

North Tyneside Council Adult Learning Alliance

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Background information

Inspection judgements

Inspectors use a four-point scale to summarise their judgements about achievement and standards, the quality of provision, and leadership and management, which includes a grade for equality of opportunity.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Scope of the inspection

In deciding the scope of the inspection, inspectors take account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, and comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding body. Where appropriate, inspectors also consider the previous inspection report (www.ofsted.gov.uk), reports from the inspectorates' quality monitoring or annual assessment visits, and data on learners and their achievements over the period since the previous inspection.

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

- Health, public services and care
- Construction, planning and the built environment
- Information and communication technology
- Languages, literature and culture
- Education and training
- Preparation for life and work

In addition, inspectors sampled work and provision in adult and community learning, and in sport and leisure, and incorporated these judgements into leadership and management.

Description of the provider

1. The North Tyneside Adult Learning Alliance (NTALA) is North Tyneside Council's adult and work-based learning organisation. It comprises a number of former external institutions that have come together to create the alliance. It manages all the Tyne and Wear LSC funded post-16 learning and training, and holds a single strategic contract that funds further education, literacy and numeracy training, adult and community learning (ACL), work-based learning and Train to Gain activities. NTALA's 2005/08 three-year development plan is the strategic plan for adult and work-based learning for the Council. Currently 2,129 learners are enrolled on 316 programmes.
2. The NTALA is part of the learning and skills service area, located within the Children, Young People and Learning Directorate (CYP&L). The strategic director is also the designated director of children's services for the borough. The director chairs the CYP&L board. This board and its related theme and task groups, make up the children's trust arrangements for North Tyneside.
3. North Tyneside ranks as the 80th most deprived area out of the 354 English local authorities. A significant gap exists between the more affluent areas and those with high levels of poverty and deprivation. Twenty-one thousand residents live in areas considered to be among the most deprived 10% in England, while 62,000 (nearly one third) live in parts considered to be among the most deprived 20%.
4. In 2006 and 2007 almost 62% of school leavers achieved five or more GCSEs at A*-C which is slightly higher than the score for the north east at 57% and for England at 58.5%. The performance at GCSE has improved over the last three years from 48% to the current 62%.
5. In the borough, 81% of the population are economically active against a Great Britain rate of 78%. Around 64% hold a national vocational qualification (NVQ) at level 2 or higher and the unemployment rate is 6.5% compared with the national figure of 5.5%. Records indicate that only 1.9% of the population are from a minority ethnic group compared with the national figure of 9%.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Good: Grade 2
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Outstanding: Grade 1
Achievement and standards	Good: Grade 2
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Quality of provision	Good: Grade 2
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Good: Grade 2
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Sector subject area

Health, public services and care	Good: Grade 2
Construction, planning and the built environment	Good: Grade 2
Information and communications technology	Good: Grade 2
Languages, literature and culture	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Education and training	Good: Grade 2
Preparation for life and work	Good: Grade 2

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning
Work-based learning

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

6. The overall effectiveness of the NTALA is good in both ACL and work-based learning provision. In particular, the achievement and standards, quality of provision, leadership and management and equality of opportunity in ACL are all good. Achievement and standards and leadership and management of work-based learning are good, but the quality of provision is satisfactory. The provision in health, public services and care; construction, planning and the built environment; information and communication technology (ICT); education and training; and preparation for life and work are all good. The provision for languages, literature and culture is satisfactory.

Capacity to improve

Outstanding: Grade 1

7. NTALA has demonstrated that it has an outstanding capacity to improve. Since the previous inspection, overall success rates have improved each year rising for all long courses from 51% to 72% and for short courses from 58% to 92%. Current data shows continued improvement. Managers are very effective in creating a good basis for further improvements in the quality of the provision. Quality assurance procedures include the observation of key processes, especially teaching and learning. A highly effective moderation process ensures a standardised approach to lesson grading. NTALA has paid particular attention to improving the quality of teaching, particularly on personal and community development non-accredited programmes. Good systems collect feedback from all key stakeholders; these contribute to the development of actions to improve the quality of its programmes.
8. Managers identify and provide excellent support for staff development needs. Regular in-house training also takes place. Self-assessment is a fully inclusive process involving all staff, partners and subcontractors. The self-assessment report is accurate and evaluative.

Key strengths

- High success rates in many areas
- Good acquisition of social and workplace skills
- Good teaching in most areas

- Very effective quality improvement
- Good curriculum management in most areas
- Exceptional partnership working
- Very good response to community and employer needs

Key areas for improvement

- The use of progress reviews and target-setting to influence the planning of learning
- Timely success rates on apprenticeship programmes
- The use of management information across the whole provision

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning
Work-based learning

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

9. Overall achievement and standards are good, as recognised in the self-assessment report. Success rates are good in many areas. All further education long courses over the last three years have improved from 51% to 58%, to 72% in 2006/07. The same applies to all further education short courses, which improved from 58% to 63%, to 92%. These improvements apply to both 16-18 year old learners as well as 19+ learners. All sector subject areas perform above national benchmarks. The service uses general further education performance data for benchmarking. The general standard of learners' work is good. NTALA develops a good range of social and workplace skills in most areas. Work in portfolios is often good. Learners make good, positive contributions to their learning activities in classes.
10. Learners' make good progress relative to their prior achievements. Construction learners progress particularly well and this is clearly recorded in the learners' achievement tracker.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning
Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

