

# Nottinghamshire County Council

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Inspection date

15 May 2009

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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' monitoring visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

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

- Health, public services and care
- Independent living and leisure skills
- Community learning
- Employability training
- Family learning

## Description of the provider

1. Nottinghamshire Adult and Community Learning Service (ACLS) is part of the county council's Libraries, Archives and Information Group. It contracts out all of its provision. In 2007/08 this involved 51 subcontractors. The service management team consists of a service manager and four development managers supported by four community learning officers, a family learning development worker, a personal and community development learning curriculum leader and an administrative support team. Courses in family learning and 14 subject sector areas are delivered in venues throughout the county. There are 1,744 learners on courses; a total of 6,073 learners have taken part in ACLS courses in 2008/09.
2. The Skills for Employment team, part of the council's Youth Support Service, is led by a service manager and six team managers. The team delivers Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes, advanced apprenticeships and apprenticeships. It operates from 13 sites across the county. Twelve sites offer an E2E programme focusing primarily on personal and social development. The other site delivers vocational E2E programmes and apprenticeships in health, public services and care. There are 139 E2E learners and 30 apprentices in health, public services and care.
3. Both teams are funded by Nottinghamshire LSC with additional funding provided by the county council.
4. In April 2009, 12.8% of the county's 771,900 population had no qualifications and 3.6% were unemployed, both slightly below the regional and national figures. The proportion claiming incapacity benefit was slightly higher than both regional and national rates, at 7.7%.

## Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Good: Grade 2
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

## Sector subject areas

Health, public services and care	Good: Grade 2
Independent living and leisure skills	Good: Grade 2
Community learning	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Employability training	Good: Grade 2
Family learning	Good: Grade 2

## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning  
Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2  
Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

5. The overall effectiveness of both adult and community learning and work-based learning provision is good. Achievement and standards, quality of provision and leadership and management of both aspects are good. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good. Provision in health, public services and care, independent living and leisure skills, employability training and family learning is good. Provision in community learning is satisfactory. The community learning delivered for ACLS under subcontract by local further education colleges was judged to be good at their recent inspections.

### Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

6. The departments responsible for adult and community learning and work-based learning have both demonstrated a good capacity to improve. Both departments have undergone substantial reorganisation and realignment to better reflect the council's and the funding body's priorities and the needs of learners. The predominantly good grades awarded at this inspection generally match those from the previous inspections even though the organisations themselves and the nature and mode of delivery of the provision have changed substantially. Quality improvement arrangements are generally well designed and robust although some are yet to be fully implemented. Self-assessment processes are good, with good involvement from staff and stakeholders. Quality improvement plans satisfactorily address areas for improvement identified through self-assessment. Self-assessment reports are self-critical and identify most strengths and areas for improvement found by inspectors. However, some significant areas for improvement found by inspectors were not identified through self-assessment.

## Key strengths

- Clear strategic vision and leadership
- Good management of a wide range of subcontractors in adult and community learning provision to address issues of social deprivation and access to learning across the county
- Well managed and targeted E2E provision to meet the needs of the most vulnerable group of young adults
- Comprehensive and robust arrangements for quality improvement and development in ACLS
- Excellent partnership arrangements to ensure programmes are locally based, flexible and responsive to the learning needs of specific groups and communities
- Good staff development

## Key areas for improvement

- Incomplete implementation of the system to recognise and record progress and achievement
- Insufficiently rigorous observation of teaching and learning in some instances
- Underdeveloped provision of good quality information learning technology to support learning in some community venues

## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning  
Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2  
Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

7. Achievement and standards are good. In most programmes, learners develop a variety of skills well. These include personal and social skills as well as vocational and parenting skills. In accredited provision, success rates are generally good. In the apprenticeship programme, they are outstanding. Positive progression in E2E is satisfactory. Achievement in non-accredited courses is largely satisfactory although the lack of common definitions does not allow for a direct comparison to a national average or other providers. In 2008/09, ACLS changed its definition of achievement to be the percentage of starters who achieve 75% or more of their course objectives. Previously the definition had been based on completion of all the course objectives. Neither definition takes account of learners' achievement of personal goals. The overall combined success rate, both accredited and non-accredited, on all ACLS completed courses in 2008/09 is 77% with a further 13% partial success rate and 3% awaiting the results of accreditation.

### Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning  
Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2  
Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

8. The quality of provision overall in both ACL and work-based learning is good.
9. Teaching and learning overall are satisfactory. They are good in health, public services and care and in independent living and leisure skills. They are satisfactory in the other areas. Most tutors successfully engage learners, and programmes are well designed to suit the learners' needs. Teaching and learning venues are generally satisfactory. Some poor accommodation is used but this enables learners to access learning in their own communities.
10. Monitoring and moderation of the system for the recognition and recording of progress and achievement has yet to be fully implemented. In some curriculum areas, target-setting is poor and the monitoring and recording of progress is too vague. Many individual learning plans are poorly used, often recording only the course objectives and with wide variations in the recording of progress. Progress review meetings are used well in work-based learning but poorly in most adult and community learning. Both services have identified the full implementation of recognising and recording progress and achievement is an area for further

improvement, and training for providers and tutors is planned during the summer and autumn term.

