

Manchester City Council

Inspection date

18 April 2008

Inspection number

322475

Contents

Background information	3
Inspection judgements.....	3
Scope of the inspection	3
Description of the provider.....	4
Summary of grades awarded	4
Overall judgement.....	6
Effectiveness of provision.....	6
Capacity to improve	6
Key strengths	6
Key areas for improvement.....	7
Main findings	8
Achievement and standards.....	8
Quality of provision	8
Leadership and management.....	9
Equality of opportunity	9
What learners like:.....	11
What learners think could improve:	11
Information and communication technology	12
Arts, media and publishing.....	14
Classical and modern foreign languages.....	17
Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages.....	20
Family learning	22

Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

In addition to reporting on overall effectiveness of the organisation, its capacity to improve further, achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management, this inspection focused on specialist provision adult and community learning, more specifically in:

- Information and communication technology
- Arts, media and publishing
- Classical and modern foreign languages
- Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages
- Family learning

Description of the provider

1. Manchester Adult Education Service (MAES) operates within the Chief Executives Department of Manchester City Council. MAES receives funding from the Greater Manchester LSC to provide adult and community learning.
2. During 2006/07 MAES offered 1,371 further education courses, 787 personal and community development learning, neighbourhood learning in deprived communities and family learning courses. Approximately half of the current learners are on non-accredited provision. These courses are offered across Manchester in 14 dedicated adult learning centres and over 165 venues. During the same period 11,000 learners accounted for over 20,486 enrolments. MAES subcontracts 5.8% of its further education provision including neighbourhood learning in deprived communities.
3. MAES currently operates through an interim structure, and is managed by the head of MAES with support from three senior managers. The provision is planned and co-ordinated through three district teams and a sector subject area team which includes 120 full-time and pro-rata tutors.
4. The City of Manchester is made up of 33 wards. Some 27 of these are among the top 10% most deprived wards in the country. Around 19% of the population are from minority ethnic backgrounds compared with the national average of 9.1%. Unemployment is above the national average at 4.1%.

Summary of grades awarded

Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
----------------------------	----------------------

Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
----------------------------------	----------------------

Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
-----------------------------	----------------------

Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
----------------------------------	----------------------

Equality of opportunity	Good: Grade 2
--------------------------------	----------------------

Sector subject areas

Information and communication technology	Good: Grade 2
-------------------------------------------------	----------------------

Arts, media and publishing	Good: Grade 2
-----------------------------------	----------------------

Classical and modern foreign languages	Good: Grade 2
-----------------------------------------------	----------------------

Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages	Good: Grade 2
-----------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------

Family learning	Outstanding: Grade 1
------------------------	-----------------------------

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

5. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. The quality of provision in family learning is outstanding. Provision is good in information and communication technology; arts, media and publishing; classical and modern foreign languages; and literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL).
6. Adult learners gain a wide range of skills, develop confidence and progress to other courses or employment. Retention rates are good at 88.8%. The attainments of most current learners are good.
7. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning in most areas are good and in family learning are outstanding. The sessions are mostly planned well with a good range of activities. However, in a few teaching sessions, recognising and recording progress and achievement (RARPA) is insufficient. The range of programmes to meet learners' needs and interests is good. MAES is particularly successful in engaging learners from minority ethnic backgrounds. Guidance and support are good overall. Learner support arrangements are very effective, and those with learning difficulties achieve as well as others.
8. Leadership and management are good. MAES has been very effective in managing the restructuring of the service. Sector subject area teams are supported and managed well. Provision planning is very effective with a strong focus on community, LSC and the council's priorities. Partnership working has been particularly effective in offering provision which has promoted social inclusion.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

9. MAES' capacity to improve is good. MAES has implemented good actions to improve the quality of the provision since its reinspection in 2006. Performance of learners on accredited courses has improved. Retention rates of all learners have also improved. MAES has maintained the good quality of some of its provision and improved others. A major re-organisation of the service has been carried out particularly well. However, the re-organisation is not yet fully complete. The observation of teaching and learning is thorough and implemented well. Quality arrangements are effective in identifying areas for improvement. The self-assessment report is comprehensive, analytical and uses learner performance information well for its judgements. Inspection findings closely reflected the judgements of the self-assessment report, and matched most of the grades proposed. MAES underestimated the quality of its provision in languages, literature and culture and its arrangements for equality of opportunity. The self-assessment report is supported by a very effective development plan which identifies the priorities for improvements.

