

Hertfordshire County Council

Inspection date

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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:

- Information and communication technology
- Preparation for life and work
- Family learning

Inspectors also examined evidence from specialist provision in arts, media and publishing which was not reported on separately, to support judgements in achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management.

Description of the provider

1. Hertfordshire County Council (the council) has a contract with Hertfordshire LSC to provide first steps provision and adult safeguarded learning across the county of Hertfordshire. It also has a contract with Hertfordshire LSC to manage a learning for living and work project, which support learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the transition from school into further education, training or work. The council also receives LSC neighbourhood learning in deprived communities funding.
2. The provision is managed by the Hertfordshire adult and family learning service (the service) located in the libraries, culture and learning portfolio of the council's children, schools and families department. At the time of inspection, the head of service post is vacant. The senior adviser for quality and development and the senior adviser for Skills for Life and family learning hold joint responsibility for managing the service.
3. Most family learning provision is directly managed and delivered by the council. Other provision is subcontracted to a range of providers, including the four local colleges of further education, the university in Hertfordshire and the voluntary and community sector. Accredited provision is offered in family language, literacy and numeracy (FLLN) and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). Most of the other programmes are non-accredited. The largest sector subject areas are arts, media and publishing, information and communication technology, preparation for life and work and family learning.
4. Hertfordshire is a county that is relatively prosperous, characterised by high skills and attainment levels. However, pockets of deprivation and social disadvantage exist. The percentage of pupils gaining five GCSEs at A* to C in Hertfordshire in 2007 was 67%, compared with 62% nationally.

Summary of grades awarded

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

Sector subject areas

| | |
|--|-----------------------|
| Information and communication technology | Satisfactory: Grade 3 |
| Preparation for life and work | Satisfactory: Grade 3 |
| Family learning | Good: Grade 2 |

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

5. The overall effectiveness of provision is satisfactory. This judgement agrees with the council's self-assessment. Provision is good in family learning and satisfactory in information and communication technology (ICT) and preparation for life and work. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Many learners increase their self-confidence and make good progress in the development of their knowledge and skills. Standards of learners' work are generally satisfactory.
6. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In the best sessions, tutors have high expectations and learners are appropriately challenged. Weaker learning sessions are characterised by poor planning to meet individual learner needs and insufficient monitoring and recording of individual learner progress. Learning resources are satisfactory.
7. Responsiveness to the needs and interests of learners is good. The council has increased the participation of learners from disadvantaged areas and communities and learners have access to a wide range of provision. The council successfully manages a project to provide access to further education and training for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.
8. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Initial guidance and recruitment are satisfactory and tutors and other staff support learners well when they are on programme. Learners' literacy, language and numeracy needs are identified and additional support is satisfactory.
9. Leadership and management are satisfactory and equality of opportunity is good. The council's strategy to develop provision to meet the needs and interests of the most vulnerable communities across Hertfordshire is very effective. The council's direct delivery of family learning is well managed, as is the project for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The management of the subcontracted provision is satisfactory overall.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

10. The council's capacity to improve is good. It has rectified the key weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Curriculum planning has significantly improved, with the development of a wide range of carefully targeted subcontracted provision. The directly delivered family learning provision is very well managed and has improved from satisfactory to good. The monitoring of the provision is well established, with good use of data. Quality assurance arrangements provide an effective framework for improvement. Observations of teaching and learning are often evaluative and accurate, particularly in family learning. The quality of observations remains too variable overall, but managers have taken clear actions to secure improvements from September 2008.

Arrangements for literacy, numeracy and language support are satisfactory and learners have access to a wide range of literacy, numeracy and language provision. Equality of opportunity is good. Managers have a clear idea of what actions they need to take to improve the provision further.

11. Self-assessment is inclusive and used well as a tool to support quality improvement. The report is detailed and broadly accurate in making judgements about the quality of the provision. The report on the directly delivered family learning provision is thorough and accurate. The sector subject area reports on the subcontracted provision are satisfactory.

