Poole Adult Learning

Inspection date: 6 June 2008

Inspection number 320898

Contents

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' monitoring 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 and social care
- Modern foreign languages
- Preparation for life and work
- Business, administration and law

Inspectors also sampled evidence from provision in science and mathematics, agriculture, horticulture and animal care, engineering and manufacturing technologies, information and communication technology, retail and commerce, leisure, travel and tourism, arts, media and publishing, social sciences, education and training, family learning and community development.

Description of the provider

1. Poole Adult Learning (PAL) is part of the Borough of Poole unitary authority, in South Dorset. PAL provides adult and community learning at the main adult learning centre and more than fifty community venues, including schools, libraries, museums, churches and community centres for those living in and around the borough. PAL offers courses from pre-entry to level 4, with accredited and non-accredited programmes in 16 areas of learning. The provision ranges from short courses of less than five weeks to programmes of two years duration. Since the start of 2007/08, a total of 4,663 enrolments have been made on these programmes. PAL also provides Train to Gain programmes to local employers and a range of extended services within the area, including information, advice and guidance as a subcontractor. Approximately 88% of PAL's provision is publicly funded.

2. A total of 1,093 learners are on adult and community learning programmes funded by the Dorset and Somerset Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Of these, there are 58 learners in health, public services and social care; 26 in science and mathematics; 17 in agriculture, horticulture & animal care; 40 in information & communications technology; 77 in retail and commercial enterprise; 35 in leisure, travel and tourism; 39 in arts, media and publishing; 107 in languages, literature and culture; 40 in education and training; 461 in preparation for life and work; 71 in business administration and law; 100 in family learning and 22 on community development programmes. In Adult and Community Learning, the provision in modern foreign languages and preparation for life and work was inspected.

3. The Train to Gain provision is also funded by the LSC with a total of 54 learners, 40 in health and social care, one in information technology and 13 in business, administration and law.

4. The working population rate in the Borough of Poole is 60.2% compared with 62.2% nationally. Most employment is within the services industry. Unemployment rates are 3.8% compared with the national rate of 5.4%. According to the 2001 national census, 4% of the borough's residents are from minority ethnic groups compared with 9.1% in England. Of the total population, 21% are aged over 65 compared with 16% nationally.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	**Satisfactory: Grade 3**
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade3
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4

Capacity to improve	**Satisfactory: Grade 3**

Achievement and standards	**Satisfactory: Grade 3**
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade3
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4

Quality of provision	**Satisfactory: Grade 3**
Adult and community Learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade3
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4

Leadership and management	**Satisfactory: Grade 3**
Adult & Community Learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade3
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4

Equality of opportunity	**Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2**

Sector subject areas

Health & social care	**Inadequate: Grade 4**

Modern foreign languages	**Satisfactory: Grade 3**

Preparation for life and work	**Satisfactory: Grade 3**

Business, administration and law	**Inadequate: Grade 4**

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Adult and community learning   Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Train to Gain   Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4

5. The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall, a steady improvement from a significant decline in 2005/06. Success rates for personal and community development learning (PCDL) have been maintained at a high level in the previous three years. Further education (FE) success rates improved in 2006/07 and are satisfactory. However, overall success rates for Train to Gain are inadequate. Retention rates for PCDL programmes are high and are satisfactory overall for FE programmes. The standards of learners' work, their progress and attendance are satisfactory.

6. The quality of provision is satisfactory for adult and community learning, but is inadequate for Train to Gain provision. Teaching and learning are satisfactory for adult and community learning but are inadequate for Train to Gain. In the provision directly inspected there is insufficient planning of learning. Programmes and activities are satisfactory to meet the needs and interests of learners in adult and community learning but are inadequate overall for Train to Gain. PAL's arrangements for learners' guidance and support are satisfactory.

7. Leadership and management are satisfactory and equality of opportunity is good for adult and community learning, but are inadequate for Train to Gain provision. PAL has a clear strategy for the provision and good initiatives to widen participation. Developments have been focused effectively to meet learners and funding needs as well as the broad objectives of Borough of Poole.

