

Stockton on Tees Borough Council

Inspection date

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Inspection number

329356

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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
- Construction, planning and the built environment
- Arts, media and publishing
- Languages, literature and culture
- Preparation for life and work
- Business, administration and law
- Family learning

Description of the provider

1. Stockton on Tees Borough Council (SBC) receives funding from Tees Valley LSC to provide work-based learning and adult and community learning. SBC holds contracts to deliver further education, first steps, personal and community development learning, family learning, literacy, language and numeracy and work-based learning including apprenticeship, entry to employment (E2E) and Train to Gain programmes.
2. Adult and community learning is currently managed by Stockton Adult Education Service (SAES) and work-based learning by Training Employment Services (TES). These two services are being restructured into one team. In 2005 SAES gained the Offender Learning and Skills Service (OLASS) contract for the Tees Valley. SBC subcontracts Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) provision from two prime contract holders. The OLASS and DWP provision was not in scope for this inspection.
3. In addition to delivering provision in specialist centres, SBC provides learning in a range of local settings.
4. SBC currently has 2,385 learners on courses in adult and community learning. Of the 219 learners on work-based learning, 146 are on apprenticeship programmes, 33 are on E2E and 40 are on Train to Gain. Since August 2008 SBC has had just over 2,540 enrolments on adult and community learning, 59 on apprenticeship programmes, 25 on E2E and six on Train to Gain. SBC provides courses in 13 of the 15 sector subject areas and family learning.
5. Stockton-on-Tees is the largest unitary authority in the Tees Valley. In 2008 63.7% of school leavers gained five GCSEs at grades A* to C. The population is approximately 187,100 and has risen by 6.8% since the 1991 Census. Most economically active residents are employed in the public sector or distribution.
6. Unemployment in the borough in March 2008 at 3.1% is average for the North East as a whole but is higher than the National figure of 2.1%. The 2001 census shows that the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups is 2.8%.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Adult and Community Learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Work-based Learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Capacity to improve	Inadequate: Grade 4
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Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Adult and Community Learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Work-based Learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Quality of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Adult and Community Learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Work-based Learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Leadership and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Adult and Community Learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Work-based Learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
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Sector subject areas

Health, public services and care	Good: Grade 2
Construction, planning and the built environment	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Arts, media and publishing	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Language, literature and culture	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Preparation for life and work	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Business, administration and law	Good: Grade 2
Family learning	Good: Grade 2

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Adult and community learning

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

7. The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory. Apprentices and adult and community learners demonstrate a good standard of work. Framework success rates for apprentices have improved and are now high for health and social care and business administration learners. These apprentices complete their frameworks in good time, but construction apprentices take too long to complete their programmes. Many learners gain in confidence and use their learning in their everyday lives. Many progress to higher level courses. Success rates for learners on accredited courses in adult and community learning are satisfactory but retention rates have declined. Success rates in some sector subject areas have declined. Retention of learners on non-accredited provision has also declined.
8. Teaching and learning are satisfactory but insufficient good or better teaching and learning takes place. Teaching resources and accommodation are generally at least satisfactory. Information and learning technology is used well in a number of adult and community learning courses but is weak in work-based learning. Initial assessment and the provision of additional learning support are generally satisfactory. Assessment practice overall is satisfactory but for work-based learners it is good. Internal verification is satisfactory. The procedures for recognising and recording the progress and achievement of learners (RARPA), though established, are ineffective.
9. SBC's response to social inclusion is good. Good initiatives are in place to engage with priority target groups. Effective partnership working supports a wide curriculum offer. Employers speak highly of the provision their employees receive.
10. The guidance given and the support for learners are satisfactory overall. Support for learners' individual needs is good. In work-based learning good arrangements are in place for providing individual personal support, and reviewing learners' progress. In adult and community learning, pre-course information is insufficiently detailed for learners in arts, crafts and media and languages. Careers guidance for learners on accredited courses is thorough with some good progression into further learning or employment.
11. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The council has good strategic vision and direction to meet local, regional and national priorities. Partnerships are used well to meet community needs. Good resources are used well to support learning. Curriculum management and equality of opportunity are satisfactory. SBC makes good use of feedback to improve provision but arrangements for assuring the quality of the provision are incomplete. Retention and success rates have improved for apprentices but retention declined in adult and community learning in 2007/08. Effective actions to raise standards and achievement for all learners are insufficient.

Capacity to improve

Inadequate: Grade 4

12. The council demonstrates an inadequate capacity to improve. The council has corrected most of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection of TES but some weaknesses of SAES remain. Resources have improved, but information and learning technology resources for apprentices remain insufficient. The success rates of apprentices have improved and are now good, other than in construction. However, some work-based learning contracts, including that for horticulture which remained inadequate at reinspection, were withdrawn because the council failed to satisfy the minimum level of performance criteria applied by the funding body. SBC has regained some of these contracts, but it is too early to assess the success of SBC in managing these. In 2008 the council purchased a new management information system which is in use for its adult education provision. Quality systems and self-assessment remain ineffective in bringing about improvement. Observations of the learning processes are insufficiently thorough and have not brought about improvement in teaching and learning or in tutors' application of RARPA procedures on non-accredited programmes.
13. Target-setting and performance monitoring is based on data which has been calculated inaccurately since 2006, when SAES was one of the Adult Learning Inspectorate's cycle 2 pilot inspections. The grades awarded by the inspection team for adult and community learning provision in languages, family learning, art and crafts, preparation for life and work, and for leadership and management and equality of opportunity have declined since the previous inspection. In accredited adult and community learning, success and retention rates have fallen and are now broadly satisfactory. The RARPA process is unreliable in measuring achievement of learners on non-accredited provision. The merger of work-based learning and adult and community learning is well advanced but the new management structure for the combined provision is not yet in place. The head of service was promoted to a more senior position in June, and at the time of the inspection he carried out both roles; a new acting head of service will take up the post after the inspection.
14. Self-assessment is inadequate. It is inclusive and consultative but the most recent draft report for 2007/08 is insufficiently critical and evaluative; in some sector subject areas it is too descriptive. Judgements are not supported by evidence. It fails to sufficiently identify key strengths and areas for improvement in many aspects of the provision. Grades awarded at inspection for four of the seven sector subject areas inspected were lower than those in the draft self-assessment report. The inspection awarded lower grades to leadership and management, equality of opportunity and capacity to improve.

