

# Luton Borough Council

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**Inspection date**

3 October 2008

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**Inspection number**

330480

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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](http://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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

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

- Information and communication technology
- Languages, literature and culture
- Literacy and numeracy
- Family learning

English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) was not inspected as there was no provision in the inspection week. Inspectors did speak to ESOL staff and also sampled the provision in arts, media and publishing. The provision in the remaining subject sector areas was too small to be included in this inspection.

## Description of the provider

1. Luton Borough Council adult and community learning service (LACL) is one of the services within the council's Housing and Community Living directorate. Its offices are located in its main community education site in the northern part of the borough. LACL uses some 50 to 80 sites during the year in community centres, schools, libraries and employers' premises throughout Luton. The service provides accredited and non-accredited programmes in 12 of the 17 sector subject areas. These programmes are funded by Bedfordshire and Luton LSC. At the time of the inspection there were 835 learners on non-accredited programmes and 717 on accredited programmes. Of these learners, 161 were on programmes in information and communication technology (ICT), 290 in language, literature and culture, 265 in literacy and numeracy, and 120 in family learning.
2. Approximately 28% of the town's population of 188,800 are from minority ethnic groups, with significant Pakistani/Kashmiri, Bangladeshi, Indian and African and Caribbean communities. There are also small communities of Albanian, Russian and Turkish speakers. Twenty per cent of the population were born outside the UK.
3. The local unemployment rate of 3.1% is higher than the regional rate of 1.7% and the national rate of 2.5%. In 2007, 6.4% of the working age population were claiming incapacity benefits, compared with the national figure of 7.1%. In 2007, 20.3% of the local population had no qualifications, compared with 13.1% nationally.

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## Summary of grades awarded

<b>Effectiveness of provision</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>
<b>Capacity to improve</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>
<b>Achievement and standards</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>
<b>Quality of provision</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>Satisfactory: Grade 3</b>
<b>Equality of opportunity</b>	<b>Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3</b>

## Sector subject area

<b>Information and communication technology</b>	<b>Satisfactory: Grade 3</b>
<b>Languages, literature and culture</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>
<b>Literacy and numeracy</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>
<b>Family learning</b>	<b>Good: Grade 2</b>

## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

#### Good: Grade 2

4. Overall effectiveness is good. Achievement and standards and the quality of provision are good. Leadership and management and equality of opportunity are satisfactory. The provision in languages, literature and culture, literacy and numeracy and family learning are all good. Provision in ICT is satisfactory.

#### Capacity to improve

#### Good: Grade 2

5. The provider has demonstrated a good capacity to improve. At inspection in 2003 the overall provision had been inadequate. At reinspection in 2004 all aspects except Quality Improvement were satisfactory or better. At this inspection, of the subject sector areas graded, the provision in languages, literature and culture and literature and numeracy had improved to good, the provision in family learning had been maintained as good and provision in ICT remained satisfactory. The service was reorganised in 2007 following a thorough review after the previous inspection and reinspection. Self-assessment is now well established and is satisfactory. An update of the 2006/07 self-assessment report produced before inspection recognised most of the strengths and areas for improvement found at inspection. The service is already addressing the areas for improvement and, in particular, the use of data and the enhancement of quality improvement arrangements. The most significant areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been satisfactorily addressed, although the quality improvement arrangements are not yet fully established.

## Key strengths

- Good achievement on most programmes
- Good resources
- Good partnership working
- Good management of change
- Good curriculum management

## Key areas for improvement

- The insufficient planning of learning to meet individual needs
- The insufficient use of data to plan the curriculum
- The insufficiently established quality improvement arrangements

## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

#### Good: Grade 2

6. Achievement and standards overall are good. Achievement or success rates on most courses are good. In non accredited provision learners achieve their course and personal goals well. However, many of these goals are insufficiently specific or challenging for the achievement data to be meaningful. Retention and attendance are generally good. Overall success rates for accredited courses in 2006/07 were good at about 10% above the national average for GFE colleges in long courses at Levels 1 and 2 and just below the national average for short courses over 5 weeks in length. Data for 2007/08 was incomplete at the time of the inspection. Learners on all courses gain confidence and demonstrate increased skills levels.
7. Achievement data for non-accredited courses was collected for the first time in 2006/07. The self-assessment report recognises the need to further refine the data in order for it to be a useful tool to drive improvement.

