

Durham County Council

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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:

- Health, public services and care
- Information and communication technology
- Arts, media and publishing
- Preparation for life and work

A small sample of teaching and learning in leisure, languages and family learning was observed to support judgements in the main findings section of the report.

Description of the provider

1. Durham County Council (DCC) provides adult and community learning through its Education in the Community (EiC) service. It also provides work-based learning with a small contract for Train to Gain, through its Durham Assessment Centre (DAC). EiC is situated within the Children and Young People's Service (CYPS) in the council while DAC is within Adult Services (AS). EiC's overall remit includes youth and community learning, family learning, the youth service and skills for life. All provision is directly delivered and classes are available in all sector subject areas. Classes are offered at more than 160 locations throughout the county in partnership with community organisations, skills for life centres, schools, libraries and other community groups. Much learning takes place on community association premises. EiC has service level agreements with these associations. Currently EiC has 6,068 learners on programme. Learners from skills for life and arts, media and publishing represent over half of all learners with 1,725 and 1,646 learners respectively. Information communication technology has 957 learners. The remainder are spread across all other sector subject areas with the most significant being leisure, travel and tourism.
2. DAC's remit is specifically Train to Gain provision, half of which is given to council employees, the rest to private employers. Currently 190 learners are on Train to Gain programmes with 117 on health, care and public service provision. The remainder are on business administration programmes.
3. The EiC manager reports to the director of CYPS and is supported by a strategic leadership team consisting of an adult education manager, a youth service manager, a service quality officer and a business manager. The strategic leadership team in turn is supported by a senior management team which includes all the above plus five area managers. It is organised into five area teams each led by one of the area managers, and four skills for life units, each with its own co-ordinator. Each area team has an area specialist who develops provision in the area. EiC employs 280 tutors, most of whom are part-time. The area teams are supported by a team of central officers and an administrative group. The Train to Gain contract is monitored by the learning and development team of DAC. DAC is managed by two officers on a job-share basis. They are supported by five DAC-employed assessors and three work-based assessors.
4. DCC receives its funding from County Durham LSC. County Durham is predominantly a rural county and many towns and villages are former mining communities. Mining and other heavy industries have declined, and significant economic, social and environmental difficulties exist. A significant number of people live in wards that rank in the worst 10% in the country in terms of health, employment, income and education skills.

Summary of grades awarded

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

Sector subject area

Health, public services and care	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Information and communication technology	Good: Grade 2
Arts, media and publishing	Good: Grade 2
Preparation for life and work	Good: Grade 2

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning
Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

5. The overall effectiveness of DCC's provision is good. Achievements and standards, the quality of provision and leadership and management are all good. The arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

6. DCC's capacity to improve is good. DCC has good quality improvement arrangements, with a good, comprehensive and accurate observation of teaching and learning process. Moderation processes for this and the self-assessment are good, using both internal measures and an external peer-referencing group. Communications, meetings and the structure of the organisation are good and improving. Re-structuring measures since the previous inspection are good.
7. Some issues remain with resources, and problems associated with short-term funding but the service is still maintaining a wide range of provision and is working well with partners to provide a rich and innovative curriculum. Since the previous inspection, quality has improved and DCC was awarded several grade two's at the reinspection. This quality has been maintained despite the re-organisation and diminishing funding.
8. The self-assessment process is good. It is an inclusive process, with staff at all levels fully involved. They value the process and see it as a positive way of improving provision. Learners' views are well incorporated through evaluation forms and through learner forums. Partners are fully involved, especially through the peer referencing system and provide a thorough moderation process. Employers' views are insufficiently used, but DCC are aware of this and are seeking to improve. Inspection findings matched the strengths, areas for improvement and grades identified by DCC. The exception to this is the health, public services and care Train to Gain provision where DCC awarded a higher grade.

