

North Lincolnshire Council

Inspection Date

26 September 2008

Inspection number

329357

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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:

- Early years and playwork
- ICT for users
- Arts, media and publishing
- Education and training
- Preparation for life and work
- Family learning

Description of the provider

1. North Lincolnshire Council (NLC) receives funding from Humberside LSC to provide adult and community learning. NLC holds contracts to provide further education, personal and community development learning, first steps, wider family learning and family literacy, language and numeracy. NLC subcontracts a small provision in employability to Mencap.
2. Currently the council has 2,491 learners on courses in adult and community learning. For the year 2007/08 NLC had 6074 enrolments on adult and community learning programmes, 52% of enrolments were on accredited provision. NLC provides courses in 12 of the 15 sector subject areas and family learning. During this inspection five sector subject areas and family learning were inspected and graded.
3. Adult and community learning is managed by the learning, schools and communities service area within the local authority. The head of the adult education service is supported by three adult education managers, and reports to the service director for learning, schools and communities.
4. NLC has an administration centre and provides learning programmes through a network of four main centres and 17 community-based venues located across North Lincolnshire.
5. North Lincolnshire has a population of 159,000. The area is mainly agricultural comprising small towns and villages and the substantial urban area of Scunthorpe and Bottesford. Some 3.71% of the population are from a minority ethnic background.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Inadequate: Grade 4
Capacity to improve	Inadequate: Grade 4
Achievement and standards	Inadequate: Grade 4
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Inadequate: Grade 4
Equality of opportunity	Inadequate: Grade 4

Sector subject areas

Early years and playwork	Satisfactory: Grade 3
ICT for users	Good: Grade 2
Arts, media and publishing	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Education and training	Inadequate: Grade 4
Preparation for life and work	Inadequate: Grade 4
Family learning	Inadequate: Grade 4

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Inadequate: Grade 4

6. The overall effectiveness of the provision is inadequate. Capacity to improve, leadership and management, equality of opportunity and achievement and standards are inadequate. Provision in preparation for life and work, education and training and family learning is inadequate. Overall the quality of provision is satisfactory as is provision in early years and playwork, and arts media and publishing. Information and communication technology (ICT) provision is good.

Capacity to improve

Inadequate: Grade 4

7. The service demonstrates an inadequate capacity to improve. Success rates have declined on accredited provision in many sector skills areas since the previous inspection. Grades awarded at inspection for leadership and management and equality of opportunity are lower than those awarded at the 2004 inspection.
8. The promotion of equality to learners remains poor. Some senior managers have insufficient understanding of the actions that should be taken and the diversity group has had little impact. The processes for recognising and recording progress and achievement have not been adequately implemented and the service does not monitor the impact of staff development or other activities.
9. At the time of the previous inspection, the weak quality assurance arrangements did not promote improvement. Some quality improvement processes have been implemented. The service is now part of a peer review group with other adult and community learning providers. No quality improvement manuals or documented processes exist. Management of the quality assurance processes and an understanding of the benefits that a systematic and effective quality assurance can bring to the service is insufficient. NLC has not yet identified the key processes that need to be quality assured.
10. All courses were audited in January 2008 but the results were not analysed or used to improve the quality of provision. Learner satisfaction surveys and other surveys may be analysed but the results are not used to devise an action plan to bring about improvements. Materials posted on the virtual learning environment are not quality assured.
11. The observation of teaching and learning is insufficiently thorough. Some sessions are given too high a grade. The system to moderate the observation grades is ineffective. Observers do not always focus sufficiently on the quality of teaching and learning as a basis for action-planning. No system is in place to ensure that tutors' action plans are monitored or actions completed. The service does not achieve its target of observing all staff.
12. The self-assessment is clearly written and presented but insufficiently accurate or judgemental, with too few judgements on leadership and management throughout the

report. Supporting evidence is not clearly signposted. Staff have insufficient understanding or awareness of the process of self-assessment. They are not able to contribute to it in a meaningful way.

13. The quality improvement plan is superficial and many actions have not been completed in a timely way. Monitoring of actions is insufficiently thorough. The service does not adequately evaluate the outcomes and effectiveness of its actions or report outcomes to appropriate groups.

Key strengths

- Open and supportive management
- Strong effective partnerships to widen participation

Key areas for improvement

- Low success rates
- Insufficient good or better teaching and learning
- Insufficiently thorough arrangements for the planning, monitoring and recording of individualised learning
- Weak management of the provision
- Underdeveloped strategy and development planning
- Inadequate management information
- Insufficient promotion and monitoring of equality of opportunity
- Inadequate quality improvement

