

Rutland Adult Learning Service

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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' 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, public services and care
- Information and communication technology (ICT)
- Languages, literature and culture
- Preparation for life and work

Description of the provider

1. Rutland County Council (RCC) was established as a unitary authority in 1997 and is the smallest mainland unitary authority. The Rutland Adult Learning Service (RALS) is a part of the county's Inclusion, Youth and Adult Learning Service which is within the Children and Young People's Service (CYPS). RALS contracts with Lincolnshire and Rutland LSC, offering accredited and non-accredited courses in 13 of the 15 sector subject areas. In addition, it offers a leisure programme subsidised by RCC.
2. Courses are provided at two main venues, Casterton Business and Enterprise College and Vale of Catmose College. A number of outreach and community venues including primary schools, Ministry of Defence establishments, village centres and libraries also provide courses.
3. During the year 2006/07, RALS had a total of 1,542 enrolments including 648 in adult and community learning and 894 in further education, of whom 41% were new learners. They enrolled on a total of 175 courses, 81 in adult and community learning and 94 in further education. Currently, there are 362 learners on 48 courses.
4. Rutland is the smallest county in mainland England with a population of about 38,000, and is an area of low deprivation with above average household income. Levels of unemployment are low at 0.6% in February 2006, compared with the national average of 2.6%. The population is qualified to above the national average, with a third of the resident working population holding a degree, and 67% of pupils achieving five GCSEs at grade A* to C. The number of young people aged 16 to 18 and not in education, employment or training is low, at about 2%. The 2001 census return shows that 1.9% of the population are from minority ethnic groups compared with the national average of 8.7%.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Sector subject areas

Health, public services and care	Satisfactory: Grade 3
ICT	Good: Grade 2
Languages, literature and culture	Good: Grade 2
Preparation for life and work	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

5. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievements and standards are satisfactory and the quality of provision and leadership and management are good. Arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory. The provision in health, public services and care and preparation for life and work is satisfactory and in ICT and literature, languages and culture the provision is good.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

6. RALS demonstrates a good capacity to improve. Quality improvement arrangements are good and the steps taken by RALS to promote these since the previous inspection have been very effective. All aspects of the provision are monitored effectively and most of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection have been successfully addressed. Better use is made of targets for retention, achievement and success rates at course level. Target-setting in skills for life programmes has been improved and is now satisfactory. The approach to recognising and recording learners' progress and achievement has been revised, although not all tutors have implemented the procedures effectively. There have been improvements to the data collection system and an improved process for observation of teaching and learning.
7. The self-assessment process is good. It draws on the views of learners and staff and is well-established within RALS' quality cycle. The current self-assessment report, updated just before the inspection, provides a broadly accurate assessment of RALS' performance. It correctly identifies most of the strengths and areas for improvement in the provision.

Key strengths

- Good standard of learners' work
- Much good teaching
- Good strategic leadership
- Good actions to improve the quality of the provision

Key areas for improvement

- Poor success rates in some areas

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

8. Overall, success rates are satisfactory, as the self-assessment report recognises, although they vary between programmes. Comparing 2005/06 and 2006/07, success rates of accredited programmes in most areas have improved. In languages, literature and culture they are particularly good. In 2006/07, success rates for accredited short courses in ICT lasting up to 24 weeks were good, however, the success rates for long courses lasting over 24 weeks were poor. Levels of retention and attendance have remained good for a number of years. Learners in childcare and care, and some learners in ICT, make slow progress.
9. Learners develop good skills and the standard of their work is high. Many are able to use their new-found skills in their work or to improve their prospects in the employability. In language sessions, learners produce creative and well-thought written work. A process to record achievements in non-accredited courses was introduced in 2005/06. A new system has been introduced recently and, although at an early stage, there is evidence indicating that a high proportion of learners are achieving their planned learning objectives.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