Key strengths

- Good management
- Strong culture of continuous improvement

- Very effective partnership working to widen participation
- Good use of management information
- Good acquisition of skills
- Good teaching and learning
- Good retention

Key areas for improvement

- Insufficient resources that impact on learning and development
- Insufficient implementation of the revised equality and diversity measures
- Development of the recognition and recording of progress and achievement process across all provision

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning
Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

9. Achievement and standards are good, a strength recognised in the self-assessment report. Retention is good in all sector subject areas. In 2006/07 retention rates were 89% in skills for life, 94% in Train to Gain, 95% in ICT and 96% in non-accredited courses in arts, media and publishing. Success rates, using the recognition and recording of progress and achievement (RARPA) process by DCC are good in all areas, though tutors do not yet consistently apply it across provision. Achievement of accredited qualifications is good in ICT, rising from 90% in 2005/06, to 94% in 2006/07. Most learners achieve good standards of work and outstanding results are produced in floral art, patchwork and quilting. Learners in all areas develop good skills and gain confidence. In 2006/07 in Train to Gain, achievement of qualifications is satisfactory at 63%.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning
Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

10. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good except in Train to Gain where it is satisfactory. DCC use observations of teaching and learning very effectively to raise standards. Inspection findings broadly matched those of DCC across all areas observed. In ICT, tutors provide a range of interesting learning activities and very good individual teaching. Teaching in arts is inspiring and motivates learners to develop good skills in a wide range of techniques. Skills for life tutors use ICT extensively to engage learners and develop additional skills. Teaching and learning on skills for life are well structured but target-setting is ineffective. Assessment and internal verification arrangements are satisfactory in Train to Gain. However, planning and co-ordination of on-and off-the-job training is insufficient. Accommodation and resources in some ICT and arts courses are unsatisfactory. Assessment is satisfactory overall except for the insufficient assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy needs in ICT. RARPA is a well-established and comprehensive process however, not all tutors use it effectively. DCC accurately identified these issues in the self-assessment report.
11. A good range of courses meets the needs of learners. Arrangements for identifying and providing courses that meet their needs and those of diverse communities are well developed and effective. DCC staff consult and work in partnership with a wide range of organisations, communities and individuals to determine their need, and to raise their interest in learning. DCC use street surveys, questionnaires and meetings with local groups very effectively. Staff collaborate closely with other DCC departments, district councils, colleges and a wide network of other organisations to attract learners who are hard to reach. Five adult education development workers and four skills for life officers work across the region in geographically defined areas and are particularly active in

overcoming barriers to participation by minority groups. DCC work well to identify and meet the needs of local employers. They use innovative methods to meet the challenges of isolated communities and employers that are mainly small businesses. Tutors and assessors raise the aspirations and expectations of their learners and often facilitate their progression into further education and employment. Learners benefit from their enrichment activities. Recruitment to courses has exceeded overall target numbers every year from 2004 to 2007. Although mainstream funding has been reduced, DCC has successfully obtained financial support from other sources to meet learners' and employers' needs. However, progression is limited in some areas with insufficient accredited courses.

12. Guidance and support for learners are good. Volunteer support staff integrate particularly well into skills for life courses and contribute fully. Hearing loops and visual aids are provided. All DCC premises have been subject to access audits and have appropriate action plans in place. Tutors across the provision are supportive and approachable, providing extra support when necessary. Assessors provide especially good personal support to Train to Gain learners. Information, advice and guidance is satisfactory overall. Health and safety audits and risk assessments are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

13. Leadership and management are good as identified in the self-assessment report. Organisational structure is good, which facilitates change and improvement. Staff have clear roles and responsibilities. Strategic and operational managers, and staff working in the field, work enthusiastically towards a common purpose. A range of effective meetings successfully involve staff at all levels where performance and progress is very effectively monitored and evaluated. Team work and sharing of practice is good. Staff participate effectively in action groups across the service. They have a very good understanding and knowledge of the local area and the needs of the community. Staff work well in meeting challenging targets for the recruitment, retention and achievement of learners. Health and safety management is effective. The marketing group effectively identifies and engages new learners. The management structure within DAC clearly defines roles and responsibilities. This area places great emphasis on the strategic, contract and business management of the provision and less on management and quality improvement of teaching and learning.
14. Quality improvement arrangements are good. The observation of teaching and learning process is comprehensive, completed regularly and effectively improves the quality of teaching and learning. Staff value feedback and use it effectively to improve their performance. Moderation is good and ensures consistency of judgements, with some use of external partners. Observation judgements broadly matched inspection findings. Staff see quality improvement as a key part of their role. Involvement in external quality improvement through active participation in a peer-referencing group is effective, and also moderates the self-assessment report. They organise joint staff training across partners and

very effectively share good practice. Partners act as critical moderators and strengthen the observation process through some paired observations. RARPA processes are comprehensive, included in the observation process and well moderated. They work well in measuring progress in some areas, however, in others they are used inconsistently. DAC provision quality assurance has been insufficiently effective in identifying issues with planning of learning, though the assessment and internal verification processes are sound.

