

# Newcastle upon Tyne City Council

---

Inspection date

15 May 2009

---

Inspection number

333338

## Contents

Background information .....	3
Inspection judgements .....	3
Scope of the inspection.....	3
Description of the provider .....	4
Summary of grades awarded .....	5
Overall judgement .....	6
Effectiveness of provision.....	6
Capacity to improve .....	6
Key strengths .....	7
Key areas for improvement .....	7
Main findings.....	8
Achievement and standards .....	8
Quality of provision .....	8
Leadership and management .....	10
Equality of opportunity .....	10
What learners like.....	12
What learners think could improve .....	12
Sector subject areas .....	13
Health, public services and care .....	13
Languages, literature and culture .....	16
Preparation for life and work.....	19
Family learning.....	22
Learners' achievements .....	25

## 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
- Languages, literature and culture
- Preparation for life and work
- Family learning

Information and communication technology; hospitality and catering; arts, media and publishing; education and training and employability training were sampled by inspectors and contribute to the inspection main findings. Provision in science and mathematics; agriculture, horticulture and animal care; leisure, sport and recreation; humanities; social sciences; business, administration and law and community development was not inspected. Learner numbers in most of these areas were low.

## Description of the provider

1. Newcastle upon Tyne City Council (the council) is a large metropolitan local authority in the northeast. The council set up Newcastle City Learning (NCL) in August 2006 following a full service restructure, after the previous inspection, to directly deliver most of the council's learning and skills provision across 16 sector subject areas.
2. Tyne and Wear LSC funds NCL to deliver adult and community learning for adult learner responsive provision, adult safeguarded provision and work-based learning employer responsive provision in apprenticeships, Train to Gain, Entry to Employment (E2E) and European social funded employability provision, under a single contract.
3. The head of adult learning manages NCL, supported by managers for curriculum and quality, employment and skills, management information and plans, E2E and construction work-based learning. NCL subcontracts its construction apprenticeships to Northumberland College. Trinity Solutions provides E2E together with five subcontractors. Two partners, Learning First and Interactive Development provide courses for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and some National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). A small number of community partners provide neighbourhood learning in deprived communities' projects on behalf of NCL. The service employs 166 tutors.
4. In 2007/08, NCL enrolled 13,640 learners to its adult and community learning provision, and 822 learners to work-based learning. Currently 5,797 learners are enrolled; 5,121 in adult and community learning and 676 in work-based learning, with 36 apprentices, 480 Train to Gain learners and 160 on E2E programmes.
5. In April 2009, unemployment in Newcastle was 7.8%, compared with 7.1% nationally. Unemployment in some wards is over 15%. Newcastle is ranked 37<sup>th</sup> most deprived of 353 local authority areas in the 2007 indices of deprivation.

## 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
Train to Gain	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
Train to Gain	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
Train to Gain	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
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Satisfactory: Grade 3

## Sector subject areas

Health, public services and care	Good: Grade 2
Languages, literature and culture	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Preparation for life and work	Good: Grade 2
Family learning	Good: Grade 2

## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

6. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievement and standards are good. Work-based learners develop skills, knowledge and confidence. Success rates in accredited adult and community learning are satisfactory. Retention is low for these courses, but most learners who complete achieve their qualification.
7. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching is generally planned well and most tutors use a wide range of effective teaching and learning strategies to motivate learners. However, tutors do not use learners' individual targets sufficiently to support planning for teaching and learning. Extensive provision responds effectively to community and employer needs, and offers good progression routes. A strong emphasis is placed on employability skills. Support for learners is satisfactory.
8. Leadership and management are good. Good strategic leadership and direction is developed collectively with the head of service and senior staff, and is communicated well to staff. Curriculum management has improved since the previous inspection and is good. Curriculum managers have led and supported their teams successfully through periods of intense change. Partnership working is particularly effective. NCL has wide-ranging partnerships across all areas of the city with increasingly productive links with employers and well-established links with schools.
9. The implementation of quality improvement arrangements is incomplete. A wide range of established quality policies and procedures is used, but the quality group concentrates on compliance and audit. Observations of teaching and learning are not complete for all staff.
10. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Social inclusion and widening participation initiatives are good and target some of the most deprived communities. Examples of the promotion of equal opportunities within the curriculum exist, but it is not well established.

### Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

11. NCL's capacity to improve is good. Since the previous inspection, NCL has effectively tackled all of the key weaknesses and maintained its key strengths. Strategic direction and leadership of the service is now good. Success rates show a significantly improving trend although retention remains an area for improvement within accredited adult and community learning provision. NCL has

restructured its service to improve delivery and accommodation. Curriculum management is now good. Quality improvement systems are thorough and in place but the implementation of some arrangements are not applied consistently within adult and community learning provision. In some sector subject areas, the number of observations of teaching and learning completed is unacceptably low.