10. The quality of the provision is good, as the self-assessment report identifies. Much of the teaching and learning in three of the four sector subject areas is good. Sessions are lively and well planned to meet the needs of individual learners. A good range of activities are used with good learning materials. Learners are well supported by tutors and they make good progress, although the use of information learning technology (ILT) is weak in most areas. RALS has developed a clear strategy to promote the use of ILT by tutors and an associated action plan showing clear milestones and targets. An audit of tutors' information technology (IT) skills has taken place and a wide range of training has been given. RALS recognises that progress has been slow. The virtual learning environment is being used by a number of tutors to store and share learning materials, although few tutors provide learners with system access. The main exception is learners on the NVQ in childcare programme, who are able to retrieve learning materials from the system, which enables them to progress at a faster rate. In many languages, literature and culture sessions, learners benefit from tutors' use of a range of technology to improve the quality of the learners' experience. For example, they use e-mail to keep in touch with learners and make referrals to websites which are relevant.
11. Recognising and recording progress and achievement in non-accredited courses was introduced in 2005/06. The process was effective in identifying individual learning objectives, even though some of these were not detailed enough. However, recording successful completion of these was not effective, relying solely on learners identifying how much progress they had made and led to some under-recording of learners' achievements. A new system is now in place which uses both the learner's and the tutor's assessment. Early indications are that this more accurately records learners' achievements.

12. RALS offers a good range of programmes across many sector subject areas. Four people are effectively used as neighbourhood learning champions to identify the needs of the communities in which they work. Much of this work is to identify and meet the needs of under-represented groups, but not exclusively so. A number of methods are used to identify which courses the residents of Rutland both need and want. For example, staff from RALS question members of the public on market days and at the annual Rutland agricultural show. They have been effective in identifying the changing population of Rutland and its needs, such as in the provision of programmes for eastern European migrant workers.
13. RALS has an effective marketing group with representatives from across the service. Membership of the group is reviewed regularly and programmes are publicised through a range of methods such as local radio and press. The neighbourhood learning champions communicate directly with community groups, ensuring that all residents in the area are aware of new courses that are on offer. Initial assessment of learners' prior skills and knowledge is broadly appropriate, although in ICT a new process has not been fully implemented.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

14. Strategic leadership is good. The wide range of policies to support the county council in providing a service to local people is clear, and they are fit for their purpose. The RALS management structure is now appropriately aligned with the other directorates of the county council and with the priorities set by the LSC. The service manager is involved in the setting of headline targets for the local area agreement and the strategic delivery plan. The new management structure enables closer work with other local authority services, such as the extended schools team, which works with schools to provide a range of additional services and facilities for children, their family and the wider community. Communication through a wide range of meetings is good. An annual staff conference and autumn briefing are effective, particularly in exchanging new policies, procedures, implementation plans and updates to staff information packs. Regular meetings are held with collaborative partners about joint developments, such as building projects. An electronic newsletter and bulletin are produced and available at all RALS sites.
15. Initiatives to increase the range of provision are very effective. New accommodation is being developed and two additional venues are due to open, one with potential for drop-in sessions for information, advice and guidance, skills for life and IT. The other is a family and community centre based in the east of the county. Both are to provide opportunities for partnership work with other agencies using the centres. A successful bid has been made for capital funding for a new complex to be based within a secondary school. Negotiations are underway with the local volunteer agency to use part of a new volunteer centre in Oakham to provide skills-based courses, including work experience and provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A local partnership between providers of adult learning within Lincolnshire and Rutland continues to develop complementary work with clear progression routes.

16. Improvement actions since the previous inspection have been very effective in developing the quality of teaching and learning, target-setting, support and guidance, health and safety and, more recently, learners' achievements. A calendar has been particularly useful in highlighting key events and quality improvement processes in the academic year including the development of the self-assessment report. The quality and performance group oversee this process, working closely with curriculum and service co-ordinators. RALS has a robust scheme to assess the quality of teaching and learning which is based on the *Common Inspection Framework*, is completed annually and links to appraisal and continuing professional development. Records are detailed, clearly identifying strengths and areas for improvement. The outcomes are shared and staff guidance is clear. Joint observations during the inspection confirmed the accuracy of the system.
17. Data collection and analysis is satisfactory. This was identified as a weakness at the first inspection and improved at reinspection. Monthly management meetings cover regular analysis of progress against targets. Sector subject co-ordinators are now able to identify areas of under-performance and action plans are developed to address them. Other data collected and analysed is satisfactory, some anomalies in data still exist.
18. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet government requirements. Staff and learners understand the policy and procedures for safeguarding. Appropriate vetting checks for all staff have been carried out. All staff have received recent training in safeguarding and staff who are more likely to have contact with young people and vulnerable adults have more in-depth training.
19. RALS promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Actions to identify and recruit learners from under-represented groups are very effective. Data is now collected which identifies ethnicity, gender and whether the learner has a learning difficulty and/or disability. A range of initiatives have been developed targeting harder-to-reach learners and those who do not traditionally engage in learning. The learner services team, managed by a learner services co-ordinator, has been central in this development. The appointment of an additional neighbourhood learning champion to engage hard-to-reach adults has built on existing engagement work in an area with a low uptake of adult learning. The appointment of an information, advice and guidance specialist, to provide adult advice and guidance, has complemented the team effectively, directing prospective learners to a range of options and to additional support. The implementation of a learner monitoring system, specifically for supported learners, has ensured good monitoring of progress and development of this group of people. Particularly useful data is produced identifying the number of new learners in each targeted location, the sector subject areas they are in, the number of advice and guidance sessions they receive and the outcomes, including progression rates. There has been an increase in the number of learners recruited from targeted areas. Regular staff training in equality and diversity is effective and these processes along with complaints procedures are generally understood by learners. In most sessions, equality and diversity are given appropriate attention in the content and in the materials used. Some shared accommodation does not allow for sufficient promotion of equality and diversity by the use of posters and displays of learners work.