Key strengths

- Good development of learners' confidence, knowledge and skills
- Wide range of provision to meet the needs and interests of learners
- Good partnership working to widen participation and engage new learners
- Very well managed project for learners with complex needs

Key areas for improvement

- Continue to improve teaching and learning
- Further develop processes to recognise and record progress and achievement in non-accredited provision
- Further develop the quality assurance of the subcontracted provision, to include a greater focus on the quality of provision

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

12. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Retention rates are consistently high across the range of courses, which the self-assessment report identifies. Achievement rates on family numeracy accredited courses are also high. Achievement data in non-accredited provision, based upon recognising and recording learners' progress and achievement, are not yet sufficiently robust. In preparation for life and work and family learning, the development of learners' confidence, knowledge and skills is good. Learners attending arts, media and publishing classes in the community make good progress in personal development and in the acquisition of learning and social skills. Skills development in ICT is satisfactory.
13. Standards of learners' work across the provision are satisfactory overall, although in 2007/08, the council did not collect sufficient evidence from the subcontracted providers on the standards of learners' work in all sector subject areas. Learners are highly motivated to progress onto other courses, but data to assess the impact of the provision on learners' progression into further training, education or employment is not yet sufficiently developed. Attendance is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

14. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. It is good in FLLN and satisfactory in wider family learning and in preparation for life and work. In the best sessions, tutors have high expectations and learners are appropriately challenged. The active promotion of equality of opportunity in learning sessions is satisfactory. Initial assessment is satisfactory, as are learning resources and the use of information and learning technology as a tool to support teaching and learning.
15. For arts, media and publishing, the self-assessment report does not contain sufficiently thorough judgements on the quality of teaching and learning. Teaching and learning is inadequate in ESOL, with insufficient attention to lesson planning and with learners having insufficient opportunities to practice their speaking skills. Planning to meet the individual skills development of learners in ICT is insufficient. Across the provision, the monitoring and recording of individual learner progress has improved since the previous inspection, but is insufficiently developed on some courses.
16. The range of provision is very wide ranging and meets the needs and interests of learners across the county of Hertfordshire very well, which the self-assessment report clearly identifies. The council carefully targets provision in specific geographical areas and with individuals and communities with the greatest needs. Learner focus groups successfully contribute to the planning and development of programmes. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities benefit

significantly from highly specialist work, which supports their successful transition into further education and training opportunities matched to their needs and interests. Across the provision as a whole, learners have access to satisfactory progression opportunities.

17. Guidance and support are satisfactory, which the self-assessment report identifies. Initial guidance and recruitment are satisfactory, as is information, advice and guidance when learners are on programmes. Tutors and other staff support learners well. Learners in preparation for life and work receive particularly good support and for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the support is highly individualised and very effective. Language, literacy and numeracy support has improved since the previous inspection and is satisfactory. Learners from traveller communities are well supported with literacy and numeracy classes designed to match their needs. Learners are also referred to specialist providers for support.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

18. Leadership and management are satisfactory, which the self-assessment report identifies. Meetings between service managers and senior officers of the council are frequent and well recorded and actions to develop and improve the provision are effectively monitored. The council's clear strategy to meet the needs of the most vulnerable communities and educationally disadvantaged learners across Hertfordshire is communicated well to partners and subcontractors. The curriculum is well planned and the council has very effective commissioning processes in place, to work with a wide range of voluntary and community providers and colleges to meet these needs and identified priorities.
19. The directly delivered family learning provision is very well managed, as is the learning for life and work project for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The council also manages the neighbourhood learning in deprived communities funding very effectively, with good processes in place for the allocation of funds to subcontractors. Curriculum management in ICT is satisfactory. In preparation for life and work, actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning are insufficient.
20. The council maintains particularly effective partnerships with its 23 subcontractors and other local organisations. Since the previous inspection, the monitoring of subcontractors has improved significantly and is satisfactory overall. When providers do not meet their contractual duties, managers act promptly to remedy this. Each year all subcontractors have a thorough pre-contract risk assessment. Subcontractors meet regularly at meetings arranged by the council and receive up-to-date information on changes and developments. Providers know each other well and recommend each other's provision to learners. The sharing of good practice across sector subject areas, for example in arts, media and publishing, is insufficient.