11. Overall, the quality of provision is good. This is correctly identified in the self-assessment report. However, the quality of provision in work-based learning is satisfactory against a self-assessment grade of good. Teaching and learning are good as identified in the self-assessment report. In the better sessions, tutors use a good range of teaching techniques and strategies to promote learning and to develop learners' knowledge of how they can apply their learning. However, the recording of learners' progress in all subjects is not always thorough. For a significant number of learners the use of individualised, measurable targets recorded on their individual learning plan is insufficient.
12. Arrangements to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning include a thorough moderation of observation reports and paired observations, occasionally utilising external expertise. Observers do not always focus on the significant areas of teaching and learning as a basis for action-planning.
13. Deployment and management of resources are satisfactory. Teaching staff are well qualified. Over 80% of full-time tutors and all part-time tutors have teaching qualifications with a significant number who have teaching qualification at level 4.
14. Assessment is satisfactory. Arrangements to recognise and record progress and achievement on non-accredited courses are broadly satisfactory, but in literacy and numeracy, the recording is inconsistent with too many generalised comments and targets.

15. Arrangements to identify additional learning needs are effective, although on some courses it is not systematic. However, where needs are identified, the learners are offered effective support.
16. The range of programmes to meet learners' needs and interests is good. The self-assessment report judged this as satisfactory. The service offers a good range of non-accredited and accredited provision. Work-based learning and Train to Gain programmes are in the most appropriate areas of learning for the locality. Despite the reduction in funding NTALA has increased the number of learners on its accredited and non-accredited provision. The service's response to work-force development requirements of local employers is particularly good, offering a wide range of courses at convenient times.
17. Educational and social inclusion is good. Very effective partnerships have enabled the service to provide learning opportunities in almost all the deprived communities of the borough. The provision is delivered at a diverse range of venues including community and religious venues at times chosen to suit work patterns and the caring responsibilities of learners. The service provides appropriate provision for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, vulnerable learners and minority ethnic learners.
18. As identified in the self-assessment report tutors provide satisfactory and effective personal support for learners. Advice and guidance is effective in helping most learners to choose suitable courses. Tutors offer appropriate support for learners with additional learning needs.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning
Work-based learning

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

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

19. Leadership and management at NTALA are good as identified in the self-assessment report. Partnership working is exceptional and the service has established outstanding arrangements with other authorities, universities, colleges, schools, other learning providers, and agencies. NTALA frequently leads developments between partners based on trust and shared values. A wide range of groups effectively ensures the curriculum is appropriate to the needs in the area. Sharing across a range of organisations contributes to improvements in the quality procedures. Training providers in the region have successfully worked together to develop curriculum initiatives, improve recruitment and share good practice. The service has worked closely with local universities and other organisations to develop appropriate professional development. In many of the sector subject areas curriculum management is good.
20. Comprehensive systems to ensure continuous improvement in quality are very effective. A quality-working group meets regularly throughout the year and monitors the improvement cycle. The group regularly update action plans that are distributed to staff through line managers. Learners and staff review courses and this leads to improvements

in course provision. The planned programme of observation of teaching and learning is effective. A moderation panel thoroughly monitors the results of observations. Some grades awarded to teaching and learning sessions are too high. The moderation team and external observers have completed some paired observations which have led to improvements.

21. The current self-assessment report is an accurate assessment of the service and provides a good basis for improvement. Effective staff workshops in each sector subject area contribute to self-assessment. Self-assessment reports lead to comprehensive improvement action plans that NTALA shares with partners and subcontractors. The strengths and areas for improvement are similar to those found by the inspection team.
22. Actions to ensure equality and diversity are good. The service is effectively targeting areas of high deprivation; much of its provision takes place in outreach centres in these areas. Around 25% of NTALA learners now come from these areas. Action to improve access for members of under-represented communities has been good.
23. NTALA makes good provision for learners with disabilities. Induction loops are available in the main buildings, sign language courses are provided and computer and other equipment are provided for those with impaired sight. Procedures to tackle harassment are satisfactory. Additional support for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities is good.
24. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. Where necessary, staff are checked with the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) to ensure that vulnerable learners are not put at risk.
25. The strategic aims of NTALA are clear and understood by all staff. Strategic planning links closely to the priorities of the Council, the current requirements of the LSC, and government initiatives such as the Leitch Report and the 16-19 proposals. A range of working parties effectively implements the strategic plan. These groups develop their own action plans. Communication between staff at all levels is effective.