What learners like:

- Dedicated, supportive and hardworking tutors
- 'It's a qualification employers want'
- 'I like to go to sessions and meet with other people'
- 'Excellent teaching and good one-to-one work — the tutors take time to explain things well'
- 'I've built up my confidence'
- 'I have been promoted because of my new skills'
- 'It's on the job at my own pace and fits in with my life'
- The friendly atmosphere in the class

What learners think could improve:

- The missed meetings with assessors
- Rooms that are hot in the summer and cold in the winter
- Pre-course information
- Increase the length of sessions
- Paperwork that gets in the way of learning

Sector subject areas

Health, public services and care

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

20. RALS offers non-accredited courses in parenting called 'is that normal?', and 'making childcare career choices', as well as accredited courses called 'introduction to basic counselling skills', 'children's care learning and development' and 'health and social care'. Nine learners are enrolled on a basic counselling skills course and 45 learners are on NVQ courses. In health and social care, 12 learners are working towards qualifications, four at Level 2 and eight at Level 3. Thirty-three learners are working towards qualifications in children's care learning and development, 16 at Level 2 and 17 at Level 3. Learners are supported and assessed by part-time assessors and tutors from RALS.

Strengths

- Very effective action to improve the quality of provision

Areas for improvement

- Slow progress by learners on NVQ programmes

Achievement and standards

21. Retention rates on all courses are satisfactory. Progress on NVQ courses has been slow. Of the 20 learners that started the childcare course in 2005/06, 90% were retained to the end of the programme. Of these learners, 55% achieved their qualification and 35% are still in learning. A further ten learners from one workplace, taking qualifications in health and social care, have also stayed past their completion date and are still supported. Retention and achievement on the 'introduction to basic counselling' course is excellent, and includes all learners for the past two years. The standard of learners work is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

22. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Learners attending childcare workshops enjoy the sessions, which help to develop their theoretical understanding of childcare work. Employers value these sessions and learners gain confidence in applying their developing skills at work, however there are no current workshops for health and social care learners. Many learners cannot recall the sessions that took place earlier in their programme and rely on text books and their employers' policies and procedures for background knowledge. Resources are satisfactory. Learners either buy their own textbook in advance of the course or are provided with one by RALS.
23. A selection of childcare books has been provided in the school library where workshops take place but not all learners and assessors are aware of this. Learners are able to access the virtual learning environment which contains workshop information. Assessment is satisfactory and meets national requirements. Assessors meet learners at times and places to fit in with the learners' work patterns, including early and late in the day and at

weekends. Learners' portfolios of evidence are satisfactory and assessment records are clear.

24. Training accommodation is satisfactory, although displays of learners' work, useful information, or specialist resources relating to the subject, cannot be displayed or stored. The room used for the counselling skills course is part of a pre-school centre and does not have all the facilities needed to run the course well. The teaching on the counselling skills course clearly develops the learners' understanding and skills, demonstrated by their performance of activities and the discussion of practice in their work or home settings.
25. The provision meets the needs and interests of learners. Courses are run at appropriate times and venues for learners who work or have childcare commitments. The 'making childcare career choices' course is particularly helpful in enabling learners to choose the right career. Some learners progress into employment including managerial roles or to higher level courses.
26. Support and guidance is satisfactory. Effective initial assessment of literacy needs has been introduced and learners are given extra support from a qualified specialist tutor where appropriate. Some learners choose not to take up this help. Assessors also give practical support including additional time with individual learners and adapt their assessment practice according to the learner's need.