11. Programmes and activities meet the interests of learners well. The ACLS provision is particularly well targeted to engage under-represented groups. It is offered in the areas of highest deprivation and in response to particular communities. The E2E provision meets the needs of the targeted young people well and the centres are well placed for access to those most in need.
12. Learners are well guided and supported overall. In class, support is good, particularly in independent living and leisure skills, E2E and family learning. ACLS successfully uses subcontractors specialising in information, advice and guidance to provide this service in small providers which might otherwise lack the capacity.

## Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

13. Leadership and management are good. The two services have clear strategic objectives which effectively support the priorities of the council. Provision is effectively managed across a wide range of contracted providers and is well matched to address issues of social deprivation and access to learning. There is also good financial support and commitment to the work of ACLS and Skills for Employment from senior officers and elected members of the council. All ACLS provision is delivered through efficient subcontracting arrangements with 52 providers operating from approximately 250 venues. Additional sources of funding are accessed by good partnership arrangements between the service, the council and its providers to ensure the range of provision meets the needs of local communities in a highly flexible and responsive way. For example, the council makes an excellent financial contribution to support the Skills for Employment provision for some of the most vulnerable young people in the county. There is an inclusive and thorough process of self-assessment involving tutors, learners and other staff members. Self-assessment grades match the inspection grades in all areas except community learning.
14. Effective communication systems are in place. Providers are highly complimentary about the quality of information and guidance they receive from the service through an improved electronic website and frequent engagement in consultation activities, training events and meetings to discuss service delivery, quality issues and development.
15. Quality improvement arrangements are comprehensive and effective in the ACLS. Providers understand expectations placed upon them through the grant aid and commissioning arrangements. Managers monitor provision systematically in

contract meetings and through management information scrutiny. Realistic targets are negotiated with providers, reviewed on a regular basis and are proportionate to need. While systems and procedures for quality improvement are in place within the Skills for Employment programme, given the newness of the team, some of these are not yet established. Arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning are generally satisfactory. In March 2009, 58 observations of 61 tutors had taken place. Paired observations are completed regularly to improve practice and moderation meetings are held to assess the quality of the process overall. Considerable training has been delivered to develop observation skills of ACLS staff and the Skills for Employment programme team. However, too many observation reports lack sufficient evaluative evidence to support the grades awarded and it is not always clear from the records whether areas identified for improvement have been taken forward or addressed.

16. Staff development for tutors and staff of the two services is good. There is a broad range of programmes which focus on improving skills within specific subject areas as well as more generic awareness raising topics such as child protection and health and safety. Tutors and staff are also supported to achieve appropriate teaching qualifications and most tutors are registered with the Institute for Learning.
17. Excellent partnership arrangements between ACLS and a wide range of providers and stakeholders encourage good participation from targeted groups and ensure provision matches local needs. The broad and diverse network of providers and stakeholders involved with the service strongly reflects very good working relationships that have developed and grown over several years. Effective partner arrangements exist between the service and for example the local LSC, local colleges, children's centres, schools and extended services provision, the probation service, primary care trusts, and the regional joint information systems committee. These creative and dynamic relationships contribute considerable value to the work and profile of the service. The highly effective community operations groups held in 13 neighbourhood areas across the county attract regular involvement of providers, stakeholders and learners, and attendance is consistently good. These meetings provide valuable opportunities for networking between the various groups to discuss, review and plan a range of learning opportunities.
18. Skills for Life is delivered in discrete areas of provision across the ACLS including positive action learning support (PALS), family learning, literacy and numeracy, and E2E. Some good practice has been developed, for example the embedding of literacy and numeracy in the family learning curriculum. There is however, no organisation-wide strategy for identifying needs, for planning the curriculum to meet needs, or for setting standards for staff qualifications, teaching, assessment and accreditation. The service has plans to embed Skills for Life through the curriculum but they are yet to be implemented. In the skills for employment programme, Skills for Life is comprehensive across the provision and good progress is made by young people in literacy and numeracy.