What learners like:

- 'I can keep up with my grandchildren in using the computer'
- 'The tutor is amazing and always has time for me'
- 'The courses are fun and cheap'
- 'The course is near to where I live'
- 'If school had been like this it would have been a pleasure'
- 'I can work at my own pace'
- 'The learning is relevant to my home and my community'
- 'I enjoy meeting and working with others'

What learners think could improve:

- The access centre needs better lights
- Some rooms do not have computers
- To provide handouts or practise tasks to take home after the lesson
- 'Holidays reduce the time we can access courses'

Sector subject areas

Health, public services and care

Good: Grade 2

Context

26. NTALA offers a wide range of courses in a variety of venues that include schools, children's centres, community centres and purpose built training centres. Currently 13 learners are working towards a level 3 NVQ in early years, and 20 learners are on the speech, language and communication support level 3 programme. Additionally 30 learners are on health and social care programmes, of whom eight are following early years programmes and 22 are working towards awards in adult care. Currently 17 learners are on the mentoring skills level 2 course.
27. Currently 41 learners are on level 2 counselling programmes and 20 learners are on personal and community development learning programmes. Forty-three learners are following Train to Gain programmes. Of these 30 are working towards health and social care level 3 and 13 are working towards health and social care level 2.
28. Most learners are adults over the age of 21. A quarter of learners are men, 4% are from minority ethnic groups, and 12% of learners declare a disability or learning difficulty.

Strengths

- High success rates
- Good teaching and learning
- Good curriculum management
- Good staff training and development

Area for improvement

- Poor progress towards framework completion on childcare apprenticeship programmes

Achievement and standards

29. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates are good on most courses, as identified in the self-assessment report. In 2006/07, success rates on the teaching assistants' speech, language and communication support level 3, food safety in catering qualification, and health and safety in the workplace were all 100%. Retention and achievement on personal and community development courses was 97%. Success rates on the NVQ advice and guidance level 2 were 75%, although only 54% at level 3. On the health and social care NVQs success rates were 92% at level 2, and 69% at level 3. Success rates on the mentoring skills level 2 were also good at 89%.
30. The standard of learners work is satisfactory. Portfolios are developing well and learners receive appropriate support both in the classroom and the workplace. Learners' confidence has developed well and they recognise the benefits of learning on other areas of their lives. Learners following programmes in speech, language and communication

support are very keen to access the courses offered to develop skills in the workplace and to gain qualifications towards career development.

31. Progress towards framework completion is poor on childcare apprenticeship programmes. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. Current success rates for 2006/07 are 22%. Actions to improve the quality include new measures regarding assessment and internal verification, both of which have been effective. Learners remain on programme and receive ongoing support. Current progress of these learners is now satisfactory.

Quality of provision

32. The quality of provision is good in ACL and satisfactory in work-based learning. Teaching and learning are good and is identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. Tutors have very good subject knowledge. Links with external partners provide learners with opportunities to experience a wide range of vocational learning that is delivered by visiting specialist teachers. Overall planning of learning is good; most teaching materials are appropriate, of good quality and used effectively to extend learning. Most schemes of work are clear and detailed. Lesson plans are satisfactory. Aims and objectives are clear and resources identified. However, health and safety, equality of opportunity and learning related to *Every Child Matters* are insufficiently covered in these plans. Delivery of learning to meet learners' different needs and learning styles is also insufficiently covered in lesson plans.
33. Resources and accommodation on most sites is good. However, some remote sites have some shortcomings. For example, access to technology and/or to support for technology in the evening is limited. Similarly, some learners experience many room changes to enable access to the hearing loop system.
34. Assessment of learners is satisfactory as identified in the self-assessment report. On counselling courses, a supportive ethos helps learners to deal with sensitive issues. Planning of teaching links theory to the practical setting well. NTALA provides good support for learners undertaking work-based programmes. They work with appropriately qualified and experienced staff to develop practical skills.
35. NTALA offers an adequate range of programmes to meet the needs of learners and employers. This is identified in the self-assessment report. Courses are delivered and structured to meet the needs of employers, learners and the local community. NTALA develop new courses following employer and learner requests.
36. Information, advice and guidance, and the use of individual learning plans are all satisfactory. Introduction days ensure the selection of the correct course. Initial assessment is satisfactory and specialist support is available.

Leadership and management

37. Leadership and management of the curriculum are good. The self-assessment report recognised this strength. Course design is very effective and responsive to partners', employers' and learners' needs. Successful partnerships allow NTALA to work closely with other directorates in the authority, local employers and care trusts to identify training needs. NTALA specifically designs courses to meet government targets, and has been

successful in planning these programmes and gaining accreditation. Introduction days are planned and teachers and assessors offer appropriate levels of advice and guidance to ensure programme suitability and support for learners. NTALA holds regular meetings with partners, which are effective in sharing good practice and identifying targets. The work of the NVQ quality subgroup has been particularly effective in sharing good practice.

38. Staff training and development is good. Continuing professional development is planned at programme level, ensuring teaching and assessment is current, and meeting awarding body requirements. NTALA supports other training needs well and training has been undertaken in equality and diversity.
39. Internal verification arrangements for the NVQs are thorough. Effective monitoring of assessor performance takes place on all programmes. Regular auditing and sampling of course materials, learning and assessment plans and tutor performance takes place. Bi-monthly standardisation meetings are used effectively to update assessors and verifiers, and to share and develop good practice.

