport and leisure there is one curriculum leader who is employed for six hours per week. There are 57 part-time tutors teaching between one to ten hours per week.

Strengths

- Good success rates on short accredited outdoor education courses
- Very good health and social benefits for older learners and those with medical conditions
- Much good teaching and learning
- Very broad range of provision to meet learners needs

Areas for improvement

- Insufficiently thorough assessment practice on non-accredited provision
- Insufficiently developed quality improvement mechanisms

Achievement and standards

20. Success rates on short accredited outdoor education courses are good at 97% for 2006-07 and they have been consistently high over the last three years. Retention and achievement on long accredited courses are satisfactory. In 2006-07 retention was 75% and the success rate was 68%. Retention rates have remained stable over the last three years. The average attendance rate in 2006-07 was 79%. Progression onto other programmes within the provision is satisfactory.
21. Health and social benefits for older learners and those with medical conditions are very good. Older learners report significant improvements to their muscular skeletal conditions and experience benefits to their physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being. They report improvements in cardiovascular fitness, relief from injuries and medically diagnosed conditions, greater mobility, and improved ability to perform everyday tasks. Many learners experience reduction in stress levels and improved sleep patterns. For the learners attending cardiac rehabilitation classes the benefits of exercise upon their health is particularly significant.

Quality of provision

22. Teaching and learning is good. Learners participate in a range of enjoyable and stimulating activities. Tutor and learner interaction is often good with enthusiastic discussion and self-reflection. In the best sessions, tutors carefully monitor and assist learner performance which results in improved exercise technique and skills. In the poorer sessions, there is little support for individual learners and insufficient emphasis on the correct technique.
23. The provision is very broad and meets the learners' needs well. Currently 234 courses are offered in 15 different subject areas and these are distributed well throughout Cumbria. Many subjects offer clear progression routes onto higher level programmes, and there is a good range of accredited and non-accredited courses. Over half the learners enrolled in 2007-08 are new learners. Resources to support learning are satisfactory, with appropriately equipped suitable venues. Tutors have appropriate qualifications for the courses that they teach.
24. Referral systems for learners with medical conditions are good. CAES receives referrals from Morecambe Bay Primary Health Care Trust with whom good partnership links have been developed.
25. Guidance and support is satisfactory. Learners receive sufficient information before enrolment through publications and course information sheets which are also available on the service website. Sufficient support is provided for learners and information about progression opportunities is adequate.
26. Assessment practice on non-accredited provision is inadequate. Although some group learning goals are identified, little attention is paid to the collection of individual learning aims. Initial assessment to determine learners' levels of fitness at the start of the programme, and formal monitoring and recording of progress is inadequate, particularly in relation to individual learner goals. In many sessions, specific feedback to individual learners about their performance and progress is insufficient.

Leadership and management

27. Curriculum leadership is satisfactory. However, quality improvement mechanisms are insufficiently developed. The observation of teaching and learning process has been established, but has not yet impacted on the quality of teaching. The quality of lesson observation reports is variable. Some lessons are over or undergraded, and the grades awarded do not always reflect the content of the report. Tutor action plans do not always include the identified areas for improvement. However, there has been some improvement to the quality of recent lesson observation reports.
28. Self-assessment is satisfactory. Mechanisms to obtain learner feedback are effective. Tutors complete course reviews which are analysed by the centre managers. However, data is not sufficiently used to inform the self-assessment process or to identify targets for improvement. The self-assessment report did not identify all the strengths and areas for improvement identified during inspection.

29. Staff development sessions are poorly attended, although there have been recent efforts to improve this. The identification of and opportunities for sharing good practice are insufficient. Most tutors undertake professional development although it is not formally monitored by centre managers and the service.
30. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The range of classes to target older learners and those with particular medical conditions and needs is good. Some attempts have been made to recruit more male learners who are under-represented in this curriculum area. Recent equality and diversity training for tutors has been insufficient.