Key strengths

- Outstanding family learning provision
- Good development of learners' skills and confidence
- Good teaching and learning

- Good individual learner support
- Good management of change
- Very effective partnership working to widen participation

Key areas for improvement

- Low success rates of learners on accredited courses
- Use of target-setting for learners
- Use of technology in teaching and learning
- The quality of some teaching venues

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

10. Achievement and standards are good as identified in the self-assessment report. Learners' retention rates on non-accredited courses have improved since the previous inspection and are high at 91.5%. Learners on all courses develop a good range of skills and self-confidence. Learners' on family learning courses develop outstanding skills and confidence and help their children more effectively with their homework. Most learners on family learning make outstanding progress to other courses and to employment. Learners on arts, media and publishing courses produce a very good standard of work which is exhibited to the public. Learners on language, literature and culture courses confidently use their language skills in social, personal and work-related situations.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

11. The quality of provision is good as identified in the self-assessment report. Teaching and learning are good overall. Tutors skilfully build confidence and encourage independent problem-solving. The most effective sessions are well structured with frequent changes of activity and a good focus on individual learning and attainment. Tutors make very good use of a range of teaching and learning methods and keep all learners fully motivated. Learners are encouraged to contribute to discussions and group work in a relaxed environment. Planning for individual needs is particularly good. Teaching materials are generally of a good quality. However, a few sessions are insufficiently planned to inspire learners.
12. Procedures for RARPA in non-accredited learning are satisfactory. In the best examples, records clearly show that learners receive an initial assessment, a set of group and individual learning goals and formative assessments to demonstrate achievement. Comprehensive records of progress and achievements are maintained. In the less effective examples, targets are not clearly defined, recorded or time-constrained and progress and achievement are not well recorded.
13. The range of programmes to meet learners' needs and interests is good. Social inclusion is very effective. Courses are offered in a diverse range of venues and settings convenient to the learners. MAES locates provision in deprived communities. Approximately 75% of learners come from these communities.
14. MAES is working closely with further education colleges, other training providers and the LSC to develop a city-wide service offering good progression routes for learners. However, in some areas, progression is not always clear or easily accessible.
15. Arrangements to support learners are good. Staff are well trained in all aspects of providing advice and guidance. Good team working in supporting learners takes place, particularly in the classroom. Well trained volunteers and learning support assistants work well with tutors to provide support. The assessment and support processes for learners with additional needs is good. MAES provides a range of support including additional support workers, adaptive technologies, adapted forms and additional lesson notes or

information. Advisers and tutors are trained in the identification of and support strategies for dyslexia.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