Construction, planning and the built environment

Good: Grade 2

Context

40. Currently 64 apprentices are enrolled on craft apprenticeship programmes with 61 on the level 2 apprenticeships and three on the advanced apprenticeship programme. Additionally 94 learners are on Train to Gain with 47 learners working towards NVQ level 2 craft awards. Thirty-three learners are working towards a construction supervisory NVQ level 3 with the remaining 14 learners enrolled on a construction management award at level 4. Sixteen learners currently attend skills for life programmes as part of the Train to Gain provision. Placements for apprentices range from sole proprietors to large contractors and the local authority. Apprentices spend one day each week at NTALA's centre in Willington Quay. Adult ACL is delivered at the North Tyneside skills and enterprise centre.

Strengths

- High success rates
- Very good range of programmes for adult learners
- Good curriculum management

Areas for improvement

- Low timely success rates on apprenticeship programme
- Insufficient placements and employment opportunities for apprentices

Achievement and standards

41. Achievement and standards are good. Success rates on the advanced apprenticeship programme are high at 75% for 2006/07, 55% of these are timely. However, learner numbers are very low. The self-assessment report recognises this. Success rates for Train to Gain learners are very good. In 2006/07, 96% of learners successfully achieved their NVQ and 15 learners who enrolled on the skills for life programme all achieved the national adult literacy award. Success rates on ACL programmes are also very good. In 2006/07, 97% of learners on non-accredited programmes achieved their learning objective and 94% successfully achieved on accredited programmes, 6% above the national average. Success rates on the apprenticeship programme are satisfactory. In 2005/06, 53% of apprentices who left their programme completed the full framework. This fell slightly to 50% in 2006/07 just below the national benchmark of 55%. Of the learners who have left so far in 2007/08, 44% have completed the full framework.

42. Learners develop good technical and practical skills to an acceptable industrial standard. They use tools and equipment competently. Apprentices' portfolios contain a range of appropriate evidence. Portfolios in Train to Gain are of a particularly high standard. Attendance is good and appropriately monitored.

43. Timely success rates on the apprenticeship programme are low. In 2006/07, timely success rates were 14%, a decrease of 15% from 2005/06. Timely success rates in 2007/08 are currently 17%.

Quality of provision

44. The quality of provision is satisfactory as identified in the self-assessment report. Teaching, learning, and on-the-job training in the workplace are well planned and satisfactory. Tutors effectively use their considerable industrial knowledge and experience to provide good technical instruction and support to apprentices. However, learning methods are insufficiently varied. Insufficient links are made to literacy and numeracy to develop apprentices' skills. Reviews of apprentices' progress are satisfactory, although some targets are too generic.
45. Initial assessment and the identification of learners' support needs are comprehensive. Individual learning plans are satisfactory. Assessment and internal verification is satisfactory. Good use is made of assessment planning and records are comprehensive and well maintained. Internal verification is effective to maintain and improve standards.
46. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Training workshops for ACL programmes are well maintained and most classrooms provide good access to information learning technology. However, the Marine House training centre used by apprentices is basic with limited access to information learning technology.
47. ACL learners can attend non-accredited taster courses before enrolling onto level 1 programmes delivered during evenings and weekends. Train to Gain programmes range from craft courses at level 2 to supervisory and management programmes at levels 3 and 4. NTALA, in conjunction with its subcontractor, provides a good range of industry related training to meet employers' workforce development needs and industry specific legislation.
48. Placements and employment opportunities for apprentices are insufficient. Only 52% of apprentices are currently in employment or work placement. NTALA recognises this as an area for improvement in its self-assessment report and has recently started work on two projects which have enabled an additional 20% of learners to gain experience. The small number of projects and the relatively narrow range of activities available within them minimises the opportunities for apprentices to gather all the evidence to satisfy course requirements.
49. Support for learners is satisfactory as identified in the self-assessment report. Before joining their programmes potential learners are offered clear advice and guidance about the construction industry and their options. Apprentices benefit from support with transport costs and provision of essential personal protective equipment, tools and stationery. Information, advice and guidance is satisfactory and is provided by an independent Connexions adviser whose contact details are displayed prominently within training centres. The induction process is comprehensive with good information about learners' rights and responsibilities in their training or employment. Support for apprentices with literacy and numeracy development needs is satisfactory.

Leadership and management

50. Curriculum management is good. Managers have a very clear strategy for developing the construction programme. Partnerships with schools, employers and other training providers are very effective. A successful 'Partners in Work' project established a community interest company to develop the occupational competencies required to succeed in construction related industries. The first group of apprentices are following a clear progression pathway to sustained employment. Operational management is good. Regular and effective assessor, internal verification, standardisation and staff meetings take place. Staff training is well planned and effective.
51. Staff use data well to monitor and inform planning and quality improvement. A systematic lesson observation programme is supported by a thorough moderation process. However, the observation programme does not yet extend to other learning processes such as the learner progress review. Thorough evaluation of learner feedback contributes to improvements to the ACL programme. Self-assessment is effective and the self-assessment report is very accurate in its presentation of strengths and areas for improvement. However, the associated quality improvement plan is insufficiently detailed.
52. Arrangements for equality of opportunities are good. NTALA has one female apprentice and one female participating in Train to Gain. Of the learners on the recent ACL programme, 14% were females. Learners' knowledge of equal opportunities is satisfactory.

