

Liverpool City Council

Inspection report

Unique reference number: 53073

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Type of provider: Local Authority

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Information about the provider

1. Liverpool City Council Adult Learning Service (the service) is part of Liverpool City Council's Children, Family and Adult Services business unit. The service has four main centres, two in both the north and south of the City of Liverpool, together with numerous other community venues. The interim Head of Adult and Community Learning reports to the Head of the Employment and Skills business unit and is supported by two senior and nine curriculum and service managers.
2. The service secured funding from Greater Merseyside Skills Funding Agency for provision in personal and social development and adult learner responsive learning. Other funding is provided by an area based grant, business, innovation and skills transformation funds, and family learning and neighbourhood learning in deprived communities (NLDC). The service offers mainly adult learner provision, with learning for both qualifications and social and personal development. There is a small amount of Train to Gain employer provision, which was sampled but not inspected in full. A relatively small amount of provision is delivered by 18 subcontractors within the local community.
3. In 2008/09 there were approximately 14,000 enrolments of which 12% were for learning for qualifications; 29% of learners were men, 20% were from a minority ethnic background and 9% declared a disability. The largest areas for enrolment are information and communication technology (ICT), crafts, creative arts and design, preparation for life and work, family learning and community development.
4. The City of Liverpool has one of the lowest employment rates in the UK with nearly double the national rate of recipients of Jobseeker's Allowance. There are some areas of significant deprivation. Around 92% of the population are white British.
5. The following organisations provide community learning on behalf of the provider:
 - Alt Valley Community Trust (Neighbourhood Learning Champions)
 - Everton Development Trust (Neighbourhood Learning Champions, ICT, community video)
 - Liverpool Personal Service Society (Neighbourhood Learning Champions)
 - Granby Toxteth Development Trust (Neighbourhood Learning Champions, preparation for life and work)
 - Speke Training and Education Centre (Neighbourhood Learning Champions, ICT, care)
 - Kensington Community Learning Centre (ICT)
 - Liverpool Lighthouse (preparation for life and work, ICT, music)

- Granby ALS (horticulture)
- Priority Management Ltd (community development)
- Volunteer Centre Liverpool (volunteer training)
- Chara Trust (ICT)
- First Take Film Productions (film production)
- Liverpool Habitat for Humanity (construction)
- Merseyside Society for Deaf People (British sign language)
- North Liverpool Regeneration Company (construction, business administration, seafaring)
- RAISE (financial literacy)
- The Methodist Centre (ICT, hairdressing, dance)

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Young learner provision: Further education (16 to 18)	42 part-time learners
Adult learner provision: Learning for qualifications Learning for social and personal development	1,406 part-time learners 12,734 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain	200 learners

Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
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Capacity to improve	Grade 2
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	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	3
Equality and diversity	2

Learning for social and personal development	Grade
Information communication technology (ICT)	3
Preparation for life and work	2
Family learning	2

Overall effectiveness

6. Overall effectiveness is good. Most learners achieve their learning goals on social and personal development courses. In most areas this proportion is high and improving; in a minority of areas, they are not improving but satisfactory. Outcomes on courses leading to externally accredited qualifications are good and for Train to Gain learners they are outstanding. Learners' confidence grows as they develop new skills they can apply in their daily lives. Learners feel safe; they are motivated, enthusiastic and enjoy their studies. Arrangements for safeguarding learners are satisfactory.
7. Teaching and learning are good. Tutors have high expectations of learners and use a wide range of activities, which engage them. Good practice in utilising information learning technology (ILT) in sessions is insufficiently widespread. Arrangements to provide information, advice and guidance are effective.

8. The provision is highly responsive to local needs and national priorities. Highly effective partnership working has clear benefits for learners. Working with partners, the service ensures the planning of local provision is effective and makes good use of resources. Good partnership working with employers has enabled a large number of learners to gain employment.
9. Leadership and management are good. The learners and local community benefit from the good provision. The clear strategy for development of the service is communicated well to staff, change is managed well and communication is good. Performance against clear, appropriate, stretching targets is monitored well. Teamwork is very good and staff are well motivated and enthusiastic. The promotion of equality and diversity is good.