Leadership and management

27. Action to improve the quality of the provision has been very effective. Several changes in staff, both in the management of the curriculum area and in the assessors and verifiers, delayed the progress of many learners. The recently appointed co-ordinator has recruited new assessors who are now working regularly with learners towards achievement. Recruitment to the health and social care NVQ has been suspended until current problems have been resolved. Assessors are well supported by the co-ordinator and internal verifiers. Mentors are provided to newly appointed assessors and effective update and standardisation events take place. Internal verification is satisfactorily planned and executed, and provides clear and detailed feedback to assessors. Communication between staff and employers is good. Learners have a clear understanding of equality of opportunity and health and safety issues.
28. The updated self assessment report did not contain a separate section for health, public services and care, but was included only as a part of the NVQ programme as a whole. However, a number of the areas for improvement identified in the original self-assessment report have been successfully addressed, and most of the strengths have been maintained.

ICT

Good: Grade 2

Context

29. The ICT sector subject area is managed by a curriculum area co-ordinator who is supported by eight part-time tutors. Currently, 14 courses are running with a total of 75 learners. During this year, there have been 414 enrolments on 93 courses. In 2006/07, there were 628 enrolments on 69 courses. Courses are offered in, for example, the 'use of common IT programs and the Internet', and 'digital imaging'. They range from 'taster' courses for beginners to Level 2. Most learners can opt to accredit their learning with nationally recognised qualifications. Most learners attend computer workshops, where learners work at their own pace, at one of the six community venues. A smaller number attend intensive one week courses on local Royal Air Force (RAF) bases.

Strengths

- Very high retention rates
- Good achievement rates in the subcontracted provision
- Much good teaching and learning on accredited courses
- Good range of courses to meet local needs

Areas for improvement

- Poor achievement rates in computer workshops
- Some inadequate planning of learning and assessment
- Slow implementation of the quality improvement plan

Achievement and standards

30. Overall, achievements and standards are good. Retention rates are very high, with only 2% of learners leaving their course early in 2006/07. Attendance in 2007/08 has remained very high. Learners who attend the provision at RAF bases have high success rates. This represents half of the provision. In 2006/07, 92% of them achieved their target qualifications. However, in computer workshops, learners aiming towards the same qualification achieve at significantly less than the national average. The success rates of other learners are satisfactory.

31. Most learners gain useful practical skills and their employability is enhanced. Learners find their new skills useful for writing official letters or for Internet shopping. They are more at ease in a world with an ever-increasing use of technology. Most learners are progressing at a satisfactory rate, though a minority in computer workshops are making slow progress. Learners' enthusiasm creates a good friendly atmosphere which is conducive to learning. Learners are keen to help each other.

Quality of provision

32. The quality of the provision is good. Much of the teaching and learning on accredited courses is good with half of all sessions being good or better, although a small minority

are unsatisfactory. Learners benefit from knowledgeable tutors in small, friendly classes. Good, clear workbooks are used in computer workshops and learners work at their own pace. Learners on the RAF bases are able to progress at a faster pace. In both types of class, tutors' support for learning is sensitive to the age and maturity of the learners. They manage requests for help well, and learners never wait long when they need assistance. Many tutors use extension materials to challenge the more able learners and help them to make good progress. One tutor promotes good health and safety practice exceptionally well, taking her older learners through neck and shoulder loosening exercises after each hour at the keyboard.