Information and communication technology

Good: Grade 2

Context

53. Currently 607 learners are enrolled on ICT courses, of whom 362 are further education funded learners. Of those learners who have enrolled in 2007/08, 72% are female. Accredited provision includes the European computer driving licence to level 3, and an exam-based computer literacy qualification at levels 1 and 2. Non-accredited provision includes an introduction to computers, web page design, and using the internet and email. Most accredited courses are taught over 30 weeks and lead to a qualification. Non-accredited provision is mostly short courses of 20 hours. Courses are delivered at 14 centres, most of which are community centres, community colleges and libraries. A curriculum team leader and two curriculum co-ordinators manage the programme. Currently 18 part-time tutors are employed, two of whom are internal verifiers.

Strengths

- Good attainment of skills
- Very good and improving success and retention rates
- Very good individual coaching to encourage learning
- Wide range of provision to meet local needs
- Good curriculum management

Area for improvement

- Insufficient planning and recording of individual learner progress

Achievement and standards

54. Achievement and standards are good. Learner attainment of skills is good. This was recognised in the self-assessment report. Enthusiastic and well-motivated learners exceed well beyond their initial expectations. Many learners at entry level overcome their anxieties of computers and develop useful basic computing and other skills. Learners use these newly gained competences confidently in their personal, community or work activities, for example booking foreign holidays and in producing the league table for the local darts team. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory and some learners' portfolios are of a high standard.

55. Success rates on accredited courses are very good and improving as recognised in the self-assessment report. Rates on the computer literacy and IT level 1 course have improved significantly from 31% in 2005/06, to 76% in 2006/07 for the certificate or diploma. Success rates when unit accreditation are included is 80%, 24% above national rate. Retention on non-accredited courses is good at 96% in 2006/07. Most learners who leave the course before completion do so for reasons not connected to the course. Attendance rates on most courses are high.

Quality of provision

56. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. Coaching of individual learners is very good. This was recognised in the self-assessment report. Tutors take full account of the strengths of the individual and the context in which they are learning. However, in many instances planning for the session is insufficiently thorough. Tutors do not include sufficient group activities. For some sessions, the objectives are insufficiently challenging. Some schemes of work and lesson plans are inappropriate for the ICT sessions. Formative assessment is good. On-course assessment is satisfactory and meets awarding body standards.
57. Resources are satisfactory and used appropriately to enhance teaching and learning. These include good quality instruction manuals and very well designed paper-based workbooks. A resource portal is under development and not yet available to all learners. Most accommodation is good with a number of welcoming, light and spacious learning environments. However, one venue is cramped and has insufficient teaching resources. All venues are equipped with up-to-date hardware, software and work stations. Learners have a good understanding of safe working in the classroom. All tutors are qualified teachers and have specific ICT qualifications.
58. Planning and recording of individual learner progress is insufficient. The self-assessment report did not identify this. Individual learning targets are not sufficiently specific or used effectively to plan for the workshop sessions. Some tutors do not routinely record the outcomes of the learning. In many workshop sessions, tutors ask learners to identify an objective for the lesson. However, they are insufficiently aware of what steps they need to take to achieve their aim. Many individual learning plans contain insufficient detail to measure progress towards the acquisition of skills. Some tutors do not routinely update the plans. Non-accredited learners are required to complete a diary to record progress. In many instances, learners do not use these appropriately.
59. The range of provision in ICT to meet community needs is good. This was recognised in the self-assessment report. Planning of courses and opportunities for progression are good. The range of provision is effective in widening participation. NTALA ensures learners have access to a training centre close to where they live. Short courses are used effectively to encourage new and inexperienced users. Provision is growing to meet the needs of employers and a number of bespoke courses are delivered to local businesses. NTALA promotes these courses well through course brochure distribution to households and learning centres.
60. Guidance and support for learners is satisfactory. NTALA identified this as good in the self-assessment report. Information is readily available and new learners receive appropriate advice. They complete an initial diagnostic assessment of ICT skills to ensure they enrol onto the most appropriate course. Although no formal assessment of communication and numeracy skills takes place, these are evaluated by the tutor and the learner is directed to appropriate support.

Leadership and management

61. Leadership and management are good. The provision is well managed with clear direction provided by the curriculum team leader. Effective curriculum planning ensures a good balance of accredited and non-accredited courses. Learners benefit from clear progression

routes enabling ease of progression through levels of learning and accreditation. Planning and management of courses are effective in using the NTALA ICT infrastructure to engage hard to reach learners in the most deprived wards. Minimum standards for accommodation have been established resulting in the withdrawal of one venue.