15. DCC and DAC uses management information well. Staff effectively monitor data at the range of meetings. Monitoring of the relative performance of different groups of learners and the measurement of performance against internal targets is good. Data effectively contributes to management action.
16. Partnership working is highly effective. Partnerships are mutually beneficial. Good collaborative working ensures learners benefit from a broader curriculum and opportunities for progression. Different partners support learners well through the shared input of staffing, premises and resources. Partners avoid duplication of provision. Funding is used effectively to widen the provision offered and meet community needs. An external agency provides information, advice and guidance and satisfactorily meets the needs of participants. However, the service recognises the need for a more extensively qualified service and plan to train staff. Management of literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. When tutors identify support needs, learners are signposted to suitable discrete provision.
17. Resources are insufficient. Some senior posts are vacant and planning is often constrained by short-term funding. While DCC has improved accommodation, some rooms are still cramped and unsuitable with some furniture not fit for purpose. In some instances, resources for practical activities are insufficient. Access to ICT for some learners is unsatisfactory. DCC recognise this area for improvement and are now providing a small mobile ICT resource, which tutors are beginning to use effectively.
18. DCC's approach to equality and diversity are satisfactory. DCC successfully engage learners from hard to reach groups, particularly in family learning where male participation has increased. Access audits are complete and appropriate action plans and improvements are in place. Policies and procedures are adequate, including DCC's arrangements for complying with the Race Relations Act. Arrangements for the protection of children and vulnerable adults meet current government requirements. DCC complete Criminal Record Bureau checks in a timely and regular manner to ensure validity. Appropriate procedures and guidelines are in place, though are currently being reviewed to ensure they are up-to-date. Key staff have received relevant training, however, wider staff across the service are yet to receive it. Implementation of the revised equality and diversity measures is insufficient. DCC has many initiatives to raise the agenda of widening participation and attracting under-represented groups, particularly groups from minority ethnic origins and gender. However, this does not form part of a coherent overall plan. Plans to resolve staff development needs with regard to equality and diversity are underdeveloped. An equality and diversity strategy and working group has recently been set up, but it is too soon to judge its impact. The strategy has yet to be disseminated and understood by staff across the county. Promotion of equality of opportunity in lessons is insufficient. Promotion of equality and diversity is not explicit within the observation of teaching and learning procedure.

What learners like:

- Increased confidence and ability to do new things
- Individual help for specific problems
- Very good, very supportive tutors who take the time to listen
- ‘Learning to think in a different way and learning to express myself differently’
- ‘It’s fun so it sticks in your mind’
- ‘The range of classes and what you can do in them’
- ‘I can’t believe I did this! I’m impressed by how much I’ve learned’
- ‘My teacher is such a positive role model’

What learners think could improve:

- ‘More information on the course syllabus before it starts and more qualifications to help with our job prospects’
- More comfortable chairs
- Photocopying for practice tests
- Longer course - 2 hours a week is too short
- Specific lessons for grammar in English for Speakers of Other Languages
- Bigger print for handouts for those with poor sight

Sector subject areas

Health, public service and care

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

19. Currently 117 learners are enrolled on the Train to Gain programme working towards national vocational qualifications (NVQ) level 2 and 3 in health, public service and care. Since 2006 a total of 232 learners have participated in Train to Gain. Half the learners are recruited from DAC's care services' provision. A learning and development officer co-ordinates their recruitment. Learners are also recruited from private sector organisations. All learners attend a one-day induction, which includes initial assessment of literacy and numeracy and an information, advice and guidance.
20. All learners are required to undertake 20 hours training during their programme as well as assessment activity. Assessors visit learners at work to plan and carry out assessments taking account of shift patterns. Currently five DCC assessors and three work-based assessors complete this work.

Strengths

- Good retention
- Good personal support from assessors

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient planning and co-ordination of learning

Achievement and standards

21. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. Retention of learners is good, despite a high staff turnover in the care sector. In the year 2006/07 retention was 93.6%. In the current contract year retention is 95.8%. Some learners have overcome significant barriers to learning.
22. Qualification success rates are satisfactory. In the year 2006/07 they were 67%. Learners make satisfactory progress towards achievement with the average time for completion being six months for level 2 and eight months for level 3. Most learners develop increased confidence and self-esteem. Increased knowledge and understanding positively influences the way learners approach care delivery. For example several learners referred to their raised awareness of clients' rights and choices.