Key strengths

- Good strategic vision and direction to meet local, regional and national priorities
- Good standard of learners' work
- Good range of provision to meet the needs of individuals and the community

Key areas for improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning
- The thoroughness of self-assessment
- Retention and achievement of learners on adult and community learning provision
- Ineffective use of RARPA procedures on non-accredited programmes
- The use of management information to bring about improvement

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Adult and community learning
Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

15. Work-based and adult and community learners demonstrate a good standard of work. Learners on the family learning courses achieve high levels of personal and parenting skills. Many adult and community learning learners use the skills and knowledge they acquire more widely to benefit their families and the wider community. E2E learners develop good personal and work related skills but their progression rates are low. Apprentices in most areas make good progress. Apprentices gain good practical skills and

many progress into employment or more advanced courses. Achievement of learners on Train to Gain courses is satisfactory.

16. Framework success rates for apprentices have improved and are now high for health and social care and business administration learners. These apprentices complete their frameworks in good time, but construction apprentices take too long to complete their programmes.
17. In 2006/07 success rates for learners on accredited further education provision were around the national average. SBC's data indicates that retention rates of learners declined from 81% in 2006/07, to 69% in 2007/08. Although final success rates for learners on this provision were not available at the time of the inspection early indications were that a reduction has occurred overall. Success rates for learners on skills for life courses and languages have declined.
18. On non-accredited provision, learners who complete the course are considered by the provider to have successfully achieved the outcomes. On these course retention dropped from 87% in 2006/07 to 78% in 2007/08. Success rates for these learners have therefore declined. The reduction in retention and success rates on adult and community learning provision is identified in the self-assessment report.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Adult and community learning
Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

19. The overall quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching staff are generally appropriately qualified. Teaching resources and accommodation are generally at least satisfactory. However, the use of information and learning technology and e-learning are incomplete in some sector subject areas, particularly for apprentices. While much good teaching exists in some areas, too much remains unsatisfactory. Unsatisfactory teaching is characterised by poor planning, lack of challenge, insufficiently varied learning activities, slow progress of learners and in some instances insufficient attention to aspects of health and safety.
20. Initial assessment is satisfactory overall but in languages tutors do not use the results of initial assessment effectively to plan learning and few construction apprentices are identified as having additional learning needs. The provision of additional learning support for literacy, numeracy and language needs including key skills is satisfactory.
21. Assessment practice is satisfactory overall and good for apprentices. In some subject areas, and particularly in apprenticeship programmes, learners receive timely and effective feedback to help them progress. Internal verification is satisfactory. However, for those learners on non-accredited programmes, RARPA is ineffective with few clear targets, little use of initial assessment to plan provision and insufficient formal feedback by tutors. The service has not defined the criteria for successful completion of non-accredited courses.
22. A good range of provision meets the needs of learners and the wider community well. A wide curriculum offer is supported by very effective partnership working, which helps widen participation into some of the most disadvantaged communities in the borough. Employers speak highly of the flexible and tailored provision their employees receive.

23. Guidance and support for learners is satisfactory overall. Staff providing impartial pre-enrolment advice and guidance are well qualified. Work-based programmes are widely publicised and the adult and community learning prospectus is delivered to every home in the borough. However, for some learners pre-course information is inadequate. Careers guidance is thorough with some good progression into further learning or employment.
24. Support for learners' individual needs is good. Individual support is sensitively delivered and appreciated by learners. The influence of the support is analysed showing very good outcomes for those who receive it.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Adult and community learning
Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Contributory grade: Good: Grade 3

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

25. Leadership and management are satisfactory. SBC has good strategic vision and direction to meet local, regional and national priorities. It works well with carefully chosen partners to attract learners with skills for life and employability training needs and develop communities. The council is in the process of merging its work-based learning provision with its adult and community learning provision, providing a more coherent and comprehensive service for local people. This process is being managed well but it is too soon to assess the affect on learners. The service has developed a virtual learning environment with other regional providers to promote and improve the sharing of resources and the development of staff. The council has signed the skills pledge and is working successfully with local employers to raise skills levels for both employers and their staff. The service researches the needs of the area in conjunction with the council, and its outreach work is effective in taking provision to hard-to-reach priority groups in the borough. The service has good strategies to promote sustainability.
26. The council has good resources which are used well to support learning. Many learners benefit from purpose-built, pleasant accommodation with good quality dedicated resources for a number of specialist areas. Centres, conveniently located for the client group, are very well equipped to support learning. Adaptive technology is used well to enhance learning. The service uses specialist resources such as Braille handouts and activities to improve the learning experience of its target groups. Staff are generally well qualified and experienced. The virtual learning environment enables tutors to vary their resources, learn from their peers and share good practice. The service uses its resources well to provide good value for money; it accesses a good range of funding to enhance learning and to attract under-represented groups.
27. The collection and use of feedback from learners was a strength at the previous inspection of SAES and continues to be so. Apprentices' representatives meet monthly with the learner mentor; findings from these meetings are actioned satisfactorily. The council has made a number of positive changes in response to learners' views. SBC uses a range of methods to inform learners of its response to their requests. SBC also uses feedback from employers to improve its service.

28. Communication is effective in keeping people informed of key issues. Meetings are held regularly and recorded. The council uses the intranet increasingly well to locate and share policies and procedures. Structures are clear, and people know whom to contact for information or help.
29. Curriculum management is satisfactory overall. Managers and tutors have a satisfactory overview of the provision and know their learners well. Managers develop the course offer effectively for the benefit of new and existing learner groups. Courses are designed and located in response to community needs, prompt action is taken to close uneconomic courses. Staff training has covered a number of important areas such as child protection and use of the virtual learning environment. In the new structure the number of curriculum managers has been reduced and they are now supported by subject leaders. They have received training and support but the service has identified that the quality of subject management is variable.
30. The arrangements for assuring the quality of provision are insufficiently comprehensive. The recently appointed quality manager is redeveloping the quality system. It has a revised procedure for observing teaching and learning, but observers do not always identify key strengths and areas for improvement and the text does not always match the grade awarded. Actions for improvement are not always accurately identified or followed up sufficiently to improve performance. Only one session observed by the council in 2007/08 was graded unsatisfactory. This is a much lower proportion of unsatisfactory sessions than that observed during the inspection. Target-setting is weak and in many cases does not lead to improvement. Important aspects of performance management are insufficiently precise. The inspection team found discrepancies between their own findings and those of the service. Tutors have an annual appraisal, sometimes in groups, and this is used in conjunction with findings from lesson observations to plan their professional development. However, in a number of cases, basic training needs have not been met in a timely way through these mechanisms; effective training on specific aspects of teaching and learning has been insufficient.
31. Data is not used well to improve provision for adult and community learning. Inaccurate retention and success rate data for adult and community learning has been used for several years. This is a weak platform for target-setting and monitoring, planning or calculating trends in performance. SBC has recently replaced the faulty software but it is too soon to measure the affect of the new data analysis system. The use of management information for work-based provision is satisfactory.
32. The self-assessment process has been revised this year in an attempt to make it more thorough and judgemental. However, not all staff understand the process well, and present evidence and case studies rather than judgements on the quality of provision. The draft self-assessment report for 2007/08 has little focus and is insufficiently judgemental; some judgements are too vague or inaccurate. The inspection findings matched some grades in the report, but found it overemphasised strengths and placed insufficient importance to fundamental areas for improvement.
33. Managers have been unsuccessful in raising retention and success rates in adult and community learning and these declined significantly in 2007/08. Success rates have risen in some areas of work-based learning, but the rise in overall success rates masks the fact that the service has lost the contract for delivering some programmes because of a failure to meet the minimum levels of performance set by the funding body. In adult and community learning targets to raise retention and achievement rates have little precision and are based on inaccurate data. Managers are aware that retention and success rates of

learners on adult and community learning provision have been calculated inaccurately by the previous management information system.