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Inadequate: Grade 4

14. Achievement and standards are inadequate. The self-assessment report judged achievement and standards as satisfactory. Success rates on accredited programmes are low. Between 2005 and 2007 they declined in all curriculum areas except business administration and law. Success rates on preparation for life and work short courses are poor. The inspection team are not confident about the reliability of data on retention in all curriculum areas. However, retention is particularly good on ICT courses at around 95% and success rates are high.
15. On non-accredited courses the recording of learners' personal aims and monitoring of achievements is insufficiently thorough for the inspection team to use the data with confidence. On preparation for life and work provision, success rates were very low in 2006/07. NLC was not accurately recording that learners had achieved targets on non-accredited courses during the first two terms. Measures are now in place to resolve this and success rates are improving but still low. The recognising and recording of progress and achievement process is not well established, although it is starting to be used effectively in preparation for life and work, and ICT provision. Retention and achievement on all courses in family history are outstanding at 100%.
16. Generally learners develop a good range of skills and self-confidence. Learners on early years and playwork courses demonstrate particularly good acquisition of new skills and knowledge. On arts media and publishing courses, learners develop good technical and personal skills.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

17. Overall, the quality of provision at NLC is satisfactory, as recognised in the self-assessment report. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, although there is insufficient good or better teaching and learning. In the better teaching sessions, tutors use a good range of teaching techniques and strategies to engage the learners, to promote learning and to develop skills, and knowledge. Tutors encourage learners and help them to understand how they can apply their learning to their everyday lives. In non-accredited programmes recognising and recording progress and achievement is underdeveloped. In the less good sessions, tutors fail to fully motivate and engage with the learners, they do not clearly identify the aims and objectives. In some sessions, teachers spend too long giving presentations and learners are inactive. Only a minority of learners have effective individual learning plans.
18. Deployment and management of resources are satisfactory. Teaching staff are appropriately qualified. Formal assessment is satisfactory. Arrangements to identify additional learning needs for learners are satisfactory and in most cases, where needs are identified, the learners are offered effective support.

19. The range of programmes to meet learners' needs and interests is satisfactory. However, no clear strategic plans are in place to support the rationale for the choice of provision offered. Educational and social inclusion is satisfactory. The service works with a range of partners to provide learning opportunities in some communities with high levels of deprivation.
20. Guidance and support for learners and the provision of literacy, numeracy and language support is satisfactory. Good use is made of skills for life volunteers; these are required to achieve appropriate qualifications to assist them in this role. Volunteer 'befrienders' provide good individual support in other classes. NLC carries out appropriate checks of all volunteers. However, the service relies too heavily on the tutors to identify learners' support needs. The approach to initial assessment is not consistent across the whole provision. In non-accredited provision, too much reliance is placed on learners' disclosure of additional support needs.

Leadership and management

Inadequate: Grade 4

Equality of opportunity

Contributory Grade: Inadequate: Grade 4

21. Leadership and management are inadequate. The self-assessment report judged this as satisfactory. Since the previous inspection NLC has restructured its provision and has embarked on a programme of improvement. Some progress has been made, particularly with aspects which affect the viability of the service. Improvements include better financial management, a new management information system and a restructure of the service. Since April 2008, six curriculum managers have been in post and a new management structure implemented.
22. Management is open and supportive. They are responsive to staff needs and requests and support staff and learners well. Communications are good. Staff morale is good, with good opportunities for staff development. The management of health and safety is thorough and systematic with regular checks on all premises.
23. Strong and effective partnerships exist which successfully widen participation. Many partnerships are longstanding, but other more recent partnerships are also successful, such as that with Mencap. NLC staff are actively involved in a range of strategic and working groups, which share resources and practice. The service responds effectively to the needs of the community and local businesses. It has been particularly effective in attracting learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.
24. NLC consults learners regularly and a strong emphasis is placed on the learners' voice. The service responds promptly to learners' views and learners are kept informed about action taken.
25. Management of the provision is inadequate. New curriculum managers have received appropriate induction training and are well supported by managers. However, these new posts are yet to have an effect on curriculum leadership and management. It is not clear how the roles will function within the new structure. Management of staff, timetables and the courses offered are the responsibility of the adult education managers at centres,

not curriculum managers. The annual employee development review is supportive and focuses on the training and development needs of employees. However, too few performance related targets are in place in terms of learner enrolment, retention and achievement, and too few key actions agreed with the service managers.

26. Strategy and development planning is incomplete. As identified in the self-assessment report the service's strategic aims and objectives are outdated. No current strategic plan is in place. The current development plan is descriptive, yet contains insufficiently detailed actions, targets and milestones and has not yet been shared with staff. The skills for life strategy is underdeveloped and the associated development plan lacks targets.
27. The understanding and use of data is inadequate. A new management information system has recently been installed but as yet it is not widely used or understood by staff or managers. Arrangements for the collection of data have improved for 2008/09. Historical data relating to retention, achievement and success rates for 2006/07 is not accurate. Data is not well used to monitor retention, achievement and success rates. Attendance monitoring is inadequate and progression data is not collected systematically. Insufficient progress has been made to develop relevant reports and to train staff at all levels. NLC does not analyse the performance of different groups sufficiently. Performance management is inadequate. Managers do not effectively use data to set targets. Success rates on accredited courses declined significantly in 2006/07, but there was no coherent strategy for improving success rates and no targets for improvement in 2007/08. Key targets are those agreed with Humberside LSC for enrolment and these are not split into curriculum or centre enrolment targets.
28. Equality of opportunity is inadequate. Promotion and monitoring of equality of opportunity is insufficient. NLC does not analyse equality and diversity data. Actions to attract underrepresented groups are not part of a coherent strategy. The success of these actions is often not evaluated or consolidated through follow-up actions. The recently appointed marketing officer has used the management information system to analyse recruitment by gender, ethnicity and age and focus marketing efforts, but as yet this information has not been shared widely. Equality and diversity training including disability discrimination awareness takes place. Some is compulsory but records of attendance are not kept and no systematic process is in place to ensure that new staff are trained and all staff updated. The staff handbook and induction does not include equality and diversity. No learner handbook exists and the approach to equality of opportunity in the learner induction is not systematic. In the flagship buildings posters related to sexual orientation were removed from some classrooms as a result of learner complaints, with no attempt to use these complaints to challenge beliefs. The work of the diversity group is not evaluated.
29. Buildings and resources are of a high standard but some buildings are not yet fully accessible to all learners and no overall plan is in place for how access will be improved. The service has joint use of a number of buildings including Ashby link. This is a purpose built multi-use centre opened in 2000. Although the council recently approved plans for a new accessible entrance, the target date has not been met or revised and the entrance to the learning area and lifts are not accessible to all learners.
30. The procedures for safeguarding do not meet the current government requirements. Safeguarding training is available but is not compulsory for all staff. Attendance at