Arts, media and publishing

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

31. Arts, media and publishing represents a quarter of the total provision for Cumbria, with 3,499 PCDL and 299 FE learners in the week of inspection when 215 courses were running. Male learners total 24% of enrolments. Currently 91% of classes are non-accredited. Classes are in a variety of subjects including jewellery, art, upholstery, watercolour painting, dress making, mixed media, pottery, writing for publication, salsa dancing and patchwork and quilting. Most PCDL courses run for five or ten weeks a term in two hour sessions. Some courses, such as jewellery making, are one day courses. Most take place during the week, with both daytime and evening sessions

available. There are some taster sessions and provision at weekends and in the summer. Courses run at 41 main adult education centres with a number of outreach venues linked to them, such as libraries, community centres and social centres. There are 116 part-time tutors working in this subject area. A curriculum leader has five hours each week to monitor this area of learning.

Strengths

- Good standard of learners' work
- Some inspiring teaching
- Wide range of courses

Areas for improvement

- Slow implementation of appropriate quality systems
- Insufficient sharing of good practice
- Poor use of data

Achievement and standards

32. The standard of learners' work is good. For example, in printing, learners design and produce collagraphs and etchings to a high standard. Learners' work is displayed in local venues. Attendance during the inspection was good at 89%.
33. Achievement is satisfactory. Most courses show satisfactory success rates. Retention, achievement and success rates are broadly in line with national averages.
34. Learners value their lessons and have good, friendly relationships with their tutors. Learners make good progress from their initial starting points. Many produce a high standard of work and some is outstanding.

Quality of provision

35. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Many teachers are practicing artists or craftsmen and women who are enthusiastic to share their skills and specialist knowledge. In the best lessons teachers have high expectations of learners. They ensure all learners are challenged and remain engaged. Most lesson planning is effective and meets the needs of both new and more experienced learners.
36. There is some inspiring teaching from highly qualified teachers. Teachers use their own work, and that of advanced students, to excite and inspire new learners. The best lessons were packed with stimulating activities and learners developed advanced creative and technical skills.
37. In less effective lessons the content is repetitive and changes little from week to week. In a minority of art and craft lessons there are no lesson plans. In these lessons teaching is uninspiring, focus upon underpinning basic design skills and colour awareness is insufficient and there is too much reliance on technique.
38. The range of provision is good, with a variety of first steps and widening participation classes offered, as well as a wide range of creative programmes. Centres have

partnerships with a variety of organisations to attract non-traditional learners into courses such as upholstery, to develop skills and lead to employment opportunities. Classes are held in a variety of locations accessible to learners. However, most planning is based on historical practice and there is little consultation with the community, or analysis of data to determine need. The publicity and marketing of classes is limited to an annual brochure and course information handouts. Some teachers market their own classes.

39. Support for learners is satisfactory. Useful induction checklists ensure the process is thorough and learners are advised of the support available.
40. RARPA documentation is being used in most classes to assess progress but there is little individual planning of learning or imaginative recording of learners' creative work. The potential of RARPA to enable learners to take more responsibility for the direction and pace of their own learning is unexplored and under-developed. Individual learning plans are not yet used to drive learning and teachers and learners do not fully appreciate the benefits.

Leadership and management

41. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Managers work together well as a team and tutors feel well supported. Managers are responsive to the needs of teachers and use email effectively to keep in touch.
42. The implementation of quality systems is slow. Some progress has been made since the previous inspection, but observation of teaching and learning grades are overgenerous. Agreed actions resulting from lesson observations are not sufficiently clear and are not always followed up. Teachers do not always receive timely feedback following observations.
43. Sharing of good practice is insufficient. The self-assessment report does not accurately identify all areas for improvement and action-planning is poor. Teachers complete course review forms, but these are brief with little reference to teaching or learning.
44. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory with some good specialist workshops. At some venues there are problems such as poor lighting, work surfaces and storage for equipment. Little use is made of ICT and many centres have no information technology (IT) resources. However, teachers in many classes communicate with learners using email and a useful website is in the process of development to exhibit learner work online. Staff development has been provided to support the implementation of RARPA.