12. The self-assessment process is inclusive of staff, learners', employers' and wider partners' views. The self-assessment report is very thorough. Inspection findings confirmed many of the key strengths and all the areas for improvement identified by NCL in its self-assessment report.

## Key strengths

- Good outcomes in work-based learning
- Good development of skills, knowledge and confidence
- Good teaching and learning
- Extensive provision that responds effectively to community and employer needs
- Good strategic leadership and direction
- Good curriculum management
- Particularly effective partnership working

## Key areas for improvement

- Low retention in accredited adult and community learning
- Insufficient use of learners' targets to support planning for teaching and learning
- Incomplete implementation of quality improvement arrangements

## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

13. Achievement and standards are good. Outcomes are good in work-based learning. Most success rates have improved significantly over the last three years. Apprenticeship overall success rates were consistently high over the period at around 90%. Timely success rates have improved significantly from 33%; almost all apprenticeships are now timely. Advanced apprenticeship framework completion is now above the national rate at 67%; their NVQ success rate is 100%, almost all timely. Train to Gain overall success rates are 93% in 2007/08, and the historically low timely success rates have improved. For planned leavers in 2007/08, 73% are timely. Good progression rates for E2E learners have been maintained since the previous inspection. The achievement of E2E objectives has improved, but is still too low at 39%.

14. All learners demonstrate good development of skills, knowledge and confidence. Learners concentrate well and actively participate in their sessions. Standards of work are good, and learners make good progress. At a celebration of learning event, adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities produced a confident performance in front of a large audience. Adult learners discuss key topics confidently and present their findings to their peers. Many progress into further learning and some into employment.

15. Success rates in accredited adult and community learning provision are satisfactory. However, achievement is high. LSC data for 2006/07 and provider data for 2007/08 show that 89% of the learners who complete achieve their qualification. Retention on non-accredited adult and community learning is high.

16. Retention is low in accredited adult and community learning, and has declined by seven percentage points from 2004/05 to 2006/07, from 86% to 79%. NCL has identified this and has improved its monitoring of attendance and learners' withdrawals from courses. It is too soon to assess the effectiveness of these actions.

### Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

17. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching and learning were good or outstanding in nearly 75% of observations, with no



unsatisfactory teaching, which matched NCL's findings. Most teaching is planned and paced well, using a good range and balance of teaching and learning strategies, often involving information and learning technology. Practical sessions use an effective balance of whole group teaching, demonstration, and individual coaching. Tutors are enthusiastic, manage their classrooms well and motivate their learners. In E2E, team teaching provides effective vocational and Skills for Life support for learners. In some E2E provision, links with *Every Child Matters* and the content of sessions are particularly clear. Resources for teaching and learning are mostly good but in a minority of sessions tutors do not use information learning technology effectively. Assessment in vocational and accredited adult and community learning provision is thorough.

18. Learners' individual targets are used insufficiently to support planning for teaching and learning. A minority of tutors use learners' personal targets well when they plan their sessions. In E2E, the links between passport targets and the daily activity plan are generally unclear. In adult and community learning, individual targets are often vague or unrealistic. It is not clear how tutors use their monitoring of learners' progress to refine their teaching. NCL has identified this, but the training provided in setting targets has yet to show full effect.
19. Extensive provision responds well to community and employer needs. A particularly broad range of non-accredited and accredited learning opportunities offer good progression routes from pre-entry level to level 3. Most adult and community provision is accredited, leading to vocationally relevant qualifications. A strong emphasis is placed on employability skills. The UCAN pre-employment course supports unemployed learners to prepare for guaranteed interviews with large employers. Provision to meet specific needs includes dedicated provision for sight and hearing impaired learners and provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. NCL uses project-based activities well to place Skills for Life into a vocational context for E2E learners, but in some workplaces Skills for Life and vocational links are unclear.
20. Support for learners is satisfactory. Tutors provide good support in sessions. In E2E, one partner produced a range of useful learner booklets to explain each *Every Child Matters* outcome. Effective partnerships support the provision of much information, advice and guidance. NCL has identified the provision of information, advice and guidance as a development area in adult and community learning. It is working towards the Matrix standard and training administrative staff for NVQs in advice and guidance. The range of course information is generally satisfactory. Support in sessions for learners with particular support needs is satisfactory. However, in adult and community learning, most support needs are self-declared. When needs are not declared at enrolment, the provision of support is delayed. Arrangements for additional learning support and adaptive equipment are generally satisfactory, although funding does not always meet the needs of all disadvantaged learners.

## Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

21. Leadership and management are good. The head of service sets good strategic leadership and direction. These strengths are not identified in the self-assessment report. An effective strategy group, with suitable independent membership, provides useful support and challenge. Strategic direction is developed and monitored collectively with senior staff, is supported well by council leaders and communicated to staff well. Roles and responsibilities are defined clearly. The overall service strategy links clearly to city priorities, and has good input from sector subject areas. Individual strategies identify and tackle key issues effectively. The management and deployment of resources is good and supported by strong council-wide financial controls. The strategy group is fully aware of the remaining challenges and works hard to deliver the strategic plan.

22. Curriculum management is good. This strength was identified as an area for improvement at the previous inspection; it is not identified in the self-assessment report. Curriculum managers successfully led and supported their teams through periods of intense change. Staff are valued, well informed and able to take advantage of the good range of training opportunities offered to them. Good staff recruitment processes are in place and most staff are appropriately qualified.

23. Partnership working is particularly effective. This is identified in the self-assessment report. NCL has wide-ranging partnerships across all areas of the city, including increasingly productive links with employers and good links with schools. Partners are well informed and their contribution is valued. In E2E, the provider network is managed well. Many NCL staff participate in a wide range of networks, keeping well informed of national initiatives and developments within the curriculum.

24. Staff use the satisfactory management information systems routinely to identify problems. Previously, data was collected but not used well by management or staff. Recently, managers have revised the data available and trained all staff on its use. Staff now use data more effectively to monitor the progression of individual learners and provide managers with accurate information on retention and achievement. Attendance data is collected and made available to tutors, but this system is not yet electronic and has only recently been introduced.

25. The implementation of quality improvement arrangements is incomplete. This is partially identified in the self-assessment report. Guidance on the range of well established quality policies and procedures is available to staff online, but the implementation of these is incomplete. The quality group concentrates on compliance and audit at the expense of quality improvement. Observations of teaching and learning are not yet complete for all staff and are not always linked

effectively to staff appraisal. In some sector subject areas, very few observations have been carried out. Work-based learning staff do not grade observed sessions. Highlighted action points from observations are not always followed up. Feedback from learners is routinely sought; in E2E this is used effectively. Elsewhere it is collected but not always analysed sufficiently quickly to provide an effective response or to promptly identify where improvements could be made. The response rate for the employer survey was very poor at 23%. Some monitoring of subcontractors is insufficiently thorough. A new system of monitoring the delivery and take up of learner support has been introduced but it is too soon to determine its effect.

26. Safeguarding arrangements for learners meet government requirements and are supported by a council-wide safeguarding policy. However, this is not specific to adult and community learning. All staff have enhanced Criminal Records Bureau clearance, and have completed safeguarding training. An identified member of staff is responsible for safeguarding vulnerable adults and child protection. Contact details for younger learners are kept on a central list. Some referrals have been made via the common assessment framework. Safe e-learning is promoted effectively. NCL investigates complaints promptly.
27. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Policies and procedures, to cover staff and learners, meet all legislative requirements and are reviewed regularly. All NCL staff have attended equality and diversity training. An equality working group meets regularly and provides effective leadership and guidance. Data is analysed regularly to ensure active engagement of learners across the city and to highlight any differences in achievement of different groups. Marketing and promotional materials successfully promote the diversity of learners who use the service. Good widening participation initiatives target some of the most deprived communities, with particular success in family learning where the number of men engaged in learning has increased significantly. The promotion of equal opportunities to learners within the curriculum is satisfactory. Some examples of good practice exist, for example in health and social care, but in many areas the promotion of equality and diversity through the curriculum is not well established.

## What learners like:

- 'I've learnt to take responsibility for my learning'
- 'I'm growing in confidence. I felt that because of my poor education that I couldn't support the children, now I can.'
- 'I'm made to feel positive about learning mathematics'
- Gaining confidence and the chance to go further
- 'It's a good social setting. I feel comfortable with the others'
- Supportive and non-judgemental staff
- The tutor has a lot of knowledge and experience to draw on
- 'The tutor mixes activities so we learn in different ways'
- The pace of the sessions
- Provision of confidential individual support
- Being able to get released from work to attend courses
- Going on work-placements
- 'Being able to contribute, through focus groups, to issues that affect us'
- 'They did an evaluation early in the course and things changed as a result of that'

## What learners think could improve:

- Not always enough publicity about courses
- 'I wish this class was a bit nearer to where I live'
- More courses to match children's learning at different stages
- Other forms of research than the internet, perhaps more books in the library
- Not having a break between assessors
- Healthier food in the café
- Room temperatures are sometimes too hot or too cold

## Sector subject areas

### Health, public services and care

Good: Grade 2

#### Context

28. Provision includes adult and community learning in holistic therapies, counselling, higher education foundation courses (HEFC) in health studies, and Train to Gain NVQs in health and social care, in cleaning and support services, and in advice and guidance. Courses take place in a range of locations, including schools, community venues and workplaces.