34. RARPA processes are established in the service and innovative systems have been devised. However, staff do not use these processes well to measure performance and improve provision. The service has provided training and development for the implementation of RARPA, but it remains poorly understood and applied in many cases. Initial assessment is not always sufficiently informative in establishing learners' starting points, and subsequent action planning and target-setting frequently lacks precision and clarity, and is not measurable. Criteria for learners' success are not clearly defined or well understood. Success is too often deemed to be the same as completion of the course, and many learners are insufficiently challenged in their learning.
35. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The service's ethos of equality and diversity is clearly reflected in the handbook for tutors and the charter for learners. Teaching materials are examined to ensure that they comply with best practice in equality and that they raise awareness and challenge assumptions. The service has taken strong action to support learners when they have been subject to prejudice. The service complies with all relevant legislation including the Race Relations Act (amendment) 2000 and the Disability Discrimination Act. Its premises are accessible, and it has made reasonable adjustments in cases where buildings cannot be adapted to the needs of people with specific disabilities. The service has been successful in attracting men into family learning programmes. It supports individual learners well to achieve their learning objectives by providing relevant resources such as adaptive technology or support workers. Equality of opportunity is promoted satisfactorily overall but well in family learning and health and social care. Promotion to construction apprentices is weak. The service analyses data to monitor and plan for equality and diversity, but the data used for calculating retention and success for different groups in adult and community learning is inaccurate. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. Staff have benefited from relevant training, and know how to respond if issues are identified.

What learners like:

- Supportive helpful tutors
- ‘The fun we have in class’
- The convenience of the good quality venues
- ‘Increasing my information technology skills’
- ‘I thought I could handle a camera before I came here now I realise its full potential’
- It’s a good way to get a qualification

What learners think could improve:

- ‘Enrolment procedures. Why can’t they enrol more than one person at one email address?’
- More information on courses
- More flexible times for courses
- Payment arrangements are confusing with different dates for different types of payment and fees not printed on course information sheets

Sector subject areas

Health, public services and care

Good: Grade 2

Context

36. SBC offers a range of provision within health, public services and care. Currently 109 learners attend accredited and non-accredited courses including complementary therapies, basic counselling, confidence building, weight management, first aid, food safety, information and advice, introduction to youth work, British Institute of Innkeeping Awarding Body (BIIAB) certificate for door supervisors and National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in youth work. Currently 62 apprentices, including 20 advanced apprentices are working towards frameworks in health and social care.
37. SBC has nine part-time tutors delivering adult and community learning provision in a range of community venues. Apprentices attend the Dovecote Centre for NVQ, key skills and technical certificate sessions. An additional four qualified assessors visit learners at 43 placements across the borough. A curriculum manager is responsible for each area of the provision.

Strengths

- High success rates for apprentices
- Good progression
- Good teaching and learning
- Very good assessment practices in work-based learning programmes

Areas for improvement

- Declining retention rates for non-accredited programmes
- Insufficient monitoring of learners' progress in youth work programmes

Achievement and standards

38. Success rates on apprenticeship programmes have improved and are now high at 77%. All four advanced apprentices successfully completed their frameworks in 2007/08.
39. Learners are making good progress and most are on target to complete in a timely manner. They enjoy learning new approaches and develop good vocational knowledge and skills. Most learners have grown in confidence and improved their communication skills. Learners take responsibility for a wide range of tasks in the workplace and work to a high standard. Attendance is good.
40. Progression is good, as identified in the self-assessment report. Most learners progress to higher courses such as NVQ at level 2 or 3, the social work degree or gain employment.
41. Retention rates for non-accredited programmes at 63% are low and have declined over the last three years. Success rates have also declined on these programmes. Success rates for accredited programmes have improved, but at 81% in 2007/08 are still six percentage points below the national average.

Quality of provision

42. Overall the quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Tutors plan sessions and schemes of work well and they make good links between theory and practical work. Learners are encouraged to contribute in discussions and participate in all activities. Tutors use a range of teaching methods well to promote and extend learning and quickly establish positive working relationships with learners. Learners are well motivated, enthusiastic and enjoy the learning sessions.
43. Assessment practices in work-based learning are very good. Assessments are well planned, detailed, and inclusive. Assessment is thorough and observations are recorded well. Tutors give learners good verbal and written feedback which helps learners improve. Learners' portfolios are well structured and contain a good range of evidence. The internal verification is good. Actions identified by verifiers are rectified quickly. Regular standardisation meetings take place which effectively share good practice. Assessment in adult and community learning provision is satisfactory. The use of RARPA in non-accredited programmes is satisfactory.
44. Tutors review the progress of work-based learners thoroughly. Reviewers set clear short-term targets. Additional support needs are discussed and recorded and appropriate support provided. Tutors routinely update individual learning plans and use them in the review process. Equal opportunities and health and safety are regularly monitored and checks made that learners understand the issues.
45. Progress monitoring for learners on youth work NVQs is ineffective. This was not identified in the self-assessment report. Assessors set too few clear targets to measure learners' progress and achievement. Insufficient detail is recorded on the review form, some comments are vague and others descriptive rather than evaluative.
46. The satisfactory range of courses adequately meets the needs of learners and is socially inclusive. Some good links exist with partners to widen participation. Hard to reach learners from disadvantaged backgrounds have been encouraged to participate in the training by some effective outreach work.
47. Induction is satisfactory. It is well structured and provides a good foundation for learners' programmes. Learners value their induction and gain confidence from the experience. Initial assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy ability is satisfactory. The results are used to signpost learners to the basic skills tutor for extra support.
48. Support for learners is satisfactory. Tutors and assessors are accessible and responsive to learners' needs. They visit learners regularly and frequently in the workplace. Learners value the support they receive very highly.