Capacity to improve
Satisfactory: Grade 3

8. The capacity for Poole Adult Learning to improve is satisfactory. PAL made considerable improvements from inspection in 2004 to the reinspection in 2005. Many of the areas for improvement from the previous inspections have been addressed. Since 2005/06 success rates have improved, particularly in preparation for life and work, PAL's main programme area. Provision in Train to Gain is inadequate; however this provision is small and relatively new. The previous inspection grades for modern foreign languages and equality of opportunity have been maintained effectively. At the previous inspection, however, preparation for life and work and leadership and management were judged as good and are now satisfactory.

9. Arrangements for most aspects of quality assurance are satisfactory. PAL has developed a very clear policy for quality improvement which is reviewed regularly. Quality improvement procedures are well documented with good support literature for tutors. Quality improvement plans are detailed and effectively monitored. Quality assurance procedures are well established. Arrangements for observations of teaching and learning are well planned and detailed although the grades awarded are generally too high. PAL

has good arrangements to collect learner feedback from all adult and community learning courses.

10. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. It is thorough and includes contributions from all tutors. Feedback from learners is used effectively as part of the service's self-assessment. Data is used well at course level to develop the process. PAL's self-assessment report is critical and comprehensive. However, some of the areas for improvement identified by inspectors were not recognised in the self-assessment report.

Key strengths

- Strong strategic management and direction in Adult and Community Learning (ACL)
- Very good partnerships in widening participation
- Good support for learners with disabilities and/or learning difficulties
- Good support for tutors

Key areas for improvement

- Insufficient planning of learning
- Insufficient timely use of management data to monitor retention and success rates
- Weak management of the Train to Gain programme
- Inaccurate monitoring of teaching and learning

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4

11. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Overall success rates for PCDL declined to 88% in 2005/06 from 91% in 2004/05. However, in 2006/07 they improved to 93%. Overall success rates in FE provision declined significantly from 83% in 2004/05 to 47% in 2005/06, as recognised in the self-assessment report. In 2006/07, FE success rates improved to 68%.

12. Individual programme success rates have generally been maintained in the previous three years. However, in PAL's main area of provision, preparation for life and work, FE success rates declined from 85% in 2004/05 to a very low rate of 21% in 2005/06 but improved to 60% in 2006/07. Success rates are particularly high at 96% on accredited yachting courses for 2006/07.

13. Success rates for learners with a disability improved in 2006/07 and compare well with PAL's overall success rates. Success rates are comparable between men and women, but are slightly lower for minority ethnic learners, most of who are on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) programmes.

14. Overall retention is good at 88% in 2006/07 and 2005/06. In 2006/07, retention was high for PCDL programmes at 95%, but satisfactory at 77% for FE provision. Retention in 2006/07 was low in science and mathematics, languages and preparation for life and work programmes, as recognised in the self-assessment report. Learners' attendance is satisfactory.

15. In Train to Gain, the overall success rate is low at 54%. Success rates are high for administration at 86%. However, success rates are very low in health and social care at 40% and customer service at 47%.

16. The standard of work produced by learners is satisfactory. Many learners develop improved confidence and self-esteem. Some learners make rapid progress. Most learners are well motivated and achieve well.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4

17. The quality of provision is satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in adult and community learning provision and are good in some learning sessions. Most tutors are suitably qualified. Delivery of training in Train to Gain programmes is insufficient. Most learners make satisfactory progress, although in Train to Gain progress has been slow for some learners but is improving.

18. In adult and community learning, initial assessment is satisfactory and is used effectively to identify the level of learners' skills on entry to their programme. Arrangements for additional learning support are also satisfactory. Assessment is satisfactory and in Train to Gain assessment plans are particularly detailed. Progress reviews are generally satisfactory but are not always sufficiently thorough to meet learner needs.

19. Resources are satisfactory in adult and community learning and meet learners' needs. In modern foreign languages the use of resources is good in most learning sessions. However, the use of e-technology in preparation for life and work is not sufficiently well developed. Most of the main centre is well equipped, however, accommodation and resources for some learning sessions are poor. Not all outreach centres have access to information learning technology. Insufficient learning materials are available for Train to Gain.

20. Initial assessment is inadequate on Train to Gain programmes. Learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs are not assessed. No arrangements exist to support learners with additional learning needs.

21. Planning of learning is insufficient which was not recognised in the self-assessment report. In modern foreign languages, assessment is not used sufficiently to identify learning targets and plan learning. In preparation for life and work there is insufficient focus on real-life contexts in the planning of learning, which is not sufficiently tailored to learners' needs. In Train to Gain programmes individual learning plans are incomplete and are not used sufficiently to plan learning and assessment opportunities.

