

INSPECTION REPORT

Worcestershire County Council Adult Community Learning Service

18 January 2007



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people aged over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learnirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**).

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the Common Inspection Framework by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

Pre-inspection analysis

The resources allocated to a cycle 2 inspection are primarily determined by the findings from the previous inspection. Account is also taken of information about achievement and retention obtained from the funding body, and any significant changes in the size or scope of the provision.

Where a provider has received good grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is relatively light. If the provider offers a number of areas of learning, a restricted sample is inspected.

Where a provider has received satisfactory grades in cycle 1, the cycle 2 inspection is less intensive and it is possible that not all areas of learning are included.

Where there are significant unsatisfactory grades from cycle 1, the intensity of the cycle 2 inspection is broadly the same as cycle 1, and all significant areas of learning are inspected.

Providers that have not previously been inspected will receive a full inspection.

Overall effectiveness

The grades given for areas of learning and leadership and management will be used to arrive at a judgement about the overall effectiveness of the provider.

An **outstanding** provider should typically have leadership and management and at least half of the areas of learning judged to be a grade 1. All area of learning grades will be graded 1 or 2.

A **good** provider should have leadership and management and at least half of the area of learning grades judged to be a grade 2 or better. A good training provider should not have any grade 4s, and few grade 3s in the areas of learning.

A **satisfactory** provider should have adequate or better grades in leadership and management and in at least two thirds of the area of learning grades. An adequate provider might have a range of grades across areas of learning, some of which might be graded 4.

Provision will normally be deemed to be **inadequate** where more than one third of the area of learning grades and/or leadership and management are judged to be inadequate.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning.

Grading

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas and Jobcentre Plus programmes, as well as to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes equality of opportunity and quality assurance. The descriptors for the four grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Worcestershire County Council Adult Community Learning Service (WCCACLS) is part of the council's cultural services department and is in the directorate of adult and community services. Until November 2005, the service was part of Worcestershire County Council's education directorate.
2. Since it was last inspected, in 2003, WCCACLS has appointed a new head of service and five programme managers who oversee the day-to-day management of courses. The service is a lead partner in a widening adult participation project funded by the European Social Fund (ESF). Fifteen learning ambassadors work on this project and are employed by the WCCACLS or by the partner organisations that act as key contacts in the community.
3. The service provides learning opportunities directly in preparation for life and work and information and communications technology (ICT). There are four main areas of provision. First steps courses in ICT are directly funded and offered in community venues and on a mobile unit. Family learning and wider family learning programmes are offered in 55 local schools and other venues through subcontracting arrangements with four local further education colleges and a sixth form college. The adult education programme for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, referred to by the service as life skills, is offered in day centres locally. Community development programmes come under the widening adult participation project. In 2005-06, there were a total of 2,186 learners enrolled across all provision.
4. In 2005-06, 31 per cent of the learners were men. The proportion of learners from black or minority ethnic communities, at 4.4 per cent, was well above the 2.5 per cent in the local population.
5. WCCACLS works with learners in Worcestershire's main population centres of Worcester, Bromsgrove, Droitwich, Evesham, Kidderminster, Malvern and Redditch. Much of the county is rural.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

Grade 2

6. **The overall effectiveness of the provider is good.** Leadership and management and quality improvement are good. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The quality of provision in ICT is satisfactory, and in community development it is good.
7. Achievement and standards are good. Learners make good progress, learn new skills, and develop confidence and increase their self-esteem. Some learners who had not been in employment for some time have gained employment using these new skills. Others have progressed to further training, and some vulnerable adults have achieved qualifications for the first time. In community development and on family learning courses, learners have used their knowledge to develop opportunities in their local communities. Retention is satisfactory in ICT and good in community development.

8. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are generally satisfactory and in some cases good. In many lessons, tutors are sensitive and patient with learners developing their skills. However, in a few lessons in community development, tutors do not vary their teaching methods enough and use too narrow a range of learning materials. The service has strengthened its systems for the observation of teaching and learning and inspectors were broadly in agreement with strengths and weaknesses identified by the service's own observers. However, tutors do not record sufficient detail about learners and their progress on individual learning plans.