Leadership and management

49. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. Work-based learning contract management is good. Tutors and managers and work well as a team. Communication is satisfactory; regular staff and employer meetings take place. Equality of opportunity is promoted well across the sector subject area and staff understand learners' diverse cultural backgrounds.
50. Resources are satisfactory. All staff are appropriately experienced and qualified, committed and enthusiastic about their subject area. Training rooms are spacious, bright,

well equipped and fit for purpose with learners' work displayed effectively. Learners have access to books, journals, handouts, leaflets, computers and the internet. Staff use a good range of learning materials.

51. Quality improvements overall are satisfactory. Internal verification processes in work-based learning programmes are thorough. The audit process on the work-based learning contract is thorough with detailed actions. These are monitored weekly by the curriculum manager and staff, and monthly by senior managers. Learners' feedback is collated. However, managers do not use the analysis of the feedback effectively to evidence judgements about the quality of teaching and learning. The self-assessment process was insufficiently thorough or inclusive and the report does not accurately identify the strengths and areas for improvement.

Construction, planning and the built environment

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

52. Currently 35 apprentices, including 11 advanced apprentices, are enrolled on carpentry and joinery work-based learning programmes. Of these 34 are on the site joinery apprenticeship and six are on the bench joinery apprenticeship. Learners include one female and one learner over the age of 25. Most learners are referred to SBC from Connexions, although some are already employed when they enrol on the programme. A few progress from school having attended a taster course with SBC. Learners without employment or a placement attend the centre four days a week. Learners who have a job attend one day every two weeks. Apprentices work towards their technical certificate and key skills at the centre. They also receive instruction in joinery but they do not start their NVQ assessment until they gain employment or a placement. Two assessors visit learners in the workplace.

Strengths

- Good success rates on advanced apprenticeships
- Good development of learners' practical skills

Areas for improvement

- Slow progress for learners on apprenticeships
- Promotion of equality of opportunity

Achievement and standards

53. Success rates on the advanced apprentice programme are good. In 2006/07, 80% of learners completing the programme achieved the full framework, compared with the national average of 60%. A similar success rate was achieved in the previous year. These learners also achieve in good time when compared with the national average.

54. Learners' practical work in the centre and in the workplace is of a very high standard. In the workplace high-specification work for demanding clients is completed accurately and professionally. Learners in the centre develop good hand skills, using tools well and completing jointing, door hanging and roofing tasks to a high standard. These skills are highly valued by employers and many six-week placements lead to full-time employment. Learners in the workplace demonstrate good personal skills in dealing with customers and colleagues. All learners achieve the key skills component of the framework early in the programme.

55. The framework completion rate for apprentices is satisfactory, and has improved to around the national average in 2007/08. However, the rate of progress for apprentices is too slow; only 22% achieve within the agreed timeframe. Apprentices do not gather NVQ evidence until they gain employment or a placement. Those without employment or placement remain in the centre developing practical skills and working toward the technical certificate. Too many learners remain unemployed for too long. Some have been in the centre for nearly a year and made little progress towards their NVQ, which is a major component of the apprenticeship framework. These learners receive insufficient support to

find employment. Several do not have an up-to-date curriculum vitae or adequate knowledge of where to access specific information about jobs in the construction industry.

Quality of provision

56. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Tutors plan practical sessions well and learners understand what they achieve and what they need to do to improve. In theory sessions the use of questioning techniques to check learners' knowledge and understanding is weak. Tutors do not rearrange furniture in classrooms to suit the range of teaching and learning activities they deliver or to enable learners to see demonstrations clearly. The centre is well resourced with a good supply of tools and consumable materials.
57. Assessment in the workplace is satisfactory. Assessors visit the workplace frequently, willing to fit in with the work patterns of a very mobile workforce. Assessment is mostly well planned. Assessors gather most evidence by observing learners at work. Learners do not keep diaries to help them reflect on the skills they have developed in their varied day to day tasks. This can sometimes slow progress towards NVQ achievement.
58. Information and communication technology (ICT) resources at the centre are inadequate. Too few computers are available to use in sessions and learners have insufficient access to ICT. This limits their opportunity to search websites for suitable work-placement or job opportunities. Jobsearch is not included in the learners' programme.
59. The range of the provision is satisfactory, but has reduced recently due to the lack of specialist staff. Learners wishing to work in other construction trades are directed to one of two local further education colleges or a large national provider that has a centre nearby. Links with schools are good. Currently 12 pupils from seven schools attend the centre. They develop construction skills and work towards a City & Guilds qualification. Some progress to apprenticeships. The centre is part of a 14-19 diploma consortium and aims to introduce the diploma in 2009.
60. Support for learners is satisfactory. Few have identified additional learning needs, but staff have a good understanding of learners' personal circumstances and provide effective support when needed. Support for literacy and numeracy is effective.

Leadership and management

61. Management of construction is satisfactory. Adequate numbers of well qualified staff train learners in the centre and visit them in the workplace. Staff have good industrial contacts and use these to help secure learner work-placements in an industry experiencing difficulties in the region. Subject learning coaches support staff well and provide up-to-date learning materials and resources.
62. The centre manager observes teaching staff and providers receive detailed feedback following observations. Internal verification is also satisfactory with constructive comments given about the assessment process and learners' portfolios. The provider is involved in the framework for excellence pilot and has carried out learner and employer satisfaction surveys through this initiative. Learners' feedback is generally positive and they particularly value the respect shown to them by staff.

63. The promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity is inadequate. Questions asked during progress reviews insufficiently check learners' understanding of their rights and responsibilities. Employers also remain present for the entire review, which does not allow learners time to discuss more confidential aspects of their training openly. Learners are not always aware of who to contact if they feel they have been unfairly treated although none of those interviewed have felt the need to speak to anyone. All staff in contact with learners have appropriate Criminal Records Bureau checks.
64. The self-assessment report did not include key areas for improvement such as the slow progress of apprentices or the lack of work-placements.

Arts, media and publishing

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

65. SBC has 69 courses available; 12 in art; 24 in craft; nine in DIY, eight in creative media; four in dance; seven in music, five in flower arranging and one accredited course in silversmithing. Currently 852 learners are enrolled; 30% are male, 7% are from minority ethnic backgrounds and 22% are eligible for fee remittance. The age range of the learners includes 3% under the age of 25 and 28% over the age of 65. Courses take place in the two main adult learning centres, and in community centres, primary and secondary schools throughout the borough. Courses are available in the morning, afternoon, and evening. A full-time sector subject area manager and a part-time subject leader manage the area, and 22 part-time tutors teach between two and eight hours a week.