22. The arrangements to provide programmes and activities to meet the needs and interests of learners are satisfactory for adult and community learning. PAL provides a broad range of programmes and levels of provision. The service is very responsive to feedback and requests from learners. In the main programme areas there are well planned progression opportunities. Courses are provided in a wide variety of venues across the borough. Provision for family learning is well established and community learning is well planned to meet learners' needs. In preparation for life and work, initiatives with employers and community-based agencies to establish provision are good. A good range of enrichment activities exist in modern foreign languages.

23. The extent to which the Train to Gain programme meets the needs and interests of learners is inadequate overall. Some aspects are satisfactory, however, PAL does not meet the programme guidelines for the delivery of training. Employers' needs are not sufficiently met.

24. Guidance and support for learners is satisfactory overall. Learners are enrolled on programmes at the appropriate level. The tutorial support for learners in preparation for life and work is good. Modern foreign language learners have access to a useful grammar workshop. Across the provision, tutors provide learners with effective personal and individual support. Support for vulnerable adults is carefully arranged and Every Child Matters outcomes for these learners are appropriate. In Train to Gain, employers and assessors support their learners effectively. PAL's arrangements for information, advice and guidance are satisfactory.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Adult and community learning   Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Train to Gain   Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4

Equality of opportunity   Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

25. PAL has very strong strategic management in Adult and Community Learning. The service's strategies have sound links into the direction of the Borough of Poole. PAL has developed and diversified the provision well towards a demand-led curriculum. Staff and tutors have good input into the development of courses and the curriculum. Targets for learner recruitment are generally met or exceeded.

26. PAL has developed good initiatives to widen participation. PAL has very effective referral arrangements with partners, bringing new learners onto programmes and providing specialist support for learners. Strong partnerships have been developed to access joint funding bids. PAL has significantly increased the number of employers they work with through introducing work-based learning. A recent project, in partnership with a neighbouring adult learning provider, is having early success in helping people with barriers to employment into sustained employment.

27. Support for tutors has greatly improved following a recent restructure, as identified in the self-assessment. Meetings are very effective and well attended, with a strong focus on sharing best practice and staff development. A good proportion of tutors have, or are working towards, teaching qualifications. Tutors and staff have good development opportunities, although the impact of some subject specific development is not always demonstrated in the classroom.

28. PAL has good arrangements for supporting learners with disabilities and/or learning difficulties. Learners have very good access to a wide range of adaptive technology and equipment and are well supported by a network of highly effective volunteers and support workers. Current and potential learners with a disability and/or learning difficulty are fully consulted with by PAL when relevant policies and action plans are devised.

29. Development of recognising and recording of progress and achievement (RARPA) in non-accredited learning is satisfactory. The use of RARPA is systematically monitored and moderated. However, not all tutors are using RARPA effectively on individual learning plans and some examples are only a record of activities completed by the learner.

30. PAL provides satisfactory value for money. Senior managers are thorough in managing and monitoring resources and budgets. PAL has successfully maintained a value for money approach as a key consideration while developing the curriculum and course offer. However, some courses at the main centre are held in poor quality classrooms.

31. PAL's procedures for safeguarding learners meet government requirements. Staff and learners understand the policy and procedures for safeguarding. Appropriate vetting procedures are in place although these have not yet been completed for a very few staff. Recent training has been carried out for all staff including volunteers.

32. Monitoring of teaching and learning is inaccurate. PAL's moderation of observation of teaching and learning (OTL) has identified that the grades awarded are not supported by observation judgements. However, PAL misjudged this to be an issue with the accuracy of the observation evidence. PAL has overestimated the quality of teaching and learning. Too

much of PAL's OTL process focuses on teaching and does not sufficiently consider learning.

33. PAL recognises that staff appraisals are of variable quality and has begun to plan improvement. Some appraisal records are insufficiently detailed. Targets identified are not always thoroughly monitored. Few tutor appraisals contain reference to observations of teaching and learning.

34. Timely use of management data to monitor retention and success rates is insufficient. PAL's management information system does not have the capacity to easily produce in-year retention or success rate data. Managers do not use data sufficiently to monitor improvements, trends, performance by different groups or the impact of initiatives. Senior managers do not routinely analyse the reasons for poor retention rates to effect timely improvement.