9. The range of programmes is particularly responsive to local needs. Since the 2003 inspection, WCCACLS has secured funding from the ESF to widen adult participation in learning, and it is a very effective lead partner in this project. Learning ambassadors in community development are particularly effective in developing provision to meet their local community's and learners' needs. In ICT the service uses a mobile unit to take learning into the community. Links with local communities and voluntary organisations are good. The family learning programmes benefit from good working arrangements with local colleges.

10. Support for learners is satisfactory. Initial advice and guidance is generally satisfactory. In community development, managers and learning ambassadors plan provision carefully to meet local needs. However, in ICT some learners progress onto higher-level courses without being competent in basic ICT skills. Since the 2003 inspection, the service has recruited a learning support assistant who provides good individual support mainly to ICT but also to other learners. WCCACLS's Skills for Life strategy is incomplete and there is insufficient specific support for learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs. Skills for Life is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. The service refers learners to other providers or offers discrete provision to meet their literacy, numeracy and language needs.

11. The inspection team was broadly confident in the reliability of the self-assessment process. The self-assessment process is inclusive and takes account of the views of staff, learners and partners. Managers consider a range of evidence to evaluate the provision and make judgements. However, some of this evidence is not analysed sufficiently and some judgements are based on subjective evidence.

12. The provider has demonstrated that it is in a good position to make improvements. Since the 2003 inspection, WCCACLS has improved its provision. Leadership and management are stronger, and significant actions have been taken to improve the quality of provision. The service has improved its observations of teaching and learning, and the way it monitors subcontractors, and increased the number of partnerships, to benefit a wider range of learners.

KEY CHALLENGES FOR WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ADULT COMMUNITY LEARNING SERVICE:

- develop systematic quality assurance procedures
- fully develop the Skills for Life strategy
- continue to provide highly effective strategies to keep a wide range of learners involved in learning
- maintain the good development of learners' skills and progress
- continue to develop assessment procedures for non-accredited learning
- continue to use data to bring about improvement

GRADES

grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = inadequate

Grades awarded at inspection

Leadership and management		2
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality improvement		2

Information and communications technology			3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>ICT for users</i>		3	
Adult and community learning	280	3	

Community development			2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade	
<i>Adult and community learning</i>		2	
Other government-funded provision	89	2	

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

13. WCCACLS was first inspected by the Adult Learning Inspectorate in March 2003, and received a quality monitoring visit in September 2005. For this inspection, four inspectors visited WCCACLS over four days in January 2007. A one-day longitudinal visit, before the main inspection week, was used to observe an aspect of the community development work. The ICT and community development provision was inspected and graded. Family learning and Life Skills were sampled to gain an overview of the full range of provision, but they were not graded separately.

Number of inspectors	4
Number of inspection days	21
Number of learners interviewed	21
Number of staff interviewed	28
Number of subcontractors interviewed	2
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	14
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	12

Leadership and management

Strengths

- strong leadership and good management of the service
- very clear and effective strategic direction
- particularly strong partnerships which benefit learners
- successful actions to improve the quality of the learners' experience
- good use of data to bring about improvements

Weaknesses

- insufficient development of the Skills for Life strategy
- insufficiently systematic quality assurance
- insufficient promotion of equality of opportunity to learners

Information and communications technology

ICT for users

Strengths

- good development of ICT and personal skills
- good coaching of learners

Weaknesses

- insufficiently thorough assessment of non-accredited provision

- insufficient planning of individual learning
- insufficiently thorough monitoring of provision

Community development

Adult and community learning

Strengths

- very good progress and achievement
- highly effective strategies to recruit learners and keep them involved
- good capacity building activities
- good project management

Weaknesses

- insufficient individual support for learners with literacy needs

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ADULT COMMUNITY LEARNING SERVICE:

- the good teaching - 'they make learning new things fun'
- the very supportive and enthusiastic tutors - 'they give my confidence such a boost'
- sharing problems with other learners in a confidential way
- the way tutors challenge learners in lesson - 'they push us but don't intimidate us to learn'
- 'the centres are warm and welcoming and easy to get to'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ADULT COMMUNITY LEARNING SERVICE COULD IMPROVE:

- the number of higher-level courses - 'would like to go further with my training'

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- strong leadership and good management of the service
- very clear and effective strategic direction
- particularly strong partnerships which benefit learners
- successful actions to improve the quality of the learners' experience
- good use of data to bring about improvements

Weaknesses

- insufficient development of the Skills for Life strategy
- insufficiently systematic quality assurance
- insufficient promotion of equality of opportunity to learners

14. The head of the WCCACLS and the management team provide clear leadership and good management. The director of cultural services, designated members and other council officers effectively oversee the development of the service to meet challenging objectives. Since the previous inspection, the service has appointed a new head and been restructured to provide clear and challenging objectives. Roles and responsibilities are clear and managers are accountable for their responsibilities. Senior managers form a strong and supportive team. Communication is good, and the service's staff and partners have a good understanding of its objectives and its priorities. Managers monitor staff performance and carry out appropriate staff development and coaching. However, the effect of some of this training on the learners' experience has yet to be fully recognised.

15. WCCACLS has a very clear and effective strategic direction that managers communicate well to its partners. Managers base the strategy on thorough market research and local information. It links clearly with wider council initiatives such as those for extended schools, cultural services and adult services. The service explains its objectives well in a detailed three-year development plan that has clear targets and action plans. Managers have made good progress in implementing the strategy and the operational plans. Since the previous inspection, the WCCACLS has been particularly successful in attracting external funding to meet the needs of learners in the county.

16. The service takes a key role in very strong partnership networks that include colleges, learning providers, voluntary organisations and community organisations, and this benefits learners. These partners meet regularly to share good practice and to plan and monitor provision to meet the needs of the local communities. For example, one of the partners has successfully provided courses to meet the needs of learners recruited by WCCACLS's learning ambassadors. The service manager for family learning has close and productive working arrangements with the subcontractors that provide family learning tutors. WCCACLS effectively manages a very successful ESF project that has widened participation in five targeted areas of social deprivation. WCCACLS's managers closely monitor this programme and have successfully supported partners who have improved

their own systems and processes.

17. WCCACLS manages and uses resources satisfactorily. Most venues are thoughtfully chosen to provide good access opportunities for learners. The main learning centre is a very good venue. It is a campus development which includes a health centre, school, and a Sure Start centre. The learning centre has ICT training rooms and a library, as well as meeting and teaching rooms and a learndirect centre. The centre is modern, well equipped and well maintained. Computing facilities are good, with modern laptop computers and up-to-date software. A bus is used to take computers and learning into the community. The staff are vocationally qualified and most also have teaching qualifications.

18. WCCACLS provides satisfactory support for learners. A learning support assistant currently provides a range of good, appropriate support to individual learners, and keeps comprehensive records to share relevant and appropriate information with tutors. However, the Skills for Life strategy is incomplete. The service has recently appointed a new manager who has overall responsibility for Skills for Life. She has conducted useful research to identify key issues that will ensure literacy and numeracy are integrated with the teaching and learning. However, WCCACLS does not provide support for the specific literacy, numeracy and language needs of learners on ICT and ESF courses, and the tutors refer them to other courses or providers. The service offers courses specifically focused on improving adults' literacy and numeracy.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

19. The service sets targets for the recruitment of learners from minority ethnic groups and male learners. Data is used appropriately to monitor the retention and achievement of these groups and successful action is taken to widen participation. Partnership and delivery provision is located in super output areas. Learners receive good individual support to help them succeed on the programme, and learning programmes are planned well to meet individual learners' needs. Learners are treated fairly and with respect. The service has adapted Worcestershire County Council's equality and diversity policies appropriately for its own use. Staff have had much training on equality and diversity issues, although some has been very recent. Four managers have recently been trained to conduct equality impact assessments. Most accommodation is of a good standard, especially that directly managed by WCCACLS. It provides appropriate access and is adapted to meet the needs of learners with disabilities. There is sufficient suitable equipment available to meet the needs of learners with disabilities and/or learning difficulties.