Strengths

- Good standard of learners work
- Good teaching and learning in craft and media studies
- Interesting and varied range of provision
- Good resources

Areas for improvement

- Insufficiently challenging targets
- Inadequate pre-course information
- Insufficiently thorough quality improvement arrangements

Achievement and standards

66. The standard of learners work is good, as identified in the self-assessment report. For example, learners on card making courses are accepting commissions to make cards for family and friends. In DIY sessions learners are making a full size rocking horse to a very high standard. Learners are highly motivated and many consider sessions to be the highlight of their week. Many complete extra work, such as researching projects or practising their craft or computer skills, at home. In some areas, such as craft, the development of learners' skills and techniques is good. New learners acquire skills and techniques quickly. They share experiences in discussions with other members of the group. Retention and attendance are broadly satisfactory. Retention rates have fluctuated over the last three years. In 2007/08, retention rates dropped to 94% from 97% in 2006/07.

Quality of provision

67. Teaching and learning are good in craft and media studies. These make up around 60% of the curriculum offer. Craft tutors have extensive specialist knowledge and are skilled in promoting learning. They bring their experience directly into the class, where learners benefit from their knowledge of current methods. These tutors have high expectations of their learners and sessions are vibrant and challenging. They set goals which stretch the learners and further develop skills using activities that are well planned, interesting and challenging. Group visits to craft fairs and exhibitions enrich learning. Learners on the photography course organise group walks independent of the programme. They take photographs which they use in future sessions. Learners recognise the progress they make

and enjoy engaging at a higher level. However, in the satisfactory and inadequate sessions, tutors insufficiently challenge learners to improve their skills. In art sessions learners are not encouraged to keep sketch books or practise their skills at home. Learners lack confidence and do not attempt new techniques. Some learners make insufficient progress.

68. Tutors do not set or use challenging targets to encourage learners to improve their skills and to progress to higher levels. Some tutors do not use the service's RARPA processes effectively. Tutors are encouraged to use different formats for recording learner progress and achievement which are appropriate to the learning. However, these processes are insufficiently thorough. Tutors do not use individual learning plans consistently to develop programmes or plan sessions. Most sessions include beginner, intermediate and advanced learners; many attend sessions for between five and ten years without making sufficient progress.
69. The service provides a good range of provision. Subjects are interesting and varied and include silversmithing, stained glass, embroidery, creative, Photoshop, belly dancing, and rocking horse making. Courses are available throughout the borough in the morning, afternoon and evening.
70. Insufficient pre-course information leaves some learners confused by course titles. The prospectus contains inadequate course descriptions and information. Central guidance staff available by telephone are often unable to provide additional information. No estimate of costs for equipment or materials is provided and some learners find this to be expensive after enrolment. SAES has not identified inadequate pre-course information as an area for improvement. Support for learners is satisfactory.

Leadership and management

71. Resources are good, with well equipped studios for two and three dimensional work. These rooms are dedicated spaces for art and craft with good lighting, interesting displays, storage cupboards and fit for purpose furniture including large cutting out tables in the sewing room. Woodwork tools and machinery are of a good standard, and enable learners to complete their work to a high standard. The sewing course has new up to date sewing machines, and in the silversmithing sessions the learners can take advantage of bulk purchase prices for equipment they will require to continue the course. Staff development is satisfactory as is the promotion of equality and diversity.
72. Quality improvement arrangements are insufficiently thorough. Monitoring of the quality of provision is ineffective. The draft quality improvement action plans do not contain specific targets to drive forward improvements. The use of management information and data has been insufficiently effective in improving teaching and learning. Observations of teaching and learning, though carried out regularly, are not comprehensive or evaluative. Grades are very different from inspection findings. Sharing of good practice is insufficient. Tutors meet twice yearly at meetings largely used for sharing information. Tutors in the same subject areas do not meet; many opportunities for sharing good practice are missed.
73. The self-assessment report in this area is insufficiently evaluative. Key strengths and areas of improvement have not been identified.

Languages, literature and culture

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

74. Currently 397 learners attend 34 courses in eight languages; lip reading, creative writing and advanced ESOL. All sessions take place once a week, for two hours, at nine venues across the borough. Over half the sessions take place in the evening. Approximately 75% of the courses lead to qualifications, at entry level or at levels 1 and 2 in languages and at level 3 and above in ESOL. Higher level but non-accredited courses are provided in four languages. A part-time subject leader manages the area and 16 tutors on either fractional or sessional contracts deliver the courses.

Strengths

- Good internal communication
- Responsive provision which meets the needs of learners and local employers well

Areas for improvement

- Low retention and success rates on further education accredited courses
- Insufficient pre-course information and guidance
- Ineffective self-assessment to bring about improvement

Achievement and standards

75. The retention and success rates of learners on further education courses declined from 92% in 2005/06, to 70% in 2007/08. Around three quarters of the learners are on these courses and recruitment is increasing. In 2007/08 the number of learners on accredited courses increased by 22%. For those who completed their courses in 2007/08 the achievement rate was good at 4% above the national average. The success rate of learners on accredited provision has also fallen and in 2007/08 was nine percentage points below the national average. Success rates on British sign language courses, a fifth of the provision, are low.
76. For courses which do not lead to a qualification, success rates are satisfactory. However, the method of calculating and recording success on these courses is not yet fully established within the subject area.
77. Learners demonstrate a satisfactory level of attainment and increase their confidence in understanding and speaking in the foreign language. They also improve their information technology skills. Progression to higher level courses is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

78. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, this was identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. Many tutors are native speakers of the language they teach and all are skilled linguists. Many tutors use a range of lively teaching strategies to motivate learners. Learners appreciate the relaxed yet purposeful atmosphere created by tutors and their sympathetic correction of language mistakes. Learners complete most of the tasks successfully with accuracy, fluency and pronunciation at an appropriate level. Most sessions are well planned but tutors do not always take into account the results of initial assessment in planning for the different levels and abilities of learners. In some sessions, particularly at beginners' level, tutors use too much English, which limits the opportunities for learners to progress. Resources are generally good and specialist equipment and accommodation are of a satisfactory standard. Tutors make increased use of information and learning technology. The virtual learning environment for languages is well developed. Many learners use it to reinforce what they have learnt in sessions or to help them catch up after absences. Audio and visual materials sourced from the internet provide good opportunities for learners to hear and see native speakers to improve their listening and speaking skills.
79. The provision is responsive and meets the needs of learners and local employers well. SAES responds very positively to requests in developing course provision from a wide range of partners including existing learners, community centre staff, local employers and agencies such as the youth service. The area has successful links with employers, and has provided courses for four companies as well as the prison service and a sheltered housing organisation. Employer feedback about the flexibility and reliability of the service and the

acquisition of language skills is positive. The current range of languages offered, Arabic, British Sign Language, French, German, Greek, Italian, Spanish and Urdu, is satisfactory. In all of these except Urdu, opportunities exist to progress above beginners' level. The number of learners who would not normally consider studying a language has increased.