Languages, literature and culture

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

45. CAES subcontracts this provision to 26 centres throughout the county. A part-time curriculum leader supports the delivery of the provision and advises centre managers and tutors on quality standards in teaching and learning. The curriculum leader is supported by two part-time curriculum co-ordinators. In 2006-07, 42% of learners were enrolled on FE accredited provision and 58% were enrolled on ACL programmes. Their achievement is recorded through RARPA. The number of enrolments in this programme area has reduced by 24% since 2004-05. The county offers a range of modern foreign languages, including Italian, Portuguese, Chinese Mandarin, Japanese, Polish and British sign language in a range of levels. Most courses are offered in the evening.

Strengths

- Good development of learners' confidence in language learning
- Good use of foreign language in introductory level courses
- Good range of programmes to meet the needs of learners

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient strategies to support individual learning and achievement
- Limited use of resources to stimulate learners and enhance teaching
- Ineffective quality improvement processes

Achievement and standards

46. Learners acquire good personal skills that enable them to develop confidence in language learning. They comment positively on their increased confidence when communicating with native speakers. They enjoy the opportunity, through active participation, to develop supportive friendships with other group members and say that this builds their confidence in speaking and understanding. Attainment of language skills is at an appropriate level for most learners. In the best lessons learners use the foreign language, both orally and in writing, with a good degree of fluency and accuracy.
47. Lessons are well attended and learners are punctual. Most learners who completed an accredited course in 2006-07 gained a qualification. Retention is satisfactory. In PCDL provision retention has been steady for the last three years at 80%, however, on accredited courses there has been a decline from 2005-06 to 2006-07 by 6%. Success rates are also satisfactory on accredited provision at 60%. On PCDL programmes success is measured using the RARPA framework. This was first introduced in 2006-07 and is still being developed so reliable data is not yet available.

Quality of provision

48. Tutors' use of foreign language to support learning is good, particularly in introductory courses. Some tutors make good use of body language and mime to facilitate understanding. This often adds to the learners' enjoyment and learners appreciate the opportunity to use the language. Tutors encourage learners to speak, even if they make mistakes in pronunciation, at an early stage. Tutors plan appropriate activities to encourage learners to interact with each other in pair and group work, using the foreign language. Tutors motivate learners to use the language by giving positive feedback in the class.
49. The range of programmes is good and meets the needs of existing and potential learners. Alongside the most widely spoken languages the provision includes some minority languages such as Polish, Dutch, Chinese, Japanese, Swedish and Finnish. New programmes have been set up in response to requests by the community, for instance Japanese and Dutch for people working in the tourist industry and Polish in response to recent migration of Polish workers. Effective relationships with schools support the location of programmes within local communities. In 2006-07 languages were introduced into family learning and there were 34 learners on First Steps languages programmes. Both accredited and non-accredited language courses attracted a significant number of new learners in 2006-07.
50. Learners receive satisfactory information, guidance and support before joining a course and while on programme. Individual centres publish informative leaflets and brochures, some of which are attractive and accessible. In addition some centres organise open days for information and advice. All learners receive an induction on their first session which includes course requirements and health and safety issues. Learners are well supported during their studies and staff are aware of who to contact to meet any additional learning support need.
51. Use of strategies to support individual learning and achievement is insufficient. Initial assessment is not effectively used to inform planning to meet differing needs within mixed ability groups. Individual learning plans are not used to support the progress and achievement of learners on accredited courses. Individualised learning goals are not set and reviewed. Tutors do not sufficiently address differing learning styles through a range of learning activities.
52. The use of resources to motivate learners and enhance teaching is limited. Many tutors rely solely on the use of whiteboard, handouts and text books to deliver lessons. Though some tutors use games effectively to reinforce learning, most tutors use a limited range of resources, some of which are of a poor quality. Multimedia resources are insufficiently used to support the development of speaking and listening skills. Little use is made of individual learning targets in the classroom to extend learning and encourage learner independence.

