

Open Door Adult Learning Centre

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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 Open Door Adult Learning Centre, 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

Description of the provider

1. Open Door Adult Learning Centre (ODALC) is a registered charity and independent provider of adult and community learning within the voluntary sector. It was established in 1985 and has offered part-time adult education courses since 1989. ODALC is located within a housing estate in Birley on the south-eastern outskirts of Sheffield. It predominately operates from two neighbouring shop front premises. The organisation is funded by South Yorkshire LSC to annually provide visual and performing arts and information and communication technology (ICT) programmes to approximately 300 adult learners aged 25 or over.
2. Since September 2007, ODALC has enrolled 250 adult learners and has had 344 enrolments. At the time of the inspection, 243 learners were enrolled on courses in adult and community learning. Six part-time tutors provide the programmes supported by a full-time centre co-ordinator and an assistant centre co-ordinator. The voluntary management committee is responsible for the strategic direction of the organisation.
3. The unemployment rate in Birley is 6.4% compared with 4.2% in Sheffield and 3.4% nationally. In Birley 27% of people of working age claim key benefits, compared with 16% in Sheffield, and 14% nationally. Around 1.5% of the Birley population are from minority ethnic groups compared with 10.5% in Sheffield and also nationally. In Sheffield 49% of pupils leaving school achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C compared with the national average of 58%.

Summary of grades awarded

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

Sector subject area

Information and communication technology	Outstanding: Grade 1
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Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

4. The overall effectiveness of the provision is outstanding. Achievement and standards are outstanding, as are leadership and management and the quality of provision in ICT. Arrangements for equality of opportunity and social inclusion are outstanding.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

5. Capacity to improve is good. ODALC has carried out very effective work to sustain and improve aspects of its provision since the previous inspection. It has maintained the quality of its ICT provision, leadership and management and its arrangements for equality of opportunity. At the previous inspection quality assurance was judged to be good. New quality improvement arrangements have been developed and implemented. ODALC works well with other providers to develop and share good practice. However, ODALC makes insufficient use of teaching observations to improve teaching. Although there are many positive aspects of this process, the focus of the observations is on teaching performance rather than its impact on learning. Observations do not cover aspects of training such as initial assessment, induction and progress reviews.
6. The self-assessment process is inclusive and effective in engaging the views of staff, learners, the management committee and its partners. The self-assessment report, which was updated in November 2007, is thorough and accurate. Inspection grades match those of the self-assessment report. The report is supported well by an action plan and a strategic plan.

Key strengths

- Outstanding success and retention rates
- Particularly effective planning and monitoring of progress towards qualification achievement
- Very good progression routes
- Effective learner support
- Excellent leadership and management
- Very effective actions for improvement
- Outstanding actions to support social inclusion

Key areas for improvement

- Insufficient planning of training to support learners' personal goals
- Insufficient use of teaching observations to drive further improvement

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Outstanding: Grade 1

7. Success and retention rates are outstanding as identified in the self-assessment report. Very high proportions of learners complete their courses and achieve their target qualification. For example, in 2006-07, 94% of learners on longer courses achieved their qualification. On shorter courses, 85% achieved their qualification. Learners progress well and most complete in the expected time. A relatively high number of learners progress to higher-level courses. Attendance is good. All learners develop confidence in using computers in their every day lives, for example, at home for email, internet access and official letters, and in their wider interests and hobbies. A satisfactory proportion of learners use their new skills at work.

Quality of provision

Outstanding: Grade 1

8. The quality of provision is outstanding, as identified in the self-assessment report. Teaching and learning are good overall. Tutors plan and monitor learners' progress particularly effectively. Learners review their progress at the end of each session, to identify achievements and obstacles encountered. Tutors note learners' progress in lesson evaluations well. Learners significantly benefit from negotiating four-weekly targets with their tutors, estimating how much of their workbooks they will complete. Learners effectively review these with tutors at the end of each four-week period. Tutors identify when learners benefit from extra support, and provide this effectively to keep learners on schedule and prevent under achievement. In classes, tutors provide learning and pastoral support that is sensitive to the maturity and confidence levels of the learners. Workbooks are good and most learners find them easy to understand. Tutors, however, do not sufficiently reinforce the importance of good posture when using computers for extended periods.
9. The self-assessment report identified accurately that ODALC offers a very wide range of ICT qualifications including web page design and digital imaging as well as the more common desktop applications. Courses are available from entry level to level 3, and national vocational qualifications (NVQs). ODALC consults widely with learners, other providers and employers when planning its provision. ODALC uses demographic data very well to identify the best areas for advertising their courses, and widen participation effectively by attracting learners from hard to reach priority groups such as lone parents and those in receipt of benefits. Flexible patterns of attendance allow learners with other commitments to fully participate in the programmes.
10. Learner support is outstanding. As identified in the self-assessment report tutors and other staff support learners very effectively. They develop good working relationships with learners and provide appropriate learning and pastoral support. They use positive comments well, referring frequently to learners' successes. Staff promote the use of assistive keyboards and pointing devices well for learners with restricted mobility. They provide good feedback on work learners have done outside the course. Learners can contact tutors by telephone, email and through ODALC's website. The centre co-ordinator

provides technical support where possible for learners' home computers. Learners can also attend additional seminars on difficult or new topics, such as different versions of computer packages. Support for those who miss teaching sessions is thorough and effective. Staff contact non attendees' and offer good support and encouragement to continue.