Main inspection findings

- Outcomes on courses for personal and social development and those leading to qualifications are good. However, success rates in a few subject areas are low or not improving sufficiently. Overall and success rates within the planned time for Train to Gain learners are outstanding.
- Learners from minority ethnic groups, those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those receiving additional learning support achieve well.
- Learners enjoy their studies; they gain confidence and good vocational skills, and produce work of a high standard. Learners' economic and social well-being is enhanced through learning. They feel safe. Many learners make a contribution to the community through volunteering.
- Teaching and learning are good. Tutors use a wide range of approaches and activities which keep learners engaged. The use of ILT and the virtual learning environment is not well developed in some lessons. In some lessons tutors pay insufficient attention to meeting the individual needs of all learners.
- Training for Train to Gain learners is very good. Assessment is well planned and feedback explains how learners can improve.
- The provision is highly responsive to local needs and national priorities. A good range of courses enables learners to gain knowledge and skills to further their personal and employment goals. Very good partnership working has raised attainment and enabled a large number of learners to gain employment. However, progression and destinations are not systematically monitored.
- Most learners receive good information, advice and guidance which ensure that they are recruited to the right course. They are supported well to overcome any barriers to learning. Tutors provide good personal support and encouragement. There are no formal arrangements to evaluate the quality of support provided to learners.
- Leaders and managers are committed to continuously improving the provision to meet local and national priorities. Organisational change has been managed

effectively. Clear targets are set and performance against targets is rigorously monitored throughout the organisation.

- There is good promotion of equality and diversity. The service has been very successful in recruiting under-represented groups and widening participation. The very good community development programme successfully engages many new learners from areas of deprivation. Arrangements for safeguarding are satisfactory. Safe working practices are promoted well.
- Learner feedback is collected and used to improve the provision. Arrangements to collect feedback from employers are less well developed.
- Accurate data are analysed and used very effectively to monitor performance, but learner progression and destination data are not collected or analysed sufficiently.
- The service provides good value for money. Resources are managed effectively. Learner outcomes have improved significantly over the last four years and are now good.

What does the Adult Learning Service need to do to improve further?

- Increase successful outcomes on accredited and non-accredited courses in subject areas where they are low or static, so that they are equal to or above national average, by more effectively sharing the good practice in the areas where success rates have improved and are now high.
- Improve the use of ILT and develop tutors' skills to ensure that learners' individual needs are met and to add more variety to lessons to enable learners of all abilities to make good progress and achieve well.
- Continue to develop the virtual learning environment and make it accessible to all learners and staff to enable learners to more easily access learning materials.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of learner support so that service managers have an accurate view of the quality of support provided to learners which can be used to identify more easily aspects to improve.
- Introduce arrangements to collect feedback from employers in order to inform the service of what it needs to do to meet their needs most effectively.
- Introduce arrangements to collect data on learner progression and destinations so that the service has more detailed information to improve the quality of service.

Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

What learners like:

- working in mixed cultural groups, making new friends and meeting people
- improving their confidence and self-esteem
- the good personal development on courses

- learning about the city they live in and going on visits to places where they can then take their family/children to at weekends and in school holidays
- tutors who are good at explaining things and are very patient
- improving their language skills, being able to communicate better in English and not needing an interpreter any more
- feeling better prepared to continue with education and training
- the lack of discrimination by anyone.

What learners would like to see improved:

- more follow on-courses/longer sessions
- more free provision
- more help with transport costs.

Summary of the views of employers as confirmed by inspectors

What employers like:

- the standard of training which meets organisational training needs well
- the opportunities for unemployed people to gain new skills for employment
- the regular meetings and good communication with the service
- the additional learning support materials for learners to study at home/between sessions
- the provision of courses which develop essential ICT skills
- very good quality training to prepare prospective employees for work
- the excellent service to business, which helps to train the workforce and support new businesses.

What employers would like to see improved:

- there were no suggestions for improvement.