29. In adult and community learning, 181 learners are enrolled: 98 in counselling at levels 2 and 3, 59 in holistic therapies and 24 in HEFC in health studies. Course length varies from eight to 30 weeks and all courses are accredited. Men constitute 15% of the learners and 14% are from minority ethnic backgrounds.

30. In Train to Gain, 100 learners are working towards NVQs, mostly employed by the council. Recent recruitment includes other employers including the National Health Service (NHS). An internal partnership arrangement with children and adult services supports the delivery of health and social care NVQs for council staff.

#### Strengths

- Good overall success rates on health and social care Train to Gain programmes
- Good development of learners' skills and knowledge
- Good teaching and learning in adult and community learning
- Wide range of programmes to meet learners' and employers' needs
- Effective management of change

#### Areas for improvement

- Low retention on some adult and community learning programmes
- Insufficient use of individual learning plans and reviews to plan and monitor progress in Train to Gain

#### Achievement and standards

31. Achievement and standards are good. Overall success rates for Train to Gain in health and social care are good at 95% in 2007/08. The self-assessment report identifies this. Timely success rates are satisfactory at 69%, and improving. Current learners on Train to Gain programmes make satisfactory progress and those who complete gain their qualification. Progress of learners in HEFC in health studies is good. All learners currently completing their course have places in higher education for a range of professional subjects including nursing, radiography, social work and sports science.

32. Learners on all programmes develop good skills and knowledge, both professionally and personally, as identified in the self-assessment report. Learners show increased confidence in their workplace and in the classroom. In health and social care, learners develop a heightened awareness of their work role. Learners in holistic therapies put new skills into practice effectively with friends and family. Learners work is of a good standard.
33. Retention is low on some adult and community learning courses. Some learners do not start the course they enrol on while others leave further into the programme. The self-assessment report partially identifies this. Retained learners attend regularly and achieve their qualification.

### Quality of provision

34. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning on adult and community learning courses are good. NCL identified these strengths in its self-assessment report. Sessions are planned well and link to clear schemes of work. Highly qualified and experienced tutors use diverse and interesting methods to engage learners. In holistic therapy sessions, demonstration and practical experience are balanced appropriately. On HEFC in health studies courses, tutors use current topics effectively to promote discussion and learning, using professional language to stretch learners. All tutors frequently reinforce and check learning and maintain all learners' interest. Courses are well resourced. Treatment beds, and all necessary equipment for holistic therapies, create an appropriate environment in community settings. Main centres have fully equipped therapy rooms. Learners on higher education foundation courses have good access to the internet and centre libraries.
35. Assessment on Train to Gain programmes is satisfactory. Assessors plan assessment in detail to make effective use of evidence to assess across a number of units. Good use is made of audio and video recording of observed assessments in cleaning and support, and advice and guidance. Planned workplace visits to learners make best use of on-the-job evidence and often take place outside usual work hours. Internal verification is effective. On some occasions, assessors focus insufficiently on completing specific units. Initial assessment on all programmes is satisfactory and support offered as needed.
36. Individual learning plans and reviews are used insufficiently to set interim targets and measure progress in Train to Gain programmes. The extensive learning plan has many good features, including post course evaluation, but centre staff are not clear about how to use the form.
37. A good range of programmes meets learners' and employers' needs well. This strength was not identified in the self-assessment report. In adult and community learning, HEFC in health studies courses prepare learners effectively to enter higher education. A range of holistic therapy courses provides learners with good opportunities to gain sufficient qualifications to enter employment. Counselling courses are well subscribed and valued by learners. Community-based courses are available, at a range of suitable times, in locations across the city that are accessible by public transport and have good parking facilities. The Train to Gain

programme is broad and particularly valued by employers. In health and social care, programmes are effective in providing employers and learners with the opportunity to gain NVQs at all levels.

38. Initial advice, guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Tutors and assessors are supportive. On many of the adult and community learning courses, learners receive clear pre-course information. However, for some learners this information is insufficiently detailed to prepare them for the course.