35. Management of the Train to Gain programme is weak. Many aspects of the programme have not yet been fully introduced, including initial assessment, literacy, numeracy and language support, off-the-job training and resources. Data is not used effectively to monitor timely or overall success rates. PAL's arrangements for quality assuring key aspects of the Train to Gain Programme are inadequate. Train to Gain assessors have not received sufficient training on the requirements of the programme.

36. PAL's promotion of equality of opportunity is good in adult and community learning. PAL's equality and diversity statements are well promoted throughout learning venues. The service is covered by the Borough of Poole's single equality scheme, which meets current legislation. PAL has been very proactive in assessing the impact of equality and diversity of its identified key functions. Managers are effecting improvement swiftly through the resulting action plans. PAL offers a diverse, accessible and wide range of courses. The number of community venues used has continued to increase. Participation by minority ethnic learners and learners with a disability is at a considerably higher rate than the local population profile. PAL is making good progress in implementing their skills for life strategy and embedding support across curriculum areas. The fee policy and structure is well planned and encourages participation. PAL's systems enable complaints to be well managed and resolved effectively. PAL has developed a very comprehensive equality and diversity training module, however, not all tutors and assessors have attended this training. In Train to Gain, learners' understanding of equality and diversity is not sufficiently developed.

What learners like:

- Inspirational and enthusiastic tutors, who are generous with their knowledge.
- The support and encouragement given to succeed.
- Developing confidence fast.
- The frequent assessment visits for Train to Gain learners.
- I've learned more in the last six weeks than I've ever done.

What learners think could improve:

- Being able to use the computers more.
- Promote courses more widely, particularly within schools.
- More access to learning materials for Train to Gain.
- Provide better information about how to enrol for the next level of course.
- 'Too much paperwork'.

Sector subject areas

Health & social care

Inadequate: Grade 4

Context

37. At the time of inspection there are 40 learners on the Train to Gain programme. All are working towards a national vocational qualification (NVQ) in health and social care at either level 2 or 3. Learners are aged 19 or over and 36 are women. They are all employed in a range of care settings in and around Poole. PAL began delivering Train to Gain provision in health and social care at the end of 2006 and a total of 50 learners have been recruited onto the programme. All training and assessment is carried out in the workplace by PAL's part-time assessors. The internal verifier has a part-time post. The programme is funded at the higher rate for Train to Gain to include 20 guided learning hours for each learner.

Strengths

- Good development of skills and knowledge for some learners.

Areas for improvement

- Poor success rates.
- Poor planning and recording of learning.
- Inadequate initial assessment.
- Poor programme management.
- Insufficient promotion of equality of opportunity.

Achievement and standards

38. Achievement and standards are inadequate overall. However, development of skills and knowledge for some learners is good. For these learners their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical aspects of care has increased and the quality of their client care has improved.

39. The standard of learners portfolio work is satisfactory. Most learners have gained in confidence and self-esteem while on the programme. Learners' attendance is satisfactory.

40. Success rates are poor at 40%. A substantial number of learners have experienced a significant delay in their assessment arrangements and have previously made slow progress. However, at the time of inspection, most learners are making satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment.

Quality of provision

41. The quality of provision is inadequate overall. Teaching and learning are inadequate. Assessment is satisfactory. Assessors make frequent visits and work effectively with learners and their employers. The assessment plans produced are particularly detailed. Progress reviews are also satisfactory, taking place at regular intervals and learners fully participating in the process. However, not all employers are sufficiently involved in the reviews.

42. The planning and recording of learning are poor. Individual learning plans only detail units of the NVQ to be achieved and do not identify or plan to meet learners' other needs. The individual learning plans are not used effectively to plan learning and assessment opportunities. Planned completion dates for most learners are not sufficiently challenging. Insufficient training is provided for learners, as they are not receiving the required 20 hours of training. Availability of training resources is poor.

43. Initial assessment is inadequate. No effective method of assessing learners' current competence in their job role exists. PAL has recently introduced a skills check document, but it is not sufficiently detailed. A system to initially assess learners' literacy and numeracy skills has only recently been introduced. However, no provision is available to meet identified needs. Some learners have undiagnosed literacy needs. No system exists to ensure that all learners are fully assessed at the start of their programme to identify any gaps in their skills and knowledge.