Quality of provision

23. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Assessment practice is satisfactory. Arrangements for work-based assessment are flexible and ensure realistic opportunities are well used.

DAC use an appropriate range of assessment methods. To reduce over reliance on written evidence, staff make good use of laptop computers to record answers to verbal questions. This was especially useful when used with one learner whose first language was not English. Drop in opportunities at the centre provide useful individual support. The standard of learners work is satisfactory for level 2 learners. However, the evidence required of level 3 learners is insufficiently challenging. Portfolios are well organised. Internal verification is satisfactory.

24. Learning is insufficiently planned and co-ordinated. DAC has no overall scheme of work for delivering background knowledge. Most session plans are under-developed. Work is insufficiently individualised and little active learning takes place. Although learners enjoy off-the-job training sessions they are insufficiently challenged and learning is insufficiently reinforced. Although staff use skill scan at the start of the programme, they do not use it sufficiently to build useful individual learning plans or specific targets. Although some satisfactory learning resources are available they are not used to best effect. On- and off-the-job training is insufficiently co-ordinated and staff miss opportunities to include workplace learning effectively. Collaborative planning between the skills for life team, information, advice and guidance consultant and DAC staff is insufficient. While skills for life support is good, opportunities to relate that work to the NVQ are missed.
25. The range of provision is satisfactory. DAC recruit half of all learners internally from council-run provision with the rest from a good range of private providers. DAC respond flexibly to the needs of employers. The professionalism of the staff is valued. The programme provided by DAC is effective in meeting the needs of the care sector for qualified staff at level 2, but employer involvement in workplace training and assessment is minimal.
26. Assessors provide good personal support. They have a good range of current occupational experience and skills. They are highly credible with learners and employers. They use their understanding of the demands of the workplace to good effect with learners, gaining the confidence of individuals who are returning to learning after extended periods. Assessors are very effective in helping learners to overcome barriers to learning and to find creative and effective solutions to difficulties. Learners receive clear advice on how to generate assessment evidence. Assessors are enthusiastic, flexible and reliable. They provide a high standard of individualised mentoring alongside assessment activity. Learners develop confidence and maintain motivation.

Leadership and management

27. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communication and collaborative working between DAC, other council departments and employers is effective. Information about learners and their progress is shared well. Employers have satisfactory access to assessors and value the opportunity to share information. A learning and development officer within DCC co-ordinates applications and recruitment for council employees. They also provide useful assistance with recruitment from private sector organisations. Induction provides an effective introduction to the NVQ, and an appropriate opportunity to carry out initial

assessment of literacy and numeracy. A consultant gives satisfactory information, advice and guidance. DAC are responsive to employers' needs and requests. Most employers support attendance at off-the-job training sessions by rearranging work rotas. Staff are appropriately experienced and qualified. They receive appropriate support and good opportunities for professional development. DAC use management information effectively. The strengths and areas for improvement identified in the self-assessment report are broadly accurate, though some strengths identified are normal practice and the overall grade proposed is higher than that awarded. The report contained too much detail about strategic and business management and less on management and delivery of learning.

Information and communication technology

Good: Grade 2

Context

28. Currently 957 learners are enrolled on 175 ICT courses. Of these 37% are men, 10% have a disability, 5% are from minority ethnic backgrounds and 42% are over the age of 60.
29. Courses are held in 51 venues including community halls and schools across the county. Currently 35 part-time tutors deliver the provision. Courses range from three hour taster courses to 116 hour provision and take place during the day and evenings. Courses range from basic computing to accredited course like European Computer Driving Licence with

others covering digital photography from entry level to level 3. Accreditation is available through several awarding bodies including the Open College Network and City & Guilds.

Strengths

- Good learner retention
- Good acquisition of skills and confidence
- Good teaching and learning

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient assessment of literacy and numeracy needs
- Some unsuitable accommodation

Achievement and standards

30. Achievement and standards are good. Retention is good and shows an improving trend. Courses match the needs of learners and most learners stay to the end of their courses. Achievement of individual learning goals as measured by DCC's RARPA is good at 94% in 2006/07 and improved from 90% in the previous year. Accredited provision accounts for approximately 10% of provision. Progress towards the qualifications is good.
31. Learners acquire good personal and ICT skills. They are well motivated and gain skills they use in employment and in their personal lives. Some learners use their skills well to progress in their job role or run their own business. In digital photography classes learners are able to manipulate images and produce good work using advanced features of the software. Learners quickly gain confidence, to a level where they can use computers without fear and begin to understand the problems that develop on their own home computers.
32. Progression to higher level courses is satisfactory. Progression pathways are outlined but learners are not always sufficiently clear about the opportunities available to them. Attendance is satisfactory at 78%. Learners adopt safe practices and good systems are in place to monitor health and safety.