16. Leadership and management are good, as identified in the self-assessment report. As a result of good strategic planning and a clear focus by senior managers, leadership within sector subject area teams is strong and communications are very good. Staff are well supported and highly motivated. Staff development is effectively planned and implemented to support the organisational changes.
17. Partnership working is very effective in widening participation. MAES collaborates well with local learning providers, support agencies, community groups and volunteer organisations to attract hard to reach groups such as ex-offenders and minority ethnic communities to its provision. Currently 35% of enrolments are from minority ethnic backgrounds compared with a city proportion of 19%. Over 17% of learners have a declared disability. Collaboration with SureStart is very effective in providing childcare support for community learners.
18. Equality of opportunity is good. Staff promote equality of opportunity well and teaching materials reflect the specific needs of learners. Many staff have, or are due to complete, the council's extensive internal equality and diversity training programme. Sector subject area managers provide specific training for tutors on the implementation of equality and diversity in the classroom.
19. MAES has a thorough system for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning. All tutors are observed at least once each year. Observations lead to detailed feedback and most result in clear action plans for improvement. However, in a few cases action plans are not completed despite the session observation record indicating clear improvement needs. Arrangements for sharing good practice to improve all teaching grades across different sector subject areas are insufficient.
20. The current management information system is insufficiently comprehensive. Although some learner performance reports can be produced centrally and trends are identified from these, other reports such as attendance have to be generated manually by tutors at local level. Other information such as learners' progress during their courses cannot be easily analysed centrally. MAES has recognised these problems and a new system has been purchased to be operational for the next academic year.
21. The self-assessment process is thorough and inclusive. It involves all the main partners, but tutor contributions are particularly good. Tutors prepare detailed interim and end of course reviews, which include analysis of learner feedback, attendance, and retention and achievement data. These reviews are discussed in detail within the teams. The conclusions of these discussions form the basis of the self-assessment report.
22. Arrangements for safeguarding are satisfactory. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. MAES has a designated child protection officer. All crèche workers, family learning staff and other staff regularly based in settings where

they may come into contact with children have an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check.

What learners like:

- ‘Courses are focused on employment which helps in getting a job’
- ‘Tutors make learning fun’
- ‘Helps me keep up with my children and grandchildren’
- ‘Learning English allows me to interact in my community’
- ‘Educational trips increase awareness of other cultures’
- ‘Personalised targets and good quality feedback from tutors’

What learners think could improve:

- Progression opportunities
- Arrangements for cancelled sessions
- The availability of refreshments at some centres

Information and communication technology

Good: Grade 2

Context

23. In 2007/08 to date the service has offered 231 courses to 1,452 information and communication technology (ICT) learners in 24 centres. These include MAES centres, libraries and community venues. Courses are offered every day of the week including evenings and weekends. A senior manager, one manager, three team leaders and 16 full-time and pro-rata tutors are responsible for this provision.
24. Most courses are first steps learning for beginners who can then progress up to level 2. Learners can choose from courses covering subjects such as desktop publishing, digital cameras, using the internet and learning to use popular office software. Short taster courses are available to introduce learners to computing from which they can progress to other provision.

Strengths

- Good development of ICT skills
- Thorough and detailed initial assessment
- Well equipped ICT facilities in all the teaching venues
- Good management of change

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient range of provision

Achievement and standards

25. Achievement and standards are good as identified in the self-assessment report. Learners develop good ICT skills. All learners are confident in basic data manipulation, printing, saving and creating new files. Work produced by learners at entry or pre-entry level is of a good standard. Learners develop the confidence to use more complex functions. Many learners progress to the higher level courses. Learners use these skills well to improve their lives, for example using the internet to contact their families or take more advanced courses to improve their employment prospects.
26. Learner attainment is good. Retention is high at 85% on accredited courses and attendance is satisfactory at 80%.

Quality of provision

27. The quality of provision is good as recognised in the self-assessment report. Initial assessment is thorough and detailed and uses a good range of assessment methods. Initial assessment starts during the induction and, if appropriate, learners' literacy, numeracy or language support needs are identified. Learners self-assess their computer skills, but observations are carried out to confirm this and to identify any barriers to learning or specialist support required. Tutors record learners' specific needs in individual learning plans. Tutors record in detail learners' prior achievements and set appropriate learning targets based on these achievements.