individual training sessions is recorded but no central record of attendance at the training exists. In accordance with council requirements, the service has made arrangements for appropriate vetting checks of all staff including support and caretaking staff. A central register exists and progress in carrying out checks is being monitored. Before this, vetting was prioritised for staff working with children and learners with learning difficulties and disabilities and the register was not complete. Some staff are not aware of the designated member of staff to whom they should refer incidents.

31. The arrangements for quality improvement are inadequate. Some features of an effective quality improvement system are in place but these are not applied systematically or effectively and do not successfully bring about improvement. The quality improvement plan and other action plans have insufficient targets and milestones. The monitoring of progress is not based on evidence and is insufficiently thorough. No central record of compliments and complaints exists. A complaint file is maintained in each centre and appropriate action is taken to respond to each complainant. However, complaints are not analysed or reported to the quality or management groups. Information from complaints is not used to lead to improvements.

What learners like:

- Fantastic tutors – very supportive
- ‘Learnt new things that I had no idea I didn’t know’
- ‘I was elated with my computer class. It gave me so much confidence that I enrolled on a beginners Italian course and a belly dancing course’
- ‘The atmosphere was very welcoming – within 10 minutes I felt like part of the group’
- Good to try new things
- Good feedback – useful comments on assignments
- ‘It was really quick to get on the course – everyone was really helpful’
- ‘I’ve gained more confidence’
- ‘I knew I wasn’t thick – now I’ve got a qualification – I didn’t get any at school’
- ‘It’s friendly here’

What learners think could improve:

- Poor lighting in some classrooms
- Better information about course demands and the amount of work
- Better co-ordination of the assignments briefs and the content of the sessions
- ‘I didn’t understand the virtual learning environment and think I missed out’
- Not enough coffee machines – ‘I spend too much time queuing at break time’
- There are too many in the class – ‘it’ll be better when some drop out’

Sector subject areas

Early years and playwork

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

32. NLC offers courses leading to a certificate at level 2 and a diploma at level 3 in pre-school practice. Currently 11 learners are on the second year of the diploma course. Learners attend classes on a weekly part-time basis. Classes are available either morning, afternoon or evening in one learning centre. In addition 18 learners are currently studying for the diploma in home-based childcare. This 11 week part-time course is run three times each year and completion of the qualification enables childminders to meet national requirements for registration. A full-time curriculum manager and four part-time tutors are responsible for all aspects of course delivery.

Strengths

- Very high success rates on two year diploma and certificate courses in pre-school practice
- Particularly good acquisition of new skills and knowledge

Areas for improvement

- Declining overall success rates
- Insufficient formal arrangements for quality assurance

Achievement and standards

33. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Success rates are very good for the diploma and certificate in pre-school practice two year course, having risen from 67% in 2006/07 to 92% in 2007/08. Retention of learners recruited to these courses in 2007/08 is 100%. However, overall success rates have declined from 93% in 2005/06 to 61% in 2006/07, and are particularly poor on the one year pre-school practice course at 33%. The service has recognised this as an area for improvement and has reviewed entry requirements and improved support arrangements for the one year course.

34. Learners demonstrate particularly good acquisition of new skills and knowledge. They effectively apply new learning when caring for children in the workplace. Learners are very sensitive to children's developmental needs and they use suitable language when discussing individual children. Learners' course work is good. Work is well presented in a logical order with appropriate references to theory and legislation. Learners are creative and imaginative when completing tasks. Learners make good use of research techniques, particularly in relation to understanding race legislation and issues relating to prejudice, discrimination and bias. Many learners have acquired useful ICT skills. The attendance of learners is good and all learners currently on programme are making satisfactory progress towards completing their qualification.