Main inspection report

Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 2

10. The service demonstrates a good capacity to improve. Over the last four years it has a sound track record of sustained improvement. Inspection grades have improved since the last inspection. Appropriate strategic priorities are focused on equality and diversity, sustaining improvement and meeting local and national priorities. An effective process for setting ambitious targets, which are generally achieved, supports priorities. The appropriate management structure supports the provision well. Resources are appropriate and managed well to enable the service to continue to improve.
11. Arrangements for self-assessment are well established and lead to improvement. Most of the inspection grades match those contained in the recent self-assessment report. Motivated and enthusiastic staff are clear about their contribution to sustaining improvements.

Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

12. Most learners attain their qualifications and learning goals. Learners enjoy their learning and particularly appreciate being able to learn at their own pace. Outcomes on courses leading to externally accredited qualifications are good. Most learners study at foundation level and success rates on these courses are high. Success rates at intermediate and advanced level have improved from a very low base and are now satisfactory. Success rates on accredited provision in health, public services and care and preparation for life and work are high but in languages and literature they are declining and low. Skills for Life success rates have improved significantly and are now high. GCSE A* to C success rates are low. Participation by men is improving but women achieve more highly. Learners from most minority ethnic groups achieve highly or in line with all learners. Success rates for learners receiving additional learning support are high but in ICT they are low. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well.
13. The vast majority of learners are on the largely non-accredited social and personal development courses. Outcomes on these courses, in most subjects, are good and improving. However, in languages and literature they are low and declining and in a minority of subjects outcomes are not improving but are broadly satisfactory. The arrangements for recognising and recording progress and achievement (RARPA) for non accredited courses are reliable. Learners and tutors agree challenging but achievable learning goals which are very well documented within the learner's record book. Tutors assess learners' progress regularly. The moderation of RARPA and assessment is extremely thorough and ensures that the process is effective.

14. Overall and success rates within the planned time for Train to Gain learners in health, public services and care and education and training are outstanding at 98%. Success rates for Train to Gain learners in ICT and Skills for Life are low but the numbers of learners are small. Learners' practical and written work is of a good standard. Portfolios are well organised and contain a good range of evidence which is carefully mapped to the performance criteria.
15. Learners' confidence grows quickly as they learn and develop new skills. They gain good, relevant work-related skills which improve their job prospects. English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learners talk confidently in English and gain independence through their newly acquired language skills. Many learners produce work of a high quality, which meets commercial standards. Retention is very high; learners' attendance has significantly improved and is good at 96%.
16. The service is developing a strategy to deliver and assess the wider outcomes for learners. Very effective employability provision enables many learners to gain jobs. Learners achieve a good range of skills and qualifications which enhances their employment prospects. Learners feel safe. Access and egress are effectively controlled at all the main sites. Good attention is paid to health and safety practices in lessons and on the Train to Gain programme. Learners are briefed on internet safety but receive no formal guidance. The family learning and childcare curriculum includes good coverage of health and well-being. Good opportunities are available for learners to engage in community volunteering. Neighbourhood learning champions work effectively within disadvantaged communities with socially excluded people.

The quality of provision

Grade 2

17. Teaching and learning are good. Most learners are returning to learning after many years and many are highly apprehensive. Their fears are skilfully allayed by tutors who provide a relaxed, highly supportive atmosphere. Their good teaching allows learners to flourish. Most tutors have high expectations and use a wide range of activities to keep learners engaged. They make good use of group work which enables most learners to participate. Induction prepares learners well for their course of study.
18. In most subjects, the use of ILT enhances teaching and learning but appropriate resources are not always available in the outreach centres. In some subjects, ILT is not used effectively to enhance learning. A virtual learning environment is at an early stage of development. A team of subject learning coaches effectively promotes improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Tutors showcase and share their good practice with other tutors in the service. Well-planned assessment meets the needs of learners. Tutors carefully explain the assessment process and provide clear feedback so that learners know what they need to do to improve. In a few lessons tutors pay insufficient attention to meeting the individual needs of all learners.