62. The quality improvement process is good. Learner performance information is analysed and used well to evaluate the effectiveness of learning and of the provision. Course review and learner feedback questionnaires inform managers of development needs. Information on attendance and progression is also collected. Course reviews monitor tutor targets. Observation for most tutors takes place annually, and the outcomes are used to contribute to the planning of staff and programme development. Staff participate effectively in self-assessment and the sharing of good practice. The self-assessment report is accurate in identifying key strengths and areas for improvement.
63. Equality of opportunity and diversity are satisfactory. Learning centres provide appropriate specialist equipment and assistive software.

Languages, literature and culture

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

64. Currently 172 learners are enrolled on 17 courses. Most of these are in British sign language (BSL) and are accredited. Provision is available in lip-reading, English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. Of these, the Spanish and one of the English courses are accredited. Classes are held at eight centres on weekdays and in the evenings. All courses have a five-week introductory course followed by 25 weeks for accredited courses and 10 weeks for non-accredited courses. The curriculum team leader is part-time and manages the provision delivered by eight tutors.

Strengths

- Good retention rates for non-accredited courses
- Good teaching and learning

Areas for improvement

- Narrow range of progression opportunities in modern foreign languages

Achievement and standards

65. Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Retention on non-accredited courses, which accounted for 77% of learners in 2006/07, was good at 88%. Success rates on accredited courses are improving and increased by 13% in 2006/07. Attainment in lessons observed was satisfactory with most learners able to carry out the tasks set adequately. This was recognised in the self-assessment report.

Quality of provision

66. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are good as identified in the self-assessment report. All tutors support their learners well in a sympathetic manner and create a relaxed atmosphere that is conducive to learning. In most lessons, their lively approach ensures that the pace of the lesson is challenging with a good range of activities. These include paired-work and group-work as well as whole class teaching. Learners are confident to use the target language when asking questions or seeking clarification.

67. Lesson plans are mostly adequate but vary in format and few have details of how they will meet individual needs of learners. The range of teaching materials is limited. Most are paper-based with a heavy reliance on the tutor as a resource, with little evidence of the use of information learning technology. In several lessons, both the tutor and learners use English unnecessarily.

68. The service has developed a useful selection of subject specific materials to determine learners' prior knowledge and record their progress and achievement on individual learning plans. These are being used in most of the lessons observed but not consistently

across the provision. The initial assessment procedure is also able to identify any additional learning needs.

69. The area has made satisfactory efforts to recruit learners from under-represented groups. This is not reported in the self-assessment report. These include an English conversation class for Bangladeshi men. A successful link with a local employer resulted in a BSL course receiving a Union award in the summer of 2007. However, the range of opportunities for progression in modern language learning is narrow. Of the 17 courses running at the time of inspection nine were in BSL, two in lip-reading, two in English and only one course each in French, German, Italian and Spanish. Of these courses only the BSL, Spanish and one English course lead to an external qualification. Some short, intensive courses in languages are planned for the summer of 2008.
70. Information and guidance are now satisfactory as recognised in the self-assessment report. Course information sheets are available which give clear answers to the most frequently asked questions although not all learners receive them before their first lesson. One group reported dissatisfaction with the enrolment procedure due to confusion over the course structure and fee.

Leadership and management

71. The leadership and management of the area are satisfactory as identified in the self-assessment report. Communication with BSL tutors is good. The curriculum team leader is now able to use BSL and interpreters are present at regular team meetings. Modern language tutors are well supported by their manager. All tutors are able to access internal and external professional development events. For example, most have attended a recent workshop on self-assessment. The self-assessment report correctly identified the main strengths of the area but not the area for improvement. Good practice is shared at these meetings and through regular links with other providers and awarding bodies.
72. Staff have completed accommodation reviews and premises are of a good standard and suitable for the area's needs. The provision of specialist equipment is satisfactory. E-learning materials are being enthusiastically developed with a bank of online resources available for both tutors and learners on a service portal. The service has had trouble in recruiting modern language tutors but all current staff have good subject knowledge and most have appropriate teaching qualifications.
73. The manager has a clear overview of the quality of teaching and learning through the observation of teaching sessions. This follows the NTALA policy and comments are subject specific with useful suggestions for improvement in the action plan. The process also monitors materials and content for equality purposes and these satisfactorily reflect the diversity of society.

Education and training

Good: Grade 2

Context

74. Currently 130 learners are following qualifications in education and training: 12 learners are working towards a level 3 teaching assistants' qualification, 26 towards a level 3 qualification for special support classroom assistants, 46 learners are enrolled for a level 2 teaching assistants' award and 17 are on an adult learning support programme in numeracy. Additionally 29 learners are enrolled on a level 1 teaching assistants' introductory course. A series of taster courses are also provided for those interested in becoming a teaching assistant.
75. The courses are delivered by two full-time and 10 part-time staff at centres across the borough. Currently 11 men are enrolled, one learner is from a minority ethnic background and 4% of learners have an identified disability.