Quality of provision

35. Overall the quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Textbooks are sufficiently up to date, some of which learners are able to borrow. Handouts are of good quality and are regularly updated to ensure they reflect best practice in childcare. Classrooms are spacious, very well maintained and equipped with computers. Good examples of student's work and information are on display in all teaching areas. Most lesson plans and schemes of work are good, and are linked, where appropriate to *Every Child Matters* themes. However, some indicate a narrow range of teaching styles and do not detail how learning will be assessed. Tutors reflect on each session and complete an evaluation with recommendations for improvement. Learners' work is marked promptly and tutors give constructive feedback.
36. Initial assessment is satisfactory. All learners are on an appropriate level of course. A detailed analysis of existing skills and knowledge is carried out during induction and gaps in knowledge identified. A discussion takes place with learners to ascertain if they meet the requirement for literacy skills at level 2. Until this academic year, the arrangements for the provision of skills for life support were inadequate. Learners who did not meet the entry criteria were advised to contact the service skills for life tutors. Appropriate arrangements have now been implemented and it is compulsory for learners who do not meet the criteria to work towards a formal level two literacy qualification.
37. The provision satisfactorily meets the needs and interests of learners. All courses lead to formal qualifications that meet legislative requirements for employment in childcare. Courses are offered at times which suit learners. However, they are only available at one centre. No introductory courses exist to assist learners to reach the required entry standards for level 2. All learners are either employed or on work placement in appropriate workplace settings such as nurseries. Work placements have not been regularly monitored. However, a new system is in place and all workplaces will now be monitored annually.
38. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Induction for all learners is comprehensive and includes details of the course structure and how the course is planned, good study guides and information on equality and diversity. All learners have to obtain appropriate vetting checks before starting the course. The twice termly tutorials are used productively to set targets, provide information, advice and guidance and discuss any barriers to learning which may have arisen. The opportunity is not taken in tutorials to record any additional qualifications learners may have taken or improved confidence, self-esteem and communication skills. Learners are clearly advised on career and educational progression opportunities.

Leadership and management

39. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Regular, well attended, staff meetings focus on improving the quality of the provision for the benefit of the learners. Staff development is satisfactory. New staff are allocated a mentor and their performance is closely monitored until they reach the required standard.
40. The formal arrangements for quality assurance are insufficient. Although managers have clear ideas on how the provision can be improved, they have not developed a quality improvement plan to guide them. The annual observation of teaching and learning by

experienced and well trained staff leads to the identification of areas for development. However, no arrangements are in place to ensure that improvements are implemented. The quality of learners' records such as tutorials and initial assessment is too variable. Lesson plans and schemes of work vary in quality. The self-assessment report contained insufficient judgements. All learners have a good understanding of equality of opportunity and the subject is integral to most teaching sessions.

ICT for users

Good: Grade 2

Context

41. During 2007/08, 1,145 learners enrolled on 84 courses. Of these, 31% are male, 1% are from minority ethnic communities, 62% are over 55 years of age and 1% declare a disability. Currently 99 learners are enrolled on six classes. Courses range from 10 to 36 weeks duration, sessions range from two to six hours. Courses run mainly during the daytime. Just under half of the provision is non-accredited. In addition to office software applications, courses are offered in a range of digital media. Accredited courses are provided at levels 1, 2 and 3. Sessions take place at the service's four centres. However, some provision is offered at employees' premises. The courses are provided by one full-time, 10 part-time and four hourly paid tutors. A full time curriculum manager is responsible for the provision.

Strengths

- High retention rates
- Good teaching and learning
- Good range of additional support for learners

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient use of data to evaluate provision
- Incomplete quality assurance arrangements

Achievement and standards

42. Achievement and standards are good. Retention rates are high on all courses. Overall retention rates in each of the last three years were 94%. On non-accredited courses, retention rates have risen to 97% in 2007/08. On accredited courses, they fell to 91% in 2007/08. However, the proportion of longer courses was much greater than in previous years.
43. Success rates on accredited courses fell from 81% in 2005/06 to 74% in 2006/07 and are now satisfactory. For non-accredited courses, historical records of learners' achievements are not sufficient to allow a thorough judgement. Current learners produce a good standard of work and make good progress in lessons.
44. Progression from beginners' classes to the second stage is good. Progression on to the next stage is satisfactory. Some learners complete a number of i-media courses to extend their range of skills. Attendance at lessons is satisfactory. A good system is in place to follow up unexplained absence.

Quality of provision

45. Overall the quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Tutors give clear instructions, highlighting general principles rather than mechanical steps to follow.

Demonstrations of software procedures are good, making appropriate use of the data projectors found in most classrooms. Lessons are well-planned and evaluated. Workshops are well-prepared with individualised learning. Tutors use a wide range of teaching methods including discovery learning. Tutors are knowledgeable and enthusiastic. They make good use of question and answer sessions both to check and to develop learning. They only take control of learners' computers in extreme situations. Learners are quickly able to use software packages. However, in some sessions quicker learners finish their tasks and have to wait for the next tutor presentation before they can continue. Paperwork for recognising and recording progress and achievement is now in place. Learners self-assess effectively against specific learning outcomes at the start of a course. Last year, tutors assessed and recorded learners' progress against individual outcomes.