28. Teaching is satisfactory. However, MAES overestimated this in the self-assessment report. Sessions include an appropriate range of teaching methods and activities. The better sessions are well paced with imaginative use of information technology to improve learning, by both tutors and learners. However, in other sessions the pace of learning is too slow and lacks variety.
29. Overall the standard of equipment is good, as identified in the self-assessment report. All venues have up-to-date computers, printers and a good range of learning technology equipment. All adult learning centres are networked and have internet access to the e-learning platform. Seating arrangements are generally good in most sessions and meet health and safety requirements. Paper-based learning resources are good and a wide range of materials are used by learners at different levels. Learners have adequate workspace in most cases.
30. The range of provision is insufficient. At level 2 only one accredited qualification is offered. In some centres little choice of personal interest courses exist which follow on from taster sessions. This area for improvement is recognised in the self-assessment report and appropriate actions are progressing well to improve the range and availability of courses.
31. Learners receive effective advice, guidance and support. Tutors use the results of the initial assessment well to provide effective individual support. For example learners are offered support by additional support workers, the use of adaptive technology equipment and adapted forms, information and lesson notes. One group of learners have all their course material translated into two Chinese dialects, with English still included on the paperwork.

Leadership and management

32. Leadership and management are good, as identified in the self-assessment report. Staff have responded enthusiastically to the uncertainties of the reorganisation. Many helped in the design of the new coursework, and share the better aspects of course recording documents either at staff meetings or on the e-learning platform. This particularly relates to the use of individual learning plans and the RARPA in non-accredited learning, which is now more established. Staff training is effective and well planned. Tutors are well supported and feel confident about their management team. Detailed action plans are drawn up and implemented well. Managers carry out thorough observations of teaching practices and the observation reports closely match the observations carried out during inspection. Managers make good use of data to evaluate performance of tutors and different courses, to plan future provision, staff development and deployment of resources. Equality of opportunity is effective, with emphasis on attracting and helping the most disadvantaged learners. All staff are fully involved in the self-assessment process, which broadly matched the inspection findings.

Arts, media and publishing

Good: Grade 2

Context

33. MAES offered 295 courses during 2006/07 with 2,699 enrolments. Currently 132 courses are offered in 2007/08. The range of accredited and non-accredited courses includes working with children; soft furnishing; cake decorating; pottery; painting; drawing; and music. Courses are from 4 to 30 weeks in duration in ten week blocks during mornings, afternoons and evenings. A senior manager, one manager, five team leaders and 21 full-time and pro-rata tutors are responsible for the provision.

Strengths

- Good development of skills and techniques
- Good teaching and learning
- Good range of courses to engage vulnerable groups
- Good curriculum management

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient use of learning plans

Achievement and standards

34. Achievement and standards are good as identified in the self-assessment report. Learners develop a good range of skills and art techniques. Learners are highly motivated and many use these skills well in their communities, for example in producing displays in community centres. The standard of learners' works is good. During a large exhibition of learners' work, some learners sold their paintings, which increased their confidence and motivation. Within the last three years the retention rates have improved to satisfactory levels at 86%. Success rates of learners on accredited courses have also improved to satisfactory levels.

Quality of provision

35. The quality of provision is good as identified in the self-assessment report. Teaching and learning are good. Tutors have extensive specialist knowledge and are well qualified. Tutors have high expectations of their learners and sessions are lively with a good pace. They set learning goals which motivates the learners to practise new techniques. Tutors have good working relationships with the learners and use this well to maintain the pace of work. Many learners choose to complete extra work at home ranging from research to practising their crafts. In the practical sessions tutors plan exercises to help with literacy and numeracy, for example measuring curtains. Most learners recognise the progress they make and enjoy working at a higher level. All learners are encouraged to keep detailed sketch books as a reference tool. However, in some sessions handouts are poorly produced. Tutors' generally do not use information technology sufficiently well to broaden the learners' experience.

36. Tutors use the individuals' learning plans insufficiently. Many learning plans are not used thoroughly during the courses, but are completed at the end of the courses. Some tutors have devised their own documentation for planning learners' training which the learners are insufficiently familiar with.

37. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory. In most centres an appropriate range of equipment is available. However, tutors and learners have insufficient access to computers and information learning technology. Some art classrooms are not suitably maintained and include unsuitable furniture.