44. The extent to which the programme and activities meets the interests and needs of learners is inadequate. The quality of learners' employment in the workplace is satisfactory. However, the programme and activities are insufficient to meet learners' needs. PAL does not meet the programme guidelines for the delivery of training. Employers' needs are not sufficiently met. Learners are enrolled on programmes at the appropriate level. However, there is no systematic and recorded discussion with employers to identify the needs for learners' skills development and how these link with the qualification and any additional learning support needs.

45. Guidance and support for learners is satisfactory. Assessors visit learners in the workplace at least fortnightly and provide effective guidance and support. Learners have good access to telephone and email contact with their assessor. Arrangements for information, advice and guidance for learners are satisfactory. Employers support learners effectively. Some employers provide external skills training, linked to the NVQ to help their learners' progress with the qualification.

Leadership and management

46. Leadership and management are inadequate. Management of the programme is poor. Data is inaccurate and incomplete. Managers do not monitor or compare success or progress rates between different groups of learners. Action to resolve previous staff shortages was slow and some current learners had no assessment visits for several months. Quality assurance arrangements are incomplete and do not cover all of the key learning processes. Managers do not use details of learners' progress to identify quality improvements. No overall analysis of learner progress takes place. Not all staff are fully qualified and sufficiently trained for the roles they are expected to undertake. Insufficient guidance and resources are available for the quality assurance of individual learning and assessment plans and training. Internal verification is incomplete. There are no sampling plans. The feedback from internal verification to assessors is satisfactory and standardisation

meetings generally cover an appropriate range of activities. There is a wide range of training available to staff, however the rate of participation is low.

47. Promotion of equality of opportunity is insufficient. Equality and diversity are integral to the NVQ and learners have a good understanding of how it applies to their work. However, there is no discussion during reviews to raise awareness of issues which may affect learners in relation to their employment or achievement of their potential. Employers' equal opportunities practices are not monitored. A recently introduced learner handbook provides learners with detailed information on PAL's equal opportunities policy.

48. The Train to Gain health and social care programme was not included in PAL's 2006/07 self-assessment report. Strengths and areas for improvement are included in the service's current quality improvement plan. However, the associated action plan does not sufficiently identify how improvements would be made. Inspectors found the strengths identified to be no more than normal practice. PAL did not identify all the areas for improvement found by inspectors and overestimated the grade for the provision.

Modern foreign languages

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

49. PAL offers 13 courses in Spanish, French, German, Mandarin Chinese, Lip Reading, British Sign Language (BSL) and GCSE English. Learning sessions are held at the main centre and seven community venues. Lessons are two hours long and most take place in the evening. Courses are offered at levels 1, 2 and 3. The level 1 and 2 courses are publicly funded and are externally accredited. At the time of inspection there are 107 learners on these courses. The provision is managed by three staff and delivered by 15 hourly paid tutors.

50. In 2006/07, there were 262 learners on programme, 73% of whom were women and 77% new to language learning. Learners aged 16-34 accounted for 26%, 45% were 35-54 and 29% were 55 and over. Learners having a minority ethnic background accounted for 6%, 22% had a declared learning or physical disability and most attended lip reading learning sessions.

Strengths

- Good use of resources.
- Good enrichment activities.

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient feedback on learning.
- Insufficiently effective observation of teaching and learning.

Achievement and standards

51. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Across the provision, the standard of learners' work is satisfactory and is relevant to their learning goals. Some learners make rapid progress. For example, learners in one group gave presentations in Mandarin Chinese at the end of their level 1 course. Most learners make satisfactory progress in learning a new language and some have progressed from beginner level to completing a GCSE in three years. In addition to language skills, learners develop a useful understanding of the country's culture and history. This effectively adds interest for all learners and is particularly valuable for those who live in the country of the language studied for part of the year or wish to use the language for work.

52. Retention and success rates overall are satisfactory. In 2006/07, retention rates on short, non-accredited courses were 92% and success rates were 85%. However, rates on accredited long courses have declined over the previous three years. The retention rate in 2004/05 was 82%, in 2005/06 it declined to 70% and in 2006/07 it was 66%. Success rates have also declined and were 77% in 2004/05, 67% in 2005/06 and 61% in 2006/07. Subsequently effective action has been taken to improve the retention rates on these courses. Data for 2007/08 show retention rates on long courses have improved to 72%. It is too early to judge the impact on success rates. Learners' attendance is satisfactory. Learners who have been absent for two consecutive lessons are routinely contacted.