### Quality of provision

#### Good: Grade 2

8. The quality of provision overall is good. The quality of teaching and learning overall is satisfactory. The range of provision is good and learners are well supported.
9. Teaching and learning resources are good. Teaching rooms in the service's own centres and within schools in the borough are generally bright and well equipped for the subjects being taught. There is widespread use of interactive whiteboards. Tutors are suitably experienced and qualified and learning support assistants are appropriately deployed. Information for learners on costs and materials needed for their courses is clear.
10. The service works well with internal partners in other council departments and with other providers and local employers to match the range of provision to learners, employers and local community needs. It provides training for local employers both on their own sites and at LACL's premises. Unusually the service has consulted focus groups of those not already involved in its provision to identify remaining unsatisfied need.
11. Planning to meet the individual needs of learners is insufficient. Initial assessment relies too much on learners' self-declaration to identify additional support needs. Many individual goals recorded on individual learning plans are not sufficiently specific and often not measurable. Initial assessment and individual learning plans are not used effectively to plan differentiation in many lesson plans or schemes of work.
12. The self-assessment recognises the areas for improvement needed in the quality of provision and a number of actions have recently been taken to address them; however, it is too early to judge their full impact.

### Leadership and management

#### Satisfactory: Grade 3

## Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

13. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The management of change is good. In 2007, the council restructured the service, appointed curriculum leaders for key sector subject areas and centralised the service's main functions at one site. This process was sensitively handled. Staff were kept well informed. Internal communications are now much more effective. Curriculum teams meet regularly to discuss provision. Teaching staff are well supported.
14. The service has developed particularly effective partnerships to promote learning for all. This is acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Partnership working is closely allied to the service's mission to raise participation levels, promote the development of skills and to build capacity. Particularly effective links with local schools have contributed to a successful family learning programme. The service energetically promotes adult learning to other departments within the council. Good collaborative working with voluntary sector organisations has contributed to the service's aim to promote learning for socially excluded groups.
15. Training and development are satisfactory. New staff receive an induction which covers equality of opportunity, health and safety and the service's priorities. Training and development activities are closely tied in with appraisals. Attendance at staff training events is satisfactory, although attendance by part-time teachers is often poor.
16. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. The council has appropriate policies and procedures for the protection of children and vulnerable adults. Staff have received training and designated staff have responsibility for children and vulnerable adults. Appropriate vetting checks are carried out for all staff and volunteers involved in training.
17. Equality of opportunity arrangements are satisfactory. The service has detailed policies and procedures that cover all aspects of equal opportunities. Race, gender and disability equality schemes are in place. Promotion of equal opportunities through the service's marketing and publicity materials is satisfactory. Equalities issues are well covered during induction for staff and learners. Equal opportunities issues are recorded on individual learning plans, end of course reviews, observations of teaching and learning paperwork and on lesson plans and schemes of work. However, the depth and quality of these records often falls below the standards that the service expects. Managers regularly monitor recruitment, retention and achievement data according to gender, ethnicity, disability and age. Tutors receive regular training to update them on their responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity, but attendance by part-time tutors is often poor. The service has been partially successful in its aim of recruiting more men into adult learning.
18. The service does not make sufficient use of management information to plan the curriculum. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. The management information system does not provide timely and accurate information about learner numbers, attendance, retention or achievement. Managers have developed their own information recording systems to help them plan the curriculum, but the service recognises that this arrangement is unsatisfactory.



19. Quality improvement arrangements are insufficiently established. This is partially recognised in the self-assessment report. A revised observation of teaching and learning scheme has recently been implemented. Observations are carried out by curriculum managers. Records are generally satisfactory but many observation reports are too descriptive and insufficiently evaluative. The text does not always support the grade. A significant minority of early observation grades had to be changed following moderation. Action plans for tutors following an observation are often of poor quality. Teachers carry out an evaluation at the end of each course, however, the quality of the reviews are often poor. Teachers do not always complete all sections in the review document. Many responses are brief and uninformative.
20. The service does not make sufficient use of targets to improve the quality of provision. Appropriate targets are in place for enrolment, staff development activities, social inclusion and fee income, but not yet for learner attendance, retention, achievement and success rates.