20. Equality of opportunity is not promoted sufficiently to all learners. There are no simplified materials available to support their understanding of policies, procedures and definitions. Learners receive very little information on equality of opportunity at induction. Some learners receive essential information for adult learners which has one statement relating to equality of opportunity. This requires them to respect all other learners by not using language or behaviour that may be offensive. However, learners have too few opportunities to extend their knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity through further training, learning activities or learning resources.

Quality improvement

Contributory grade 2

21. WCCACLS has made significant improvements to the accuracy and availability of data since it was last inspected, and it now uses this data well to bring about improvements.

Challenging performance targets are set for the service overall and for each department. These include targets for recruitment and achievement as well as qualitative targets relating to the completion of learning plans, questionnaires and reviews. The manager with responsibility for management information systems produces a very useful comprehensive review every term. Each manager compiles a report on their area of responsibility and discusses this with the head of service to identify successes and areas for improvements, set targets and monitor performance. Managers rigorously monitor the clear action plans for improvement that are set in response to each report. The reports, which have been introduced recently, have already led to significant improvements. Managers use the reports to provide evidence for the self-assessment process.

22. WCCACLS has taken successful action to improve the quality of its provision. Managers demonstrate a strong commitment to continuous improvement, identifying issues through routine monitoring visits to partners, through observation of teaching and learning, and by routine monitoring of course paperwork. Managers also monitor progress effectively through monthly management team meetings with staff.

23. WCCACLS has recently strengthened its quality assurance processes, but they are still insufficiently systematic and thorough. The process for the observation of teaching and learning has been revised, and the service has provided comprehensive training for all observers and tutors. Managers ensure all staff are observed, and the observations are now graded. Inspectors broadly agreed with the strengths and weaknesses identified by the service's own observers. However, the service has no written quality process that covers all aspects of the provision, and members of staff remain unclear about how some aspects are improved. For example, the service is aware that some individual learning plans are insufficiently detailed and clear but has not carried out any analysis of the individual learning plans or set clear action plans to bring about improvement. The head of service has recently introduced service level agreements with all WCCACLS's partners. These are satisfactory but the system for quality assuring learning delivered by partners is insufficiently thorough. The recently introduced process for recognising and recording achievement in non-accredited provision is not sufficiently developed.

24. The self-assessment process is inclusive of the views of learners and WCCACLS's partners. Inspectors found that the self-assessment report was broadly accurate and identified most of the strengths and weaknesses in the provision. In 2006, the self-assessment process was used to support partners in their own self-assessment, as many had not carried this out before. However, the process takes too long. Managers acted to rectify weaknesses as they were identified, and most had been dealt with well before the draft 2005-06 report was compiled in January 2007. The head of service has revised the schedule for 2006-07 so that the final report will be produced more quickly and will come out earlier in the year. Managers consider a wide range of evidence to help them determine judgements for the report, but some of this evidence is not analysed sufficiently and is insufficiently objective.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information and communications technology

Grade 3

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>ICT for users</i>		3
Adult and community learning	280	3

25. There were 27 courses running at the time of the inspection, most of them intended for learners who have not used a computer before. The service offers a few accredited courses at levels 1 and 2. Courses attract a wide range of learners including unemployed learners, learners with mental health problems, low-skilled employed learners, older learners, and learners with mobility or learning difficulties. Sessions are held at a number of venues around the county including the premises of voluntary groups, community centres, employers, churches, secondary schools and primary schools. Learners can access sessions during the day, afternoon, and evenings, and occasional taster sessions are offered on a Saturday. There is one ICT manager and seven tutors.

ICT for users

Strengths

- good development of ICT and personal skills
- good coaching of learners

Weaknesses

- insufficiently thorough assessment of non-accredited provision
- insufficient planning of individual learning
- insufficiently thorough monitoring of provision

Achievement and standards

26. Learners develop good ICT and personal skills. Many learners who join the courses have very little experience of ICT, or have poor previous experiences of learning. Learners are motivated well. They gain new skills, develop self-confidence and very good communication skills. They use these skills well to pursue their interests, for example in using the internet to learn about other communities, and corresponding by e-mail. Some learners, who have not been in gainful employment for some time, have used these newly acquired skills to return to work.