#### Leadership and management

39. Good leadership and management, including the effective management of change, have improved the whole curriculum since the previous inspection. Previously low retention and success rates have improved significantly in most courses. Investment in good-quality resources supports adult and community learning courses. Managers have clear roles and responsibilities, and demonstrate good line management skills. Communication with dispersed tutors in adult and community learning, Train to Gain assessors and internal verifiers is regular and effective. In health and social care, meetings include partner/provider support. HEFC in health studies tutors meet with university stakeholders for an end of course review that includes learners' views. Market changes, particularly in holistic and beauty therapies, are taken account of in programme planning. Managers take effective action to resolve problems and improve outcomes. Learners' understanding of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Learners are safeguarded effectively.

## Languages, literature and culture

Satisfactory: Grade 3

### Context

40. Languages, literature and culture form one of the largest sector subject areas within NCL's adult and community learning provision, covering 15 foreign languages, English and cultural courses. During 2008/09 to date, 1,672 learners have enrolled on programmes. Most programmes are located in the four main venues situated across the city, and take place in the evening. Currently 61% of learners are women, maintaining the ratio of the previous two years. The proportion of learners from backgrounds other than White British is 13%, higher than in the local area. Adults declaring a disability account for 2% of learners.

41. A senior tutor manages the area, supported by two area managers. One full-time tutor, two substantial part-time tutors on half time contracts, and 43 sessional tutors are employed, 28 specialising in modern foreign languages and 15 in English.

### Strengths

- Good learner engagement
- Good range of languages provision
- Good management of curriculum change

### Areas for improvement

- Low retention
- Ineffective target-setting and individual learning plans to improve learning
- Insufficient observation of teaching

### Achievement and standards

42. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Learners' engagement in their learning is good. Learners are particularly focused and concentrate effectively. Their oral contributions and the standard of work in their files indicate that they learn and progress well. Learners in almost half of the sessions clearly evidenced their development as autonomous learners, able to take responsibility for their own active learning.

43. Success rates are satisfactory. In the period up to 2007, success rates on long programmes were unsatisfactory and falling. In 2004/05, success rates on level 1 programmes were well above the national rate, at 70.2%, but fell by 2006/07 to well below it at 51.2%. Level 2 programmes showed a similar dip, while level 3 programmes were consistently low throughout the period. In 2007/08, success rates improved by seven percentage points and at 69% are now in line with the national rate.



44. Retention is low as identified in the self-assessment report. Retention rose by seven percentage points to 78% in 2007/08 from a very low rate in the preceding year, but remains below the national rate of 81.2%.

### Quality of provision

45. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In better sessions, tutors use varied teaching methods and approaches suited to the sector subject area. A few tutors encourage autonomy in their learners successfully. In the better language sessions, tutors use the target language well to motivate learners, and encourage confidence with the range of skills. Lesson plans and schemes of work follow an appropriate standardised format that encourages differentiation. However, too few tutors differentiate their teaching effectively to meet the needs of all learners. Less successful sessions rely too much on a tutor-led approach and use insufficiently varied teaching and learning methods. Tutors do not always clarify learning points for learners. Arrangements to identify literacy and numeracy needs or additional learning needs are incomplete.

46. Resources and facilities to support teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teaching staff are appropriately qualified. A tutors' resource pack and CD-ROM supports language tutors well, while the recent virtual learning environment development holds resources for tutors and learners. Teaching accommodation is satisfactory. Appropriate access to information learning technologies includes interactive whiteboards, but these are not always used effectively. The quality of tutor produced learning resources is inconsistent, some of poor quality.

47. Targets and individual learning plans are not effective enough to improve learning. The standardised individual learning plans do not help learners to identify precise and measurable short-term targets. Those targets agreed by learners and tutors are too broad and general to identify progress sufficiently. In some instances, reviews are not documented.

48. The range of language provision is good and meets learners' needs and interests well. It accounts for over 80% of programmes in this area. The number of different languages and language-related programmes provided is high and includes languages less commonly found such as Japanese, Russian and Arabic, and programmes developing the culture of the language. Courses from beginners to level 3 ensure good progression opportunities. The curriculum supports communication with hearing impaired people through its range of British sign language provision, which provides progression through to level 3. However, provision is concentrated during the evenings and on the four main sites, limiting opportunities to those for whom timing and venue may form a barrier.

49. Support and guidance are satisfactory. On-course support for learners is satisfactory. Tutors provide good support to learners during sessions. In some cases, this is enhanced with email support. Learners who do not have a computer at home can borrow a laptop for a refundable deposit. Appropriately detailed pre-course outlines are available to learners. However, not all learners receive

sufficient initial information about the level or commitment needed for the course they are taking.