19. There is a clear strategy and strong commitment to developing the provision of good quality information learning technology resources across ACLS and Skills for Employment. However, delays in rolling out aspects of the strategy have frustrated progress. In some community learning programmes, the absence of good quality equipment essential to the topic area, such as printers and scanners, has restricted learning opportunities. The provision of laptops has been very well received by providers and plans are in hand to improve internet access through global positioning technology.
20. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. There are clear and well-documented safeguarding policies and procedures which ensure that learners feel safe. All staff receive regular, continuing safeguarding and child protection training and there are helpful guidance notes on the service's intranet. In most instances staff have undergone the required checks. A small number of tutors from one provider have not undergone criminal records bureau checks. This is in hand.
21. Equality of opportunity is good. Both ACLS and the Skills for Employment team have carefully and successfully targeted their provision to engage hard-to-reach and under-represented groups. There is a particular emphasis on accessibility to training and education in the most deprived super output areas of the county, and in matching the courses offered to the needs of the local communities and the interests of under-represented groups. In 2008/09, just under 70% of ACLS learners came from the 250 most deprived super output areas. In 2007/08 the provider largely met or exceeded its ethnicity-based targets for learners from minority ethnic groups and 'white other' groups (aimed at an influx of Eastern Europeans) and its targets for learners with a declared disability. Around 13% of the personal and community development learning funded learners were on programmes for discrete learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The service has established significant links with the traveller community, which is beginning to engage, primarily through family learning programmes.
22. Equality and diversity are fully established in the E2E and apprenticeship programmes. They are innovatively promoted at quarterly reviews and through drama groups, visits and activities involving a variety of ethnic and cultural groups. Equality and diversity policies are amplified in tutor and learner handbooks in both services and most class groups negotiate a set of rules on acceptable behaviour, which include recognition of equality and diversity issues. The procedures for reporting and dealing with discrimination or harassment are clear. Staff and learners' awareness of equality and diversity issues is good.
23. Nottinghamshire County Council has a single equalities scheme, which applies to both services. All policies have been subjected to equality and diversity impact assessments. Procedures for reporting and dealing with cases of discrimination, harassment or bullying are clear and a record of actions and outcomes is kept centrally.

24. Both services have appointed members of staff to lead on equality and diversity, who liaise with each other to exchange good practice, and both have appropriate equality of opportunity action plans, which satisfactorily seek to address issues identified through self-assessment. Equality working groups include partner organisations with particular expertise in aspects of equality and diversity such as mental health issues.
25. The services use management information well to monitor enrolment and satisfactorily to monitor the relative outcomes for the various groups of learners and inform relevant management decisions. Targets for enrolment of various groups of learners are based realistically on their representation within targeted areas rather than county totals.

## What learners like:

- 'The staff are there to help when you get stuck'
- 'It is lovely all the time'
- Small number of learners in each group facilitates whole group discussion
- 'I feel my ideas are listened to'
- 'I know what I have achieved and what I have to do next'
- Ample time and support to complete written work
- 'I can now help my child with mathematics without losing my temper'
- 'Now home is no longer a battlefield after an effective parenting course – I now listen and praise my children and give them more time'
- 'The most important thing I gained is confidence'
- 'I couldn't read or write at all and now I've got an entry level 3 literacy and numeracy qualification and can help my children'
- 'We have such a good range of courses. Last summer we were lighting fires and other outdoor activities. I now do a lot of gardening with my child; I've improved my own skills as well as being confident with my child'
- 'I use the recipe book and cook lots of different things with my children and they love fruit and veg snacks'
- 'I started because I had to, now I come because I want to'
- 'We all support each other'
- 'They are very helpful, they encourage you, I have never felt embarrassed'
- Classes are local so easier to access
- 'They go the extra mile here'
- 'I have learnt loads here, more than I ever did at school'
- 'I get treated with respect'
- 'It's helped me get a college place'
- 'My communication skills have got better and my writing too'

## What learners think could improve:

- 'Nothing, I like it all'
- 'Sitting down all the time'
- More courses
- Dislike of the paperwork
- 'No printer to print my work out'
- Slow computers, technology is a fault
- 'Sometimes they try to cram too much into one lesson'
- 'Resources could be set up before we get into the class'
- 'The room is not very inspiring, it is small and seems like an office'

## Sector subject areas

### Health, public services and care

Good: Grade 2

#### Context

26. ACLS provides 125 courses delivered by 17 subcontractors in 81 venues across the county. A total of 976 learners attend non-accredited and accredited courses including holistic therapies, anger management, health and safety at work and emergency life support for infants and children. The Skills for Employment team offers programme-led apprenticeships in children's care, learning and development at one site. Apprentices gain work experience in schools, community centres and council nurseries. There are eight apprentices and 22 advanced apprentices.

#### Strengths

- Outstanding success rates in work-based learning
- Good teaching and learning on personal and community development learning courses
- Good resources to support learning
- Very effective management of subcontracted provision

#### Areas for improvement

- Insufficient monitoring and recording of learners' progress and achievement
- Insufficient sharing of good practice

#### Achievement and standards

27. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates for apprentices are outstanding. Achievement for learners on personal and community development learning courses is good. Timely success rates for both apprentices and advanced apprentices rose to 88% in 2007/08. Most current learners are making good progress towards completing their qualification. Success rates for accredited personal and community development learning courses were 85% in 2006/07 and 84% in 2007/08. Achievement on non-accredited programmes is good. Overall retention is good.

