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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:

- Information and communication technology
- Literacy and numeracy

## Description of the provider

1. dip delivers **learndirect** courses in one centre through the West Yorkshire **learndirect** region. Located in Batley, West Yorkshire, dip has operated as a **learndirect** centre since March 2001. The centre opens flexibly in the evenings and on Saturdays. It provides programmes in literacy and numeracy, and information and communication technology (ICT) for users. Currently 431 learners are enrolled, of whom 8% are following literacy courses, 11% are enrolled on a range of literacy and numeracy courses and 81% are taking ICT courses. In addition one learner is following an English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programme as part of a pilot project. dip is owned and managed by the chief executive who is also the only full-time tutor. A business adviser, who is not employed by dip, supports the chief executive in strategic business decisions. Two consultants deliver literacy, numeracy and ESOL support for two hours each week.
2. The centre is located in the deprived ward of Batley East. Most learners are recruited from eight of the most deprived wards in West Yorkshire. Approximately 32% of learners are from a minority ethnic background.

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Outstanding: Grade 1
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

## Sector subject areas

Information and communication technology	Good: Grade 2
Literacy and numeracy	Good: Grade 2

## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

#### Good: Grade 2

3. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievements and standards are outstanding on skills for life and ICT courses. Learners are highly motivated and develop a good range of skills. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. The extent to which dip meets the needs and interests of learners is satisfactory. Support for learners is particularly good. Leadership and management are good, with particularly effective management action to improve and maintain high success rates. Equality of opportunity is good as is provision in literacy and numeracy, and in ICT.

### Capacity to improve

#### Good: Grade 2

4. dip has demonstrated that it has a good capacity to improve. Success rates are consistently high in skills for life and have shown significant improvement in ICT, with both being significantly better than regional and national rates. Withdrawal rates are below regional and national rates for **learn**direct programmes. dip has consistently achieved, and often exceeded, its funding body and recruitment targets. The organisation has shown consistent and sustained growth since contracting with Ufi. Quality assurance arrangements are informal, but are successful in bringing about improvements for learners.
5. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. Staff and learners contribute to the judgements in the report. The self-assessment grades matched inspection grades with the exception of achievement and standards, where the inspection team awarded a higher grade. dip accurately identified many of its key strengths and areas for improvement. Some judgements in the report are repetitive and focus insufficiently on specific key questions. The action plan resulting from the self-assessment report is kept under constant review and many actions have been met according to deadline dates set.

## Key strengths

- High success rates on all courses
- Good development of learners knowledge and skills
- Particularly good support for learners

- Particularly effective management action to improve success rates
- Good investment in resources
- Good commitment to meeting learners' additional learning needs

## Key areas for improvement

- Insufficient planning and recording of learning

## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

#### Outstanding: Grade 1

6. Achievement and standards are outstanding. Success rates are high in skills for life. In 2006/07, they were at 87% and at the end of quarter 2 in 2007/08 are at 88%. These success rates are significantly higher than the regional and national success rates. Similarly in ICT, success rates in quarter 2, of 2007/08 are high at 84%. This is a significant improvement compared with the previous year's success rate of 43%. Pass rates in the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) qualification are very high at 89%. Withdrawal and timed-out rates are considerably lower than the regional and national averages in both areas of learning.
7. Learners develop a good range of knowledge and skills. ICT learners acquire a good range of skills, such as word-processing, emailing, spreadsheets and databases. Skills for life learners are particularly proud of the nationally recognised qualifications they obtain through **learndirect**, especially if they left school without formal qualifications. Learners receive good encouragement to reach as high a standard as possible in their in-course and external assessments. Learners are highly motivated and many take several **learndirect** courses. Learners' confidence improves considerably as their computing skills develop and as their literacy and numeracy knowledge increases. One learner, who successfully studied 19 courses, achieved the Yorkshire and Humberside **learndirect** outstanding learner award and was a finalist at the national awards. Learners apply themselves very well to their study and make good progress.

### Quality of provision

#### Good: Grade 2

8. The quality of provision is good. Tutors are patient, approachable and particularly helpful in guiding individual learners when they require assistance with their **learndirect** courses. If learners are working at home and require help, tutors provide good email and telephone support which makes a significant contribution to their progress. A good range of learning materials, to supplement **learndirect** courses, are available and effectively used by learners who require additional practice. dip's appointments system is effective and learners' attendance is well monitored. Learners' progress is regularly checked.
9. Initial assessment is satisfactory. **learndirect** skills checks are satisfactorily used to assess learners' literacy and numeracy skills. dip does not have a strategy to guide the delivery of the **learndirect** skills for life provision. ICT learners are satisfactorily assessed through oral questioning before being recommended to an ICT **learndirect** course. Induction arrangements are satisfactory and cover an appropriate range of topics.
10. Planning and recording of learning are insufficient. Individual learning plans do not set specific, measurable, time-related and achievable short-term goals to guide learners' immediate learning. Insufficient attention is given to reviewing their in-session learning and to assess whether they have made sufficient progress and achieved what they intended. This area for improvement is acknowledged in the self-assessment report and action is being taken to resolve it.



11. The range of **learndirect** courses available to learners is satisfactory. The provider has ambitious plans to move to larger premises within the next two months and to offer a much wider portfolio of courses, including ESOL, business and management courses and national vocational qualifications through the Train to Gain initiative.
12. Learners receive particularly good support. They have access to impartial information, advice and guidance to assess the suitability of **learndirect** courses. Learners who have restricted incomes are very well supported through the offer of bus fare assistance which enables them to access their **learndirect** courses when otherwise they may not be able to do so. Learners can use the free-phone and call-back facilities which enable them to communicate with the centre at no cost to themselves.