## What learners like:

- Small classes
- Sympathetic tutors
- 'Everyone is mature'
- 'I know where to go for help'
- 'The teacher is clear'
- 'The teacher is enthusiastic, lots of activities'
- 'Tutors and staff are helpful and friendly'
- 'Working at my own pace'
- Flexible learning
- The support given
- The facilities

## What learners think could improve:

- Setting homework
- More frequent provision – 'class twice a week instead of once would be great'
- The length of classes – 'class longer than two hours'
- Lower fees
- Free courses for people on benefits
- Progression beyond Level 2 for languages
- Some of the software

## Sector subject areas

### Information and communication technology

#### Satisfactory: Grade 3

#### Context

21. LACL provides ICT courses at 13 centres. Most are unaccredited and short, lasting for up to eight weeks. Accredited programmes are available from entry level to Level 3. Seven tutors teach on programmes in ICT supported by a Curriculum Leader. At the time of inspection 161 learners are on programmes. The start of many programmes has been delayed to enable learners to participate in Eid. A further 177 learners have enrolled on programmes due to start in October 2008.

#### Strengths

- Good achievement of learning outcomes on non-accredited programmes
- Good partnership working to widen participation
- Good arrangements for information, advice and guidance
- Good curriculum leadership

#### Areas for improvement

- Low success rates on accredited programmes
- Ineffective use of initial assessment to plan learning
- Insufficiently established quality improvement arrangements

#### Achievement and standards

22. Achievement and standards overall are satisfactory. Achievement of learning outcomes for learners on non-accredited programmes is good. Achievement rates range from 78% for learners on beginners' programmes to 100% for learners on more advanced programmes. However, learning outcomes are not always sufficiently challenging and some learners attend introductory programmes more than once. Retention rates on these programmes have declined over the past four years but remain good at 95%.

23. The standard of current learners' work is satisfactory. Learners gain confidence in using the mouse and keyboard functions.

24. Success rates on long accredited programmes are low; 50% on ECDL Level 2, 60% on the CLAIT Certificate and 66% on the ECDL Level 1 programme. LACL has decided to offer these programmes on a flexible, full-cost recovery basis during 2008/09.

#### Quality of provision

25. The quality of provision is satisfactory.

26. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most programmes use a limited range of teaching and learning methods. In the better lessons, there is active learning and tutors check individual learning well. In the weaker lessons tutors employ unimaginative and uninspiring activities and give insufficient attention to individual learners. There is little differentiated learning. Most classes work at the pace of the slowest or least able learner.

27. Resources are satisfactory. Accommodation is satisfactory; however, working space for learners in community venues is often restricted. Handouts are satisfactory. Learners have well presented course workbooks but they are not always fully used or referred to in lessons.
28. Assessment is satisfactory. RARPA is fully implemented and established. Amended individual learning plans are satisfactory. Individual learning plans include programme and learner goals. The recording of programme outcomes and progress made towards achieving programme and personal goals is satisfactory, however, these goals are not always sufficiently challenging. Learners complete a weekly reflective diary recording their progress. Teachers comment on learners' progress but this is not always individualised. Assessment on accredited programmes meets awarding body standards.
29. LACL does not use initial assessment to plan learning effectively. Most learners complete a self-declaration of their existing ICT skills, linked to the learning objectives, although, this information is not always used effectively to plan differentiated learning or to set more challenging targets for learners. Learners complete the same activities using the same worksheets, regardless of their prior knowledge or experience. There is no formal assessment of literacy, language or numeracy support needs. Learners complete a self-declaration and where a need is identified learners are referred to appropriate programmes within LACL or receive appropriate support in the classroom.
30. The range of provision is good. Partnership working is good and widens participation. Programmes run in a range of community venues across the borough and at times to suit learners. The percentage of male learners has increased from 28% in 2007/08 to 42% in 2008/09. LACL works well with a wide range of employers to provide learning opportunities for their employees. Staff work well with trade union representatives and community groups. They have developed a good e-safety programme in partnership with the Luton Safeguarding Children Board to raise parent, teacher and carer awareness of all aspects of e-safety. LACL uses questionnaires well to establish local needs for targeted groups. The service has worked successfully with the library to secure lottery funding to provide additional ICT facilities and training.
31. Guidance and support for learners are good. Information, advice and guidance are good. Clearly presented course information booklets provide comprehensive programme details enabling learners to choose the most appropriate. Accredited and non-accredited progression routes are very clear. Pastoral support is good. Learners can access crèche facilities and a bursary fund to help with course fees. Sufficient assistive technology is provided as required. A wide range of taster courses enable learners to try new software before enrolling on longer programmes. In class support for learners is generally satisfactory; however, there is insufficient use of volunteers to support novice learners.