Quality of provision

33. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good as recognised in the self-assessment report. Tutors provide very good individual teaching and use a range of activities including whole class and paired work. Teaching is interesting and learners take responsibility for their own learning. Tutors make good use of questioning to draw out learners' knowledge and challenge their thinking. Learners work well together and staff frequently challenge them to complete tasks that are more difficult. Learning resources are good. Tutors produce clear handouts which learners find useful and easy to follow. DCC has some good examples of interactive resources. For example, interactive quizzes on keyboard techniques using drop down boxes. Tutors mark work for ICT skills and provide adequate feedback to show where learners could improve. DCC has satisfactory processes to recognise and record progress.

34. DCC is responsive to the needs of learners, designing some courses specifically in response to their requests. When learners enquire about programmes they receive appropriate advice to help them in their choice. All venues are conveniently situated and local to learners. Provision meets learner needs in terms of improving their skills and meeting the needs of a range of groups including older learners. The range of enrichment activities is satisfactory. For example, one digital photography class visited local venues and special events to take photographs.
35. Support for learners is satisfactory. Additional support for learners with disabilities is effective, including the use of specialist equipment such as tracker ball mouse, wrist and foot rests and screen enhancing technology. Advice and guidance is satisfactory. When learners enquire about programmes they receive appropriate advice to help them in their choice. Learners also receive appropriate advice and guidance on issues such as jobsearching skills and further study.
36. DCC insufficiently assess literacy and numeracy support needs. Although staff assess learners' ICT skills, no objective assessment of their literacy and numeracy needs takes place. All learners are asked to assess their own needs. Some learners are unwilling to disclose support needs at this stage. Learners who do request support are directed to extra classes. In some cases adequate action is not taken. If learners do not take up the opportunity of extra classes support for them in sessions is insufficient. In the better sessions tutors with skills for life experience support learners well. Opportunities for reinforcement of skills are not included in schemes of work or lesson plans.

Leadership and management

37. Leadership and management are good. Quality improvement processes are effective. The observation of teaching process and feedback from learner evaluations are the main tools to improve provision. They work well. Partnerships with other learning providers are good. The council works well with a local college to provide higher level courses and share tutors. Communication is satisfactory. Managers use tutor feedback well to improve provision.
38. Promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Learners receive information about equality of opportunity at induction. Promotion of equality of opportunity during courses is insufficient and opportunities to reinforce this area are not evident in session plans.
39. The self-assessment process is good. The process is inclusive and all tutors are involved. The report reflects inspection findings. Some accommodation is unsuitable. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. In some venues chairs are not adjustable and in some instances chairs are not working properly. In some venues lessons are disrupted by noise from adjacent rooms and learners work in cramped conditions with insufficient space for materials. Learners sometimes find it difficult to concentrate with these distractions.

Arts, media and publishing

Good: Grade 2

Context

40. Arts, media and publishing represent 28% of the total provision. Classes are held in village halls, youth and community centres, schools and care homes. Currently 1,725 learners are enrolled on 399 courses offered in 64 venues. Of these, 758 are new learners. Provision includes courses in patchwork and quilting, lace making, painting and drawing, beaded jewellery, floral art, dressmaking, mat making, portrait painting, line dancing, card craft, singing, drama, calligraphy and forensic art. Currently 1% of the provision is accredited at level 1. Courses vary in length with most being two hours each week for ten weeks. Classes are held in the day, twilight and evening with a range of one-day Saturday workshops and short taster courses. Some 57 part-time tutors teach the courses, led by a full-time head of curriculum and supported by eight development workers. Learning support assistants provide additional learning needs support. Currently 79% of learners are women, 5% are from minority ethnic groups, 41% are aged over 60 and 9% have a declared disability.