## Leadership and management

**Good: Grade 2**

### Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

13. Leadership and management are good. Management actions to maintain and improve success rates are particularly effective. dip has taken part in a Ufi pilot project to reduce withdrawals. Successful strategies include effective and regular communication with learners at every stage in their programme to encourage them to stay on programme. Learners identified at risk of not completing their programme are frequently contacted and given additional support to help keep them in learning. Unemployed learners are given financial support with travel arrangements to attend the centre. A free-phone number encourages learners to contact the centre regularly. Learners have satisfactory opportunities to give their opinions about the quality of their **learndirect** experiences through regular surveys. Responses indicate high levels of satisfaction with all aspects of the provision. dip celebrates learner success well by acknowledging each qualification success by letter. dip is collecting progression data to assess success in improving learners' employability and career and training opportunities. Of the learners who have been supported to complete curriculum vitae, 50% have been successful in securing employment.
14. The centre has invested in providing good quality resources for learners, a strength recognised in the self-assessment report. Learners benefit from a relaxed yet professional environment. Computer work areas are individually screened for privacy to prevent unnecessary disruption from other learners. Information technology equipment is of a good standard. The air conditioned and well maintained environment provides a comfortable and conducive learning environment. Staff are well qualified and experienced and hold or are working towards level 4 qualifications in literacy and numeracy.
15. dip has developed effective links with a range of relevant local organisations who now refer potential learners to dip to improve their skills and employability. Most learners stay with dip and take a range of further qualifications.
16. Strategic planning is satisfactory and provides a good focus on the projected growth of the business. The chief executive is the only full-time tutor and makes all business decisions through consultation with a business adviser. dip has steadily grown over six years while meeting and often exceeding funding body targets. New premises are in the final stages of

purchase and directors plan to expand courses and staffing levels. These plans however, are not committed to paper. The self-assessment development plan is used to guide the business on an annual basis. Some targets in the plan are insufficiently precise.

Management information is reviewed monthly to assess performance against targets. dip has a satisfactory range of key policies and procedures, including health and safety, complaints and equality of opportunities. However, some policies are not dated and others have not been reviewed since October 2006.

17. dip's approach to equality of opportunity is good. Learners work in a safe and professional environment. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. Staff at the centre are undergoing checks with the Criminal Records Bureau. The centre does not currently have any learners who are classed as vulnerable adults. dip's approach to meeting the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2002 is good. A wide range of equipment is provided for learners with physical and sensory impairment. Access is good and a recent wheelchair accessible washroom facility has been completed. Learners receive appropriate information on equality of opportunity at induction. Attractive posters in the centre promote equality and diversity. The centres fees policy and recruitment processes encourage inclusivity. dip is less successful at ongoing promotion of equality of opportunity to current learners. Staff receive regular training and updating on equality and diversity through Ufi network training events.
18. dip's approach to quality improvement is satisfactory. They have achieved the quality standard of Matrix accreditation and are working towards Customer First accreditation. Quality assurance arrangements are informal, but are effective in bringing about improvements. An observation of teaching and learning process is used and dip is further improving the process by linking with another organisation to gain a more independent approach. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. Staff and learners contribute to the judgements in the report. The self-assessment grades were mostly accurate. dip accurately identified some of its key strengths and areas for improvement, but did not sufficiently review and evaluate its approach to quality improvement or equality of opportunity in the report. Some judgements in the report are repetitive and focus insufficiently on specific key questions.

## Information and communication technology

### What learners like

- ‘The course has been a big help to me. A real confidence booster’
- Convenient location and opening times
- ‘The centre is excellent and the staff are very welcoming, helpful and courteous’
- ‘Staff are at the end of the telephone to give help when I need it’
- The well managed centre
- The phone-back service
- Good response to emails
- ‘Learning here is an enjoyable experience’
- ‘I like **learndirect** courses. They go step-by-step, are easy to work through and are very specific’
- ‘The ECDL course is excellent. I did not know about computers before and started at the very beginning. Now I’m much more confident’

### What learners think could improve

- ‘Computer booths are cramped if you need to do any writing’
- Share results of ECDL course diagnostic assessments
- ‘Open on Mondays’

**Good: Grade 2****Strengths**

- High success rates in Quarter 2 of 2007/08
- Good development of knowledge and skills
- Good facilitation of learning
- Particularly good support for learners

**Areas for improvement**

- Insufficient planning of learning

**Literacy and numeracy****Good: Grade 2****Strengths**

- Consistently high success rates in literacy and numeracy
- Good development of knowledge and skills
- Good facilitation of learning
- Particularly good support for learners

**Areas for improvement**

- Insufficient planning of learning

## Annex

## Learners' achievements

Outcomes on **learndirect** programmes 2008

Q2 2008	Enrolments	Counted for data	Success rate (%)	Withdrawal rate (%)
All sectors	1306	1214	86.8	0.7
ICT	514	428	84.3	1.2
skills for life	792	786	88.2	0.4

## Equality and diversity

Q2 2008	All Ethnic Groups	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Chinese/Other	Mixed	Not Known	White
Enrolments	1306	348	17	10	30	0	875
Completion rate (%)	99.3	99.1	100	83.3	95.8	0	99.6
Achievement rate (%)	90	89.6	75	100	82.6	0	90.3
Success rate (%)	86.8	84	75	83.3	79.2	0	88.1
Withdrawal rate (%)	0.7	0.9	0	16.7	4.2	0	0.4