19. Whilst teaching and learning are very good in early years, literacy, employability, ESOL, family learning and community development, in ICT, languages and literature, history and numeracy they are satisfactory but not improving enough.
20. Training for Train to Gain learners is very good. All learners receive planned off-the-job training which links well with workplace training and effectively supports the development of job knowledge and the acquisition of competence. Assessment is frequent and mainly carried out by direct observation in the workplace. Internal verification is rigorous and ensures the reliability of assessment. Almost all staff are qualified tutors or are working towards qualifications. Most staff have taken recent training to update their knowledge and skills.
21. The provision is highly responsive to local needs and national priorities. Learners feel comfortable accessing learning in familiar surroundings in their local communities. A mobile learning centre is used to good effect to target isolated areas and groups. Much provision is aimed at improving literacy and numeracy, ICT and employability skills. Learning champions provide excellent role models and promote learning opportunities to hard-to-reach individuals and groups within the most disadvantaged communities. Very good use is made of external funding to target provision at local priorities; for example, the inclusion of minority ethnic learners, economic migrants, refugees and those who are workless. A good range of courses, ranging from first steps to advanced level, enables learners to gain confidence, knowledge and skills to further their personal and employment goals. The service has responded positively to the needs of local employers in developing its Train to Gain provision. Learners are able to gain recognition for their skills and achieve qualifications to improve their future employability. A good proportion of Skills for Life learners progress to higher levels of study. Progression from level 2 to level 3 for Train to Gain learners is good. However, progression and destinations are not systematically monitored across the service.
22. Partnership working is highly effective and has clear benefits for learners. The service is instrumental in local strategic developments. Together with its partners, the service has ensured that the planning of local provision is effective and makes good use of resources. This has helped remove duplication and ensures that the needs of learners continue to be met. Demand for ESOL provision at times exceeds supply. This has been recognised and a strategy is in place to deal with the issue. The service is actively involved in a wide range of projects to address worklessness. Good partnership working with employers in a wide range of employability programmes has enabled a large number of learners to gain employment. The service has responded positively to the needs of employers by developing very good Train to Gain programmes. Good partnership working with other providers has helped to raise attainment in the city. The service makes a good contribution to its peer network group. A learner involvement strategy is being developed. A good range of surveys effectively collects learners' views. These are thoroughly analysed and action plans

formulated. Actions taken are systematically fed back to learners. Learner focus groups have been established for each main learning centre but they have not been consistently established in outreach centres. Arrangements to involve employers across the provision are insufficiently developed.

23. Arrangements for providing information, advice and guidance are good and ensure that most learners are recruited to the right courses. A wide range of publicity materials are available in appropriate community languages and other mediums, such as large print and Braille. Effective links with community groups enable the service to promote learning. Most learners receive guidance on progression opportunities. The identification of additional learning support needs is effective but the support does not always begin soon enough and not all learners take up the support offered. Learning support workers work effectively alongside tutors. A range of resources and adaptive technology is available to support learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. Learners are supported very well to overcome any barriers to learning.
24. Tutors provide very good personal support and encouragement which enable many learners to achieve beyond their expectations. Their support is highly individualised and tailored around learners' needs. The approach to tutorial support varies across the service. Whilst some learners receive intensive tutorial support, others receive very little. Tutorials are not included in the observation process and there are no formal arrangements to evaluate the quality of support. Learners with caring responsibilities for children have good access to free childcare to enable them to participate in learning.

Leadership and management

Grade 2

25. Leaders are committed to continuously improving the provision, with a clear focus on improving success rates. The organisational structure supports the achievement of Liverpool City Council's aims and the Adult Learning Service's strategic objectives with a strong focus on equality and diversity. Organisational change has been well managed. Since the last inspection, provision has been successfully developed to ensure a focus on national and local priorities. Communication is very good, staff understand the service's priorities and know exactly what they need to do to contribute to the achievement of them. They are enthusiastic and teamwork is very good. Clear targets are set and performance against targets is rigorously monitored at all levels. The achievement of strategic priorities is supported by responsible financial management.
26. The service meets government requirements in relation to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. It has comprehensive safeguarding policies and maintains a central list, which shows that all relevant staff have completed an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check. All full-time staff and most part-time staff have received alerter training in safeguarding. Training is planned for those who have not yet completed it. A designated senior member of staff who has been trained for the post is responsible for safeguarding arrangements.