Strengths

- Good skills development
- Outstanding work in floral art, patchwork and quilting
- Inspiring and motivating teaching

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient opportunities for progression
- Some poor resources for some craft classes

Achievement and standards

41. Achievement and standards are good. Development of skills is good. Learners explore a wide range of techniques, materials and processes. In dressmaking, learners incorporated bespoke hand stitching and industrial techniques to produce individually fitted garments. One student incorporated embroidery techniques she had observed in India in her garment. In painting and drawing classes, learners develop good techniques and are very open to new ideas.

42. Work in floral art, and patchwork and quilting is outstanding. In floral art, learners work imaginatively with found materials and unusual flowers. One learner returned with the arrangement from the previous week to show how horse chestnut buds had opened to create a striking display. Learners make excellent patchwork and quilting with a range of items showing great precision and good design. An enterprising group of learners are using their new craft skills to make cards and decorations for weddings in their village. Retention is very good on non-accredited courses at 96% and accredited courses at 93%. Attendance is good at 83%.

Quality of provision

43. The quality of provision is good. Teaching is inspiring and motivates learners well. Tutors plan and evaluate lessons well, improving them each session. Tutors introduce lessons well and give clear instructions and demonstrations. They have high expectations, good working relationship with learners and encourage them to try new approaches. In mat making tutors use interesting visual aids to demonstrate how learners can use traditional and recycled fabrics to create texture and blend colours. In patchwork, the tutor uses a customised skills assessment to plan more accurately individual learning. Individual learning planning is effective in most classes. Tutors use digital photographs, portfolios, notebooks and samples effectively to record progress. In some classes, tutors and learners give useful written feedback that contributes well to planning of other work. However, most of these records do not relate meaningfully to the county council process for RARPA, which tutors apply inconsistently at present.
44. The range of provision is broad. Booklets list courses in each of six geographic areas. Detailed information sheets supplement this information and provide details of materials required. Consultation with learners and the community to identify course development needs is good. Street surveys and questionnaires in local centres with a prize draw encourage public response. Development workers attend local community meetings to select appropriate courses. Progression opportunities are limited. Too few accredited courses are offered although some courses operate at a level and standard meeting awarding body criteria. Despite this, DCC do not offer learners the opportunity for accreditation.
45. Support for learners is good. Initial screening identifies learning support needs. Tutors monitor emerging needs as the course progresses. Portable hearing loops and signers are available for those with hearing impairment. Appropriate levels of learning support assistants are present in classes. Health and safety measures are satisfactory. An internal audit followed by a thorough risk assessment is completed by the tutor on commencement of the class. However, in one patchwork class there was insufficient space to cut out fabrics and use equipment safely.

Leadership and management

46. Leadership and management are good. DCC plans provision well. Partnerships are effective. Communications are effective and improving. Observations of teaching and learning grades match inspection findings. All teachers are qualified or are working towards qualifications. An extensive staff development programme is open to all and some tutors attend external specialist craft workshops. Managers carefully monitor the attendance of those identified as requiring particular training.
47. Some resources are poor in some craft areas. This was a weakness in the previous inspection though there has been some improvement. Some learners share one sewing machine and tutors often struggle to transport additional machines, sometimes up flights of stairs. Tutors often use their own resources. Learners now have access to packs of equipment where a need is identified. Access to ICT facilities for most learners is insufficient. One enterprising group of practising tutors and learners have formed a craft carousel, which tours the county visiting local community centres to promote, and sell their craft work.

48. Use of data to monitor the provision is good. DCC's approach to equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate although some strengths are overstated.

Preparation for life and work

Good: Grade 2

Context

49. DCC offers literacy, numeracy and English classes for speakers of other languages (ESOL) from entry level 1 to level 2, and with some non-accredited skills for life classes for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities. Currently 1,053 learners are enrolled on programmes, of who 708 are women, 149 are from minority ethnic groups, and 215 have declared a disability. Literacy constitutes 58% of the provision, numeracy 18%. Around 4% of learners attend literacy and numeracy, 8% attend ESOL, and 12% attend classes for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. Many learners work towards the national tests in literacy, numeracy and ESOL. Currently 42% of learners are new this year. Most classes take place in the daytime with some evening and weekend provision. Classes are spread over a wide geographical area, and take place in a range of centres including the main council-run centres, community centres, schools, employer sites, youth centres and schools. Most learners attend one class each week.