21. Equality of opportunity is good. Equality and diversity impact measures are well planned to match the specific needs and expertise of each subcontractor. The council exceeds all its equalities targets, except for the enrolment of men which is just marginally below the target. However, the provision is thoughtfully planned to attract men, publicity materials are adapted to welcome more men into learning and the number of male learners is steadily increasing. Retention rates for men are high.
22. The council organises highly effective community events to widen participation and to engage new learners, for example, through working with extended schools' co-ordinators. Many activities are carefully targeted at specific geographical areas or groups. Managers follow up all those who have attended these events, with provision carefully planned to meet their needs. For example, specialist provision is offered for learners from Traveller communities.
23. The promotion of equality and diversity in the learning for life and work project for learners with complex needs and/or disabilities is good. This project is particularly effective in engaging learners and providing very effective support in their transition into further education, training or work. A strategic partnership group regularly monitors and evaluates this work and learners, parents and carers are very satisfied with the implementation of this project. The promotion of equality and diversity is also good in family learning.
24. The council complies with all equalities legislation. It has an equalities plan in place for race, disability and gender, with realistic action plans and effective monitoring of provision. The council has begun planning a single equalities scheme. All service staff have DDA training. Equality and diversity are established increasingly into the curriculum and form an important part of the monitoring of the quality of the provision. Equality and diversity are emphasised in lesson observation records and the tutor handbook outlines clear and practical strategies to promote diversity. However, equality of opportunity is not yet established consistently into lessons across all sector subject areas.
25. The council provides good value for money. Funds are used well to train teachers and to increase learning experiences across the county of Hertfordshire. Learner numbers and enrolments have increased significantly over the two years before this inspection. Retention rates are consistently high. The adult and family learning service is managed by a small team of very committed staff, although currently the head of service post is vacant. The team does not currently have the capacity to manage all the sector subject areas to the same high standard as it does for family learning.
26. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. All staff liable to be in contact with vulnerable learners have Criminal Record Bureau checks, and the council keeps records of these. Half of the services' staff have completed an e-learning package in safeguarding, with the remaining half working to complete this.

27. Resources are satisfactory. Staff appraisal is regular and leads to actions which are reviewed and monitored. Managers identify teachers who do not have teaching qualifications and are ensuring that they are enrolled on the preparing to teach in the lifelong learning sector (PTTLS) programme. Of the 67 teachers who need the PTTLS qualification, 42 have already completed this and 20 are on programme or are planned to attend. All teachers have registered with the institute of learning. Classrooms and equipment are appropriate. In 2008, 11 centres have benefited from neighbourhood learning in deprived communities' capital funding to buy ICT resources to support the development of learners' information technology skills and the use of technology to support teaching and learning. The use of electronic learning technology is satisfactory.
28. Managers have implemented a series of actions to improve teaching and learning. These include doing at least one observation themselves per year of each subcontracted provider and training staff in the voluntary and community sector to carry out their own lesson observations. Records show that some of these observations are evaluative and accurate, particularly in family learning, while others overemphasize teaching and do not focus sufficiently on learning or learner progress. Some observations are over graded. In 2007/08, the number of observations carried out was insufficient. From September 2008, managers have implemented actions to improve the observation of teaching and learning process.
29. The management of learners' language, literacy and numeracy needs is satisfactory. A Skills for Life strategy is in place and contains an action plan with clear targets. It is not always monitored by sector subject areas and makes no reference to learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The implementation of processes to recognize and record learners' progress and achievement is satisfactory overall, but they are not yet fully established across all sector subject areas or programmes.

What learners like:

- 'The tutors create a feeling of comfort and trust. They respect me for who I am. They make me feel welcome and reassured. They are brilliant!'
- 'I thought that I was just a mum, but the course opened my eyes to see that I could achieve something myself. I can also interact better with my daughter and support her with her learning'
- 'Everyone is welcoming and gentle and attending structured sessions has changed my life. They keep stretching you and giving you new challenges'
- 'I have had continual support for my learning'
- 'I can now speak up for myself and others in a similar position to me. The course has developed my confidence and helps people like us who have learning disabilities to speak out'
- 'I like coming here because it's friendly and I meet other people'
- 'It's local, you don't have to stand around waiting for buses'
- 'After I was made redundant, taking a number of computer classes really helped me to improve my skills and gain some qualifications'

What learners think could improve:

- 'More courses more often please'
- 'The tutor could share her time between us better in the classroom'
- The availability of childcare at some venues
- The publicity about the courses so that more people get to hear about them

Sector subject areas

Information and communication technology

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

30. At the time of the inspection, the council's adult and family learning service had 1,231 learners on 159 ICT courses. The council also offers 120 one hour taster sessions in the county's libraries. Over half of the learners are men. All learners are over the age of 19, with approximately 50% over 60 years old. The courses and taster sessions are mainly introductory and non-accredited and, for most learners, represent their first steps in learning ICT. Most of the short courses are between five and ten weeks, offered during the day and in the evenings at local libraries, community centres and colleges.