Where concerns have arisen the service has taken appropriate action. There are good links with Liverpool Safeguarding Board. There are good arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of staff and learners. Safe working practices are well promoted and learners have a very good understanding of health and safety. Appropriate records of accidents and incidents are maintained and lead to appropriate action.

27. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The service's strategic objectives promote a good focus on equality and diversity. The service sets and achieves challenging targets for the participation of under-represented groups. Staff at all levels are aware of the targets and work hard to achieve them. The service has been very successful in recruiting under-represented groups and widening participation. The neighbourhood learning champions programme is particularly successful in widening participation to learners from areas of deprivation. Almost half of the champions are male and some have already progressed into work. The NLDC fund has been used to support innovative community-based projects. In 2008/09, 1,477 learners participated in the programme and 95% of these completed their learning. The participation and performance of different groups of learners are carefully monitored. The proportion of learners of minority ethnic heritage is higher than in the local community and the achievement of different types of learners is broadly similar. Equality and diversity are reinforced well at induction and through teaching. Learners gain a good understanding of equality and diversity issues. Liverpool City Council is in the process of drafting its single equality scheme. Staff training in equality and diversity is thorough. The complaints procedure is effective and complaints are dealt with appropriately. The Skills for Life action plan drives forward improvements and is effectively ensuring that Skills for Life is embedded across the provision.
28. A learner involvement strategy is being developed. An appropriate range of methods are used to collect learners' feedback, including questionnaires and focus groups. This feedback is used to inform improvement action plans. Progress against the plans is carefully monitored. There are insufficient arrangements to collect feedback from employers.
29. Quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory. The self-assessment process is inclusive of learners, staff and community groups. The report is evaluative and self-critical; it clearly identifies areas for improvement and is broadly accurate. The resulting quality improvement plan is detailed. Performance against the plan is regularly and systematically reviewed, although this is done better in some sections of the plan than others.
30. The well-established process for lesson observation has been successful in improving the quality of teaching and learning. Observation records are detailed and the grades awarded match those awarded by inspectors. Targets are set for improving the quality of teaching and learning and generally these are met. All tutors, including full-time and sessional tutors, are observed annually. Comprehensive evidence supports most judgements and grades awarded

through observation well. Action plans identifying areas for improvement are agreed for all tutors. Tutorial sessions are not currently observed. Good practice is effectively shared across the service. Quality improvement processes are well established but managers do not collate and summarise the information sufficiently to make the most effective use of it. Accurate data is analysed and used very effectively to monitor performance; however, there is insufficient collection and analysis of learner progression and destination data.

31. The service manages its resources effectively and provides good value for money. Participation has remained good in a challenging financial climate. The service has been successful in attracting substantial funds from a range of sources, which has enabled it to meet national and local priorities. Outcomes have improved significantly and are high. Budgets are monitored well. Staff are well qualified. The service is committed to managing its resources in a sustainable way. Performance against a sustainability action plan is well monitored.

Learning for social and personal development

Other social and community learning provision considered as part of the main findings but not separately graded: *holistic therapies, counselling, early years, floristry and flower arranging, hospitality and catering, sports, crafts, performing arts, humanities, languages, direct learning support, community development.*

Information and communication technology (ICT)