### **Leadership and management**

32. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Curriculum leadership is good. Since the reorganisation there has been a clear focus on centralising the leadership and management of the ICT provision. A centralised hub is the focus for resources, curriculum planning and development. Staff receive clear leadership and direction and are well included and involved in decision making, curriculum development and planning. Staff are appropriately experienced and qualified. Arrangements for their continuous professional development are satisfactory.

33. The self-assessment process is inclusive and the grade accurate. The inspection team did not recognise some strengths identified in the self-assessment report. The self-assessment process focuses on compliance rather than quality improvement.
34. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The number of males attending courses has increased significantly. The number of learners from minority ethnic groups broadly matches the local population.
35. Quality improvement measures are insufficiently established. Actions points from class visits and observations of teaching and learning are not systematically or formally acted upon to improve the quality of provision. Some course evaluations, completed by teachers at the end of each course, are insufficiently detailed or qualitative to promote quality improvement or sharing of good practice. Feedback from some observers and curriculum leaders is insufficiently detailed to help tutors improve. The monitoring of initial assessment procedures and subsequent lesson planning and teaching is inadequate.

## Language, literature and culture

### Good: Grade 2

#### Context

36. At the time of the inspection, 290 learners were enrolled on 28 courses. Of these, 162 were on accredited courses. Eight languages including Dutch and British Sign Language were running. Additionally, Swedish, Portuguese, Arabic and Urdu are programmed to start in October. Ninety-two per cent of the current courses are offered at 2 main sites and 78% are evening provision.

37. Modern Foreign Languages provision is co-ordinated by two curriculum leaders and supported by 28 tutors.

#### Strengths

- Very good achievement on accredited provision in modern foreign languages
- Good range of provision
- Good resources
- Good curriculum management

#### Areas for improvement

- Insufficient use of the taught language
- Insufficient planning of learning to meet individual needs

#### Achievement and standards

38. Success and achievement rates for most accredited programmes in modern foreign languages are good. Retention rates are also high. In 2006/07 the rate of retention was 89.4% compared with the national rate of 82.3%. Learners follow Asset accredited programmes at Breakthrough, Preliminary or Intermediate level in 11 languages. In 2007/08, the overall achievement rate was 99%. In addition, 86% of learners at Breakthrough level, 82% at Preliminary and 80% at Intermediate level attained the highest grade. One learner received an award for the best performance in modern Greek at Intermediate level. The poor examination result recorded for a British Sign Language class at Level 1 has now been addressed.

39. Achievement in non-accredited provision is satisfactory. In 2007/08, the provider defined achievement as attaining 80% of the learning goals. Achievement fell to 79% from 94% in the previous year, when it was based on completion.

40. Standards are satisfactory. modern foreign language learners develop the four language skills at an appropriate level and speed. British Sign Language learners are confident signers.

#### Quality of provision

41. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Tutors use the good resources, including smartboards, well. They use a variety of activities to aid learning, making good use of listening exercises, role-play, pair work, questions and answers and games. However, in many lessons there is insufficient use of the taught language, with few opportunities for learners to practice their speaking and listening skills. In the better lessons, tutors use the taught language for descriptions, instructions and scene setting.
42. The range of provision is good. Courses are offered in Chinese, Greek, Polish, Italian, Spanish, Swedish, German, Portuguese, Arabic, Dutch and Urdu. British Sign Language is offered at Levels 1 and 2. Courses range from one-day bite size to 15 and 25-week courses. Progression opportunities in French, Italian, Dutch and Spanish are good. Over 55% of learners who attended bite size courses earlier in the term have now enrolled on longer courses. Many learners who attended bite size courses in 2006/07 went onto study the language at the next level, some went onto study other languages.
43. Links with local employers are good. LACL has run British Sign Language, Polish and French courses for local firms' employees. Enrichment activities are good. Learners have attended organised trips to Madrid and Cadiz and daytrips to Bergamo. Many groups of learners participate in visits to restaurants serving Greek, Italian, French or Spanish food. British Sign Language learners often attend a local deaf club.
44. Advice, guidance and support are satisfactory. Brochures, course leaflets and information sheets satisfactorily give details of the languages on offer and advice on levels and entry requirements. Learners may have an interview with a tutor by telephone or in person before starting. All courses have a satisfactory induction highlighting course requirements, including books or examinations, and support.
45. Planning of learning to meet individual needs is insufficient. Learners complete initial assessments and individual learning plans containing generic, and in the better ones individual, goals. However, tutors do not consider these goals sufficiently in many schemes of work or lesson plans. Some tutors use differentiated teaching and learning activities, in particular where there are two levels of learners.