Leadership and management

53. The management of the curriculum is satisfactory. A large number of tutors receive appropriate information and advice via newsletters, emails and a well developed,

dedicated website. They feel well supported by the curriculum leader and the managers of the centres where they teach.

54. All centres conform to the county's equality of opportunities policies. Learners are treated with respect and feel that both administrative and academic staff are very helpful and approachable. However, there is little active promotion of equality and diversity in language lessons through the choice of relevant topics and materials.
55. Quality improvement processes are insufficiently effective. The self-assessment process is well established, but the report is not sufficiently evaluative and the targets set in the quality improvement plans are not always clear. Staff development is not yet making a significant impact on key issues for improvement, such as developing individualised learning. A comprehensive good practice guide has been produced by the curriculum leadership team, but has had a limited impact to date. Opportunities for sharing best practice are limited. Curriculum leadership is not provided for English language and literature.

Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages

Good: Grade 2

Context

56. Currently 48 courses in literacy, numeracy and ESOL are funded by the service. At the time of inspection there were 299 learners on these courses. Courses are held in 31 learning venues, including libraries, schools, employers' premises and a disability

association. Classes are held during the day and in the evenings. All courses are accredited at entry level and at levels 1 and 2.

57. Programmes are designed to attract a wide range of learners. In 2006-07, 792 learners were enrolled on literacy, numeracy and language programmes. Of these, 29% were men, 7% were from minority ethnic groups and 11% had a disability.
58. In addition to the skills manager, there are three part-time curriculum leaders and 37 skills for life tutors.

Strengths

- High retention rates
- Good success rates in literacy and numeracy at level 2
- Good development of learners' skills and confidence
- Good linking of literacy and ESOL with vocational skills
- Very effective partnership working
- Good management of change

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient emphasis on individual learning
- Insufficiently thorough quality assurance of teaching and learning

Achievement and standards

59. Achievements and standards are good. Retention rates at levels 1 and 2 in literacy, numeracy and ESOL are high and improving. Success rates at level 2 in literacy and numeracy are very good and satisfactory in numeracy at level 1. While success rates in literacy at level 1 and in ESOL at entry level are poor, they have improved significantly over the last year.
60. Learners' develop good skills and confidence. For instance, in literacy the quality of their writing improves as they become familiar with sentence construction and punctuation marks, while in numeracy they make good progress with fractions, decimals and percentages through structured practise. Learners' developing literacy, numeracy and language skills are able to give good help to their children, particularly with homework. Most learners are well-motivated and work hard in lessons. They speak highly about their improved skills and the beneficial impact they have on their self-confidence and self-esteem.

Quality of provision

61. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In ESOL some teaching is very good and some is outstanding. In the best literacy and numeracy classes teaching is enthusiastic and energetic. Learning activities are satisfactorily varied and the pace of learning is appropriate. Schemes of work and session plans are satisfactory. However, in some sessions learning outcomes are poorly defined, delivery is weak and practical work is inappropriate. Use of e-learning is insufficient and some learning materials are unsuitable for adult learners. In many lessons handouts and worksheets are overused.

Tutors do not critically evaluate the effectiveness of learning and teaching sufficiently and do not use the outcomes as a basis for bringing about improvements. Staff qualifications are satisfactory and a number of staff have achieved specialist qualifications in their subject area. Plans are in place to ensure that teachers who have not yet achieved these are able to do so.