27. Retention is consistently satisfactory. In 2004-05, 83 per cent of all learners were retained, of whom 90 per cent were on short accredited courses. Achievement of elements of accredited courses is satisfactory. Many learners progress to further learning. Current systems to measure learners' achievement on non-accredited courses are not sufficiently reliable for managers to make judgements over time.

The quality of provision

28. Tutors sensitively, competently and patiently coach the learners to develop or enhance their ICT skills. They have very good and close working relationships with the learners based on respect, openness and good humour and provide practical and personal support to the learners when appropriate. Tutors use computer projectors well to demonstrate various features of computer software packages, such as how to change the font or use a design feature. Most learners are encouraged to consider how they can use their new skills to enhance their interest. Learners are also supported to complete a personal record of their new skills, and in the better sessions, they use software packages to construct these records.

29. The range of programmes is satisfactory. WCCACLS has a clear vision of its curriculum offer, focusing on engaging learners and developing their basic ICT skills. The service offers a small amount of accredited provision and appropriate progression routes to accreditation through other providers.

30. Staff provide satisfactory initial advice and guidance to learners. A learning support assistant provides good general support and guidance to individual learners during the course. However, staff do not adequately identify learners literacy, numeracy and language needs on their individual learning plans, and no specialist help is available. Tutors refer learners to other provision or other providers for this support. Learners can transfer to other courses should their initial choice be unsuitable. They receive information about course content, and can negotiate some aspects of this content at the start of their programmes. However, for some learners the course content is not always suitable. The service advertises courses appropriately, with most courses offered in response to the needs identified by learners.

31. WCCACLS's arrangements for measuring learners' achievements on non-accredited courses are incomplete. Tutors do not have a consistent and thorough method of assessing learners' achievement, and a few learners progress to higher-level courses without being sufficiently competent in the more basic ICT skills. To date, the only means of identifying learners' achievement is from their individual learning plans and progress reviews, which do not adequately recognise and record the learners' non-accredited achievements. WCCACLS recognised this weakness in its self-assessment report.

32. WCCACLS does not sufficiently plan individual learning. It has procedures to identify and plan learners' training during the induction process, but relies too much on learners' self-assessment of their ICT competence. Tutors are sensitive to learners' needs and attempt to include their ICT learning preferences in the course. However, aspects of planning, such as the detail of the competences and the standards the learners need to acquire, are rarely defined in sufficient detail. The service acknowledges in its self-assessment report that this area requires further development.

Leadership and management

33. Managers organise regular, well-attended meetings at which actions are agreed. The self-assessment process is broadly adequate but the level of involvement and contribution by staff varies significantly. Staff development is satisfactory and managers focus appropriately on improving the effectiveness of teaching and learning. Managers have an inclusive approach with tutors, who work very well together.

34. WCCACLS's promotion of equal opportunities is adequate and there is a range of adaptive technologies including tracker-ball mice and large-key keyboards for learners with disabilities or for older learners. However, learners' needs are not assessed adequately, thoroughly or consistently to see whether they might benefit from this equipment. Despite the significant number of older learners, tutors have not adjusted the text style on most handouts to make them easier to read. The service's quality assurance policies and procedures are generally satisfactory and programmes have been improved. However, managers do not monitor all aspects thoroughly enough to ensure all tutors implement these. For example, staff do not monitor individual learning plans sufficiently and the course review process is not always satisfactory. On some first-step ICT courses, learners do not have enough opportunities for a reasonable proportion of them to achieve the course objectives. Monitoring of some aspects of the teaching and learning process, such as induction and progress reviews, is not always consistent or thorough. The pace at which some significant good practices are shared is too slow. In one session, there was poor practice in health and safety.