### **Leadership and management**

46. Leadership and management are satisfactory overall.
47. Curriculum management is good. There are two curriculum leaders who share the overall responsibility in addition to teaching. One of them is available at all times to deal with staff and learner issues as well as organise tutors, centres and courses. Curriculum leaders have expanded and developed accreditation and the use of information learning technology (ILT). They ensure that all tutors are kept well informed and supported through regular class room monitoring visits, email exchanges, one-to-one meetings and termly development sessions.
48. The accommodation and teaching resources are good. The two main venues used are bright, welcoming with car parking and facilities for refreshments. The rooms contain smartboards, whiteboards, tape recorders and appropriate furnishings. Most language rooms have posters and other materials on display which stimulate teaching and learning. Of the language tutors, 86% are native speakers and 93% have appropriate teaching qualifications, or are currently working towards one. Attendance at development meetings by tutors is good.

49. Quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory. A cross-curriculum team has satisfactorily conducted observations of teaching and learning which focus on learner participation, recognisable learning goals, effective use of individual learning plans, resources and the use of ICT and ILT. Observation reports clearly describe strengths and areas for improvement with action points, some of which have been carried out. However, lessons were slightly overgraded and the observation process did not identify insufficient use of the taught language by learners.
50. The course log book, which contains lesson plans, course goals, learner goals and monitoring and teacher assessment, is a useful quality improvement tool. It enables tutors and managers to collect and analyse data and learner feedback and has led to some changes and improvements including changing class times and replacing equipment. Some log books contain insufficient detail to support quality improvement.
51. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. It draws on tutor and learner feedback and data. The self-assessment report recognises most of the strengths and areas for improvement identified during inspection.
52. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Cultural diversity is celebrated as an integral part of the languages curriculum and enhanced by having native speakers. Arabic and Urdu courses serve community language needs. The two main venues have satisfactory access and facilities for learners with disabilities.



## Literacy and numeracy

### Good: Grade 2

#### Context

53. LACL offers 31 part-time day and evening literacy and numeracy classes in 13 venues, which include community centres, churches and schools. At the time of inspection, there were 154 learners enrolled in literacy classes and 95 learners in numeracy classes. Most courses are mixed level, ranging from Pre-entry to Level 2. One full-time curriculum leader is supported by three fractional and 14 hourly-paid tutors.

#### Strengths

- Good use of a range of teaching strategies and resources
- Responsive provision to meet the needs of specific groups
- Good curriculum management

#### Areas for improvement

- Insufficiently specific targets in individual learning plans

#### Achievement and standards

54. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Retention rates are good and have improved from 60% in 2004/5 to 92% in 2006/7. Attendance is carefully monitored and non-attendance followed up.

55. In learning sessions learners demonstrate good skills and confidence in applying them. Learners entered for external accreditation achieve their learning outcomes well. Very few Entry level learners were entered for external accreditation in 2007/08. Plans are in place to increase entries significantly in 2008/09. Accreditation at Levels 1 and 2 is through the national tests in literacy and numeracy. Learners who wish to do so enter when ready. In 2007/8 around two thirds of those entered for Level 1 or 2 literacy passed. In numeracy around three quarters of those entered at Level 1 and half of those entered at Level 2 passed.

56. Targets in many individual learning plans are insufficiently specific. The data derived from achievement of these targets are not sufficiently thorough or meaningful.