Grade 3

Context

32. A full-time curriculum manager, four full-time and 21 part-time tutors support 1,916 learners who enrolled on 52 courses this year to date. A further 260 learners are improving their information technology skills as part of the NLDC initiative. Subjects offered include: using common information technology (IT) programs and the internet, and digital imaging, ranging from beginners' courses to advanced level. Learners attend one of the four main learning centres, the mobile learning centre, or one of the 22 community venues.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. The proportion of learners on non-accredited courses who attain their goals has increased to a high 96%, though many of these are very short two-hour courses. Success rates for learners on accredited courses are satisfactory, but have remained static at about 70%. Attendance is good. Learners in classes observed made satisfactory progress. The success rate for those receiving additional support is lower than for all learners.
- Learners enjoy developing their new skills. Their quality of life is enhanced as they become able to use computers and the internet; for instance, following research interests or keeping in touch with distant friends and family. Many learners enhance their employability and gain sufficient confidence and self-esteem to use their new IT skills to help local voluntary groups or businesses.
- Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Learning centres are bright and welcoming. Assessment is used well to promote and monitor progress and achievement. Learners gain confidence from reflecting on their progress at mid-course reviews and in weekly learning diaries. Many tutors use good questioning techniques and varied activities to maintain a good pace of learning. Some use icebreakers well to set nervous learners at their ease.
- The pace of learning is slow in some sessions. Sometimes, tutors provide insufficient or inappropriate work for more able or experienced learners. Computers that malfunction, or are not configured to meet learners' needs, inhibit learners' progress. Beginners have insufficient access to computers that

match the software they use at home. One tutor has developed handouts that help these learners but these have not yet been widely shared.

- The provision meets users' needs satisfactorily. Courses are delivered at different times of the day and at drop-in centres. Venues are well situated in locations that meet service priorities. A good range of courses is available, often in response to learner demand. Arrangements for learners wanting to progress between courses are not always clear to them.
- The service has established good partnerships with schools and other organisations. Activities are coordinated well; for example, designing an internet course to complement a programme to promote healthy lifestyles at a day centre. A team of learning organisers identify suitable centres in priority areas and achieve good value for money by making use of these centres' IT infrastructure. Partners comment that courses complement their own aims.
- Information provided to prospective learners is unsatisfactory. Many current learners are insufficiently aware of progression opportunities and are concerned that their learning may be interrupted. Others complained that they had insufficient information on courses before enrolling. For many learners, induction failed to explain the commitment required from them and this has contributed to some low success rates.
- Tutors establish very good relations with learners and provide good pastoral care. Some provide extra out-of-hours support by mobile phone and email. One provides informal technical support to learners who bring in their laptops. The service provides good support for classes wanting to convert to clubs so that learners can continue to develop their skills.
- Managers failed to identify the lower achievement of those receiving support for additional needs. The effectiveness of additional support for English and maths is not monitored effectively. Learners do not always receive prompt advice on how to adjust the computer and mouse to make it easier to use. In the mobile learning centre, assistive technology was unavailable for several weeks.
- Curriculum management is satisfactory. National initiatives and local priorities, such as RARPA and safeguarding, are implemented well. Tutors and managers are aware of their targets for participation and success rates. Staff development is appropriate. However, IT managers have not been as successful as others in improving learners' outcomes and the quality of provision.
- Managers and staff promote equality and diversity well. Learning opportunities are extended successfully to many disadvantaged groups, including those traditionally under-represented in learning. Other than learners who receive additional support, these achieve at rates similar to their peers. Induction successfully enables learners to recognise and challenge oppressive behaviour. The local, culturally diverse heritage is celebrated in many classroom activities.
- Processes to monitor and evaluate performance are satisfactory. The lesson observation programme is rigorous and reliable. Observation outcomes inform staff development plans, but sharing good practice identified is slow. Tutors review courses and identify improvements required. Managers gather learners' feedback and address negative comments. Quality improvement plans are clear

and monitored effectively. The subject area over-estimated its strengths and failed to identify some areas for improvement.

What does the Adult Learning Service need to do to improve further?

- Improve the pace of learning and degree of challenge in lessons by ensuring that tutors effectively meet the individual needs of learners in sessions.
- Improve the management of learner support by improving the availability of and access to assistive technology to all centres and improving the support provided by tutors for learners with lower literacy and numeracy levels.
- Provide detailed information to prospective learners to ensure that learners understand the opportunities for progression, the content of the course and the commitment that will be required to complete the course successfully.