28. Learners develop good vocational knowledge and skills, including communication, motivation, teamwork, and record-keeping. They grow in self-confidence, take responsibility for a wide variety of tasks and work to a high standard. Many learners recruited to these programmes, with low levels of prior attainment and significant barriers to learning, make significant progress. Learners produce a satisfactory standard of evidence in their well-maintained portfolios, which clearly relate to the assessment process. Many apprentices progress to advanced apprenticeships, employment and higher education.

## Quality of provision

29. The quality of the provision is good. Apprentices' learning styles are assessed during induction and reflected in a good range of teaching methods. Schemes of work are detailed. Lesson plans have appropriate timings and clear aims and objectives. The overall pace of teaching sessions promotes learning and engages learners. Tutors give clear explanations and instruction to learners, and encourage them to contribute and participate in all activities. They use questions well to consolidate and confirm learning. Links between experience, knowledge, theory and practice are good. The rapport between tutors and learners is good, as are session and course evaluations. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory. Assessments are well planned, holistic and thorough.
30. Resources are good. A wide range of accredited, non-accredited and taster courses are available within communities. The professionally qualified and experienced staff are committed, self-motivated and enthusiastic. They create a positive atmosphere conducive to learning. Accommodation at most centres is good. However, there is inadequate access for individuals with poor mobility at the main base for work-based learning in childcare. The required building modifications are planned to start in summer 2009. Training rooms are spacious, bright and fit for their purpose. Most rooms are visually interesting. Displays promote and value diversity. Learners have access to books, journals, handouts, leaflets, computers and the internet. Apprentices borrow materials for creative play and educational toys to use at work. Two virtual babies facilitate learners' understanding of baby care. Personal and community development learners are provided with good quality materials and equipment for use in practical simulations and teaching sessions. Support for learners is good in helping them to stay on programme and achieve. Personal and community development learners have access to free crèche facilities at one venue. Apprentices can experience a wide range of work-placements before deciding on their career path. All managers participate in the review process and are familiar with learners' progress.
31. Individual learning plans on personal and community development courses are insufficiently detailed and are not used sufficiently to guide learning. Individual learning goals are not always recorded at the start of a learning programme. Many learning plans contain identical targets for all learners. On accredited programmes, tutors rely on the course learning outcomes and do not take into account the learners' personal learning goals. Outcomes are often too broad and are not broken down into achievable steps. Some learning goals are described using language which is too complex for learners to understand. Learners complete learning logs but most of them lack written assessment by the tutor of the progress being made. Many tutors do not record learners' progress in sufficient detail. Information in reviews of learners' progress is sometimes vague, with comments such as 'lovely work' or 'you look nice and relaxed'. Progress is not clearly recorded when it has been made. Task completion is often recorded but not the knowledge and skills acquired. Tutor comments in individual learning plans do not always advise learners what they need to do to improve. The

process for the recognition and recording of progress and achievement is insufficiently robust. Apprentices however do have individual learning goals to match their aspirations.

### Leadership and management

32. Leadership and management are good. Nottinghamshire County Council has a clear management structure that enables individuals to be responsible and accountable for the management of the personal, community and development learning provision, despite the large number of subcontractors and venues. Communication is regular and effective, particularly through provider and contract review meetings. There is rigorous and regular monitoring of the quality of the provision using a system of checks on the contract, training, performance and data, which are reviewed by the quality and management teams. All providers sign up to a funding agreement and are set targets specific to their delivery of provision and the area they are working in. The targets include achievement and retention rates. They also receive a monthly update on statistics that include age, gender, achievement, retention, and ethnicity. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory and promoted well throughout the provision. Staff fully understand learners' diverse cultural backgrounds and needs. The self-assessment processes for each team were inclusive and broadly accurate. The reports were concise and easy to follow.
33. Work-based learning and personal and community development learning both have strengths within health and social care. However, the two teams do not routinely meet to share their practice. Recently they have worked together with peer observations of teaching and learning. They acknowledge the mutual benefits and plan further collaboration.

## Independent living and leisure skills

Good: Grade 2

### Context

34. ACLS provides programmes for learners with a range of learning difficulties and/or disabilities through 19 subcontractors. Many learners have complex learning needs. Programmes are also provided for learners with enduring mental health needs who are not yet ready to leave secure accommodation. During the inspection, 287 learners were on courses with seven subcontractors. Courses take place in residential homes, day-care centres and community venues. The subcontractors provide transport for learners to venues when required.

### Strengths

- Good development of learners' communication and independence skills
- Good standard of learners' work
- Good teaching and learning
- Highly responsive provision
- Highly effective support for learners
- Good management of the subcontracted provision

### Areas for improvement

- Insufficient use of individual learning plans

### Achievement and standards

35. Achievement and standards are good. The development of communication and independence skills is good. Skills are promoted through a variety of activities. There is a strong emphasis on the development of learners' communication skills, both verbal and non-verbal. Learners make gains in their self-confidence and social skills through activities such as art and crafts, drama, and healthy living. Learners have good opportunities to gain accreditation through national awards. Progression is good. Learners have good opportunities to move between courses and attend more challenging courses in a different location.