#### Quality of provision

57. Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory. Session planning is good, with detailed plans to meet the needs of all learners based on the initial assessment of learners. Tutors use a good range of teaching strategies and resources to address the full range of learners' needs. Most classes include a range of learners from pre-entry to Level 1. In most classes, tutors manage this range of learners well. Tutors also use a good range of teaching strategies and resources, such as group work and the careful pairing of learners. They differentiate teaching and materials effectively and activities are sufficiently challenging for all learners. Learners participate well.

58. Learning support assistants and volunteers are used well in the classroom to support individual learners. They were used in half of observed sessions and were particularly effective in sessions where the range of learners' levels was wide. Learning support assistants are included in session planning and evaluation with tutors. In some classes, tutors do not manage the wide range of levels effectively and learners are given inappropriate tasks or are left too long without teacher support. LACL recognises this and has introduced two level-specific classes as a pilot scheme.
59. Individual learning plans are not used consistently. Many have insufficiently specific or measurable targets. Reviews of targets are insufficiently evaluative and progress and achievement are poorly recorded. The targets are insufficiently specific for the purposes of recognising and recording achievement in non-accredited learning.
60. Support for learners is satisfactory. Learners can access further initial advice and guidance when required, in addition to their initial interview and assessment. All learners on daytime provision have access to childcare with financial assistance if required. Induction materials and feedback forms have been simplified for skills for life learners.
61. Provision to meet the needs of specific groups is good and responsive. Four courses are run by Luton Adult Community Learning as part of the collaboration with the probation service. A Level 1 childcare course with embedded literacy has been successfully developed. Courses are run in three local schools for staff and parents as a follow-on from family learning provision. Provision is being offered in four new venues this term, targeted on areas of greatest need in Luton. Learners are able to attend local, easily accessible classes. Venues are also chosen to complement other local provision. Additional classes are offered when provision becomes oversubscribed.
62. Resources are satisfactory. Most classes are in bright, well decorated and adequately sized rooms with access to computers and smart boards. Insufficient use of ICT was seen in observed sessions. Where it was observed, it was used creatively and confidently by both tutors and learners.

### **Leadership and management**

63. Curriculum management is good. The development plan sets out a clear strategic direction for skills for life provision. Tutors are well supported. Team meetings are held regularly and include learning support assistants and the childcare tutor who teaches on the embedded childcare course. Hourly-paid staff are paid to attend meetings and training events. All classes are visited on a regular basis by the curriculum leader. Procedures and paperwork are consistent across the provision. Procedures to monitor and improve retention and attendance are effective.
64. Teaching staff are well qualified with both generic and subject-specific teaching qualifications. Most attended in-service training during 2007/08. Internal communications are good and hourly-paid staff receive timely information.
65. Quality improvement arrangements are not fully implemented. Although procedures are in place to improve the quality of teaching and learning, comments on observation records do not always match the grade given and some observation grades are overgenerous. A pilot peer observation scheme has been developed to enable skills for life and ESOL tutors to share good practice. Data is not used sufficiently promptly or effectively to monitor provision and monitor learner progress, achievement or progression.

66. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. All classes are ethnically diverse. The percentage of minority ethnic learners is well above the 28% target set by LACL. All learners receive appropriate levels of support. The curriculum leaders for ESOL and for literacy and numeracy work closely together to ensure that learners are placed in correct classes. Vulnerable adults are integrated well into classes and are well supported.

## Family learning

### Good: Grade 2

#### Context

67. LACL offers family language, literacy and numeracy (FLLN) and wider family learning (WFL) to parents and carers in Luton. Family learning courses take place mainly in primary schools and children's centres. At the time of inspection 120 learners were enrolled on 13 family learning courses. Two of these courses are WFL and the rest FLLN. During 2007/08, 848 learners participated in family learning on 114 courses. Of these, 55% were from minority ethnic communities, compared with an overall 28% in the borough. Only 3% of learners were men. Sixty-nine courses were FLLN and 45 WFL. Courses range from workshops to 10 week 'Keeping up with the children plus'. Delivery varies from two-hour workshops to courses of 12 to 60 hours, and is mainly in the daytime.
68. Family learning is managed by the skills for life and family learning manager, with one full time tutor and four fractional tutors. The team also includes crèche and administrative support.