Preparation for life and work

Grade 2

Context

33. There are 586 learners on preparation for life and work courses in literacy, numeracy and ESOL. The range of courses includes 'move on English', 'move on English with dyslexia support', 'move on maths', ESOL with employability and ESOL pre-entry. Classes are held in locations throughout the city and most courses are accredited by national qualifications. Learners can choose from short to long courses, daytime or evening. The curriculum manager is supported by five full-time and 21 part-time tutors.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are very good. Success rates for all literacy, numeracy and ESOL qualifications have improved from 68% in 2007/08 to 86% in 2008/09; much higher than the national average of 75%. Outcomes for non-accredited courses, many of which are short, two-hour courses, are also good, and in the current year success rates for literacy are 89%, numeracy 100% and ESOL 93%. Retention has been maintained at a high level at 99%.
- Learners improve their self-confidence and they feel comfortable speaking in front of the class without embarrassment. They are able to ask questions in whole-group sessions and to ask for help if they need further explanation on specific topics. Learners' improved self-confidence has been of benefit in their everyday lives.
- Learners enjoy their learning and demonstrate new skills that they have gained well. Many learners had never used a computer before starting their course and are now able to carry out simple tasks like accessing websites and using email. ESOL learners effectively use their newly acquired language skills and take part fully in classroom discussions.
- Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and tutors use a wide range of teaching methods which effectively engage learners. ICT is used effectively as an integral part of many lessons where resources are available. Tutors have designed many innovative activities which make learning fun. They ensure that the level of activities is suitable for the wide ability range of learners in many lessons. Tutors do not always ensure that learning materials are relevant to their learners' needs and they make insufficient use of local issues and events.
- The provision effectively meets the needs and interests of learners. Learners join the courses for many reasons including their desire to improve their basic skills, to obtain a qualification or to help their children with school work. All learners are pleased with their chosen course.
- The employability and personal development award, which has been integrated into many ESOL courses, benefits learners. This enables learners to become familiar with the language of the world of work and many other aspects of

employment. The service has developed good partnership arrangements and works well with community organisations, making good use of the wide range of facilities available. Currently one Skills for Life tutor has been seconded to Liverpool County Council as part of the Council's workforce development strategy and is helping to improve basic skills across the workforce.

- Support for learners is good. Tutors support learners well during lessons. Peer support is sometimes used by pairing a more able learner with one who is less able. In some classes that use computers, equipment is adapted to allow learners with sensory and/or mobility problems to take a full part. Learning assistants are used effectively in many lessons to support learners.
- The Skills for Life provision is managed well. Tutors are aware of the needs of learners and work well together to ensure that these needs are met. Managers encourage and support tutors well and they each have high expectations for their learners. Learners produce work of good quality and present it well.
- Equality and diversity are promoted effectively. Many classes contain learners from very diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds who work well together and contribute well in lessons. Learners of all ethnic backgrounds achieve well.
- At the start of courses learners and tutors negotiate a set of high expectations that will be followed during the course and include attendance, punctuality, behaviour and respect for others.
- Managers have effectively improved the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners. The self-assessment process is rigorous and involves all staff. The self-assessment report is accurate; inspectors broadly agreed with the main findings and areas for improvement.
- Resources are effectively managed. Classes are delivered within four main centres and a wide range of community settings that are suitably furnished and contain the materials and equipment needed to offer a high quality service.

What does the Adult Learning Service need to do to improve further?

- Continue to integrate the use of ICT within Skills for Life lessons to make lessons more interesting and to enable learners to gain new skills and widen access to this technology at more community venues.

Family learning

Grade 2

Context

34. Wider family learning and family literacy, language and numeracy courses (FLLN) range from pre-school to Key Stages 1 and 2 and from two-hour workshops to 10-week courses. Apart from the workshops, all programmes are accredited through the Open College Network (OCN). Courses take place in a range of venues including schools, children's centres and community centres. This year to date 1,465 learners have enrolled on family learning programmes. Over 60% are from minority ethnic groups and the majority are women. Family learning is managed by a full-time programme manager, assisted by a part-time family language programme leader, six full-time tutors and three part-time tutors. Three bi-lingual support workers assist in family language sessions.

Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. Achievement, retention and success rates are good on OCN courses in FLLN. However, success rates have been static in at around 86% for three years in family learning. Learners have the opportunity to gain nationally accredited qualifications in literacy, numeracy, ICT and ESOL.
- Learners enjoy learning and develop good personal, social and employment skills. They improve their confidence and self-esteem, communicate well with others and work well in teams. Learners take a pride in their work. ESOL learners develop good speaking and listening skills and useful vocabulary for interviews. They speak confidently in English when dealing with everyday situations such as telephoning the doctor or their children's school. The standard of learners' work on display in classrooms and in portfolios is good and presented well.
- Learners feel safe, trusted, valued and respected. Information on personal safety is given to all learners on induction and it is adapted well for learners with low literacy levels or ESOL learners.
- Learners on positive parenting courses and some family language courses are able to make informed choices on healthy lifestyles and healthy eating for themselves and their families. They receive good advice from external speakers on issues such as health and domestic violence, with bi-lingual lessons for ESOL learners.
- Many learners make a positive contribution in their local communities by volunteering in schools and some ESOL learners act as interpreters.
- Teaching and learning are good. Lessons are well planned and structured, lively and interesting, and paced to suit all learners. Learners take part actively and enthusiastically in discussions. They receive frequent, constructive feedback. Work is marked promptly, and where learners take activities home to work with children, tutors feed back to both the learners and the children. Staff use their

skills and experience well to quickly establish a rapport with learners and to gain their trust.

- ILT is not used sufficiently in learning sessions to match learning preferences and provide more opportunities for active learning. Sometimes ILT resources are not easily accessible at outreach centres. However, tutors have had recent training in the use of technology and learners are signposted to appropriate websites to support their learning.
- The provision meets the needs and interests of learners well. The service offers a particularly good range of enrichment activities. Visits are designed to interest and engage learners in the local community and include museums, art galleries, libraries, local parks, places of worship, Mersey Ferries and sports centres. Activities link to the development of literacy, numeracy and language with learners and their children. Learners can now confidently take family members on similar visits in their leisure time.
- Support for learners is good. Learners receive advice and guidance from tutors and external speakers. Support in lessons is good from tutors and peers. There are good free crèche facilities at Sure Start children's centres and good access to childcare at outreach provision. Bi-lingual support is provided in family language sessions.
- Very effective programme management has been maintained as a strength since the previous inspection. Programmes are well structured and standardised schemes of work and lesson plans are adapted well, allowing tutors to cater for the needs of local groups and individual learners. Teaching staff are well qualified and experienced. All session plans are mapped against the adult core curriculum for literacy, numeracy and/or ESOL. Moderation of qualifications is thorough. Course reviews are thorough and detailed.
- Safeguarding and equality and diversity are promoted well during induction and in learning sessions. Diversity and culture are celebrated in sessions and through the learning centres. In each centre, learners have access to a prayer room.

What does the Adult Learning Service need to do to improve further?

- Encourage tutors to use ILT more in learning sessions to enrich the learning experience, promote active learning and meet the needs and expectations of all learners.

Information about the inspection

35. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's Interim Head of Adult and Community Learning, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from funding bodies, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's quality monitoring inspection, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
36. Inspectors used group and individual interviews and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners had recently completed on behalf of the provider. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the provider offers.

Record of Main Findings (RMF)

Liverpool City Council

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time courses, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time courses; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships. Social and personal development: all adult safeguarded provision

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	16-18 Learner responsive	19+ Learner responsive	Employer responsive	Social and personal development
Approximate number of enrolled learners Part-time learners	9906	9	565	218	9114
Overall effectiveness	2	2	2	2	2
Capacity to improve	2				
Outcomes for learners	2	3	2	2	2
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2				
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	2				
How well do learners progress?	2				
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2				
How safe do learners feel?	2				
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	3				
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	3				
Quality of provision	2	2	2	2	2
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2				
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2				
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2				
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2				
Leadership and management	2	2	2	2	2
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2				
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*					
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	3				
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2				
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	3				
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	2				
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2				

*where applicable to the type of provision

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