36. The standard of learners' work is good. Work is well presented and maximum use is made of a range of practical examples and photographs with accompanying comments. In one session, a short video clip of what learners had done and achieved the previous week was made with accompanying music to assist the learners' recall and act as a record of learning. Retention is good at 92% in 2007/08.

## Quality of provision

37. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Learners enjoy the courses. Tutors encourage participation and attempt to include all learners. Most learners understand what is expected of them. Their behaviour in the classrooms is handled appropriately. In the better sessions, a variety of stimulating activities engage learners. Tutors are enthusiastic. Lessons have clear objectives, which build on previous learning. In the most successful sessions, teaching is inspiring and tutors use imaginative ways to support learning. There is an inclusive and respectful teaching and learning environment. All learning sessions set a respectful ethos by identifying simple and clear rules for behaviour and group membership. Tutors encourage learners to identify their own ground rules. Tutors and support staff assist the learners to participate and deal gently but firmly with poor behaviour.
38. The provision is highly responsive. The range of courses meets the needs of individuals and communities very well. ACLS commissions courses with providers who use venues in easily accessible areas. Programmes are flexible and designed with a strong emphasis on developing learners' independence. ACLS works closely with providers who have experience and expertise in supporting and caring for learners who are hard to engage due to their significant learning and participation barriers.
39. Support for learners is highly effective. Learner groups are small with good additional support. Learning support workers work with individuals or with small groups. Personal support is effective and focuses on supporting independence. In one session, learners were informed that learning support workers would not do the work for them but would assist if asked. Working relationships between learners, tutors and learning support assistants is good.
40. Resources are satisfactory. Most learners have access to an appropriate range of learning resources. The accommodation in most community settings is satisfactory. However, in some, interruptions occur when the classroom is needed for other purposes. Practical sessions are well equipped and many take place in spacious rooms. There is good access for learners to facilities to ensure personal hygiene, such as washing their hands before and following practical activities. Most venues have access to information and communication technology (ICT). Learners and tutors have ready access to digital cameras, which learners often use to record their work. Staff experience and qualifications are satisfactory. They have the experience and empathy to teach and support these learners.
41. Information, advice and guidance are satisfactory. Most learners receive appropriate information about opportunities for progression at the end of their course. Most providers have visually attractive and colourful leaflets about new courses.

42. Initial assessment is satisfactory. Not all tutors receive relevant information on learners' independence and communication skills to support the initial planning of learning sessions.
43. There is insufficient use of individual learning targets. In some providers, there is no clear distinction between goals and targets. Often learning goals are too broad and are not always linked to the programme. Learners and tutors are insufficiently clear about the specific targets they need to focus on to maximise progress. Learning is not always accurately recorded and often focuses on the activities rather than learners' achievement. However, some tutors use signs and symbols imaginatively to record achievement and assist the learners' understanding of it. In some cases, learning plans are used inappropriately with learners who have little understanding of their purpose. Opportunities to transfer learning between the care setting and the adult education sessions is not fully exploited. The provider is working with care establishments to harmonise the learning sessions with learners' personal care plan to further enhance the learners' independence skills.

#### Leadership and management

44. Management of the subcontracted provision is good. ACLS's clear direction and strategy to work with a wide range of providers to promote educational opportunities for adult learners with learning difficulties and disabilities or mental health difficulties is effective. ACLS supports providers well. This includes curriculum support and staff development support. Communication between the tutors, who are mostly working part time, and the ACLS is good. Procedures for lesson observations are satisfactory. Most tutors have received a recent observation of teaching and learning. Findings are broadly in line with those of inspectors.
45. Self-assessment is satisfactory. Most tutors understand the process and providers participated in an assessment that contributed to the overall self-assessment report. The provision in this area contributes well to inclusion and diversity.

## Community Learning

Satisfactory: Grade 3

### Context

46. In total, 382 learners are engaged in community learning: 167 in ICT, 105 in art, media and publishing and 110 in literacy and numeracy. Approximately 60% of the learners are new to the service. So far in 2008/09, 2,378 learners have enrolled in this area. Most learners are on non-accredited courses of between nine and 20 hours duration. Provision occurs in the mornings, afternoons and evenings and in a wide range of venues across the county. Courses include jewellery making, creative patchwork, beadwork, watercolour, belly dancing, textile art, literacy, numeracy, digital imaging, computing for the terrified and beginners ICT. During inspection, 27 part-time tutors were involved in delivery. This year, 72 have been involved altogether. Men accounted for 33% of enrolments, 1.8% came from minority ethnic groups, 47% were aged over 55 and 25% had a declared disability or learning difficulty.