46. Provision satisfactorily meets the needs and interests of learners. The range of courses is satisfactory. Managers adjust the programme well in response to learners' needs. Tutors respond to learners' requests for future courses. A short 'fun with photos' course was run in response to learners' feedback. Learners are able to choose the units they study in computer literacy and information technology (CLAIT) classes.
47. Guidance and support for learners are good. A good range of additional support for learners is available. Tutors have good knowledge of their learners' needs and the resources available to support those needs. The support is wide-ranging and includes large keyboards and tracker balls, specialist chairs and tables for learners with a range of disabilities. Provision of a specialist software package enabled a learner with 5% vision to pass CLAIT. Tutors have a good knowledge of how to adjust computers to make them as easily viewable as possible for learners with less severe visual impairments. Where there are learners with additional needs in class, second tutors and befrienders provide additional support. Learners with literacy and/or numeracy needs are referred to the skills for life team.

Leadership and management

48. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communication between tutors is good. Good practice is shared at regular meetings, where moving forward is a regular item for discussion. Tutors are in frequent contact with one another and provide mutual help and advice. Well-qualified, experienced and enthusiastic tutors attend a good range of continuing professional development activities. Resources are satisfactory. Bright, airy rooms are well-arranged and furnished. Much of the ICT equipment is good. Where there are deficiencies, these are known and plans exist to overcome them.
49. Data is not used sufficiently to evaluate the provision. Management information is not used to analyse learners' performance by gender, age or ethnicity. The decline in success rates from 2005/06 to 2006/07 was identified and some management action was taken. However, the success data for 2007/08 is currently incomplete so that no judgement is possible on the effectiveness of this action.
50. Quality assurance arrangements are incomplete. Tutors are insufficiently involved in the self-assessment process. The self-assessment report contains some inaccuracies. Retention, achievement and success data for accredited courses are not aggregated making judgements very difficult. Strengths and areas for improvement did not match

those found at inspection. Observations of teaching and learning do not focus sufficiently on the quality of learning taking place. Records of observations are too generic. They include insufficient actions for improvement, and any actions identified are not followed up.

Arts, media and publishing

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

51. NLC offers non-accredited and accredited provision from beginner through to advanced level. Currently 43 non-vocational and nine vocational courses are available, with thirty four learners currently attending accredited courses and 736 learners on non-accredited courses. Some 14% of the learners have a recorded disability and 7% have recorded a learning difficulty. The range of courses provided includes art in all mediums, lace making, embroidery, sewing, calligraphy, creative cards, parchment craft, pottery and porcelain painting. The provision is in four adult education centres and five community centres spread geographically through North Lincolnshire. Staff include two full-time tutors and fourteen part-time tutors.

Strengths

- Good development of technical and personal skills
- Very good resources for teaching
- Good support for learners

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient development of learners' creative skills
- Insufficient focus on managing key processes

Achievement and standards

52. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. The provision enables good development of learners' technical and personal skills. Learners demonstrate good attainment of skills in their practical work. They handle a range of media and control a range of visual techniques confidently. On accredited programmes standards are at the level required to achieve the qualification. Learners gain additional knowledge and understanding from attending trips and visits organised by tutors to craft fairs and art exhibitions. Learners enjoy these trips and benefit from the visits. Learners fund these activities by organising and running raffles each week. The new exhibition and sales area 'Venture' is proving a success with learners who exhibit and sell their work. This also helps to build learners' confidence. Retention, achievement and attendance on non-accredited and accredited courses are satisfactory.

53. Little encouragement is shown for learners to explore ideas development through a range of media and processes. Visual art learners are not routinely encouraged to maintain sketchbooks or scrap books for developing ideas. Other than in rare exceptions, learners do not experiment with a diverse range of primary and secondary research, or technology, to explore and refine creative concepts when working on personal projects. Learners are not challenged sufficiently in some classes where groups have been established for a long period and are repeating exercises they have already covered.

Quality of provision

54. The quality of provision is satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Tutors use demonstrations well to encourage interaction with the learners. They use effective techniques and give good advice to help the learners develop. Tutors provide good clear handouts in all lessons. Most sessions are well planned and managed.
55. Teaching resources are very good. Large classrooms are fit for the practical activity taking place. All rooms have storage facilities. Sewing equipment and machinery is of an acceptable current standard. Two of the sewing machines had been specially adapted for people with physical difficulties. The learners have access to ICT in each classroom. However, not all staff at the centres are aware of the range of resources available.
56. The provision satisfactorily meets the needs and interests of the learners. Classes are available throughout the day and evening. They run for 10 weeks with a good geographical spread across the area. Progression is available from non-vocational to vocational courses and the lace making course has a progression route with a local college. However, most sessions contain learners of mixed ability.
57. Guidance and support for learners are good. The befriender system works well with volunteers working alongside the tutor in most classes. Learners are well supported by the tutors. Tutors provide specialist equipment on loan and can provide materials at discount prices for learners to purchase. Learners are also encouraged to support each other. All the tutors have a good knowledge of the learners' needs and use observation sensitively. Specialists give good advice and guidance at enrolment.