Quality of provision

53. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The use of resources is good in most learning sessions. Resources are used well to support a range of classroom activities and individual, pair and whole group work. Tutors have good language skills and are suitably qualified. Most tutors use the target language well when they communicate with learners, for example in giving task instructions or explaining a language point.

54. Resources are satisfactory and meet learners' needs, however, not all the outreach centres used have access to information learning technology.

55. Initial assessment is satisfactory and includes literacy screening. Learners who experience difficulty in understanding grammar concepts have access to effective additional support at PAL's grammar workshop.

56. Learners receive insufficient feedback on their language skills. Feedback on learners' spoken language, particularly their pronunciation, sentence stress and intonation is poor. Tutors assess the achievement of language tasks thoroughly but do not provide sufficient feedback to learners on their performance or how they could further improve. Tutors and learners complete a detailed progress record form to reflect on learning achieved over time. However, the tutors' comments are insufficiently specific to identify new targets for learning. There is little evidence in course files and lesson plans that assessment effectively informs planning for learning, for either group or individual needs.

57. The programmes and activities are satisfactory in meeting the needs and interests of learners. A good range of enrichment activities exist which provide the learners with good opportunities to practise their language skills and support group work. Many tutors arrange outings to local restaurants that use the target language and learners benefit from the opportunity to use their language skills in a social setting. In some sessions, food is brought into the classroom and is effectively used to practise relevant language. Some groups travel to France to practise their language skills. One tutor has their own website which provides useful opportunities for learners to access language clips and practise exercises in their own time.

58. Guidance and support for learners is satisfactory. Sufficient information and guidance on courses are available and are easily accessible for current learners.

Leadership and management

59. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The day-to-day management of the provision is effective. The staff network meetings provide a useful opportunity for tutors to share information across languages and centres. Managers have used data effectively to identify the decline in retention and success rates on long courses and establish targets for improvement.

60. Staff training is satisfactory. A good general training programme exists covering topics such as electronic whiteboard use and health and safety training. However, there is insufficient subject specific training.

61. Equality of opportunity is promoted well. Specialist equipment is available to support learners in achieving their potential. PAL uses a broad range of community venues to support local access to language courses.

62. The managers and tutors contribute well to self-assessment and learners' views are used to develop the process. However, the self-assessment report is insufficiently evaluative and does not accurately reflect the provision. Inspectors' findings did not agree with most of the strengths and some areas for improvement were not identified in the self-assessment report.

63. The observation of teaching and learning is insufficiently effective. Observation reports mainly focus on the quality of teaching and lack sufficient judgements on learning and the quality of the learning experience. In some reports the grade given is overstated and does not match observers' recorded judgements.

Preparation for life and work

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

64. PAL offers daytime, weekend and evening courses at its main centre and community venues across the borough. Most courses are for two hours per week and operate for 34 weeks of the year. Learners can join some courses at any point. At the time of inspection, PAL offers 25 literacy courses, 21 numeracy courses and 16 ESOL courses. There are 29 part-time literacy and numeracy tutors, 37 volunteer tutors, 10 part-time ESOL tutors and 10 volunteer tutors. There is a full-time curriculum manager and three part-time managers for literacy and numeracy, ESOL and tutor support. The literacy and numeracy team also provide literacy, language and numeracy (LLN) support and additional learning support to learners in other curriculum areas.

65. During 2006/07, 686 learners enrolled on literacy and numeracy courses, and 389 on ESOL courses. All learners are encouraged to work towards nationally recognised LLN qualifications. At the time of inspection, there are 461 learners, of whom 347 are on literacy and numeracy courses and 114 on ESOL courses.

Strengths

- Good success rates at levels 1 and 2 in Literacy and Numeracy.
- Good tutorial support for learners.
- Very effective response to community and employer needs.
- Good support for tutors.

Areas for improvement

- Poor success rates at Entry level in ESOL and Numeracy.
- Poor accommodation for some learning sessions.
- Insufficient focus on real-life contexts in the planning of learning.

Achievement and standards

66. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Success rates for Literacy and Numeracy at levels 1 and 2 are good. In 2006/07 the success rates for Literacy levels 1 and 2 were 86% and 73% respectively. The success rates for Numeracy levels 1 and 2 were 88%, and 75% respectively. Retention rates were very good at 100% for literacy level 1 and 94% for level 2. For Numeracy, levels 1 and 2 retention rates were 91% and 87% respectively.