### Strengths

- Good development of independent learning skills
- Good individual coaching in ICT and literacy and numeracy classes
- Good range of community-based provision

### Areas for improvement

- Too much uninspiring teaching
- Weak target-setting
- Insufficient resources for learning

### Achievement and standards

47. Learners' achievement is broadly satisfactory. Success rates on non-accredited courses are satisfactory. The current year success rate is 78% in the three areas. Achievement of qualifications by offenders attending literacy and numeracy classes is satisfactory at 41%. Standards of work are satisfactory and in some cases good.

48. Learners develop good independent learning skills, particularly in ICT and literacy and numeracy. They are focused and attentive during class and fully involved in their own learning. Positive and constructive relationships between tutors and learners enable learners to participate in their learning, to contribute and to ask questions. Learners develop confidence, social contacts and personal skills as well as good practical skills. Retention rates are generally good. Many learners have attended previous courses and have progressed either to more advanced courses or to courses in other areas.

## Quality of provision

49. The quality of provision is satisfactory. ACLS provision by those local colleges not visited on this inspection was judged to be good in recent inspections.
50. Individual coaching in ICT and literacy and numeracy classes is good. Literacy and numeracy learners all follow individual programmes, attending either individually or in small groups. Many tutors use diagnostic assessment to identify individual learning needs in consultation with learners. Most tutors provide individual support to learners, using good, clear explanations and demonstrations. Relationships between tutors and learners are constructive and supportive. Many tutors in ICT encourage learners to work in pairs, individually or in groups. Tutors use effective questioning techniques to increase learners' understanding of their subject area. Tutors use good individual coaching where appropriate.
51. Much of the teaching seen in the arts-based community provision is uninspiring and bland. The pace of lessons is often slow and does not sufficiently challenge learners to develop wider skills or to experiment with original design ideas. Teachers often concentrate on the development of a range of low-level technical skills and do not include creative or more stretching aspects of the subject. However, in the best lessons detailed schemes of work and lesson plans include a variety of activities and sessions are well planned. Tutors often provide good verbal feedback to learners during lessons, which the learners use to improve their skills.
52. The range of community-based provision is good. Centres are easily accessible. The venues offer learners open and welcoming learning environments where they feel comfortable. The provider offers a wide range of courses to suit learners, ranging from three to 30 hours. A few are externally accredited. The provider targets difficult-to-reach learners, many of whom are isolated or have barriers to learning. The provider offers individual tuition to learners with multiple barriers to learning in their own home. The provider has very good links with a range of partners and works well to ensure the needs of learners are met. Literacy and numeracy teaching rooms in probation service offices help to facilitate access and improve attendance, and flexible access to courses helps learners to link attendance with other appointments. Partnership working has improved the lives of many learners in important and sometimes life-changing ways, increasing their confidence and motivation to learn.
53. Target-setting is weak. Procedures for agreeing targets with learners and recording progress are inconsistently applied and in too many cases targets are neither precise nor time bound. The individual learning plan distinguishes between course aims and personal learning aims, but in practice tutors use these in different ways and in some cases interchangeably. The diagnostic assessment for literacy and numeracy learners is used in consultation with learners to identify some specific learning objectives, although these often do not have a target date. Tutors use weekly progress reviews to record activities during the class but do not set clear, time-bound targets.

## Leadership and management

54. Curriculum management is satisfactory. Managers communicate effectively with a wide range of partners, enabling the service to support the target communities. Managers promote equality of opportunity satisfactorily and effectively monitor recruitment of priority groups.
55. Resources are insufficient for learning. Much of the specialist accommodation and resources are inadequate. Most classrooms have insufficient equipment to enable learners to develop a range of technical and creative skills. Some accommodation is too cramped for the activity taking place. Poor levels of ICT equipment in others limit the activities learners can undertake.
56. Those observing lessons do not always focus sufficiently on learning during observations. There is often insufficient identification of teaching and learning weaknesses. The grading of observation of teaching and learning is often generous which does not support the continuous improvement in standards. Tutors are not given sufficient guidance to improve their teaching and learning.
57. The self-assessment report evaluates ICT, visual and performing arts and media and foundation programmes separately and includes those elements of the provision delivered by local further education colleges and the WEA. There is little correlation with inspection findings.

## Employability training

Good: Grade 2

### Context

58. E2E is delivered by the Skills for Employment team, formed in March 2009 from two existing work-based learning teams within the Youth Support Service in the council's Inclusion and Engagement Division. The team is led by a service manager and six team managers. Provision is at 13 sites in the county. To date in 2008/09, 142 learners have enrolled on the programme. The E2E vocational strand provides training in horticulture, construction, home maintenance and painting and decorating. At two sites, provision is targeted at young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

### Strengths

- Good personal and social development for learners
- Good development of learners' vocational skills
- Good individual support
- Strong corporate commitment to supporting young people
- Good promotion of equality and diversity

### Areas for improvement

- Poor progression at some bases
- Incompletely implemented quality improvement arrangements

### Achievement and standards

59. Achievement and standards are good. Learners make good gains in their personal and social development. They learn to work effectively in teams, developing speaking and listening skills, and they cooperate well together to achieve group tasks. Their behaviour is good. They gain significantly in confidence and self-esteem and are able to reflect on their progress, learning and future goals. Many of them progress well in literacy and numeracy skills. A variety of accreditation is used well to support their achievement.