#### Strengths

- Good development of learners' confidence and skills
- Good initial assessment
- Good teaching and learning
- Good links with schools to promote participation in learning
- Good curriculum management

#### Areas for improvement

- Insufficient use of ICT to support learning sessions
- Insufficient monitoring of learner progression

#### Achievement and standards

69. Achievement and standards are good. Learners develop confidence and skills well, and acquire new vocabulary. Learners report increased understanding of literacy and numeracy in school and improvements in their own skills. They value the positive benefits of accreditation and the opportunity to gain qualifications they did not achieve at school. Learners gain a better understanding of their children's behaviour. Current and past learners have increased levels of confidence to help with their children's school work. Some progress to voluntary work in schools, or gain jobs as midday supervisors and learning assistants. One single father, who could not read previously, is now at Level 2 and is more active in the community. He has encouraged his children to join clubs and engage more with others. Head teachers confirm increased involvement in school by parents who attend family learning.
70. Learners' work in portfolios is of good quality. Writing in learner diaries on parenting courses is reflective.

#### Quality of provision

71. The quality of provision is good. Initial assessment is good. Tutors have a particularly good understanding of the process of initial assessment and its value to learners. A wide range of methods are used, from informal observation to formal skills tests, where appropriate. Initial assessment is sensitively implemented in the classroom and is used to set individual learning goals. Learner writing on individual learning plans is also used to identify literacy needs, particularly spelling.
72. Teaching and learning is good. Teaching is well planned and structured. A brisk pace motivates learners. Teaching styles are supportive, with good use of informal learning opportunities. In one class the tutor very effectively modelled ways of dealing with children's behaviour. Tutors are skilled at seizing opportunities to extend learning. Links are made with learning in school to increase understanding of what teachers might expect of their children at different stages.
73. RARPA is satisfactory overall. Individual learning plans are well developed and used across family learning provision. They are appropriately adapted for different courses. Good examples include teacher comments that are supportive and challenging, and learner evidence of practical application of learning. In weaker examples, personal learning goals contain insufficient detail.
74. The use of ICT to support learning is insufficient. Some classes make occasional use of the ICT room in schools, but most learners only have access to ICT for one session. In several classes, the tutor gave references to websites that learners could use at home, but no laptop was available in class.
75. Good links with schools promote participation in learning. Schools help LACL to reach the learner target group very successfully. Constructive discussions, especially at the annual planning meeting, result in provision which meets learners' needs. Schools benefit from course leaflets making clear links between each family learning course and *Every Child Matters*. Family workers in schools play a key role in building relationships with parents to engage those who would not normally come forward to learn. The family workers often provide ongoing support to individuals.
76. Minority ethnic learners are well represented in the provision. However, very few of those attending demonstrate good literacy skills. Good crèche provision facilitates attendance for learners with childcare needs. Advice and guidance is satisfactory. The family learning manager makes some visits to groups. Tutors include informal advice and information in sessions and sometimes skills for life tutors go into classes to talk about provision. Appointments with an information and advice worker are available.

### **Leadership and management**

77. Curriculum management is good, and internal and external communication are good. Staff are well motivated and supported and meet regularly. Staff development within some team meetings supplements service wide training. Annual appraisals and six monthly reviews also promote staff development. Targets for learner numbers are regularly monitored and achieved. Accommodation is satisfactory overall and facilities in new family rooms in schools are good. The promotion of equality and diversity and the arrangements for language, literacy and numeracy support are satisfactory. Managers routinely visit classes and regularly carry out formal observations of teaching and learning to inform self-

assessment and quality improvement. They also analyse course paperwork and evaluate feedback from learner surveys and schools. However, this information is brought together too late to prompt timely quality improvement. The self-assessment report identifies broadly similar strengths to inspection, but does not sufficiently address the areas for improvement. Although there is some evidence of progression by individual learners, LACL does not monitor or evaluate overall learner progression sufficiently.

## 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 2008**, compared with the national rates for GFE colleges.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	19+			Diff
		Starts – Transfers	ACL Provider Rate	National Rate	
1 long	06/07	827	80.4%	70.5%	10
	07/08			N/A	
2 long	06/07	118	78.8%	69%	9.8
	07/08			N/A	
Short**	06/07	770	79%	82.9%	-3.9
	07/08			N/A	

\*\* Courses over 5 weeks long