

Stockport Continuing Education Service

Reinspection report

Reinspection date

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Reinspection number

329360

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Background information

Reinspection 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 reinspection 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 reinspection

In deciding the scope of the reinspection, inspectors consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorate's reinspection monitoring visits, and data and learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection. Inspectors also 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.

This reinspection reports on specialist provision in:

- Information and communication technology

Description of the provider

1. Stockport Continuing Education Service (SCES) receives funding from the Greater Manchester LSC to provide adult and community learning under contracts for further education, personal and community development learning and neighbourhood learning in deprived communities. SCES also hold contracts for Train to Gain.
2. This reinspection follows the service's inspection in June 2007. At that inspection the overall effectiveness of the provision was satisfactory, the service had sufficient capacity to improve and its self-assessment process was satisfactory. Leadership and management and equality of opportunity were satisfactory. Provision in hospitality and catering, and community development was good and satisfactory in early years and play work, languages, literature and culture and preparation for life and work. Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) was inadequate, and is the focus of this reinspection.
3. A reinspection monitoring visit took place in May 2008 which judged that sufficient progress had been made towards improving achievement and standards and the recording and monitoring of learners' progress, but insufficient progress in improving the quality of provision or its leadership and management.
4. Currently 287 learners follow ICT courses at level 1 and 2 while 24 learners follow level 3 courses. Of the learners, 55% follow a course which does not lead to externally accredited outcomes.
5. In Stockport, unemployment accounts for 4% of the economically active population, and 12.1% of the population have no qualifications. The 2001 census gives the minority ethnic population as 4.3% compared with 7.9% nationally.

Summary of grades awarded at previous inspection

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Sector subject areas

Early years and playwork	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Information and communication technology	Inadequate: Grade 4
Hospitality and catering	Good: Grade 2
Languages, literature and culture	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Preparation for life and work including, literacy, numeracy, English for speakers of other languages and Entry to Employment	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Community development	Good: Grade 2

Summary of grades awarded at reinspection

Information and communication technology	Satisfactory: Grade 3
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Key strengths

- Good development of ICT skills
- Good recent actions for improvement

Key areas for improvement

- Low success rates on accredited programmes

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

6. Achievement and standards are satisfactory as identified at the previous inspection and in the current self-assessment report. Learners develop good ICT skills. They use these skills well in their personal lives. For example, learners use ICT skills to develop their family trees and to edit family photographs. Older learners with very little previous experience of ICT quickly overcome initial apprehension and become very confident using computers. Some learners use their newly gained knowledge about safe internet practices to support their children to access the internet safely.
7. Retention rates are satisfactory overall. The standard of learners' work is appropriate. Attendance during the inspection was satisfactory.
8. Success rates of learners on accredited courses are low at 56%. Many learners on these courses make slow progress, and complete their courses a considerable time after the date originally agreed.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

9. The quality of provision is satisfactory as identified in the self-assessment report. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, as at the previous inspection. In better sessions tutors involve learners well and effectively encourage them to apply their learning. In these sessions the quality of handouts is good, and designed well to suit, for example, less experienced or older learners. Less successful sessions rely excessively on computer-based learning materials which do not reflect learners' diverse interests. The text of the computer-based material is too small for some older learners.
10. Tutors' monitoring and feedback to learners on their work is satisfactory. Arrangements to recognise and record progress and achievement which were inadequate at the previous inspection are now at least satisfactory.
11. The service has invested well in ICT resources. These now include a good range of information learning technology equipment such as voting systems and digital cameras. Many classrooms are well equipped with interactive whiteboards, data projectors and industry standard hardware and software. However, the use of some of these resources to enhance teaching and learning is insufficiently developed.
12. Initial assessment, which was inadequate at the previous inspection, is now satisfactory. The literacy and numeracy skills of learners with little previous educational attainment are appropriately assessed. Literacy and numeracy support for those requiring it is adequate, but the recording of this support on individual learning plans is unsatisfactory.
13. The extent to which the provision meets the needs and interests of learners is satisfactory. As at the previous inspection the service provides a satisfactory range of programmes appropriate for learners who have few or no qualifications. This was also identified in the self-assessment report. The location of training venues is suitable to engage those

traditionally under-represented in learning, with some chosen specifically to include learners who have substance or alcohol dependency or are homeless. Many learners benefit from roll-on, roll-off programmes that enable them to study at times appropriate to their needs.

14. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Provision of guidance and initial advice, which was insufficient at the previous inspection, is now satisfactory. Learners receive appropriate advice to help them in their choice of courses and levels.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

15. At the previous inspection leadership and management of ICT was inadequate. It is now satisfactory, as identified in the self-assessment report. Good recent management actions are starting to improve the provision. A newly appointed curriculum manager has fully reviewed the ICT provision and acted effectively to ensure the service only offers courses on which learners' retention and success rates historically are at least satisfactory. It is too soon to assess the effectiveness of this.
16. Quality improvement arrangements have been revised and improved and are satisfactory. Recent observations of teaching and learning have identified areas for improvement. Most tutors have taken part in staff development events designed to improve their teaching. Senior managers support the new curriculum manager well and closely monitor the performance of learners on different courses. The accuracy and use of management information, which was inadequate at the previous inspection, has improved and is satisfactory. Managers now have satisfactory access to relevant and accurate information about course performance. However, until recently the pace of improvement, and the rate at which good practice was shared and implemented, was too slow.
17. The self-assessment process is satisfactory and inclusive as identified at the previous inspection. Although the 2006/07 self-assessment report is comprehensive, the most recent report does not focus sufficiently on impact on learners.
18. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. This was identified at the previous inspection and in the self-assessment report. Staff promote equality and diversity suitably during induction and inform learners appropriately about their rights and responsibilities. The mutual respect tutors establish with learners contributes well to their overcoming anxieties about using ICT. Adaptive and assistive technology is often used appropriately. All venues are accessible to learners with restricted mobility. Course promotional literature uses positive pictures to promote the provision to the non-traditional learners. Staff receive regular and extensive training on equality and diversity matters. A number of recent projects usefully engage new learners who are at the risk of social exclusion. For example SCES provides a course for learners following Entry to Employment programmes including some with challenging behaviour. SCES fully complies with relevant legislation. However, the service does not systematically monitor the retention rates or the success rates of different groups of learners.
19. Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. SCES has satisfactory policy and practices for safeguarding its vulnerable learners. A senior

manager is the designated officer. Staff are vetted and have received training on safeguarding and the protection of vulnerable adults.

What learners like:

- Very supportive tutors

What learners think could improve:

- Nothing identified