60. The development of learners' vocational skills is good. Qualifications are widely used. Learners develop practical knowledge and skills such as bricklaying, home maintenance, painting and decorating and horticulture. Learners who have gained qualifications in sound production have progressed to full-time college courses.

61. Positive progressions from E2E are currently around the national average at 56%. They have declined in recent years. However, the relatively small numbers and poor progression at some sites have impacted disproportionately on the overall figure. Service managers have recognised this as an important area for

development and put a range of measures in place to arrest the decline and improve progression rates at under-performing sites.

### Quality of provision

62. The quality of provision is good. The curriculum offered at most sites is broad with a good balance between the three elements of the programme; vocational development, basic skills and personal and social development. Tutors place importance on, and give good individual support for, young people, while focusing well on progress and achievement. Staff act as good role models for young people and display behaviours that reflect those expected in the workplace.
63. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Sessions are well planned with a good focus on learning and progression. In the better sessions, teaching is well paced and tutors use interesting, imaginative materials and activities that capture learners' imagination. Teaching is fluid, time passes quickly and learning is rapid. In other sessions, some materials are dull and uninspiring and phases fail to stimulate learners. In these instances, tutors are not always confident in the subject matter. The concentration of learners wanes and sessions lose direction. Resources used to support teaching and learning are mixed in quality and availability. Some excellent equipment is available, such as film-making and recording equipment. Where used, this contributes to a stimulating learning environment. Some sessions are over-reliant on the use of worksheets and technology is not generally used as a tool for learning. This is recognised in the self-assessment report as an area for development. Basic skills are well integrated with most sessions. Young people with dyslexia receive additional individual support from a local specialist association. Discrete Skills for Life provision is not currently available in the north of the county due to a staff vacancy.
64. Learners receive good individual support. Tutors are sensitive to the different needs of young people. They respond well to these to ensure that everyone contributes at their own pace and level. Tutors are well attuned to issues of inclusion and deal sensitively with individual needs during lessons.
65. Assessment and planning successfully focuses on the full range of learners' needs. All learners routinely undergo appropriate diagnostic assessment of literacy and numeracy. Progress is effectively reviewed and target-setting is appropriate. Guidance and support for learners is good, with regular reviews being undertaken. These ensure that learners reflect on their progress and are fully involved in setting and agreeing their targets. The E2E passport is consistently completed. Tutors ensure a good focus on learning and daily reflections help learners identify their progress and what they have learnt. Aspects of the process for recognising and recording progress and achievement are insufficiently established across the provision. Some of the tools used are ineffective. This is recognised in the self-assessment report.

## Leadership and management

66. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Corporate commitment to supporting disengaged young people into employment is strong. £898,000 funding from the county council adds significant capacity to the E2E programme. Additionally significant funding has been committed to improve the quality of the premises. Five new centres are planned to replace some poor premises in current use. Overall the quality of premises is satisfactory, but some sites are bleak and uninviting.
67. The self-assessment is broadly accurate. Managers have a sound grasp of the strengths and areas for improvement of the provision. The self-assessment involved managers and staff from the different sites and was undertaken in partnership with ACLS. The report recognises the need for greater rigour across the provision in reaching accurate judgements about performance.
68. Quality improvement activities are not yet fully established. An observation of teaching and learning scheme is in place and observations are regularly undertaken. However, there is no formal observation plan. Some lessons are graded too high, providing managers with an inaccurate picture of the overall quality of teaching. Records of observations are insufficiently evaluative and in some cases observers miss important development points. The provider has identified in the self-assessment the need to refresh the current observation scheme. Management information is routinely collected but is not used systematically to improve performance. This is recognised in the self-assessment report as an area for development.

## Family Learning

Good: Grade 2

### Context

69. At inspection, 324 learners were attending family learning courses across the provision. Of these, 177 were on 23 courses with subcontractors other than those subject to inspection in their own right. Thirty-eight per cent of learners are on courses leading to external accreditation. Courses include family finance, story-telling with puppets and related crafts, playing with language, healthy eating and music technology, as well as a variety of literacy and numeracy courses.

70. In 2008/09 so far, approximately 1000 learners have attended 91 family literacy and numeracy courses, 10 family learning impact funded courses and 46 wider family learning courses across the county in children's centres, schools, community venues and specialist centres. Eleven per cent of learners are male and 4% are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

71. In 2007/08, ACLS delivered 256 courses at 124 venues using 33 providers. There were 1,608 learners and 2,004 enrolments.