Strengths

- High retention rates
- Wide range of courses to increase participation

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient planning for individual skills development

Achievement and standards

31. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Retention rates are high at 98% in both 2006/07 and in 2007/08. Learners attend regularly and overall attendance in ICT is good. Learners are enthusiastic, enjoy their work and are keen to progress to further increase their knowledge and skills. Learners work at their own pace to complete tasks and group learning goals, gain confidence in using computers and make satisfactory progress in their skills development. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

32. The quality of provision and teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better lessons, tutors set challenging targets and use a variety of teaching strategies and resources to engage learners and to check their progress. Tutors use clear explanations and demonstrations to explain ICT concepts and provide individual coaching so that learners can achieve tasks. However, in too many sessions, planning for individual skills development is insufficient. Tutors rely on the use of group targets, with all learners working on the same group task, do not plan sufficiently to meet individual learning needs and use learning resources which are not sufficiently individualised. Although learners are encouraged to practise at home or to attend further guided learning, they are not given sufficiently personalised tasks to help them to further develop their skills. Learners' progress is recorded by ticking the group learning outcomes they are able to do at the end

of the course; achievement is based on completing the group tasks and the course.

33. Learning resources are satisfactory. Rooms are fit for purpose and well equipped with hardware and up-to-date software and some have interactive whiteboards. Adaptive technology is also available, for example software to enlarge screens. Tutors are either qualified in the subject area or are working towards a teaching qualification and all are registered with the Institute for Learning.
34. The extent to which the needs and interests of learners are met is good, with learners able to access a wide range of well targeted courses. The council has effective partnerships with subcontractors from colleges and the voluntary and community sector and within the council library service, to widen participation effectively. ICT courses are offered in accessible locations which are located in learners' local communities. Many of the subcontractors offer progression to the next level and learners are referred to the colleges for intermediate and advanced courses.
35. Guidance and support are satisfactory overall. Information, advice and guidance are satisfactory. Learners are interviewed before being placed in classes, with the interviews used to assess informally learners' starting points. Learners are also given information on progression at the end of their course. Tutors provide effective personal support and encouragement. Volunteers support learners in the taught sessions and in guided learning sessions where computers are available to help learners to progress.

Leadership and management

36. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The council uses data effectively to identify target groups and areas across Hertfordshire and to increase the participation of learners in ICT first steps provision. The council subcontracts provision to a wide range of organisations, to support them in successfully locating the ICT provision near to where learners live. Widening participation is good. All learners on courses are treated respectfully.
37. The council closely monitors the subcontracted provision and the monitoring reports include a detailed action plan, with dates for completion of key areas for improvement. The council offers a range of effective support to subcontractors, particularly those in the voluntary and community sector. The council encourages subcontractors to attend regular meetings and to communicate their development needs. The council observes the ICT provision and subcontractors observe their own staff, providing the council with copies of their observations which are of a variable quality. Although some good practice exists, many observations focus too much on teaching and grades awarded do not always match the judgements identified.
38. The self-assessment process is inclusive. Subcontractors involve their staff in self-assessment and submit copies of their report to the council. The strengths in the council's self-assessment report are accurate, but the council did not identify the area for improvement in teaching and learning.