38. A good range of courses are offered to engage vulnerable groups. Courses are provided for learners from very different backgrounds, for example ex-offenders, learners with a history of substance or alcohol misuse, learners who have mental health problems and learners who have suffered bereavement and ill health. One course helped those who had been relocated to decorate their home by attending a class for interior design and basic

maintenance. Courses are available in the morning, afternoon and evenings to suit learners. Learners are also offered visits to galleries and museums. MAES has developed a very good approach in supporting the learners who complete their courses and wish to continue to meet and learn together through setting-up their own clubs. However, some learners have insufficient information about their progression options.

39. Support for learners is satisfactory. Tutors provide individual learning support such as dyslexia support. In sessions where learners have hearing impairments, tutors ensure that the seating arrangements benefit these learners, and if required they also have good access to additional sign language support.

Leadership and management

40. Leadership and management are good as identified in the self-assessment report. Managers are successfully taking actions to improve the flexibility of the provision. Tutors have been consulted well on the organisational change and are kept informed of any new developments through meetings and emails. Staff training is thorough and many tutors take advantage of specialist subject training. Partnership working is very effective in developing provision to meet the communities' interests. These include partnerships with a number of organisations to reduce drug misuse and homelessness. Managers also work well with residential care homes, the local hospital and an organisation promoting healthy living. Learners' understanding of equality and diversity is appropriate. Many learners have a good understanding of the complaints procedure and express their views well.

Classical and modern foreign languages

Good: Grade 2

Context

41. Currently 265 learners are enrolled on 26 language courses in Arabic, French, Italian, Mandarin, Spanish and Urdu. Of these, 13 courses are accredited from entry level 2. In deaf studies 222 learners are enrolled on 20 courses. These courses include deaf awareness, lip reading and British Sign Language level 1 and level 2 accredited by the council for the advancement of communications with deaf people. Almost 75% of the provision is offered during the day with most courses planned for two hours each week, for the duration of 30 weeks. Courses are offered in 12 centres across the city of Manchester. The programme is led by a senior manager, two sector subject area managers, two team leaders and eight tutors.

Strengths

- Good acquisition of language skills
- Good teaching and learning
- Good learner support
- Good curriculum management

Areas for improvement

- Poor success rates on British Sign Language programmes

Achievement and standards

42. Achievement and standards are good as identified in the self-assessment report. In many sessions learners acquire very good language skills that enable them to communicate effectively and confidently. For instance, in a beginner British Sign Language session, hearing learners were using accurate and fluent signing for all communicative interactions and never resorted to the use of spoken language. The standard of learners' portfolios is good. On some courses learners have successfully completed their assessment ahead of time. Increased levels of confidence enable many learners to use their language skills for social, personal and work-related purposes.

43. Retention and success rates have significantly improved in the last three years. On accredited programmes during 2006/07 rates were satisfactory at 77% and 65% respectively. In personal and community development learning retention rates are good at 91%. On British Sign Language courses success rates were poor in 2006/07, for both Level 1 and 2 learners. However, the current learners' attainment is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

44. The quality of provision is good as identified in the self-assessment report. Teaching and learning are good. Sessions are well planned and include a range of interesting activities that encourages learners to practise more complex tasks. Tutors produce good quality

materials that effectively support learning and make extensive use of the taught language. Through initial assessment tutors become aware of the learners' individual needs and successfully implement strategies to enhance learning.