## Leadership and management

50. Leadership and management are good. Curriculum change has been managed well. The principal tutor led the change from predominantly non-accredited to accredited provision very effectively. During the current academic year, 83% of learners attend accredited provision, and 17% attend non-accredited, a reversal of the 2005/06 proportions. Managers supported tutors effectively through the transition, to ensure that they understood the implications of the change, and consulted with learners about the proposals effectively. Tutors were actively involved in the standardisation of the languages curriculum to ensure consistency across the area. A range of good tutor development opportunities includes two new substantive posts for language tutors, funding to develop e-learning resources and a mentoring scheme.
51. The self-assessment report is appropriately evaluative and identifies most of the areas for improvement identified at inspection, although some of the strengths noted are normal practice. Data to monitor attendance, retention and success rates is increasingly analysed as a management tool to identify areas to improve performance. The self-assessment report identifies that strategies based on that analysis are not yet fully developed.
52. Equality of opportunity is satisfactorily supported. All premises visited are accessible to learners with restricted mobility. Tutors are sensitive to the needs of those with a hearing impairment. A very high proportion of languages tutors are native speakers of the language that they teach and from backgrounds other than White British.
53. Observation of teaching and learning is insufficient and does not meet NCL's policy requirement to observe all tutors annually. During 2007/08, only 10 observations were carried out and, to date in 2008/09, 14 observations have taken place. This is an inadequate proportion of the number of tutors.

## Preparation for life and work

Good: Grade 2

### Context

54. Currently 497 learners are enrolled on literacy and numeracy courses, 395 learners on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses, and 265 on courses for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Courses are provided at all levels from pre-entry to level 2. Most learners work towards nationally recognised qualifications. ESOL courses are taught for either five or ten hours each week. Learners on literacy and numeracy courses can attend workshop sessions at flexible times. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attend courses which run from two to three days each week.

55. Literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses are provided in over 20 venues across the city during the daytime and evenings, and through Train to Gain in employers' premises. Most provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is delivered on the premises of two subcontracting providers. A total of 56 staff teach across the area: 29 in literacy, numeracy and ESOL, and 27 in provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

### Strengths

- Particularly effective development of personal skills and confidence
- Good teaching and learning
- Extensive range of provision
- Good curriculum management

### Areas for improvement

- Low retention in literacy, numeracy and ESOL
- Insufficient focus on individualised learning
- Insufficient use of data to monitor performance

### Achievement and standards

56. Achievement and standards are good. Learners' personal skills and confidence are developed particularly well. ESOL learners successfully develop their speaking skills and confidence to use English in a range of contexts. Many learners on numeracy courses begin their courses following negative previous experience, but quickly gain confidence in working with mathematical concepts. The development of learners' confidence and social skills is outstanding on much provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Learners engage successfully in discussion in learner forums and complete self and peer assessment effectively. Innovative community development projects enable learners to develop their skills through active participation in their communities. Learners who receive support for dyslexia make good progress and successfully develop their self-esteem and confidence in reading and writing. Learners' achievements are celebrated through public events, awards ceremonies and attractive displays at NCL's centres. The

standard of learners' work is good across most of the provision. In provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, learners produce good quality displays, diaries and project reports.

57. Achievement is satisfactory. Overall success rates have improved annually but remain below the national average. In literacy, numeracy and provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achievement is good. The achievement rate in 2007/08 was 91% in literacy and numeracy and 97% in provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The achievement rate in ESOL in 2007/08 was low at 66%. Attendance is satisfactory at 78% in lessons observed.
58. Retention is low in literacy, numeracy and ESOL. In 2007/08 retention was 72%, significantly below the national average. In provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, retention is good and in 2007/08, was 92%.