Leadership and management

58. Leadership and management are inadequate. The focus on managing key processes is insufficient. Systems for recognising and recording progress and achievement are not used or fully understood by all tutors. Some tutors have not attended key meetings covering recognising and recording progress and achievement. Individual learning plans are not used to plan each learner's progress. Learners do not understand or value their individual learning plans. Many learners do not complete an initial assessment. Tutors have no prior knowledge of many new learners.
59. Opportunities for tutors to share good practice are insufficient, as recognised in the self-assessment. A system for the observation of teaching and learning is in place but it is not thorough, and does not clearly identify areas for improvement. Few observations of learning have been completed and the grades awarded are too high. Actions to raise standards are insufficiently planned or recorded. All tutors are appropriately qualified but too few opportunities exist for staff development.
60. Equal opportunities data is not analysed. No action is planned to attract groups of learners whose participation on the courses is low. Currently few learners are male or from minority ethnic groups. Equality of opportunity is not well covered during learners' inductions. Tutors are not familiar with procedures for safeguarding.
61. The self-assessment report is broadly accurate but contains insufficient detail. Some tutors were not involved in the self-assessment process.

Education and training

Inadequate: Grade 4

Context

62. NLC offers certificate for teaching assistants at level 2 and 3, certificate for learner support at level 2, prepare to teach in the lifelong learning sector and certificate in delivering learning at level 3. At the time of inspection one course had started. Currently 15 learners are enrolled on this course, which start when viable numbers are recruited. Recruitment of learners is from a range of community organisations including the NLC. Staff include three full-time and four part-time tutors, two of these are new appointments. Courses are offered in two main centres, they are managed independently in three different subject areas, with a nominated curriculum manager.

Strengths

- Good achievement for learners who complete their courses

Areas for improvement

- Low retention rates on many courses
- Insufficient use of data
- Inadequate use of initial assessment
- Weak curriculum management

Achievement and standards

63. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Achievement of qualifications for learners who complete their course is very high. In 2007/08, 17 learners achieved level three awards in preparation to teach and 29 learners achieved teaching assistant awards at level two. A further 14 learners achieved teaching assistant awards at level three. The number of learners achieving distinctions is very high.
64. Learners' portfolios and assignment work demonstrate good understanding of the principles of learning and managing effective learning. Teaching materials are good. Learners complete effective learning journals.
65. On many courses retention is low, with rates ranging from around 50% to 70%. Overall retention rates have fallen by some 10% between 2005/06 and 2007/08. Learners withdraw for a range of reasons and at different stages during the course.

Quality of provision

66. The quality of provision is inadequate overall. Teaching and learning are inadequate. Teaching on all courses is planned and well resourced but session plans are insufficiently detailed to be useful. Teaching is uninspiring with insufficient use of

information learning technology. Teaching environments are very good and well equipped but are not always used to best effect. Learners respond well to questioning but are largely inactive for considerable periods. Learners appreciate and value tutor input but do not develop good study skills as a mechanism for learning. Recently a virtual learning environment has been introduced but some learners are insufficiently skilled in the use of ICT to use this to their advantage.

67. NLC has also introduced a more thorough initial assessment, but it is not used well to plan individual learning. The initial assessment identifies additional needs but the needs are not always resolved. Some learners with low literacy and numeracy levels are referred to the skills for life team for support and are not provided with sufficient support from course teachers.
68. The provision does not meet the needs and interests of learners. Learners are drawn from a range of backgrounds, businesses and industries. Courses are promoted through the service brochure and by word of mouth. However, the courses have failed to recruit well. Learners have to join waiting lists until numbers are high enough to form viable groups. Some courses, previously offered, have had to be cancelled due to a lessening of demand. Alternatives have not been investigated. Tutors waited too long before applying for appropriate vetting checks for learners, delaying their ability to practice their teaching skills. No strategy is in place to tackle this difficulty. Too few progression opportunities exist and the range and level of courses offered is too narrow.
69. Guidance and support for learners is satisfactory. Induction is satisfactory and learners understand and are made aware of the course content. Learners do not always appreciate the workload involved in carrying out part-time study while in full-time work. Assignments are well spaced throughout the courses. However, assignments are not always issued at the most appropriate time. In some cases the work set does not coincide with the coverage of the assignment subject during the course. Tutorial time is offered to learners but not systematically and an over reliance is placed on the learner requesting assistance.

Leadership and management

70. Leadership and management are inadequate. Curriculum management is inadequate. Roles and responsibilities of tutors and the curriculum manager are not clearly defined. Formal communication is insufficient and team meetings are infrequent and do not result in developing the curriculum area. Courses operate in a discrete manner under the management of several different individuals. Good practice is not shared effectively. The approach to creating new initiatives or problem-solving is not cohesive. Subject specific professional development for most staff is insufficient. Some tutors have only worked in the service and have insufficient knowledge and experience of different educational systems.
71. Tutors are aware of the self-assessment process but have little input into the final report. Many of the strengths identified are no more than normal practice although the inspection findings agreed with the identified areas for improvement.
72. Quality improvement is poor. The observation of teaching and learning is inadequate. New staff are not prioritised for observation. Comments on some observation records do

not focus on learning or the learners' experience. No action and development points on any of the records exist and the grades awarded did not agree with inspection findings.