80. Pre-course information and guidance are insufficient. This was not identified in the self-assessment report. Learners are dissatisfied with enrolment processes, particularly online processes. Course costs are not included in course information sheets and the brochure containing the choice of courses is not available soon enough. The council cancelled one course without informing learners in advance. Learners are not always aware that courses lead to a qualification or that work outside the classroom will be required. Many do not take the examination or withdraw from the course. Some sessions are reclassified from non-accredited to examination courses to maximise funding. Tutors support their learners well in sessions.

Leadership and management

81. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communication between managers and tutors is good. All tutors work part-time for the service but frequent and effective communication is achieved by the use of area meetings, CDs, email and online access to the virtual learning platform. Staff use the virtual learning environment well to share good practice within the service, across the region and with other providers. Assessment practices for non-accredited courses are incomplete. Most learners have individual learning plans with targets but many are too vague and difficult to measure. The newly appointed subject leader has introduced new RARPA procedures and trained staff in their use but it is too soon to measure their affect. For accredited courses the subject leader is carrying out the standardisation of levels of courses and common assessment materials.
82. Observations of teaching by specialist observers take place in accordance with the council's policy. Comments are appropriate and action plans are developed. However, tutor development does not always focus on the major improvements identified during observations and there is too much satisfactory teaching. SAES has invested considerable time in training tutors to use information technology equipment and this has resulted in an increase in its use.
83. Language sessions have topics which cover many of the five aspects of the *Every Child Matters* agenda and learners feel safe when attending sessions. Materials used reflect the cultural diversity of countries where the taught language is spoken and encourage discussion on equality of opportunity.
84. Managers have not used self-assessment processes effectively to identify areas for improvement or to improve the provision. Contributions from staff and learners are included in the self-assessment report. However, data contained within it is not reliable. SAES has overstated some of the good aspects of the provision and not identified the areas for improvement.

Preparation for life and work

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

85. SBC delivers 47 literacy or numeracy and 11 ESOL courses from pre-entry to level 2. Currently 299 learners are enrolled, 42 of these are on ESOL courses. Some learners attend more than one, two hour sessions each week. Most ESOL courses and approximately half the literacy and numeracy courses lead to accredited qualifications. A curriculum manager supported by an ESOL subject leader and 23 part-time tutors manage skills for life.
86. E2E provision is managed by a contract manager supported by three key workers and a skills for life tutor. Stockton Youth Service subcontracts some provision which it delivers from a youth centre. Learners normally attend full-time for a minimum of 30 hours per week and are offered placement opportunities with local employers. Currently 35 learners are enrolled.

Strengths

- Good progression in ESOL
- Good development of personal and work related skills in E2E
- Good actions to widen participation in skills for life

Areas for improvement

- Declining success rates in skills for life non-accredited provision
- Insufficiently thorough system to set targets and monitor progress
- Insufficiently wide use of resources in skills for life

Achievement and standards

87. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. In 2007/08 retention rates varied between 82% and 89% for all programmes.
88. In accredited skills for life provision 95% of learners achieved a qualification in literacy or numeracy. Retention rates dropped by 5% on literacy and numeracy programmes between 2006/07 and 2007/08. Success rates in skills for life are declining as identified in the self-assessment report. Success rates for learners on non-accredited literacy and numeracy sessions fell from 81% in 2005/06, to 57% in 2007/08, and on accredited courses success rates reduced by 4%. Progression of learners on literacy and numeracy courses to higher level or accredited courses is satisfactory.
89. Progression rates for ESOL learners are good at 65% in 2007/08, as identified in the self-assessment report. Success rates, while satisfactory, have declined on accredited ESOL provision, by 9% since 2006. Learners' success rates on non-accredited provision are good.
90. E2E learners develop good personal and work-based skills and gain in confidence and motivation. They are able to apply new skills such as team working and research to plan activities and trips. Progression rates in E2E are low. During 2007/08, 51% of learners

progressed onto further education, apprenticeships or employment. However, an improvement has occurred in the current year. Monitoring of learner progress is more regular and further development of progression links with providers of further education and employers has taken place.

Quality of provision

91. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Tutors produce clear and detailed session plans. Better sessions are well paced, have focus and include a good range of learning methods and resources. However, in skills for life too many sessions are satisfactory or inadequate. In these sessions the focus on individual learning needs and objectives is insufficient. Tutors do not adequately differentiate their teaching. The self-assessment report did not identify this. Learning venues and rooms are satisfactory.
92. Initial assessment is satisfactory. Appropriate methods and materials establish levels of learners' current skills. Diagnostic assessment appropriately identifies more specific needs. Tutors consider information and risk assessments from care staff for learners with learning difficulties when planning learning programmes.
93. Systems to set targets and monitor progress are insufficiently thorough. SBC did not identify this area for improvement in the self-assessment report. In E2E target-setting is poor. Targets are insufficiently specific or measurable and not well used to plan learning. Tutors review the general progress of E2E learners but do not evaluate what learning has been achieved or identify specific areas for improvement. In skills for life target-setting is satisfactory. However, some targets lack challenge and relevance to the wider needs of learners. Measurement and recording of progress towards learners' individual objectives is insufficient. Skills for life tutors give insufficient consideration to whether learners' skills are emerging, established, consolidated or being maintained. Records of learners work are insufficiently reflective or evaluative.
94. Skills for life tutors use a narrow range of learning resources. In most sessions learners use non-differentiated worksheets and the use of information and learning technology is insufficient. The provider identified this during self-assessment. Where information and learning technology is used it does not add value to learning. Some tutors miss opportunities to reinforce learning with tactile resources and real life objects.
95. Actions to widen provision are good in skills for life. Planning and delivery of ESOL provision is very responsive to needs of local people. Community based provision is in accessible familiar venues. Learners benefit from a good range of courses at different levels. Links with community organisations and employers are effective in widening provision. Pilot projects to embed skills for life in other subject areas are underway.
96. Support for learners is satisfactory overall. Support and guidance for E2E learners are good and particularly good systems for monitoring these learners are in place. Tutors use the candidate history log, case meetings and a 'traffic light system' well to highlight issues of concern such as attendance and behaviour. They use 'observation of on-the-job progress' records effectively to monitor learners' general progress on placement. A Connexions adviser visits the centre weekly and a wide range of agencies provide advice on sexual health, housing or alcohol misuse. At the youth centre, learners have a laundrette and shower facilities and make good use of a breakfast club.
97. Support for learners on skills for life is satisfactory. Information, advice and guidance staff are supportive and encourage learners to progress. Volunteers are used appropriately in

mixed ability sessions. A dedicated dyslexia tutor is effective in raising awareness and gives good individual support when a need is identified. Appropriate arrangements are in place to access specialist equipment.