33. Physical resources are generally appropriate. In two centres, learning is slowed when tutors cannot demonstrate key techniques because the rooms have no screen projection equipment. In one centre, the workbook relates to an earlier version of the programme and this has slowed learning.
34. Some planning of learning and assessment is inadequate. Tutors make insufficient use of intermediate targets to identify and improve potential underachievement on workshop courses. The manager's use of assessment results is ineffective. On non-accredited courses, tutors do not encourage learners to review and reflect on their progress until the end of their course. Learners do not benefit from the growth in confidence that arises from reviewing their progress, and some learners' successes are not recorded. Some tutors take insufficient account of differences between learners, or their personal goals, in planning sessions.
35. The ICT programme meets the needs of learners and employers particularly well. Free beginners' courses are successful in encouraging returning learners. Good progression routes take learners from absolute beginner level to Level 3 and beyond, through links with local further education providers. Effective liaison with partner providers minimises duplication in the area and maximises access to learning. The provision on the RAF bases meets the needs of those bases. The intensive courses meet the learners' expectations. Neighbourhood learning champions identify and monitor local learning needs. They promote learning effectively to hard-to-reach groups using innovative beginners' courses, such as 'your digital holiday photos', 'gadgets and gizmos' and 'create a family slide show'.
36. Support for learners is good. Staff initially assess the literacy and numeracy skills of learners. All learners are able to use the learning resources. Tutors can identify additional learning needs, and refer those learners with language, literacy and numeracy needs appropriately. The manager is proactive in asking learners for their views at course reviews. Support for learners who miss a lesson is effective, for example, tutors or administrative staff contact those who miss sessions to offer further support, if required.

Leadership and management

37. Leadership and management in ICT are satisfactory. Partnerships with other organisations are effective in developing the curriculum to meet local priorities. The manager supports staff well, with training and appraisals that promote their professional development. Internal communications are satisfactory and regular meetings keep staff informed of developments in the service. The manager is yet to make use of key service priorities,

such as success rates, to develop performance targets with staff. Promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Participation has been widened to include more learners from hard-to-reach groups, but equality of opportunity is not promoted actively in classes.

38. Quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory, although implementation of the quality improvement plan has been slow. Staff share good practice following systematic course reviews, feedback from learners and observations of teaching and learning. The manager's use of data is satisfactory. A programme of observations of teaching and learning awarded accurate grades. The self-assessment process is comprehensive, takes learners' views into account, and has identified many of the important issues. The manager has successfully addressed poor attendance and insufficiently clear descriptions of courses. However, they have been slow to implement some other parts of the quality improvement plan. Initial assessment is not yet standardised and targets for learners and tutors have yet to improve the poorer performance in computer workshops.

Languages, literature and culture

Good: Grade 2

Context

39. RALS offers 17 courses in this area. Eight are accredited, leading to a GCSE in English, Spanish and Italian. Nine are non-accredited including Spanish, Italian and Russian from beginner to intermediate level. Most courses last for one year. In 2007/08, a total of 160 learners have enrolled. There is 30% of male learners. Courses are offered both during the day and in the evening at two local schools. The curriculum is managed by a curriculum co-ordinator and is delivered by six part-time tutors.

Strengths

- High success rates on accredited programmes
- High retention rates
- Good teaching and learning
- Very effective curriculum leadership

Areas for improvement

- Ineffective recording of individual progress and achievement

Achievement and standards

40. Achievement and standards are good with high success rates on accredited programmes. In GCSE English, the success rate was 87% in 2006/07 and had improved from 78% in the previous year. The two GCSEs in English, completed in 2007/08, show further improvements with all learners successful. In foreign languages, success is also good with the exception of one GCSE Italian course, where the success rate was poor in 2006/07. Actions have now been taken to rectify this. Retention on the course has improved significantly.

41. Retention rates are high. On most foreign language programmes, it was good in 2006/07, averaging 91% with many courses retaining all of the learners and in 2007/08, it is also good. Retention in GCSE English was 94% in 2006/07, an improvement from 86% in the previous year. Attendance is very good at 84%.

42. Learners develop good language skills and the standard of their work is generally high. The best learners produce creative and well thought written work in both foreign languages and English. In many sessions, learners use the taught language with a good degree of confidence, drawing on an appropriate variety of structures and vocabulary.