### Quality of provision

59. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good. A wide range of learning activities and resources supports group work and project activity effectively. Tutors use information learning technology extensively. ESOL tutors use audio and online resources effectively to develop learners' speaking and listening skills, and learners on numeracy courses practise and develop their skills using interactive technology. Tutors and support staff provide sensitive and constructive support and feedback to learners during sessions. Learners benefit from the effective use of enrichment activities to enhance their learning. However, in some work-based provision, the development of learners' skills is not sufficiently integrated with working practice. In some open-learning literacy sessions, learners have insufficient opportunity to develop and practise their speaking and listening skills.
60. The focus on individualised learning is insufficient. In many sessions the targets set, based on initial assessment, are not used when planning learning. Lesson plans do not take account of different needs consistently and learners in many sessions follow the same activities irrespective of their individual needs.
61. The range of provision is extensive and meets learners' needs and interests well. A large number of literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses are available in many centres across the city. In one part of the city, learning takes place in a well-equipped and attractive centre dedicated to the provision of literacy, numeracy and ESOL. A wide range of attendance patterns enables learners to fit learning around their personal circumstances and learning needs. External examinations are offered at a number of points in the year, enabling learners to progress to the next level when they are ready. NCL has successfully introduced an innovative pre-entry level course for ESOL learners, without literacy skills in their first language, who are not yet ready to begin studying at entry level. The extensive range of work-based literacy and numeracy courses includes courses at a dental hospital and provision for council workers. Managers work closely with the work-based skills team to plan and deliver literacy and numeracy courses alongside work-based provision. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attend

a wide range of courses. Community outreach staff organise many promotional activities across the city.

62. Support for learners is satisfactory. Learners with dyslexia can attend individual support sessions. Trained learning support assistants work effectively alongside tutors in sessions for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, additional learning support is not provided for learners attending literacy, numeracy and ESOL sessions. Induction at the beginning of each course is comprehensive. Tutors provide effective individual support for learners during and after sessions. Information, advice and guidance are available to learners throughout their courses, provided by an external nationally accredited organisation. At two of the centres, crèche facilities are available and used extensively by learners.

### Leadership and management

63. Curriculum management is good. The recent re-structure has improved literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision. Managers provide good support for tutors and communicate with them effectively. Staff development is comprehensive. Engagement with employers is good. Effective employer partnerships enable employees' learning needs to be identified and met. Subcontracting partners are involved actively in the management of the provision and attend management and quality meetings.

64. Quality improvement arrangements are mostly effective. The self-assessment report is evaluative and largely accurate. Observation of teaching and learning leads effectively to the identification and implementation of actions for improvement. Learners' feedback is used to improve provision. Learner forums for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are particularly effective in identifying and responding to learners' concerns. However, NCL does not monitor the quality of subcontracted provision consistently. Data to monitor performance is used insufficiently.

65. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. The cultural diversity of the city is recognised through displays, information in public areas and in promotional literature. However, equality and diversity are not promoted sufficiently within the curriculum.

## Family learning

Good: Grade 2

### Context

66. Currently 218 learners are enrolled on programmes. The majority are women. Courses include family literacy, language and numeracy and wider family learning. Opportunities are available for learners to complete national literacy or numeracy tests. Courses are offered in a wide range of venues including schools, children's centres, church halls and at NCL's centres. Most programmes take place during the day but some courses and workshops run in the evenings or at weekends.
67. The family learning adviser manages the provision and is supported by managers for wider family learning and family literacy, language and numeracy. A total of nine tutors are employed, with two current vacancies in the family learning team. A management information system and an administrative officer support the team.

### Strengths

- Good progression
- Good teaching and learning
- Good flexible and responsive provision
- Particularly productive partnerships
- Good management of provision

### Areas for improvement

- Ineffective recording of learning progress against personal targets

### Achievement and standards

68. Achievement and standards are good. Learners' progression is good. Learners progress in a wide range of ways, making significant gains in confidence and in their ability to support their children's learning. A good number of learners progress to different courses within family learning or on to other NCL courses. Some also progress to accredited courses or achieve nationally recognised qualifications in literacy or numeracy. Other learners eventually progress to employment. For example, one former learner now works as a parent support adviser in a school and supports other family learners. Learners work more effectively with their children as a result of their learning and are more confident in supporting them with homework and in understanding how children learn.

### Quality of provision

69. The quality of provision is good as are teaching and learning. Sessions are well planned and well paced. Tutors are knowledgeable and use effective skills and strategies to interest and motivate learners. Varied activities during sessions motivate learners. For example, in one numeracy session, learners painted

geometric patterns on glasses as part of developing their understanding of geometry. Learners are encouraged to reflect on their learning and, in many sessions, are challenged to learn. Learners are encouraged to apply their learning at home with their children. Tutors regularly reinforce learning about current teaching methods and content used in schools in relation to literacy and numeracy. Initial assessment is used effectively to produce learner profiles and to identify learners' goals.

70. The monitoring of learners' progress against personal targets is ineffective.

Individual learning plans are in place to plan and monitor learning, and personal targets are set in negotiation with learners. However, some targets are too broad or excessive and learners' progress against them is not monitored or recorded sufficiently. Focus on the learning process and activity that needs to take place to ensure personal targets are met is insufficient.