Strengths

- Good achievement and retention rates
- Good development of workplace skills
- Good teaching and learning
- Good curriculum management

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient use of individual learner targets to inform lesson planning

Achievement and standards

76. Achievement and standards are good. This was identified in the self-assessment report. Success and retention rates are good. In 2005/06 and 2006/07 success rates on the level 2 teaching assistants course were 70% and 83% respectively. Retention rates were 87% and 100%. On adult learning support programmes, success was 84% in 2005/06 and 81% in 2006/07. Retention rates for these years were 86% and 81% respectively. Learners on current programmes are making good progress and retention rates continue to be very good. Attendance and punctuality are good.
77. Learners develop good workplace skills. Placements provide opportunities to work closely with classroom teachers to meet targets in respect of the learning and care of small children. Learners are involved in meeting parents, carers and school governors and are able to develop and use a range of interpersonal skills. Many contribute to activities outside the normal school day and gain an understanding of marketing and recruitment activities.
78. Progression rates are also high with most level 2 teaching assistant learners having completed an introductory course. Currently 60% of level 3 teaching assistant learners progressed from level 2.

79. The learners' work is of a satisfactory standard. Learners' portfolios are well organised. They contain good evidence of a range of tasks reflecting both placement and workplace roles. Learners' work is thoroughly marked and progress recorded by tutors.

Quality of provision

80. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning is good. Teachers carefully plan sessions to meet qualification requirements. Lesson plans are clear with appropriate objectives. Learners are interested and motivated. They participate positively in activities and share their placement experiences as a useful lesson resource.

81. Resources are satisfactory. Well-produced handout materials are clear and appropriate to lesson objectives. Appropriate use is made of whiteboards and flip charts to record and share information. Where available, tutors make effective use of information technology to enhance learning. In general, venues provide a welcoming environment for the delivery of adult provision.

82. The assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy skills, learning styles and prior learning experiences is satisfactory. The process helps learners develop a better understanding of their strengths and increases their understanding of similar activities within schools. Teachers use a satisfactory range of assessment strategies to measure learner understanding and progress. These include the use of questions and observation of individual learner contributions to group work and other class activities. Tutors carry out workplace visits to observe and assess learners as they perform job roles. Lesson plans do not sufficiently indicate the assessment strategies to be used during lessons.

83. Support for additional learning needs is satisfactory. An effective initial assessment process identifies additional learning needs. Where appropriate, learners are referred to the skills for life unit within NTALA. A dedicated member of staff is available to offer advice and guidance to learners in need of translation services or specific pieces of equipment to support learning.

84. Insufficient use is made of individual learning targets to inform the planning and delivery of learning on level 2 and 3 programmes. All level 2 and level 3 learners complete an initial assessment that contributes to the planning of individual targets, but not all learners have individual learning plans. Some tutors are unclear about the use and purpose of individual learning plans and of the importance of individual targets in meeting learner goals.

85. Matching of provision to learner and employer needs is satisfactory. Learners have good access to provision through a choice of sessions and times. The taster and introductory courses enable learners to progress from unemployment and voluntary status onto a nationally recognised qualification route. The provision helps learners to contribute effectively to community needs within local schools.

86. Support for learners is satisfactory. The self-assessment report judged this as a key strength. Venues and the times of classes are arranged to accommodate learners with childcare responsibilities. These are reviewed annually as part of a formal review process. Tutors provide appropriate advice and guidance on available courses and on career

options. NTALA staff offer help in the completion of required CRB checks and in finding appropriate placements for teaching assistants.

Leadership and management

87. Leadership and management are good. Staff have worked effectively to meet national initiatives and targets to increase the number of qualified teaching assistants. Managers and staff have introduced new qualifications to meet external requirements. Management is proactive in promoting teaching assistant provision to disadvantaged areas within the borough. Strategies to increase the number of males, learners with disabilities and members of minority ethnic groups onto teaching assistant courses are in place and having an impact on recruitment. In 2006/07, 8% of learners had identified disabilities. In the current year, 4% of learners in this area have identified disabilities.
88. The internal monitoring of classroom activity is satisfactory. An internal staff team observes all classroom tutors annually. Tutors are given formal written feedback and where required, action points are agreed and monitored.
89. Staff have opportunities to be involved in the self-assessment process. The most recent report provides a broadly accurate reflection of the provision.

Preparation for life and work

Good: Grade 2

Context

90. Currently 1,026 learners attend 141 courses in preparation for life and work. Of these, 169 learners are enrolled on discrete literacy courses, 195 on discrete numeracy courses and 389 learners are enrolled on literacy or numeracy through ICT courses. A further 108 learners are attending courses in independent living and leisure for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities and 165 are enrolled on life skills courses. NTALA run these courses in five open learning centres and 19 community and outreach venues across the borough. All courses are part-time with learners attending for around two hours per week. Classes are held both during the day and in the evenings.

Strengths

- Good achievement by learners who complete
- Good teaching and learning
- Exceptional partnership working
- Good management for improvement

Areas for improvement

- Declining retention rates
- Inconsistent use of initial assessment to plan and monitor learning

Achievement and standards

91. Achievement and standards are good. The achievement rates for learners who complete their learning programmes are good at 96%. This was identified in the self-assessment report. Achievement rates for entry level literacy and numeracy and level 2 literacy are 100%. Success rates have improved and are now at national benchmarks. However, success rates are lower at 20% for entry level literacy.