67. The standard of work produced by learners is satisfactory. Many literacy and numeracy learners are well motivated to achieve qualifications and most complete homework between lessons.

68. Across the provision, overall attendance by learners is satisfactory. The attendance rate of ESOL learners is improving and is currently 87%.

69. Success rates at Entry level in ESOL and Numeracy are poor. In 2006/07 the success rate for ESOL at Entry level was 30%. However, this does not include ESOL learners who

successfully gained a literacy qualification or learners who gained partial accreditation. The success rate for Numeracy at Entry level was 49%. Staff have worked effectively to improve attendance and performance on programmes where retention has been low. They closely monitor attendance and follow up absences by contacting learners with reminders.

Quality of provision

70. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning is satisfactory. Most learning sessions provide a good level of individual support. Tutors plan lessons effectively with a series of related activities that take account of the skills levels of individual learners. Learners make satisfactory progress in the development of basic skills. However, the use of e-technology within the classroom is not sufficiently well developed.

71. Initial assessment is satisfactory and is used effectively to accurately identify the level of learners' skills on entry to the programme. Arrangements for additional learning support are also satisfactory.

72. In the planning of learning there is insufficient focus on real-life contexts. Tutors rely too much on resources that lack topical interest, contextual relevance and challenging content. Some topics raised in discussion are not sufficiently explored as opportunities for learners to broaden their understanding. Individual learning plans do not sufficiently identify the situations in which learners want or need to become proficient. Planning of learning and reviewing progress is not sufficiently tailored to learners' needs. Learners provide good evaluative comments on how they have progressed during lessons, but not on how well they can apply their learning outside the classroom.

73. The accommodation for some learning sessions is poor and inadequately equipped. In these learning sessions, lack of storage space and display areas, unsuitable room layout and inadequate temperature controls all have a negative impact on learning.

74. The range of programmes and activities are satisfactory. PAL offers a broad range of learning sessions and levels of provision. Staff have worked very effectively with employers and community-based agencies to establish provision for specific employee groups in the private and public sectors and for vulnerable young people. Two workplace learning courses aimed at ESOL learners have been successfully established. A satisfactory range of enrichment activities for learners is available.

75. Support for learners is satisfactory overall. PAL has established good tutorial support arrangements for learners, significantly enhancing the quality of their learning experience. Some learners have quickly gained confidence and are able to learn more effectively in their group. However, there is insufficient recording of tutorials.

76. Information, advice and guidance (IAG) is satisfactory. At initial interview, learners at level 1 or Entry level who are seeking employment are routinely directed to the **nextstep** services. Learners can request a meeting with an IAG worker but generally rely on their tutor to provide information about progression routes. However, some tutors do not feel confident to perform this role.

Leadership and management

77. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Support for tutors is good. Managers operate an inclusive and consultative style of management. Termly meetings are held, where

tutors have good opportunities to develop and share good practice. Tutors are actively encouraged to develop self-managing support groups. Managers deal promptly and effectively with concerns raised by tutors. Volunteers are well supported and encouraged to progress into paid tutoring roles. Staff are supported to undertake professional training and are well qualified for their work.

78. Equality of opportunity is good. PAL promotes an inclusive learning environment in which all learners are effectively supported to achieve their potential. Outcomes for Every Child Matters are appropriate. Initiatives to widen participation and outreach work are well managed.

79. Managers have taken steps to improve performance, but have not used data effectively to develop the process. For example, progression and destination data is not systematically collected and analysed. Data is not used effectively to develop self-assessment. Inspectors agreed with some of the judgements in the self-assessment report, but found some strengths to be overstated, such as the quality of teaching and learning, and some areas for improvement were not sufficiently recognised.

Business, administration and law

Inadequate: Grade 4

Context

80. At the time of inspection there are 13 learners on Train to Gain programmes. Ten are undertaking NVQs at level 2 in customer service and three are undertaking NVQs at level 2 in business administration. Three learners are men. PAL began delivering Train to Gain in business administration and customer service in 2006/07. There are three qualified part-time assessors and one qualified part-time internal verifier. Learners are employed by a range of private and public sector organisations in the Poole area. The programme is funded at the higher rate for Train to Gain to include 20 guided learning hours for each learner.

Strengths

- Good success rates in business administration.