### Strengths

- Good development of independent learning
- Good skills development
- Good retention rate
- Wide range of well-designed provision
- Good information and advice to support learners' progression
- Good curriculum management

### Areas for improvement

- Insufficiently rigorous quality assurance of lessons
- Ineffective marketing of courses at new venues

### Achievement and standards

72. Achievement and standards are good. Learners successfully develop independent learning skills. They undertake individual project work outside of classes, compile reflective diaries at home using digital photographs and examples of work annotated by evaluative comments, practise newly acquired skills and knowledge and prepare work at home to share with the group.

73. Learners develop good practical, technical and creative skills. In one ICT class, learners learned how to write and illustrate stories and to negotiate effectively with their children about the content. On healthy living courses, learners create healthy meals. They understand the benefits of eating as a family and try new

recipes and unfamiliar foods. They are enthusiastic about learning and many are highly motivated to continue to develop their skills and knowledge. Many gain confidence and social benefits by working with other adults and children. Learners realise the importance of developing their own literacy and numeracy skills for personal development and for supporting their children's learning. Learners develop good parenting and personal skills. They increase their understanding of how children learn, teaching methodologies and the specialist language used by teachers and children when discussing literacy and numeracy.

74. Fourteen per cent of learners have gained accreditation through national literacy or numeracy tests and an additional 7% through other external accreditation bodies.

75. Most learners progress to further education, training or employment. Some become volunteers at their children's schools or nurseries or train to become teaching assistants.

76. The retention rate is good at 93% in 2007/08 and 95% so far in 2008/09.

#### Quality of provision

77. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the larger subcontracted providers, teaching and learning were judged to be good at their own recent inspections.

78. In better sessions, tutors effectively use a range of teaching strategies. Learners work enthusiastically in pairs and groups to tackle problems, discuss solutions and build their skills through a range of activities. Tutors use open questions and constructive feedback effectively. Imaginative, practical activities help develop learners' personal skills and materials for their children's learning on family courses. A range of good quality resources including information and learning technology supports learning. Tutors embed good opportunities into lessons for learners to address their individual needs and practise skills. Learners evaluate their own progress accurately and clearly identify the next steps towards their main learning goals on a clear learning plan. Group outcomes and individual targets are regularly discussed and renegotiated as the courses progress. In other lessons, tutors dominate discussions and spend too long giving information to learners. They do not sufficiently check learners' understanding or allow them sufficient opportunities to learn and discuss ideas in small group and pairs. Learners spend too much time listening to tutors' explanations. Tutors use a limited range of learning activities and pay insufficient attention to room layout and group management.

79. Initial assessment is satisfactory. Tutors use a range of customised, informal methods to effectively establish learners' starting points, needs and interests.

80. A wide range of well-designed courses meets the needs and interests of learners very effectively. The service links closely with subcontractor staff to encourage learners back into learning. Courses are designed and modified, often in direct response to learner feedback, or to respond to identified needs and gaps in provision. Some courses are particularly designed to encourage greater involvement of fathers.
81. Courses are delivered flexibly and responsively in local communities with good emphasis on the needs of adults. Learners are invited to coffee mornings and taster courses to discuss opportunities. Informal short courses are provided as well as longer courses offering opportunities to gain accreditation. Learners can take small steps at their own pace and progress in line with their own and their families' needs and situations.
82. Support for learners is good. Tutors are very sensitive to the needs of new learners. Children benefit from good childcare provision. The information and advice process is well developed and provides a systematic and comprehensive approach to giving learners' choice and signposting other relevant opportunities.

#### Leadership and management

83. Leadership and management are good. Curriculum management is good. A well-developed commissioning process involves a range of subcontractors with access to specific community groups, specialist skills and expertise, thereby providing a rich and diverse set of courses. Subcontractors work collaboratively to share good practice, avoid duplication and ensure a coherent curriculum. They are well involved in the self-assessment process.
84. Equality of opportunity is good. Provision is inclusive. Tutors promote equality and diversity issues well in lessons.
85. Marketing and publicity of courses in new venues is often ineffective with low numbers of learners being recruited.
86. The quality assurance of teaching and learning is insufficiently rigorous. Some observed lessons are graded too high. The process places too much emphasis on teaching skills and tutor knowledge, and does not focus sufficiently on how well tutors facilitate learning.

## Learners' achievements

### Outcomes on Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes managed by Nottinghamshire County Council '2006' to '2009'

Year	Number of leavers in the year	Achieved objectives rate* (%)	Progression rate** (%)
2006/07	226	29%	55%
2007/08	225	38%	53%
2008/09 (7 months)	155	39%	49%

Note: 2008/09 data is 'part year' only and is representative of seven months of the LSC contract year

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

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

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