11. Initial assessment appropriately identifies additional learning support needs and learners' ICT skill levels. Guidance and support are outstanding and ensures learners study an appropriate course. However, learners' personal learning goals are not sufficiently recorded and are not specific enough to assess progress towards them or their achievement. Progress towards personal goals is not discussed during progress review. Tutors rely on workbooks, making insufficient use of other teaching and learning methods. The self-assessment of teaching and learning, though largely accurate, did not identify the insufficient range of teaching and learning methods, or the insufficient focus on learners' personal goals.

Leadership and management

Outstanding: Grade 1

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Outstanding: Grade 1

12. Leadership and management are outstanding, as identified in the self-assessment report. Strategic planning is strong. Members of the management committee have a very good range of community and professional knowledge and experience and make an effective contribution to the provider's strategic work, including target-setting and development planning. Committee members frequently call in to the centre to have informal discussions with staff and learners and make effective use of their views in the development of the centre. ODALC uses additional funding particularly well to improve the provision. Management of curriculum is very effective with a strong focus on identifying learners' individual needs. Learner performance information is used very well to identify and improve performance trends. Computing resources are good. ODALC uses information learning technology well by, for example, making learning material accessible from its website.
13. ODALC has responded well to the previous inspection's findings and has continued to improve its provision. Leadership and management, equality of opportunity arrangements and provision in ICT, judged to be outstanding at the previous inspection, have been maintained. At the previous inspection quality assurance was good. It has developed and implemented well many aspects of a new quality assurance policy. Retention and success rates have further improved. Additional accredited courses for learners in ICT have been introduced. ODALC works well with a number of providers to share good practice.
14. Equality of opportunity is outstanding, as identified in the self-assessment report. Particularly good work is carried out to remove barriers to inclusion. A high number of learners have few or no qualifications and low self-confidence. ODALC staff provide a very welcoming and supportive environment. ODALC makes its facilities available free of charge to a range of community groups including a self-managing craft group, a video club, local councillor and police surgeries, and neighbourhood watch meetings. ODALC supports externally funded workers who work closely with the local community to identify their training or capacity building needs. ODALC makes good use of

demographic data to target learners underrepresented in learning such as single parents and the unemployed. The centre makes effective use of data to analyse recruitment and achievement of different groups. This analysis shows that the learner profile reflects the local demography well, and includes a high proportion of older learners. It also shows that no significant variation exists in achievement trends for progression of different groups by age or gender. ODALC has appropriate equal opportunities policies. The induction programme promotes equality and diversity. Learners have a good understanding of equality matters and can often apply these well to their learning experiences. ODALC fully complies with current race, gender and disability legislations.

15. The centre has implemented an effective strategy to identify and support literacy and numeracy needs. In 2005-06, a successful recruitment drive through four local schools led to the delivery of literacy and numeracy to 90 learners who all achieved national test qualifications. In 2006-07 a further 50 learners were recruited and 90% achieved national tests. The centre no longer receives funding for literacy and numeracy but continues to offer some provision in response to local need.
16. The centre co-ordinator encourages staff to identify improvements. Staff appraisal is effective with clear reviews of performance and effective action-planning.
17. Quality arrangements are good. Following the previous inspection, a new quality assurance process has been developed and many of its aspects have been implemented well, such as the operation of a detailed monitoring cycle of aspects of the learning process. The centre makes effective use of learner feedback which is collected termly through questionnaires and discussed by the teaching staff and the management committee. ODALC makes good use of a wall display to communicate its response to feedback.
18. A calendar of activities supports annual self-assessment. The self-assessment process is inclusive and draws on a wide range of evidence including achievement data, the outcomes of staff performance review, and teaching observations. The self-assessment report is sufficiently evaluative.
19. Insufficient use is made of teaching observations to implement improvement. Observation of teaching and learning is systematically carried out by an external consultant, providing detailed written feedback to staff, which includes learners' views. The grades are moderated with the centre co-ordinator, who identifies actions for improvement with tutors. However, the focus of the observations is on teaching performance rather than its impact on learning. Observations do not cover initial assessment, induction or progress reviews. Outcomes of teaching observations focus insufficiently on improving teaching.

What learners like:

- 'I used to be terrified of computers, but now I've got a better job because I can use them'
- The opportunity to gain a qualification
- 'I never thought I could do this'
- 'The staff here really care about you'

What learners think could improve:

- No comments provided