Quality of provision

43. Teaching and learning are good. Sessions include a wide and appropriate range of activities that stimulate learners and promote good development of language skills. Learners are well engaged in classroom activities and make good progress. In foreign language classes, both tutors and learners use the target language effectively for most communication. Tutors are clearly aware of learners' individual needs and abilities, and often provide effective, individualised learning opportunities. In the best sessions, there is good use of multimedia resources to enhance teaching and learning. Tutors refer learners to websites where they can find information which is relevant to their interests and the subject. Some tutors also make good use of e-mail to keep in touch with, and support, learners. In some sessions, however, tutors exclusively rely on the use of the whiteboard and paper-based resources. Although interactive whiteboards are available in most classrooms, not all tutors make use of technology to enhance sessions.
44. The recording of individual learner's progress and achievement is ineffective. Learning outcomes on schemes of work and on learners' individual learning plans are often insufficiently detailed and their achievement is difficult to measure. In 2006/07, achievement on non-accredited courses relied solely on learners' self-assessment and many learners were unable to make accurate judgements. Success rates were poor with an average of 51%. The use of new documentation to support the recognising and recording of progress and achievement is not always effective. There is little emphasis on individual targets and learners do not see the relevance of their initial assessment and individually-set targets. Monitoring of individual progress is not appropriately recorded and monitoring often consists of a mere list of topics covered with the dates. There is little indication of how each individual learner has achieved the agreed outcomes and where the gaps in that person's skills and knowledge are.
45. The curriculum offered is satisfactory. This is mainly driven by the demand from existing students. Foreign languages are available at beginner level, with progression available up to intermediate level in the most popular languages. GCSE accreditation is available in foreign languages and English. The neighbourhood learning champions promote the courses and identify needs in the local community to inform curriculum planning. A beginner course in Russian has been set up this year following a request from a group of learners who will host Russian children from Chernobyl later in the year. There is no provision for local employers at present, although some vocational German training for a local manufacturing company took place earlier in the year.
46. Support for learners in sessions is good. Tutors are sensitive to their needs and ensure that these are addressed in the planning and delivery of the sessions. Weaker learners are able to take an active part in sessions and are pleased with the progress they make. Language, literacy and numeracy support needs are identified at enrolment and learners are appropriately referred. Tutors are aware of internal referral systems and direct those learners in need of support. Course publicity material provides information for prospective learners, although some would like more details about course content to help them make their choices.

Leadership and management

47. Curriculum leadership is very effective. The curriculum management structure is clear and communications are good. Tutors are well supported by the curriculum co-ordinator and have opportunities to share information and good practice during meetings, by extensive use of e-mail and through the virtual learning environment. All tutors are appraised annually following observation in the classroom. Opportunities for professional development are available and staff have attended both external and internal training events on the use of teaching and learning resources, the virtual learning environment and the interactive whiteboard. All staff are well qualified and experienced in their field.
48. Tutors provide appropriate attention to equality of opportunity and diversity issues in the selection of both lesson content and materials. They often draw on the experience of learners of different ages, abilities, gender and backgrounds by enabling them to make relevant, individual contributions to sessions.
49. Quality improvement processes are satisfactory. The self-assessment process is comprehensive. The curriculum co-ordinator collects evidence from tutors and learners and produces a draft report that is shared with all members of the team who are invited to contribute and make comments before publication. The self-assessment report accurately identifies some of the strengths and areas for improvement, although it does not put enough emphasis on key aspects of teaching and learning that can result in a better experience for the learners. The observations of teaching and learning identify strengths and actions for improvement, often leading to better practice in the classroom. However, some high grades are not always accurate and are not supported by evidence of outstanding practice in the records.

Preparation for life and work

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

50. Currently, 134 learners are enrolled on the preparation for life and work programme, including; 51 on literacy courses, 33 on numeracy courses, 31 on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses and 19 on dyslexia courses. In 2007/08, there have been 205 enrolments on a total of 31 courses, including six short non-accredited introductory courses. The rest are accredited courses lasting more than five weeks, usually 10 or 25 weeks. Courses are held in two schools, a number of community venues across the county and in an army barracks where courses are provided for families. Courses are held in the day and in the evening. They are mostly two and a half hours in duration. The courses are designed to meet the needs of small rural communities and are mostly mixed level. Learners from pre-entry level to Level 2 are enrolled on the programme. Three were enrolled in the current year on a skills modernisation course for county council staff. In 2006/07, there were 90 enrolments on the programme, representing 73 learners of whom 53 are women and 39 are from minority ethnic groups. Eleven tutors and one full-time co-ordinator teach on the programme.