73. While staff have a reasonable understanding of equality of opportunity it is not promoted well. No analysis of learners' achievements occurs or comparison of the performance of different groups of learners. Courses are not promoted effectively to groups who are underrepresented. Insufficient attention is paid to improving retention. Managers have not focused sufficiently on analysing the reasons for learners leaving, or gaining knowledge about those learners who might be at risk of leaving the courses early. Recent actions to improve retention through better initial assessment have had little effect. Tutors are not set retention and achievement targets. Health and safety management is over reliant on learners completing audit sheets. Risk assessment, particularly for lone workers, is not thorough enough.

Preparation for life and work

Inadequate: Grade 4

Context

74. NLC offers accredited and non-accredited skills for life courses and courses for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Courses are offered in the daytime, twilight and the evening. Literacy and numeracy learners have the opportunity to take national tests and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learners take Cambridge examinations in speaking, reading, writing and listening. Currently 547 learners attend 85 courses provided in four adult and community learning centres and 11 community venues. Courses run for 30 or 36 weeks although learners can join or leave at any time. NLC works in partnership with other organisations such as the Probation Service and Children's Centres. Staff who manage the provision include three adult education managers, a curriculum manager, a full-time curriculum leader for ESOL and two part-time curriculum leaders for literacy and numeracy, with two full-time tutors and 16 part-time tutors.

Strengths

- Very effective use of initial assessment to plan individual learning
- Particularly flexible provision to meet the needs of learners

Areas for improvement

- Low success rates
- Inadequate management of provision

Achievement and standards

75. Achievement and standards are inadequate overall. Success rates are low. In 2006/07, targets were not all evidenced as achieved for learners on non-accredited learning aims during the first two terms, which significantly affected the very low success rates. Measures are now in place to resolve this and success rates are improving but still low. Retention is low and declining particularly at entry level and level 1 literacy and on ESOL courses. Too few learners take qualifications. Learners are motivated and their standard of work in sessions and attendance are satisfactory. ESOL learners develop confidence in speaking English.

Quality of provision

76. The quality of provision is satisfactory overall. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The use of initial and diagnostic assessment to identify learning targets and plan individual learning and learning resources is very effective. Sessions are planned carefully with clear outcomes for each lesson, which are shared with learners. Assessment and monitoring of learners' progress is good. Accommodation is good with good access to, and use of, ICT in learning. In the better sessions teachers give clear explanations and feedback to individual learners. They provide a good range of appealing learning activities and use a good range of teaching methods and techniques

to develop knowledge and skills. However, in some sessions learners are insufficiently supported and poorly motivated. In a few sessions teachers use a narrow range of teaching methods and learning activities and the pace of learning is slow. Identification of additional learning needs relies overly on self-declaration by learners and no systematic screening for dyslexia takes place.

77. The range of courses satisfactorily meets the needs and interests of learners. The provision provides a particularly wide range of learning opportunities in literacy, numeracy and ESOL. NLC works well with a good range of partners such as children's centres, probation and adult social services and substance misuse rehabilitation organisations. It uses these links very effectively to target provision to reach priority groups. Courses are offered in local venues at times that suit learners' needs. ESOL workshops are offered flexibly to fit in with the pattern of shift workers. NLC is developing appropriate courses in ICT, art, work preparation and life skills to tackle the poor progression and achievement of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. These learners previously accounted for a large proportion of the total number of learners. Although NLC works with the local council and a small number of employers to provide skills for life provision this has not been sufficiently developed to meet employers' needs in the area.
78. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Information advice and guidance sessions at the four main sites are very responsive, informative, welcoming and non-threatening. Individual interviews quickly get learners into the appropriate group at a time and venue to suit their needs. However, for some learners in community venues the initial assessment and enrolment are completed in class, which does not provide confidentiality or privacy. Crèches are provided at some venues to enable learners to attend courses. Advice and guidance at the end of programmes are not sufficiently systematic or thorough. It does not ensure learners have a good understanding of the opportunities for progression and that they progress appropriately.

Leadership and management

79. Leadership and management are inadequate. The management structure, which involves four managers sharing responsibility, is not effective. The curriculum manager has responsibility for the curriculum but does not have authority for timetabling or staff management and is left without a clear overview of the provision. Quality improvement is inadequate. The use of management information to monitor the quality of the provision is insufficient. Management information is not used to analyse or monitor attendance, retention or success rates by subjects, courses, levels, venues or tutors or to set targets for improvements.
80. Although observations of teaching and learning are carried out, action plans are not produced and follow ups or checks on progress are insufficient. Grades awarded at inspection were lower than those in the internal observations. The internal verification of the process for recognising and recording progress and achievement is insufficiently thorough. The self-assessment report is insufficiently evaluative and does not cover the *Common Inspection Framework* in sufficient detail. Monitoring and promotion of equality of opportunity is insufficient. The skills for life strategy is inadequate and vague, and the development plan does not contain sufficient targets.

81. Accommodation and ICT resources are generally good although access to some buildings for learners with disabilities is inadequate.