62. Linking of literacy and ESOL with vocational skills is good. Contextualised learning materials in literacy and ESOL are very good. Programmes such as Move-On Carefully, Literacy through Report Writing, Literacy through Personal Presentation Skills, and Literacy and Curriculum Vitae Writing have proved very successful with employers and learners who see them as highly relevant to personal and vocational development.
63. Very effective partnership working has led to the provision of learning support workers in schools, libraries and in employment situations. The service provides a good range of programmes in locally accessible venues. Geographical coverage of literacy and numeracy at levels 1 and 2 is good. However, provision in literacy and numeracy at entry level, particularly in the west of the county and in some rural areas, is insufficient. The authority is aware of this and is trying to attract hard to reach learners. Support for learners is good. Tutors provide effective personal and academic support which makes a positive contribution to learners' progress.
64. Emphasis on individual learning is insufficient and there is too much class teaching. Initial assessment is satisfactory but diagnostic assessment is not always used effectively as a basis for planning individual learning programmes that give learners opportunities to eliminate identified weaknesses as quickly as possible. Many learners do not have clear long- and short-term learning targets to guide their learning and against which to measure their progress. In many cases individual learning plans are poorly used and sometimes not completed.

Leadership and management

65. Leadership and management are good. Strategic direction and leadership are clear and the skills for life provision is well planned and co-ordinated throughout the county. The service uses performance indicators effectively to measure its success. Relevant individual and team meetings are held regularly and most staff are satisfactorily acquainted with the work of the service. The number of part-time tutors has recently been reduced to improve the monitoring of the provision. Satisfactory staff training opportunities are available to all staff.
66. Management of change is good. The service used an external change agent to offer informed and impartial advice on curriculum reorganisation. All the skills for life provision is now delivered directly by the service and staffing resources have been rationalised. The provision of accredited learning programmes has grown significantly over a short period of time in line with the government's priorities. The expansion of the skills for life provision has been well-managed. Curriculum leaders provide good curriculum support in literacy, numeracy and ESOL. However, the fractional nature of these managerial positions limits the amount of time post-holders can devote to their leadership roles.

67. Quality assurance and improvement of teaching and learning are insufficient. Observed teaching sessions are overgraded. Insufficient attention is given to learning, too much emphasis is placed on teaching and the grades awarded do not always reflect the comments made by observers. The self-assessment report identifies most areas for improvement, but is too descriptive and insufficiently judgemental. Opportunities for identifying and sharing good practice are insufficient.

Independent living and leisure skills

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

68. Currently 362 learners attend provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. On FE funded programmes there are 208 learners and 154 learners are on PCDL programmes. Learners on FE provision work towards open college qualifications. There are 195 female learners and two learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Most of the 45 courses are held in voluntary and community venues in the daytime and two courses are in the evening. Currently 40 courses are in West Cumbria, one is in Carlisle, and four courses are in the Furness district. No provision is available in the other two districts. Courses are mostly of 30 weeks duration. A part-time curriculum leader is responsible for the provision, which is managed by three centre managers and delivered by 36 sessional tutors.

Key strengths

- High success rates on ICT, independent living, and work preparation courses
- Good celebration of learners' achievements

- Good links with other providers and partners

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient planning to meet the needs of individual learners in sessions
- Insufficiently rigorous quality improvement
- Insufficient specialist resources for some learners

Achievement and standards

69. Success rates on ICT, independent living, and preparation for work programmes are high. In 2006-07, ICT success rates were 90%, independent living were 89%, and on preparation for work courses 85%. Success rates overall on accredited courses are satisfactory at 70% in 2004-05, 63% in 2005-06, and 69% in 2006-07 with some data for 06-07 still outstanding. Learners' success in achieving challenging targets and the standard of their work is satisfactory overall but good in ICT, independent living, and work preparation. However, there is too much variation between centres and tutors. The retention and attendance of learners is good. The provider does not collect and analyse data at a curriculum level on progression into further training, education or employment.