Areas for improvement

- Poor success rates in customer service.
- Insufficient development of skills and knowledge.
- Inadequate initial assessment and planning of learning.
- Poor programme management.
- Insufficient development of learners' understanding of equality and diversity.

Achievement and standards

81. Achievement and standards are inadequate overall. At the time of inspection, the overall success rate is only 58%.

82. Success rates in business administration are good at 86%. However, learner numbers are low. In 2007/08, six of the seven learners who left the programme achieved their qualification.

83. The standard of work in learners' portfolios is satisfactory. Many learners show improved confidence and self-esteem. Learners' progress is generally satisfactory and most learners gain the NVQ within six months. Five current learners have recently had their portfolios submitted for external verification. However, a few learners experienced a slow start to their programme and there is insufficient development of learners' skills and knowledge. Success rates for customer service are poor at 47%.

Quality of provision

84. The quality of provision is inadequate overall. Teaching and learning are inadequate. Assessment is satisfactory. Assessors make frequent assessment visits, fortnightly and sometimes weekly. They have good working relationships with learners and employers. Learners' progress is reviewed effectively at intervals throughout the programme, but is poorly recorded. Employers are not always sufficiently involved in progress reviews.

85. Initial assessment of learners learning and assessment needs is inadequate. No effective method of assessing learners' current competence in their job role exists. PAL has recently introduced a skills check document, but this is not sufficiently detailed. Employers are not involved in assessing learners' development needs. Learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs are not assessed and there are no arrangements in place to support learners with additional learning needs. Individual learning plans are incomplete and are not used to effectively plan learning and assessment opportunities. Planned completion dates for most learners are not sufficiently challenging. PAL has identified initial assessment as an area for improvement.

86. Learners do not receive sufficient training. Most learners do not improve their workplace skills over and above their previous competence. They do not have access to appropriate learning materials to widen their knowledge. PAL has developed a programme of off-the-job training, but attendance has been very low.

87. The extent to which the programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners is inadequate overall. The programmes match learners' potential and prior attainment. However, the activities do not sufficiently meet the programme guidelines for the delivery of training. No systematic and recorded discussion with employers exists to identify the needs for learners' skills development and how these link with the qualification and any additional learning support needs. The quality of employment in the workplace is satisfactory but employers' needs are not sufficiently met.

88. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Learners are enrolled on programmes at the appropriate level. PAL's arrangements for IAG are satisfactory. Assessors provide adequate information about progression opportunities to learners. Employers support their learners well.

Leadership and management

89. Leadership and management are inadequate. Management of the Train to Gain programme is poor. Managers do not use accurate and timely information about the number of learners on each programme. Data is not effectively collected and analysed to monitor the progress and success of learners. Induction for new assessors does not sufficiently cover the programme requirements. Assessors have not been sufficiently trained to implement and use new processes, for example the completion of individual learning plans. Learning resources are not made available to assessors, who are responsible for the delivery of guided learning to each learner.

90. No procedures or guidelines for the key aspects of the programme are in place and no system exists to monitor the quality of key learning processes, such as guided learning, individual learning plans, progress reviews, induction and initial assessment. Recent attempts have been made to collect feedback from employers and learners, however, the

response rate has been low. PAL has identified the need to improve quality assurance of the programme, but the actions identified in the quality improvement plan do not sufficiently address areas for improvement. Internal verification is incomplete. No overall plan is in place for the internal verification of all assessors and not all assessors have been observed.

91. Learners' understanding of equality and diversity is not sufficiently developed. A recently introduced learner handbook contains information on PAL's equal opportunities policy, but this is not adequately explained during induction. The new review document contains a section to record discussions with learners about equality and diversity issues, but these do not take place. Assessors have not attended equal opportunities training. Employers' equal opportunities practices are not monitored.

92. The Train to Gain business administration and customer service programmes were not included in the service's 2006/07 self-assessment report. However, PAL has recently identified strengths and areas for improvement for the programme and these have been included in the quality improvement plan. Inspectors found the identified strengths to be no more than normal practice. PAL did not identify all the areas for improvement found by inspectors.

Learners' achievements

Table 1

Success rates on **work-based learning** '**Train to Gain' programmes** managed by Poole Adult Learning, 2006 to 2008.

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider/college NVQ rate**
Train to Gain ***	2006/07	overall	0	0
		timely	0	0
	2007/08 (10 months)	overall	35	54%
		timely****		

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'
****   Validated data not available