Community development

Grade 2

Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning		2
Other government-funded provision	89	2

35. WCCACLS is the lead partner of a consortium of five organisations, four of which are from the voluntary and community sector. All learning centres and their outreach activities are based in areas of disadvantage. Fifteen learning ambassadors refer adults to programmes. There are 89 learners currently taking part in 22 learning activities including first aid, confidence building and assertiveness, sewing, electrical skills at level 1 and level 2, and cooking for kids. The number, range and length of courses vary and are based on the identified needs of learners and their communities. Most learners work towards completing learning goals recorded on an individual learning plan. A few work towards accredited awards or units from such awards at level 1 or 2.

Adult and community learning

Strengths

- very good progress and achievement
- highly effective strategies to recruit learners and keep them involved
- good capacity building activities
- good project management

Weaknesses

- insufficient individual support for learners with literacy needs

Achievement and standards

36. Learners who have many disadvantages make very good progress and achieve well. Of the 113 learners who have started to work towards a qualification, 110 completed their course and 99 per cent achieved the qualification. Retention of learners is good. On non-accredited courses the retention rate is 98 per cent and on accredited courses, 97 per cent. Learners gain confidence, develop their self-esteem and enjoy learning. For example, a woman who had spent much of her life looking after elderly parents felt worthless and unskilled before attending a confidence-building class. She has recently helped to establish a support group for carers in her local community. Learners acquire new skills which have a significant positive effect on their lives. For example, one learner recruited through links with the probation service, gained electrical skills qualifications at level 1 and level 2 and is now in employment. Some learners developed enough confidence to leave abusive domestic situations

The quality of provision

37. WCCACLS has adopted highly effective strategies to recruit and keep learners involved. Learning ambassadors promote learning well in a wide variety of ways. They sensitively help potential learners in their area to overcome a range of obstacles to

learning, provide them with practical and emotional support and help individuals to identify the kinds of learning they might like to consider. Learning ambassadors have credibility in communities as many live locally or have progressed from being learners themselves. Effective involvement of learners in planning helps learning ambassadors accurately identify the kinds of learning people want to try. Courses are offered at times and in places which learners can easily attend.

38. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Learners participate well and are confident about asking questions. Tutors have good subject knowledge and manage groups effectively. In better lessons, tutors challenge learners to improve and extend their work, encouraging them to practise skills and work on their own. In weaker lessons, there is too much reliance on a few teaching methods and there is little variety in the teaching and learning materials used. Some tutors do not take enough account of individual learners' literacy abilities when planning learning.

39. Individual learning plans do not hold enough detailed and useful information about learners and their progress. This was recognised as an area for improvement during the first year of the project and the recording of learning goals has improved. However, the learning goals that are set are not always easily measured. Comments about learners' progress are often very brief. Sometimes there is insufficient sharing of relevant information between learning ambassadors and tutors.

40. The service provides insufficient individual support for learners with literacy needs. In particular the needs of learners with dyslexia are not met appropriately. Most tutors and learning ambassadors do not have the skills to give learners with literacy needs individual support in class. Learners are encouraged to attend discrete literacy classes. However, too many are referred to learndirect courses, when working on a computer is not their preferred way of learning or when their skill levels are particularly low.

Leadership and management

41. WCCACLS carries out good capacity building activities. The service has helped some voluntary organisations to provide learning opportunities for the first time, while others have increased their understanding of different sources of funding and have improved the access to their premises. Managers effectively share procedures and practices through regular training and coaching activities. Learning ambassadors are mainly recruited from local areas where they increase skill levels in their communities as well as enriching their own lives. WCCACLS provides good support to staff to develop skills which can be used when the project ends.

42. The project is managed well. Project partners have a very clear understanding of the aims and direction of the project. Staff have clear, well-understood roles and responsibilities. Managers use data well to monitor project partners and inform them of their progress against targets. They communicate very effectively with the partners, using a variety of media including a newsletter, regular well-attended meetings, and good coaching. There are extensive staff development opportunities including equality and diversity training. Learning ambassadors' meetings are regular and well attended. All project partners are very responsive to making improvements and are fully involved in the self-assessment process. However, some quality improvement measures are relatively new and it is not yet possible to judge their overall effect on learning.