92. Learners make good progress in classes. Tutors and learners recognise and celebrate achievement. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory overall and good in skills for life classes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, the progress and achievement for too many learners is not recorded in sufficient detail. Attendance is satisfactory. In 91% of classes attendance rates are 70% and above. Attendance rates are lower in literacy and numeracy through ICT classes where only 50% of classes have attendance rates above 80%. Classes make a prompt and purposeful start and tutors monitor and follow-up non-attendance.

93. Retention rates have declined by up to 20 percentage points since 2005/06. Retention rates for mainstream classes are satisfactory at 74%. However, retention rates on literacy and numeracy through ICT classes are lower at 59%.

Quality of provision

94. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good as identified in the self-assessment report. Teachers use good teaching and learning methods to engage and interest learners. They relate lesson content well to learners' personal lives, interests and work-related tasks. They consistently use multi-sensory teaching methods. Learners are attentive and motivated. Teachers are good at reinforcing literacy and numeracy in lessons for learners with learning disabilities. Staff are well-qualified. Teachers have attended a range of additional training in recognising and/or supporting literacy and numeracy needs.
95. Learning environments are welcoming, friendly and accessible. Learning resources are satisfactory with good quality ICT equipment. However, too few images are used in handouts for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Insufficient workbooks are available for ICT literacy learners to take home for practise.
96. The programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners well as identified in the self-assessment report. Partnership working is exceptional and is used effectively to engage learners. For example, organisations share information and data, staff expertise and specialists such as dyslexia teachers. Referrals from hard to reach learners have increased. Funding has been used particularly well to offer 30 hours individual intensive support to 132 learners from vulnerable groups who might not otherwise be confident enough to enter mainstream learning. NTALA offers a flexible approach to delivering courses in a wide range of community learning centres across borough.
97. The NTALA meets the needs of local employers effectively with sessions delivered on employers' premises. A range of six-week taster sessions is offered to skills for life learners, many of whom have severe learning difficulties and disabilities. After sampling each of the six modules in music, drama, gardening, needlecraft, art, cookery and independent living skills learners make an informed choice about their future learning.
98. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. This was identified as an area for improvement in the self-assessment report. Class numbers are small and allow good opportunities for teachers to offer individual support to learners. Learners with additional personal, physical or behavioural support needs benefit from the use of learning support volunteers. NTALA has a clearly defined protocol for volunteers to ensure that they support learners effectively. A full-time member of staff is trained to level 4 in advice and guidance.
99. Assessment and the monitoring of learners' progress are not used consistently to plan learning. The self-assessment report did not recognise this. A comprehensive initial assessment process is in place. Learners attend a detailed interview combined with initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills, followed by a full diagnostic assessment after enrolment. Learners also carry out a learning styles self-assessment and learners on literacy or numeracy through ICT do a 'skillscan' of their computer skills. However, the conversion of initial assessment results into targets on individual learning plans is inconsistent. On too many learning plans targets are descriptive or too broad. In many individual learning plans target dates for completion are the same.

Leadership and management

100. Leadership and management are good. The self-assessment report partially recognises this. Managers set a clear direction for improvement and communicate this effectively through a well-established schedule of meetings. Staff have been effectively involved in self-assessment and in the implementation of an improvement plan which has led to improvements. Staff professional development is well planned and implemented. Observation of teaching and learning evaluates the quality of teaching and learning and supports tutors to make improvements.
101. NTALA is very effective at promoting and managing equality of opportunity. Centres are located close to the target client group. All open learning centres and 75% of outreach centres are located in identified areas of high deprivation; 34% of learners come from these areas. Equality and diversity are well promoted at induction and through notices in the centres and through working practice. Good use of funding has ensured staff in the community are trained to identify individuals with low literacy or numeracy, and to refer individuals appropriately.

Annex

Learners' achievements

Success rates on **work-based learning apprenticeship programmes** managed by the provider **2004 to 2007**

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	2005/06	overall	1	100%	53%	100%	44%
		timely	1	100%	34%	100%	27%
	2006/07	overall	10	60%	64%	60%	58%
		timely	17	24%	43%	24%	37%
Apprenticeships	2004/05	overall	17	82%	51%	59%	39%
		timely	12	17%	29%	8%	22%
	2005/06	overall	49	47%	58%	45%	52%
		Timely	53	26%	38%	26%	32%
	2006/07	overall	53	42%	65%	42%	61%
		Timely	61	10%	47%	10%	44%

* 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'

Success rates on **work-based learning Train to Gain programmes** managed by the provider **2006 to 2008**

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain***	2006/07	overall	90	83
		timely		****
	2007/08	overall	60	90
		timely		

Note: 2007/08 data is 'part year' only and is representative of the first 3 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

** Provider qualification success rates are calculated using LSC published data derived from the 'Individual Learning Record'

*** Includes 'Train to Gain' long course NVQ provision, but not 'skills for life'

**** Timely figures are not available for Train to Gain programmes