Strengths

- Good development of learners' skills
- Good teaching and learning
- Very effective initiatives to improve the provision

Areas for improvement

- Low success rates in ESOL
- Poor promotion of equality and diversity during induction

Achievement and standards

51. Achievements and standards are satisfactory. Learners make good progress in relation to their initially-assessed level. They work towards suitable qualifications and show good development of skills. In one lesson, learners discussed the different features of dictionaries and thesauruses and came up with good ideas of their own for using them. In ESOL classes, lower level learners show good development of speaking skills. In another class, higher level learners are able to identify a variety of types of text. Learners gain confidence from their improving literacy, numeracy and language skills. One learner can now fill in his timesheet correctly so that he knows that he gets paid the right amount. Another learner can now correctly add up the takings after her shift.
52. Success rates for 2006/07 are satisfactory overall. Some course have success rates above the national average. However, success rates for ESOL in 2006/07 were poor, ranging from 17% to 47%. Following substantial actions, there is some early evidence of improvements. The short courses already completed for 2007/08 show a success rate of 93%. Attendance is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

53. Teaching and learning are good. Tutors plan sessions well to meet individual learner's needs. Teaching methods are well differentiated and the sessions are well managed so that learners can work at their own pace and level. Tutors make good use of questioning to facilitate active learning and there is a good balance between challenge and support. All learners have an initial interview and assessment. Diagnostic assessment takes place within the class and is well used in the individual learning plans. Target-setting, previously an area for improvement, is now satisfactory. Learners find the planning process useful and it helps them to learn. Those learning outcomes which are not part of a qualification are well recognised. Tutors use information learning technology effectively to practice grammar, research websites, do mathematical puzzles and practice tests.
54. Resources are satisfactory. A range of paper-based and software resources are available and tutors keep their own files of useful and appropriate materials. Tutors have appropriate qualifications and three will soon complete a Level 5 subject specific qualification and others plan to do so.
55. Programmes meet learners' needs and interests. A good balance exists between literacy, numeracy and ESOL classes which are held in a number of community venues and in an army barracks. Recent initiatives, such as those to work with travellers and county council employees, are at an early stage. A small number of learners, who find it difficult to attend classes, are enrolled on a learning project, which involves the use of different learning methods. Some learners would like more than one class each week.
56. Learners are well supported by tutors. The personalised learning provided in the sessions supports learners' various needs and interests. A range of materials are available to help tutors support learners with dyslexia, or with hearing or visual disabilities. Individual learning support with a teacher is provided for learners who feel unable to attend a class because of barriers to learning. This provision has been shown to be a bridge into the service's classes for learners who might never find it accessible otherwise.
57. The co-ordinator is a specialist in dyslexia and has developed a course in dyslexia awareness which is attended by teaching assistants and parents. She has also set up a class specifically for dyslexic learners, which acts as a support group for them as well as providing teaching tailored to their needs.

Leadership and management

58. Leadership and management are good. The present co-ordinator has been in post since January 2007 and has taken very effective action to improve the quality of the provision. This includes appointing new, well-qualified tutors and providing them with coaching and support. Staff feel well supported and are fully involved in the self-assessment process. Good practice is shared at meetings and informally by e-mail. Observations of teaching and learning lead to clear improvement actions. Staff have clear targets, which are monitored, for improving success rates. There is now a standard procedure for following up non-attendance by learners.

59. Actions to improve success rates include improvements in initial assessment, and reviewing and updating learning plans. Target-setting for learners, previously an area for improvement, is now satisfactory.
60. In the current year, there has been a significant increase in the number of enrolments from 90 in 2006/07 to 205. This is in response to demand from the community and in line with the strategic priorities of the LSC and the county council.
61. Few learners made their views known through a survey. The co-ordinator is aware of this and focus groups are being created to gather learners' views more effectively. Promotion of equality and diversity during induction is poor. These aspects are mentioned during the induction process, however they are not given sufficient emphasis to ensure that all learners understand their responsibilities towards others. During sessions, they are well promoted with appropriate learning materials.

Learners' achievements

Equality and diversity

2006-07	All Ethnic Groups	Asian or Asian British	Black or Black British	Chinese/Other	Mixed	Not Known	White
Enrolments	1542	4	9	1	3	20	1505
Completion rate (%)	95	100	100	100	100	90	95
Achievement rate (%)	78	50	67	100	100	78	78
Success rate (%)	73	50	67	100	100	70	73
Withdrawal rate (%)	4	0	0	0	0	10	5

Annex