Leadership and management

98. Leadership and management are satisfactory. All staff have appropriate qualifications and experience. The skills for life team have clear roles and responsibilities. Communication with tutors is satisfactory through regular meetings and electronic means.
99. Promotion of equality of opportunity and diversity is satisfactory. Arrangements for safeguarding vulnerable adults and young people are satisfactory. ESOL focuses strongly on cultural awareness. A Holocaust project gives E2E learners' excellent awareness of cultural and religious issues.
100. Data is poorly used to monitor or improve the quality and performance of skills for life provision. Appropriate targets are set to improve achievement and retention. However, implementation of quality improvement actions for literacy and numeracy has been slow. Managers review improvement targets for the E2E programme regularly. E2E managers effectively capture the views of learners and use this information well to develop the provision. The observation of teaching and learning system is insufficiently accurate and many sessions were graded too highly.
101. The self-assessment process is satisfactorily inclusive and uses relevant information and records from tutors. The E2E self-assessment report is inaccurate in some places and insufficiently judgemental. In skills for life the report partially identified the areas for improvement needed. Both areas claimed too many strengths for practices which are only satisfactory.

Business, administration and law

Good: Grade 2

Context

102. Currently 65 learners are enrolled on administration courses. Work-based learning programmes have 20 advanced apprentices, 31 apprentices and seven Train to Gain adult learners. Training takes place at one main centre in Stockton. A lead training officer manages the apprenticeship provision, with two full-time and one part-time trainer/assessors. A service manager is responsible for all apprenticeship programmes. The Adult Education Service has 11 learners on NVQs at levels 2 and 3. A curriculum manager oversees the Train to Gain and adult learners. A part-time NVQ co-ordinator, a full-time assessor and a part-time internal verifier complete the training team. Train to Gain and adult learners receive individual tuition in their workplaces.

Strengths

- High success rates
- Thorough monitoring of learner progress
- Good support for learners

Areas for improvement

- Action to further improve the provision

Achievement and standards

103. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates are high; 80% of advanced apprentices and 78% of apprentices successfully completed their frameworks within the agreed timescale in 2007/08. This is a significant improvement over the previous two years. Retention is good as is progression. In 2007/08, 86% of learners went on to higher-level qualifications, employment or full-time education. The success rate of adult learners on accredited provision has improved to 66% but is low.

Quality of provision

104. The overall quality of the provision is good. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with satisfactory assessment, coaching and individual tutorials. Resources for teaching are satisfactory including access to teaching rooms. Schemes of work, textbooks and supporting training materials are used well. All portfolios contain a satisfactory range of evidence with some examples of good assessment practice.

105. The monitoring of learners' progress is good. Trainers, employers and learners have productive working relationships. Reviews are well planned. Employers prepare effectively for the reviews by assessing learner's progress in the workplace and their personal development and recording this on the employer's review sheet. Learners assess their own progress and personal development and this is discussed at the review. Target-setting is good. Assessors set short-term targets for learners to achieve between reviews and training sessions. Learning plans contain long- and mid-range targets for the completion of qualifications or units within them.

106. SBC meets the needs and interests of learners adequately. The qualifications on offer meet the needs of learners and employers, the standard of workplaces is good, and many learners are promoted. Learners are able to progress from level 2 to level 3. However, opportunities for learners to take more specialised administration qualifications, such as medical or legal secretaries, are not available. Some learners who attend formal meetings and take minutes as part of their job are insufficiently prepared.
107. Support for learners is good. Initial advice and guidance and initial assessment are thorough. Learners' needs and abilities are well matched to their jobs and work-placements. A diagnostic assessment for literacy and numeracy correctly identifies specific areas in which learners require additional help. Tutors incorporate this support into the learners' individual training programmes. Numeracy is incorporated into practical activities in some sessions. A vocational skills scan is included in the learners' initial assessment. Tutors use the outcomes of this to plan each learner's individual learning programmes. These include basic training in aspects of office work to familiarise learners with their working environment. Learners' assessment plans are adjusted to take into account learning styles and assessment preferences. Adjustments are made to meeting times and help given with transport to ensure all learners receive the full benefits of the training scheme. One learner with particular health needs has a sheltered work-placement, and receives timely reminders of planned visits, short assessments and supported use of computers. Learners receive employment related support, including interview practise, and support in preparing curriculum vitae and completing application forms. *Every Child Matters* themes are established in schemes of work. Guest speakers enrich the learning experience by delivering topics such as drug awareness, pregnancy and alcohol misuse. Employers are supportive to their learners, many providing a quiet room or area and time for studying when needed.

Leadership and management

108. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The staff team works well and productively together. Managers and staff have regular informative meetings and closely monitor learners' progress and achievement. External verification reports are positive. Arrangements for professional development are good. A formal annual appraisal and a six-month review identify areas for development and monitors progress. Collaboration across the council and with other agencies is good.
109. The availability of information learning technology is incomplete, with very little learning or support material available. SBC has identified this as an area for improvement. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Learners have a good understanding gained through their qualifications. However, questions asked during review are superficial and do not challenge learners or test their understanding of equality and diversity. Adaptive equipment is available including speaking computer software programmes. Staff are aware of how to access this help.
110. No clear strategy exists to improve or further develop the programme. For example, the observation of teaching and learning is not thorough. Too much satisfactory teaching exists with little improvement recorded. The self-assessment report is accurate in its grades but is insufficiently critical and strengths were overstated.

Family learning

Good: Grade 2

Context

111. Currently 1,259 learners are enrolled on family learning courses. Almost half are on accredited numeracy and literacy courses, and the others are on wider family learning and workshops. Men make up 12% of enrolments, 15% of learners are from minority ethnic groups, 10% are aged under 25, 15% are over 55 and 3% declare a disability. Courses take place in 40 venues and include daytime and twilight sessions with some held during the summer holidays and weekends. The team consists of a curriculum manager, subject leader, outreach worker and eight part-time tutors who teach between 2 and 14 hours per week. Most courses run for 10 weeks, but some last up to 20 weeks. Courses include family numeracy and literacy, computers together, digital media and healthy eating. Programmes recruit throughout the year. Between September and November 2008, 264 learners were enrolled.