Family Learning

Inadequate: Grade 4

Context

82. NLC offers courses, tasters and workshops in family literacy, family numeracy, early start and wider family learning in subjects such as art and craft, ICT and healthy eating. Currently 29 learners attend four early start courses, with five other courses scheduled for this term. Courses run at six schools and one Children's Centre. One full-time and nine part-time tutors deliver the courses. The curriculum manager for family learning manages the area.
83. During 2007/08, there were 292 enrolments of which 24% were men, 4% were from a minority ethnic background, 8% were parents under 25 and 5% were over 50. Of these enrolments almost half were on tasters or workshops. The other 167 learners attended 26 courses of between four and ten weeks.

Strengths

- Good partnership working to support learners

Areas for improvement

- Poor take up of skills for life qualifications
- Insufficient recording of progress and achievement on many courses
- Insufficient integration of e-learning across the curriculum
- Inadequate curriculum management

Achievement and standards

84. Achievement and standards are inadequate overall. Take up of skills for life qualifications is poor. In 2007/08, only three learners achieved qualifications in numeracy out of 107 learners enrolled on family literacy, family numeracy and early start courses. No accredited achievements were achieved in literacy or ESOL. A significant number of learners with full qualifications at level 2 were inappropriately recruited onto courses. Non-accredited achievement is often not supported by thorough evidence, especially in wider family learning. Recently NLC has introduced a mechanism for gathering data about the educational and social development of children whose parents have attended courses. However, it is too early to judge its effect.
85. Learners' retention and attendance is generally satisfactory. Progression opportunities are promoted well and some recorded instances of progression exist from family learning onto skills for life, ICT and teaching assistant courses.

Quality of provision

86. The quality of provision is inadequate overall. Teaching and learning are inadequate. Recording of progress and achievement on many courses is insufficient. This was

identified as an area for improvement in the 2006/07 self-assessment report and has been regularly highlighted following the observation of learning sessions.

87. Initial assessment is not carried out systematically and is often carried out too late in the course. Some learners assess their own skills and state their general aims, but this information is rarely used to negotiate and record personalised targets. Tutors frequently set only group targets. In wider family learning, few records of individual progress and achievement exist, especially for workshops. Where skills for life assessment takes place, it does not accurately identify learners' abilities beyond level 1. Teaching resources provided by NLC are appropriate and quite varied to appeal to learners different learning styles.
88. Session planning is generally detailed, incorporating a wide range of learning materials. Although computers and digital cameras are used creatively in some wider family learning classes and workshops, tutors' and learners' use of technology is not yet effectively established in courses across the curriculum. Tutors do not make sufficient use of e-learning. Very little internet access is available in classes outside NLC's own centres and hardly any use of the virtual learning environment. Online testing for skills for life is not available.
89. The range of family learning courses satisfactorily meets the needs of parents, grandparents and carers of children throughout North Lincolnshire. Community consultation takes place through schools, children's centres, health workers and other organisations working with families. These partners identify target groups, propose and advertise courses and recruit learners. Some workshops offer progression onto specific courses, like healthy eating or ICT.
90. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Information, advice and guidance services are publicised in class and learners are given appropriate information about progression opportunities towards the end of their course. Tutors regularly signpost learners to skills for life provision, if appropriate. On early start courses good childcare support is available from partners.

Leadership and management

91. Overall leadership and management are inadequate. Much good partnership working takes place with a wide range of local and regional organisations to recruit and support learners. Schools and other partners provide support staff in class to facilitate more personalised learning. The curriculum manager is very active in many local group partnerships, such as the 'parenting training task group' and 'hands across the ages'. The curriculum manager often takes a leading role in promoting more consistent working practices across all providers of parenting services in the area, has contributed to joint funding bids, joint publicity, and shared staff training.
92. Tutors are well supported by management, who deal with requests and complaints very promptly. Communication is good at all levels. Most accommodation is satisfactory with spacious and attractive learning environments. However, in some schools, learners make do with cramped ill-equipped rooms, such as a dining area.

93. Management of the curriculum is inadequate. Although systems are in place for public consultation, gathering learner feedback and observing teaching action plans are not always put in place. Very little use is made of measurable, time bound targets to lead to quality improvement. Managers do not use data sufficiently to identify areas for improvement and to inform decision-making. Electronic management information data on retention and achievement does not accurately reflect information recorded on registers. Quality assurance of such processes as learners' inductions and recognising and recording progress and achievement is insufficient. Training for tutors, including the requirements of disability legislation, equality and diversity and the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, is not monitored to ensure it complies with current requirements. The self-assessment process is generally inclusive. However, it does not accurately identify important areas for improvement, or set appropriate targets to tackle weaknesses.

Annex

Learners' achievements

Learners' achievements in FE funded, accredited provision offered by ACL providers

Success rates on accredited entry and level 1 (combined) and level 2 qualifications, by length, expected end year and age.

2006 to 2007, compared with the national rates for GFE colleges.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	19+			
		Starts – Transfers	ACL Provider Rate	National Rate	Diff
1 long	2006/07	661	43.7	70.5	-26.7
	2007/08*			N/A	
2 long	2006/07	228	70.6	69	+1.6
	2007/08*			N/A	
Short**	2006/07	1081	31.8	82.9	-51.1
	2007/08*			N/A	

* ACL provider data not validated (use where complete, validated and produced using proprietary software)

** Courses over 5 weeks long