Preparation for life and work

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

39. At the time of the inspection, the council's adult and family learning service had 489 learners on preparation for life and work courses, which include personal development, skills for work, citizenship, literacy, numeracy, ESOL and provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The council contracts with 15 subcontractors, which include the four local colleges of further education and voluntary and community sector organisations, to deliver preparation for life and work courses with personal and community development learning and neighbourhood learning in deprived communities funding. The council also has a contract to manage a brokerage project, learning for living and work, for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

Strengths

- Good development of learners' confidence, knowledge and skills
- Good development of provision to meet the needs and interests of learners
- Particularly good support for learners
- Very effective partnership working to widen participation
- Very well managed project for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

Areas for improvement

- Inadequate teaching and learning in ESOL provision
- Insufficiently thorough monitoring and recording of learners' progress and achievement
- Insufficient actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning

Achievement and standards

40. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall. Learners on personal development, citizenship and skills for work courses develop good levels of confidence, knowledge and skills. Learners enjoy their courses. They improve their listening, negotiating and assertiveness skills, improve communication with their families and perform with greater confidence at work. Skills development in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Retention is high overall. Achievement data for non-accredited provision, based upon recognising and recording learners' progress and achievement, are not yet sufficiently robust.

41. Standards of learners' work are satisfactory. Attendance is satisfactory overall, but with low attendance in some classes. Learner progression is not systematically monitored.

Quality of provision

42. The quality of provision and teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In the best classes, particularly on courses for personal development, skills for work and for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, learners are actively engaged and contribute well from their own experiences. In some citizenship classes, the development of learners' speaking, listening, reading and writing skills is very effective. Tutors help learners to develop effective strategies to work independently and to complete homework. Teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy is generally satisfactory.
43. Teaching and learning in ESOL is inadequate. The council identifies ESOL provision as a cause for concern in the self-assessment report. ESOL lessons are insufficiently well planned, with objectives not clearly identified or shared with learners. Tutors make ineffective use of classroom space to engage learners in group work. Learners have insufficient opportunities to practice their speaking skills. Target-setting is weak and learners cannot clearly identify the progress they are making.
44. The initial assessment of learners is satisfactory, as is the collation of information about their prior achievement and support needs. However, the monitoring and recording of learners' progress and achievement is insufficiently thorough across the mainly non-accredited provision.
45. The extent to which the needs and interests of learners are met is good. The council subcontracts with a wide range of providers with substantial experience of working with hard to reach groups and communities. Courses are located in welcoming and safe accommodation, which is local to learners. Many centres provide good access to ICT. Learners can also attend a good range of extension activities, such as book clubs and discussion groups. The learning for living and work project offers learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities a very effective transition from school to further education and training and/or to work.
46. Support and guidance are satisfactory overall. Learners receive appropriate initial information and advice and are successfully placed on suitable courses. Information, advice and guidance when learners are on programme are satisfactory. Support for learners is particularly good. Learners have good access to support on immigration, housing, counselling, financial advice and jobsearch. Subcontractors make good use of specialist equipment, dyslexia support and interpreters. Learners also have access to crèche facilities and funds to help them meet their travel costs.

Leadership and management

47. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Partnership working to widen participation is very effective. The council works very successfully in partnership with a wide range of voluntary and community organisations and colleges of further education, to target the provision in areas and communities of greatest need.

48. The learning for living and work project for learners with learning difficulties and / or disabilities is very well managed within the Access Ability Team in Youth Connexions. The implementation plan has achievable targets and timescales, which are closely monitored. The consultant and the brokers effectively use their knowledge and skills to encourage providers to engage in innovative delivery and support for learners. The brokers complete thorough monthly reviews, which are monitored by the strategic partnership group. Feedback from learners, parents and carers indicate that they are very satisfied with the brokerage arrangements.
49. Staff development is satisfactory. A Skills for Life strategy and an action plan with clear and achievable targets is in place, but these do not include provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Neither is it clear how they will be monitored and evaluated.
50. The council does not take sufficient actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the subcontracted provision. The observation of teaching and learning process is insufficiently thorough. Feedback to tutors does not sufficiently focus on learning or on learners' progress. The grades awarded do not always match the judgements made, with some over-grading. The monitoring reports do identify areas for improvements, but with some slow implementation of actions to improve the experience of learners.
51. The self-assessment process is inclusive. The self-assessment report for the preparation for life and work provision is insufficiently evaluative, although inspectors agreed with the grade awarded.