45. The implementation and use of RARPA is satisfactory. Learners' initial assessment and progress is accurately recorded on individual learning plans where learners also set their own personal targets. Progress is reviewed at regular intervals by both tutors and learners. However, some learning outcomes are not specific enough to provide a reliable measurement of progress and achievement.
46. The quality and availability of teaching and learning resources are satisfactory. In the best locations a range of audiovisual equipment is available, including electronic boards and whiteboards that are skilfully used by tutors to enhance the presentation of a new language. In some rooms however, the availability of appropriate resources is insufficient and tutors exclusively rely on the use of the whiteboard and their own handouts. All tutors are suitably qualified and experienced.
47. The range of provision is adequate. Most courses offered range from entry level to level 1 with no provision for many learners who wish to progress to an intermediate or advanced level. This is the result of a strategic decision by the service to focus on first step provision to better serve the needs of the local community. MAES has worked with its partners to make further progression opportunities available, for example in two local colleges. Although learners are sufficiently advised about these progression options, many choose not to take them.
48. Learners receive good support as identified in the self-assessment report. Comprehensive pre-course information and advice enable learners to choose the correct programme. An improved initial assessment process enables tutors and sector subject area managers to identify and respond effectively to the learners' individual needs. Tutors are very sensitive to learners' needs and ensure that the learning is enhanced for each learner. For example tutors provide dyslexia support to learners through the use of blue coloured paper and blue plastic wallets.

Leadership and management

49. Leadership and management are good, as identified in the self-assessment report. The management structure is clear and tutors are well supported by their managers. Regular team and individual meetings aid a good flow of information and sharing of best practice. Opportunities for professional development are good. Especially following the introduction of new procedures and systems such as RARPA or the new council for the advancement of communications with deaf people curriculum. Equality of opportunity is good. During sessions good attention is given to equality and diversity issues both in terms of content and materials. In a Spanish lesson the tutor promoted diversity by introducing the language variations and the cultures of the different countries where the language is spoken.
50. Observations of teaching and learning reports are generally accurate, evaluative and highlight relevant strengths and areas for improvement. However, in some observations the focus on learning and skill development is insufficient. Observations are frequent and adequate measures are in place to resolve poor performance. Some actions for improvements identified through observation and self-assessment have been successfully

implemented this year. Internal assessment on accredited courses is satisfactory and meets awarding bodies' requirements.

51. Actions to improve the quality of provision are effective. Tutors have contributed to the self-assessment process by completing comprehensive course evaluations that take into account the learners and their own views. Managers are clear about the actions needed for improvements and the self-assessment report recognises most of the strengths and areas for improvement identified during inspection.

Literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages

Good: Grade 2

Context

52. Currently 1,267 literacy and numeracy learners and 1,242 ESOL learners are enrolled. Some 149 courses are available in literacy and numeracy and 122 courses in ESOL. MAES offers a range of courses, from pre-entry to level 2 and established ESOL, plus courses in job skills, community interpreting and childcare at community venues and schools. All learners work to achieve the learning goals and units of skills for life qualifications agreed with them at the start of their programme of learning. All courses focus on employment skills. The programme is offered by a senior manager, four sector subject area managers, 12 team leaders and 65 tutors.

Strengths

- Good achievement rates in literacy and numeracy
- Good teaching and learning
- Good individual support
- Good sector subject area management

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient use of technology to support learning
- Some poor accommodation

Achievement and standards

53. Literacy and numeracy are good as identified in the self-assessment report. Retention rates of literacy learners are also good at 89%, with satisfactory retention rates of learners on numeracy courses at 90.7%.

54. Achievement rates of learners on the speaking and listening qualification in ESOL has improved within the last three years and is now good at 90%. Retention in ESOL is good at 90.2%. However, achievement rates of a small number of learners who take full qualifications in ESOL are low at 13.6%. ESOL learners gain confidence in using their newly gained language skills well at home, in the workplace and in their community. Some ESOL learners help their children with their school work and discuss their progress with their children's schools.

Quality of provision

55. The quality of the provision is good as identified in the self-assessment report. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching sessions are well planned with a good range of activities including group work, individual and paired activities which promote good application of skills gained. Tutors use the RARPA process well for literacy and numeracy learners. Tutors discuss and agree a good range of measurable and achievable targets with learners and routinely review these during the course of study and at formal tutorials.

56. Teaching and learning for ESOL learners is also good. Training material and topics are chosen well to develop the employability skills of ESOL learners. In many sessions tutors

use a very good range of examples to help learners understand and be able to apply different systems and practices when dealing with different organisations. In most sessions learners routinely record their own progress on the individual learning plans and discuss the targets they have achieved with the tutors and agree on new targets. However, some ESOL learners are not clear about their progress and what they need to do to progress further.