71. The range of provision is good. Managers and staff regularly work with partners and schools to develop programmes to meet local needs and priorities. Provision is flexible and responsive to community and learners' needs. For example, learners on one course requested an extension to the course, which was organised. Other programmes meet the needs and priorities of schools, and are matched, as appropriate, to priorities identified in school improvement plans. Planning is effective in ensuring Every Child Matters outcomes are integrated with programmes well. For example, courses on healthy eating and family fitness are offered. Enrichment opportunities are good and educational visits are used effectively to expose learners to new experiences and to encourage them to use a wide range of resources to teach their children. Courses designed for foster carers provide a supportive environment with a shared understanding of the challenges carers face in promoting the educational wellbeing of the children they look after.

72. Support for learners is satisfactory. Tutors offer appropriate support to learners during sessions and direct them to additional sources of support when appropriate. Tutors are sensitive to learners' needs. Childcare support is available to learners. Progression to other courses is strongly encouraged. Information and guidance are available on longer courses.

### Leadership and management

73. Leadership and management are good. The well-articulated family learning strategy is communicated effectively to partners, schools and all staff. Family learning values are widely promoted. Partnership arrangements are particularly productive. NCL works with a wide range of internal partners within the council, but also works effectively with external partners within the fire service, NHS, libraries, the voluntary sector, local churches and other service providers to develop and improve provision and to widen participation. For example, managers worked with a local voluntary sector organisation to submit a successful bid to develop a family science project to attract more learners into science. Staff are well qualified and work well as a team. Managers use data regularly to monitor overall performance of family learning programmes. Progression data is collected and contributes to programme development. Quality improvement is mostly good. Observations of teaching and learning are satisfactory, but some sessions are

graded too high. Evidence does not always match the grades. The self-assessment process is inclusive and evaluative. Strengths identified at the previous inspection have been maintained and new strengths have emerged. Judgements in the self-assessment report are similar to inspection findings.

74. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory overall. Widening participation strategies are effective. A partnership arrangement with a local football club is used to develop programmes to attract more men into family learning. Safeguarding arrangements are satisfactory but no safeguarding and child protection policies are in place that are specific to family learning. NCL has identified this and plans are being made to develop more specific policies.



## Annex

## Learners' achievements

## Success rates on work-based learning apprenticeship programmes managed by the provider 2005 to 2008

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	3	33%	52%	33%	43%
		timely	2	50%	34%	50%	27%
	06/07	overall	14	79%	63%	64%	56%
		timely	13	85%	43%	69%	38%
	07/08	overall	9	100%	68%	67%	63%
		timely	10	90%	48%	60%	44%
Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	11	91%	57%	91%	51%
		timely	3	33%	37%	33%	33%
	06/07	overall	9	89%	64%	89%	60%
		timely	11	91%	47%	91%	45%
	07/08	Overall	11	91%	67%	91%	64%
		timely	9	89%	54%	89%	50%

\* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

\*\* Provider and national qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the Individual Learning Record (ILR)

## Success rates on work-based learning Train to Gain programmes managed by the provider 2006 to 2009

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain NVQ	2006/07	overall	39	56%
		timely	39	23%
	2007/08	overall	208	80%
		timely	208	26%
	2008/09	overall	463	93%
		timely	463	37%
	2009/10 (8 months)	overall	47	
		timely	47	

Note: 2008/09 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the first three months or greater of the LSC contract year

\* Learners who leave later than originally planned are counted in the year they actually leave. This group of learners are then added to the learners who planned to complete in a given year and did so or left earlier than planned

\*\* NVQ qualification success rates are calculated using data supplied to Ofsted by the provider before inspection

## Outcomes on Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes managed by the provider 2006 to 2009

Year	Number of leavers in the year	Achieved objectives rate* (%)	Progression rate** (%)
2006/07	322	11%	54%
2007/08	361	14%	57%
2008/09 (9 months)	208	39%	59%

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

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

\*\* Progression is measured in terms of 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 provider before inspection

## Learners' achievements in further education funded, accredited provision offered by adult and community learning 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 general further education colleges.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	19+			Diff
		Starts – Transfers	ACL Provider Rate	National Rate	
1 long	06/07	2682	63.2%	72%	- 8.8
	07/08*	2071	68.0%	N/A	
2 long	06/07	1194	68.3%	69.5%	- 1.2
	07/08*	1220	65.0%	N/A	
Short**	06/07	5551	72.1%	82.1%	-10.0
	07/08*	4889	77%	N/A	

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

\*\* Courses over 5 weeks long