Strengths

- Outstanding achievement of personal and parenting skills
- Good teaching and learning
- Effective provision to meet the needs of the community
- Good partnership support
- Successful initiatives to widen of participation

Areas for improvement

- Some inadequate use of individual learning plans

Achievement and standards

112. Achievement and standards in family learning are outstanding. Learners' achievement of personal and parenting skills are outstanding. Learners understand that they are learning with their children to find out how their children learn. They build good portfolios of work and enter for accreditation during the course. The retention rate is 90% and almost all learners who complete courses successfully achieve the course outcomes or gain qualifications. Learners participate enthusiastically in debates, and gain confidence to speak in front of their peers and communicate more easily with their children. Learners gain self-esteem and discover the advantages of teamwork. The standard of learners' work is often exceptional. These learners, with little previous academic experience, have exceeded their own and their tutor's expectations.

Quality of provision

113. The quality of provision is good, as identified in the self-assessment report. Teaching and learning are good. On most courses initial assessment identifies learners' starting points. Tutors use well prepared and imaginative teaching strategies to meet learners' individual needs. These include appropriate methods to integrate learners from a wide range of backgrounds. In literacy and numeracy sessions, the exercises are relevant to learners' lives. Learners use learning diaries to map progress towards their goals and aims and tutors use the diaries to modify and develop courses to meet learner needs.

Challenging assignments and clear feedback, given sensitively and regularly, motivate further learning. Adults and children work positively and constructively together. Tutors facilitate group learning, including joint problem-solving, and some learners continue to learn independently at home.

114. The use of individual learning plans is inadequate in some sessions. Some individual learning plans record learners' aims and objectives well, but often they are sparse in content and do not aid the progress of learners. Managers check the quality and use of individual learning plans during lesson observations. While observations are detailed and provide constructive feedback they are insufficiently frequent and managers do not follow up actions for improvement within a reasonable timescale. The RARPA process is used in conjunction with the individual learning plans in all non-accredited courses but is insufficiently thorough.

115. SBC meets the needs and interests of learners well. Effective provision meets the needs of the community. The broad range of courses is flexible and learner-led in content. The service responds quickly to learners' requests for further and different courses. Many parents who have had negative experiences of their own schooldays are joining courses and gaining qualifications for the first time in their lives. They now see the benefit of

learning alongside their own children in a welcoming, non-threatening environment and join in inspirational visits to, for instance, the pantomime, the Beamish museum and Butterfly World.

116. Learners are well supported. Primary schools have a family learning consultant to meet parents face-to-face, encourage their participation in their children's learning and enrol them on courses quickly and efficiently. Parents receive an easy-to-follow, comprehensive, attractive brochure. Language support is strong for those whose first language is not English. Attendance is recorded and tutors communicate with learners regularly. Tutors from other sector subject areas provide informal advice and guidance on further courses. Courses are free. Volunteer support workers assist tutors where learners' needs are diverse such as in ESOL sessions.

Leadership and management

117. Leadership and management are good, as identified in the self-assessment report. Partnerships provide good support for family learning. The team works closely with the extended schools team, primary and secondary schools and children's centres. Head teachers recognise the contribution of family learning in improving children's behaviour, increasing the communities' pride shown in the school and breaking down the barriers to learning. The Drug Education team and Drinkwiser work with secondary school students. Well-planned team meetings and tutor development sessions improve the quality of the provision. A tutors' network, including other providers such as Darlington and Redcar, meets regularly to share good practice.
118. Initiatives to widen participation are successful. Learners of all backgrounds and age ranges take part in courses. Enrolments of hard to reach learners have improved by 56% in 2007/08. The proportion of male learners is high and further developments including a weekend 'Dads and Lads' computer course are planned. Fathers welcome the opportunity to be a good role model for their children who often do not live with them. Equality of opportunity is an integral part of family learning, showing mutual respect and threading aspects of inclusion throughout the management, co-ordination and delivery of learning. Family learning groups in schools celebrate festivals and special occasions for all, for instance, Halloween, Eid, Diwali and Christmas.
119. Resources are good. Some schools have separate, well equipped rooms for family learning with adult sized furniture and a good range of materials available. Centres, conveniently located so that learners can easily walk to sessions, have become an integral part of their communities. All centres have good access. Curriculum planning is effective. All schemes of work and lesson plans are referenced to the *Every Child Matters* criteria.
120. The self-assessment report is detailed but judgements are not always supported by sufficient evidence. The inspection findings are in broad agreement with the written judgements in the report but not the grade.

Learners' achievements

Learners' achievements in further education funded, accredited provision offered by adult and community learning providers

Success rates on accredited entry and level 1 (combined) and level 2 qualifications, by length, expected end year and age from **2006** to **2007**, compared with the national rates for GFE colleges.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	19+			
		Starts – Transfers	Provider Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 long	2006/07	561	78.8	72	6.7
	2007/08*			N/A	
2 long	2006/07	190	71.1	69.5	1.6
	2007/08*			N/A	
Short**	2006/07	562	83.5	82.1	1.3
	2007/08*			N/A	

* ACL provider data not validated

** Courses over five weeks long

Success rates on **work-based learning apprenticeship programmes** managed by the provider **2004** to **2008**.

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider framework rate**	National framework rate**	
Advanced Apprenticeships	2004/05	overall	23	39	48	17	34	
		timely	19	21	31	11	22	
	2005/06	overall	27	74	74	53	22	44
		timely	26	50	34	19	27	
	2006/07	overall	44	77	77	64	50	58
		timely	34	46	40	33	57	
	2007/08#	overall	12				86	
		timely						
Apprenticeships	2004/05	overall	148	61	51	46	39	
		timely	139	27	29	20	22	
	2005/06	overall	195	54	58	50	52	
		timely	198	44	38	40	34	

Annex

	2006/07	overall	191	54	65	53	61
		timely	176	43	47	42	44
	2007/08#	Overall	76			50	
		timely	76				

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** Provider and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the Individual Learning Record

When available and validated by the LSC

Outcomes on **E2E programmes** managed by the provider **2005 to 2008**

Year	Number of leavers in the year	Achieved objectives rate* (%)	Progression rate** (%)
2005/06	83	38	45
2006/07	96	32	32
2007/08	97	47	47

* These are key objectives identified for each learner following an E2E programme

** Progression is measured in terms of learners' movement to further education, education and employment, during or at the end of their training period.

Note: E2E 'achieved objective' and 'progression' rates are calculated using data supplied to Ofsted by the provider before inspection

Success rates on **work-based learning Train to Gain NVQ programmes** managed by the provider **2006 to 2009**

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain NVQ	2006/07	overall	8	
		timely	3	
	2007/08	overall	60	72
		timely	46	70
	2008/09	overall	18	67
		timely	12	27

Note: 2008/09 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the first three months or greater of the LSC contract year

* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

** NVQ qualification success rates are calculated using data supplied to Ofsted by the provider before inspection