57. The initial assessment process is effective in identifying learners' previous experience and their support needs. This information is used well for learners on literacy and numeracy courses to plan their learning. For ESOL learners, the use of this information is satisfactory. Tutors offer constructive and sensitive feedback on learners work, helping learners to stay motivated and progress well.
58. The use of information technology to support learning is insufficient. In only a few sessions tutors use electronic boards and computers well to explain new topics to learners or to provide learners with the opportunity to practise the more complex aspects of their course. However, these facilities are not available in all centres. In most sessions worksheets are relied on too heavily. Tutors have access to a virtual learning environment, but it is not widely available for all learners.
59. In some centres classrooms are poorly decorated, shabby and cluttered with furniture. In these rooms the tutors and learners can not easily move around, particularly during role-play and group work. The furniture is old and uncomfortable and the rooms are not equipped with adequate teaching resources.
60. The range of courses is appropriate in meeting the needs of the community. MAES offers its courses where its potential learners have convenient access to the sessions. Focus on developing employability skills in literacy and numeracy courses is strong. ESOL Plus courses introduce learners to employability and other vocational skills, for example childcare. Intensive courses are available as well as part-time courses. These are run flexibly during the day and in the evening. Learners have access to information on progression routes within the programme at the end of the year but they do not have access to information on other provision at MAES and in the local community during the year.
61. Individual support for learners is good. Tutors develop very effective working relationships with learners based on trust and mutual respect. Learners can approach their tutors to discuss their worries about learning or personal problems. Many learners have access to the free childcare facilities. Arrangements are in place to support learners.

Leadership and management

62. Leadership and management is good. Following the restructuring, tutors have been fully consulted to develop the literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision. Staff morale is high and they are supported and focused, with a strong motivation to improve the provision. Tutors are well qualified and experienced. Tutors have good access to additional staff training and are encouraged to maintain their expertise. Teamwork and communication is very effective. For example all tutors receive emails about any new developments in addition to the minutes of formal meetings. Sharing of good practice is routinely an agenda item on

staff meetings. Internal moderation is routinely planned and information circulated to all tutors. The skills for life strategy is well developed and implemented.

63. MAES successfully promotes equality and diversity and gives learners good opportunities to develop their potential. Many learning activities promote cultural awareness effectively. Quality arrangements are thorough and the observation of teaching and learning focuses sufficiently on identifying good practices and areas for further improvements. The self-assessment process is inclusive and inspection findings broadly matched strengths and areas for improvements identified in the self-assessment report.

Family learning

Outstanding: Grade 1

Context

64. MAES offers a range of family first step courses in literacy, numeracy, languages and ICT. Currently 29 family learning courses are offered with nine wider family learning courses in subjects such as parenting, arts and crafts and behaviour management. In 2006/07, 315 courses were offered with 2,473 enrolments. These courses are non-accredited and mainly offered in the daytime, although some courses are available during weekends and holidays. All courses are free with a free crèche. In some courses the children join their parents for part of the session. Two managers, four team leaders and 11 full-time and pro-rata tutors are responsible for the provision.

Strengths

- Outstanding development of learners' skills and confidence
- High progression rates to education and employment
- Outstanding aspects of teaching and learning
- Outstanding range of enrichment activities
- Highly supportive environment for learners
- Outstanding leadership and management
- Outstanding partnership arrangements to widen participation