Quality of provision

70. Teaching and learning is satisfactory. In the better sessions, tutors plan and prepare individual activities and resources for learners and the development of knowledge and skills is good. Individual support and coaching is very good and learners demonstrate good skills in word processing and manipulating text. However, planning to meet the needs of individual learners is insufficient in some sessions. Session plans focus on group outcomes and do not sufficiently take into account individual learning needs. In the weaker sessions, learning activities are not sufficiently challenging or appropriate for some individual learners. In these sessions, there is a focus on participation in whole group activities and not on the development of individual knowledge and skills. The RARPA process is not fully established and use of initial and continuous assessment to plan the content of session activities is insufficient. Tutors do not always plan for the effective use of care staff and volunteers in sessions.
71. Celebration of learners' achievements through enrichment activities is good. For example, art and craft exhibitions and performances of drama productions, awards celebrations, and well-presented learner portfolios of work help learners to recognise their success. These events are well recorded and celebrated by the service and publicised in the local press.
72. Links with other providers and partners are very effective and used to target and develop courses for particular learners. CAES uses information gained from attendance at local planning groups well to help plan provision. For example, an employability programme for an identified group of learners who were ready for a work placement, helped prepare them for the world of work. The range of programmes is good and includes some accredited programmes and some PCDL programmes. Specific provision

is made for learners with profound and multiple learning difficulties and there is a small amount of provision for learners with mental health problems. The provision is not sufficiently spread across all areas of the county, although there are other providers that offer courses in some areas.

73. The care, advice, guidance and other support provided to safeguard welfare, promote personal development, and achieve high standards is satisfactory. CAES has good links with specialist support agencies. Training in the protection of vulnerable adults has improved tutors' understanding and support for learners. The quality and accessibility of information, advice and guidance to learners is satisfactory.

Leadership and management

74. Quality improvement is not rigorous enough and is not having sufficient impact on the provision. Areas for improvement identified in the 2005-06 self-assessment report have not all been resolved. The self-assessment report for the curriculum area identifies key areas for improvement such as the insufficient collection of learners' views, but does not analyse all aspects of the *Common Inspection Framework* and the impact on learners. Observations of teaching and learning are not sufficiently effective in bringing about improvements and are often overgraded. Managers make insufficient use of data analysis to inform quality improvement. Tutors are mostly suitably qualified and experienced. Support and communication by the curriculum leader with centre managers and tutors is good.
75. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory although a minority of accommodation in partners' premises is unsuitable. Insufficient specialist resources are provided to meet the needs of some learners. In particular, learners with restricted mobility on IT courses do not have an assessment of their needs and do not have appropriate hardware to access IT. Tutors and learners have a satisfactory understanding of equality and diversity. However, monitoring of equality of opportunity and its promotion in the curriculum area is insufficient. The skills for life strategy is satisfactory but has not been fully implemented to meet the needs of all learners.

Family learning

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

76. CAES offers family language, literacy and numeracy courses and wider family learning courses to parents and carers across Cumbria. Wider family learning courses, such as family arts and crafts, health, and modern foreign languages are held in children's centres, prisons, schools, libraries, community venues, and outdoor centres. Family language, literacy and numeracy courses are mainly located in schools. Courses vary from 10 to 30 hours. Individual projects and taster courses are used to attract new learners. Courses are mainly held in the daytime with some at weekends. At the time of inspection there were 147 learners, of whom 1% were from minority ethnic communities, and 18% were men. There were 119 courses in 2006-07 with 753 learners. Accreditation is optional on family language, literacy and numeracy courses. Provision is managed by a family learning manager, with a part-time family learning development officer and currently a part-time curriculum leader post is vacant. There are 54 part-time tutors.