Family learning

Good: Grade 2

Context

52. The council directly delivers most of the family learning provision, with a small proportion subcontracted to other providers. Family language, literacy and numeracy (FLLN) and wider family learning courses are available for parents and carers and take place mainly in primary schools and children's centres. Courses are delivered during school hours, evenings, weekends and school holidays. At the time of inspection, 522 learners were enrolled on 61 family learning courses, 50 in FLLN and 11 in wider family learning covering early years, ICT, art and craft and healthy living. During 2007/08, 1,460 learners participated in FLLN courses and 1278 in wider family learning, with 11% men and 19% from minority ethnic communities.

Strengths

- Good development of learners' confidence, knowledge and skills
- Good teaching and learning in family language, literacy and numeracy
- Particularly wide range of courses to meet learners' needs
- Highly effective curriculum management

Areas for improvement

- Incomplete recording of individual learner progress
- Insufficient crèche provision

Achievement and standards

53. Achievement and standards are good. The development of learners' confidence, knowledge and skills are good. Learners greatly increase their self-esteem and develop skills to help them to support their children with school work, to gain national qualifications, to take up further education and training or to obtain employment. Increased knowledge means that parents gain a better understanding of how their children learn.

54. Learners develop their own literacy skills and learn how to plan and structure pieces of writing and the importance of sequencing as part of story telling. They develop creative and cooperative skills through group activities with other adults and their own children. Learners make good progress and the standards of work are generally good. Achievement on accredited courses in numeracy is high at 92%. Retention is satisfactory.

Quality of provision

55. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning in FLLN is good. Skilled tutors manage wide ranging learner needs extremely well, particularly in family language. The pace in sessions is brisk, with learning in appropriate but

challenging steps. Tutors make good links between learning in school and topical issues in everyday life. Learners make good use of games to help motivate them and to assist them in discovering new knowledge and skills. Teaching and learning in family numeracy is particularly strong. They are satisfactory in WFL.

56. Resources are satisfactory and tutors are appropriately qualified. The recording of individual learner progress is incomplete. Although some good record-keeping in individual learning plans and learner diaries exists, this is not systematic across the provision. In some examples, the tutors complete their section well, but learner contributions are not completed. In other examples, learners demonstrate learning well, for example in learner diaries. However, tutors have not added any comments to these during the course. On one short course, the learners did not fully understand the visual tool used to chart progress.
57. The extent to which the needs and interests of learners are met is good, with a particularly wide range of courses which meets learners' needs very well. The provision is carefully targeted to attract relevant learners and to address national priorities. Courses are located in areas of greatest need. Well planned expansion in 2007/08 has resulted in an extensive programme for learners. Learner take-up of national accreditation has significantly increased to a good level.
58. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Learners find out about provision from links with school, at events at the local shopping centres, through attending previous courses or are approached personally. The extended schools' coordinators also play a key part in recruitment. Initial and on-programme advice and guidance is satisfactory. Tutors arrange individual appointments for specialist advice, as appropriate. Tutors provide effective support and encouragement for learners.

Leadership and management

59. Leadership and management are good. Curriculum management is highly effective. A robust strategic overview is supported by detailed action plans to direct quality improvement in family learning, with significant improvements in the provision since the previous inspection. An effective management structure is in place, which supports programme development very well. Staff are appropriately qualified, roles and responsibilities are clear and staff work very well as a team. Regular staff meetings include continuing professional development activities and the sharing of good practice.
60. The observation of teaching and learning process is robust, with good evidence to support grades and a strong focus on learning. The monitoring of the provision is thorough, although the monitoring of learner progression is not yet sufficiently developed.
61. The promotion of equality and diversity across family learning programmes is good. Initiatives are in place to attract more men. A wide range of specialist family language programmes are in place for learners whose first language is not English. Across the range of programmes, equality and diversity issues are

appropriately discussed. The implementation of processes to recognize and record learners' progress and achievement is satisfactory.

62. The self-assessment process is inclusive and involves tutors, learners and partners. The report accurately identifies the key strengths of family learning. Although the judgements on the areas for improvement appear in the report, they are not given sufficient emphasis.
63. Crèche provision is insufficient. Although crèches exist in a range of locations and are highly valued by learners, in some schools and children's centres, costs and the lack of space or administrative difficulties prevents the setting up of childcare. This impacts on learners, with some having to withdraw from a course with no crèche. The council offers some help with childminding costs, but it is not always an acceptable form of childcare for some families.