Strengths

- Good development of skills
- Well-structured teaching and learning
- Highly effective partnership working
- Good management of the curriculum

Areas for improvement

- Ineffective target-setting

Achievement and standards

50. Achievements and standards are good. Learners develop good learning, personal and social skills that they can use in their everyday lives. For example, numeracy learners' understanding of percentages helps them save money when shopping. ESOL learners practise asking complex questions to gain information from visitors to classes, receiving helpful and encouraging feedback afterwards from tutors. Adults with learning difficulties confidently discuss the books they like with a visitor from the local library. Learners gain self-esteem and confidence to progress to higher levels and to try other areas. For example, learners previously successful in literacy classes progress confidently to numeracy provision. Retention is good and achievement of qualifications is satisfactory. The self-assessment report identifies good achievement and standards as a strength.

Quality of provision

51. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are well structured. Tutors manage the learning environment well and individualise work to meet the needs of learners at different levels. The pace of lessons is good and learners participate well in

learning activities, contributing and interacting confidently. Tutors use materials that are appropriate to the learners' needs, levels and interests and use a wide range of teaching methods and activities to motivate learners. Some tutors develop their own materials which effectively interest learners, and some use of real materials is very effective. Tutors use ICT well to develop literacy and numeracy skills and to attract new learners. An ESOL tutor makes good use of a data projector to instantly display and record language points for learners in venues where no whiteboard is provided. Volunteer tutors and specialist support workers work well with tutors, with clear roles and responsibilities outlined in the lesson plans. Tutors have access to a good range of resources in the main centres, including teaching and learning materials, computers and laptops, data projectors and keypad voting systems. Portable ICT equipment is available to tutors to take out to smaller centres.

52. Target-setting on individual learning plans is ineffective. Diagnostic assessment is inconsistent, and individual learning plans for literacy and numeracy do not sufficiently record the learner's profile of skills levels. Many targets are not specific and measurable, and it is difficult to effectively monitor and record progress. Clarity between short-term and medium-term targets is insufficient. In some cases, tutors do not regularly review targets, and learner involvement in the review is insufficient. Some ESOL learners are working towards several targets and have not yet achieved any of them fully. While the RARPA process is satisfactory, tutors are applying it inconsistently. Accurate measurement of progress is difficult.
53. Programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners well. Topic-based courses in literacy and numeracy attract a broad range of learners, for example, researching family trees, food hygiene, do-it-yourself and gardening. Tutors give appropriate information to learners on progression opportunities to higher levels, to different areas or to other learning opportunities during their course.
54. DCC gives good support to learners to achieve their learning and personal goals. Tutors use volunteer tutors well to further support learners. Learners with dyslexia have support from specialists, and one learner has gained so much confidence that she is now ready to apply for a job.
55. The self-assessment report accurately identifies all the strengths in the quality of provision though was less specific regarding the area for improvement.

Leadership and management

56. Leadership and management are good. Management of the curriculum is good. Managers use data well to monitor targets for engagement and success. Each of the four regions has a skills for life co-ordinator and a development worker who work efficiently to develop an innovative curriculum. The development workers have a very good understanding of local needs and are effectively able to target under-represented or marginalised groups, like adults from an alcohol rehabilitation unit and the homeless. Managers communicate well with their tutors through regular meetings and continuing professional development, in which they share good practice. A comprehensive programme of training is available to

all tutors and uptake is good. It is highly effective in improving the quality of teaching and learning, which DCC monitors very effectively through the thorough process of observations of teaching and learning.

57. Partnership working is highly effective. *Every Child Matters* themes are well-considered by DCC to ensure young and vulnerable learners are protected and developed. Provision is well-mapped to the key themes and tutors take care to cover them in sessions. An extensive network of partners has been established, including other community and voluntary organisations, district councils, care organisations, libraries, companies, youth services and other training providers. Partners work together to widen participation and to enrol and progress learners. In a project with a local sixth form college, young people who have underachieved at school gain adult literacy and numeracy qualifications.
58. The self-assessment report is thorough and tutors have been involved in the process. The strengths and underlying judgements are accurate though DCC did not sufficiently identify the area for improvement.

Learners' achievements

Success rates on **work-based learning Train to Gain** programmes managed by the provider **2006 to 2008**

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain ***	2006/07	overall	95	67%
	2007/08 (6 months)	overall	2	3%

Note: 2007/08 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the first 3 months or greater of the LSC contract year

- * Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned
- ** College/provider qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'
- *** Includes 'Train to Gain' long course NVQ provision, but not 'skills for life'