Key strengths

- Good development of learners' skills and confidence
- Good range of activities in teaching sessions
- Broad range of provision to meet learner needs
- Effective partnership working

Areas for improvement

- Poor achievement of skills for life qualifications
- Insufficiently thorough assessment processes
- Ineffective arrangements to develop quality

Achievement and standards

77. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Learners develop their skills, confidence and self-esteem well. Parents improve their parenting skills. They gain a better understanding of the school curriculum and are more able to support their children

effectively. There has been a reduction in problem behaviour. In wider family learning childrens team-working skills and confidence are developed well through activities such as sport, art, crafts, and languages. Learners on a prison-based project quickly gained confidence and self-esteem through recording stories for their own children on CD. Retention is good at well over 90% in 2006-07.

78. Achievement of skills for life qualifications is poor. Although most family language, literacy and numeracy courses are mapped to literacy or numeracy qualifications, only seven learners achieved in 2006-07. Insufficient emphasis is placed on getting learners to accreditation, either on the family language, literacy and numeracy programme or by progression to specific skills for life provision. Some learners are unaware that they can gain a qualification. Few tutors are qualified in teaching literacy or numeracy to adults and many have insufficient understanding of the core curriculum.

Quality of provision

79. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Teachers use a good range of activities, including games and practical activities, to engage and motivate learners. Learning is very well linked to the development needs of children of all ages. The pace of teaching is mostly brisk and lively. Sessions are fun and varied with good use of guest speakers and visits. Some innovative work in outdoor centres addresses the needs of whole families with multiple barriers to learning. Parents, grandparents and children all work together on raft-building and team-building exercises. In another project learners and children work together to produce football match reports on video, recording interviews with players from the local professional team. Learners are enthused by these activities and appreciate the opportunities they give for their children. However, literacy and numeracy skills are not always sufficiently developed, and the RARPA process is not yet working effectively.
80. The range of provision is wide and there are short and long courses, and some weekend programmes. In wider family learning, courses include subject areas such as arts and crafts, hockey and orienteering, languages and cookery. These meet the needs of the different age range of children from babies through to secondary school. The service also offers career choice courses aimed at young people and their parents. The geographical spread is satisfactory, with CAES planning to further target areas of deprivation.
81. Support and guidance is satisfactory. Creche provision is well-organised through a peripatetic system. Individual support and guidance by tutors is sensitive and personalised. However, some pre-course information is not sufficiently detailed. Access to careers guidance or advice on progression is limited. CAES is currently working to improve its advice and guidance service.
82. Assessment processes are insufficiently rigorous. Many different types of assessments are used, including those devised by tutors, with insufficient evaluation of their usefulness. The results of initial assessment are not fully used to plan individual learning. Targets are insufficiently personalised, specific or measurable. Learners are not always aware of their progress or the purpose of reviews. Most assessments are self-assessments or tutor observations and are insufficiently objective. Recording of progress is insufficiently detailed. CAES identified this issue in the self-assessment and is planning improvements.

Leadership and management

83. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Partnership working is good, a strength recognised in the self-assessment report. Partners are crucial in reaching the relevant learners and in maximising resources. Family learning is responsive. CAES staff quickly arrange tailored provision and jointly planned programmes in response to partner requests. They use limited funding effectively, for instance they fund creche and playwork provision for parent support workers during the summer to keep the programme running over this period. CAES works closely with library and museum services, and with SureStart, to target learners and to create joint programmes. Partnership work with schools and the extended schools service is also good. Communication, support for staff and in-house staff training are satisfactory. Arrangements for equality of opportunity are also satisfactory.
84. Arrangements to improve quality are insufficiently effective, an area for improvement not identified in the self-assessment report. A comprehensive observation of teaching and learning process has been in place for the last two years. The grades recorded by CAES observers are all good or outstanding. However, the detail in the lesson observation records does not always support these grades. Areas for improvement are not clearly identified and action plans are insufficiently detailed. CAES makes insufficient use of information from partners in evaluating its provision. Data is available, but is not used well to develop provision. The self-assessment report is insufficiently critical, though the updates provided during inspection were a more accurate reflection of strengths and areas for improvement.