Areas for improvement

- No significant areas for improvements

Achievement and standards

65. Achievements and standards are outstanding as identified in the self-assessment report. Learners develop outstanding skills and confidence. Learners with little positive experience of education are helping with their children's school work well and encourage them to produce work of a high standard. Parents use their newly gained reading skills exceptionally well to read to their children and discuss difficult ideas such as respect in the community. Learners develop a good range of skills, for example in problem-solving and expressing their suggestions. Learners with backgrounds in other countries join different community groups to improve their local area. Behaviour and confidence of children are greatly enhanced when parents attend courses. For example on an intensive language course very young children helped their parents with learning English sounds.
66. Learners' progression into education or community job roles is excellent. Almost all learners progress to a good range of activities after the completion of their courses. A significant number of learners' progress into further courses in family learning, or mainstream accredited courses. In 2006/07, 13% of wider family learning learners progressed to mainstream courses and 13% into literacy and numeracy courses. Most learners progress to volunteering in schools, as governors or teaching assistants or support other learners. Retention rates have improved over the last three years and were good in 2006/07 at 94%.

Quality of provision

67. The quality of the provision is outstanding as identified in the self-assessment report. Many aspects of teaching and learning are excellent. Teaching sessions are planned particularly well, meeting the needs of individual learners. A well managed and highly appropriate range of activities such as discussions, practical tasks, group and individual work involves learners exceptionally well throughout the programme. Questions and responses to learners' comments are particularly effectively used to reinforce main or unfamiliar concepts. Tutors detailed knowledge about the learners and their very good working relationship with them has contributed to a learning environment in which learners feel confident to express their views and concerns. Tutors encourage learners to use their gained knowledge in their daily lives. For example learners use their numeracy skills when cooking, shopping, measuring and when planning family finances. Tutors provide very detailed and constructive feedback on learners' work, helping them to further

improve. Aspects to the use of RARPA are good, for example learners define and set their own targets, which are reviewed comprehensively.

68. MAES offers an outstanding range of free enrichment activities such as visits to the local parks, museums, theatres and residential outdoor activities in the Lake District to develop learners' confidence and broaden their knowledge. These visits are well planned and very often directly influence learners to progress to other courses or activities after completion of their courses. Good free crèche facilities allow parents to attend many courses, including sessions with children and adults working together. The range of additional courses for new learners is particularly good, for example MAES offers an intensive language course. MAES has been very successful in increasing the number of male learners through a range of courses, such as 'Dads and Lads', a six week course in robot making. Courses are offered in a wide range of convenient venues for the learners such as primary schools, children's centres, churches and community centres.
69. Learners benefit from a highly supportive environment. Tutors are very skilled at creating a learning environment in which learners feel comfortable and at ease to receive a range of additional support. Resources used are particularly good in sensitively helping learners to progress, for example through easy to read text and illustrations. Initial assessments are used very sensitively to identify needs. Learners have very good access to ESOL and interpreter support when necessary. In one language session a multi-lingual nursery worker supported both adults and children. Very good support and information is given to learners to progress to other courses, and many benefit from this. In one area where public transport is not available a mini bus is provided to enable learners to access other courses.

Leadership and management

70. Leadership and management are outstanding as identified in the self-assessment report. The curriculum has been developed well to support the council's strategies for families. The development plan very clearly identifies the priorities for each district. Staff have contributed very well to the development of the new structure. Since restructuring, the family learning teams are smaller and work together extremely well to develop new provision and adopt new teaching and learning practices. Staff are well supported by managers in many aspects, such as staff development, and meet regularly to review priorities and to share information about learners. A newsletter, email contacts and informal meetings promote very effective communications between staff. Learner evaluations are followed through particularly well and are used to make improvements. Course planning is linked to the *Every Child Matters* agenda. The team works well with tutors in other sector subject areas to enhance the provision.
71. Outstanding partnership arrangements widen participation. Partnership working with schools and other community groups are particularly effective in recruiting new learners and helping them to progress. MAES uses its good working relationship with organisations that support vulnerable groups exceptionally well to help learners to progress. For example, MAES works in partnership with Outlook, a charity dedicated to drug dependant people, which offers personal development and anger management courses.
72. Staff have fully contributed to the self-assessment process and the development plans. Inspection findings broadly matched the judgements in the self-assessment report.

