

Peterborough City Council

Inspection date

8 February 2008

Inspection number

319339

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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
- Information and communication technology
- Retail and commercial enterprise
- Arts, media and publishing
- ESOL
- Literacy and numeracy
- Independent living and leisure skills
- Employability training
- Business, administration and law
- Family learning

Description of the provider

1. Peterborough City Council (PCC) provides government funded training for three groups of learners. Peterborough Adult Learning Service and Peterborough College of Adult Education (PALS/PCAE) provides adult and community learning (ACL), the largest group of learners, and work-based learning. Both are funded by Cambridgeshire Learning and Skills Council. In addition, a **learndirect** centre is provided in Peterborough library. This is managed by the PCC Environmental & Community Services Department.
2. The provision was all within PCC but in separate department. PCAE provided some work-based learning and Cobden training services provided the rest. ACL was run through PCAE but directly managed through the council. The provision has been restructured with Cobden training services merged with PCAE and governance arrangement changed. PALS/PCAE is semi-autonomous from PCC. The principal of PALS/PCAE has an indirect reporting link to the Children's Services Department via the Assistant Director, Learning and Standards, but is responsible to a separate governing board. PALS/PCAE is responsible for its own financial management. However, the chair of the governing board is a PCC councillor.
3. PALS/PCAE holds further education, personal and community development learning, family literacy language and numeracy, and wider family learning contracts with Cambridgeshire LSC. PCC has a contract with Ufi to provide **learndirect** courses. PCC offers both accredited and non-accredited courses. At the time of the inspection there were 278 work-based learners, 3977 learners on courses in 13 sector subject areas in ACL and 320 enrolled on **learndirect** courses.
4. PALS/PCAE has a range of over 100 venues available. However, many of them are not in continuous use as programmes are offered to meet current need. The bulk of the ACL provision is delivered at the Brook Street centre but some is delivered in the workplace. Much work-based learning is delivered at one of two other sites. The service is managed by the principal of PALS/PCAE who has a senior management team and curriculum area managers.
5. The mid 2006 population estimate is currently about 163,300. However, Peterborough City Council believes that there has been a significant "underestimate" of migrant workers moving to the city. The 2001 census indicate a minority ethnic population of at 11%. The minority ethnic population of Peterborough is concentrated in inner city areas, which include some of the most deprived wards. Peterborough is designated an area for Refugees and Asylum Seekers. In 2001 the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more GCSEs at grade C or above was 44.5%, compared with the national average of 48.4%.
6. PCAE's work-based learning was inspected in December 2002 and judged to be good. Cobden training services was inspected in November 2003 and judged to be inadequate. The ACL provision was inspected in March 2004 and judged to be satisfactory.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
ACL	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
WBL	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
learndirect	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3
ACL	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
WBL	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
learndirect	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
ACL	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
WBL	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
learndirect	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3
ACL	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
WBL	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
learndirect	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Sector subject areas

Health, public services and care	Good: Grade 2
Information and communication technology	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Retail and commercial enterprise	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Arts, media and publishing	Satisfactory: Grade 3
ESOL	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Literacy and numeracy	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Independent living and leisure skills	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Employability training	Good: Grade 2
Business, administration and law	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Family learning	Satisfactory: Grade 3

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

ACL	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
WBL	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
learndirect	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

7. The overall effectiveness of the provision is satisfactory. Provision is satisfactory in most areas and good in employability training and health, public services and care. Success rates are satisfactory overall and in several cases have been improved, for example in **learndirect**. Success rates on non-accredited courses cannot be fully established as measures to record achievement are not sufficiently robust. However, retention is high on most courses.
8. The achievement of skills in many cases is good and most learners significantly improve in confidence. The development of practical skills is particularly good. Learners' progress is generally satisfactory with some good examples. The standards of learners work are satisfactory.
9. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some examples of good teaching using a range of activities and engaging learners. However, too many lessons are insufficiently challenging. Resources are satisfactory overall and PALS/PCAE has been successful in gaining significant external funding to make substantial improvements in amount and quality of accommodation.
10. PALS/PCAE provides a very flexible and responsive service, working well with learners and the city community to meet their needs. Links with local and regional organisations are good and used well to the benefit of learners. PALS/PCAE advertises its programmes well and uses its links well to further develop provision, for example into the 14-16 area.
11. Support for learners is satisfactory. PALS/PCAE has made improvements in this area. Staff work hard to provide additional support for learners. This has been helped by the establishment of a specific post to manage support. Learners benefit from advice on career and a range of personal issues.
12. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The restructuring of the service has been well managed. The coherent strategy and shared vision is well established. Staff development is satisfactory but some events are not well attended. The commitment to social inclusion is strong and equal opportunities are satisfactory. However, there is insufficient promotion of cultural differences in some cases.
13. Quality assurance arrangements have been improved and are satisfactory overall. The processes for observing teaching and learning has been improved and are now rigorous. The impact of this work has yet to reach all areas of provision. Course monitoring and review is satisfactory overall. However, integration of this across the difference remits is insufficient.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

14. PALS/PCAE's capacity to improve is satisfactory. Significant accommodation improvements are well under-way. The management information system has been improved and provides a good range of reports, but information is not being effectively used by all teachers. Good work has been done to deal with areas of improvement found at previous inspections. Most have been completely dealt with but some aspects, such as the use of data, remain.
15. Quality assurance arrangements have been improved. A comprehensive quality assurance cycle and quality framework has been established, but not yet fully established. Most full-time staff have received training but many part-time sessional teachers have not. Change management has been good and the restructuring of the board has improved the focus on quality improvement.
16. The self-assessment process is inclusive. Most self-assessment report (SAR) grades match those of inspection, although the judgements vary in some areas. The SAR is clear and easy to read and has useful appendices for data tables. The quality improvement plan is thorough and detailed, with clear measurable targets and staff responsible for actions.

Key strengths

- Good strategic management of change with a shared vision of adult learning
- Good partnership working, widening participation and promotion of learning
- Good acquisition of personal, social, employability and vocational skills
- Flexible and responsive provision
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Key areas for improvement

- Poor attendance in some areas
- Overall quality of teaching and learning
- Monitoring and recording of learners' progress and achievement
- Promotion of equality and diversity

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

ACL	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
WBL	Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2
learndirect	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

17. Achievement and standards are satisfactory overall with some examples of good improvement to success rates. Achievement of skills and confidence for most learners is good. Learners in hairdressing display good practical skills and arts and media learners demonstrate skills in upholstery, painting and creative craft work. Entry to Employment (E2E) progression is good. Success rates are good on counselling courses and for apprentices in hairdressing and administration. There is some slow progress in ICT and hairdressing. Attendance is satisfactory overall but poor in ICT, Entry to Employment and family learning. Standards of learners' work are satisfactory with some examples that are very good, for example, learners on arts courses. There are no significant differences in achievement for learners, of different genders, from different minority ethnic backgrounds.
18. Overall advanced apprenticeship success rates were 71% in 2006/07, well above the national average of 58%. However, timely success rates were well below the national average of 37% at 21%. Overall apprenticeship success rates and timely success rates were around the national average in 2006/07 at 64% and 44% respectively. In 2007/08, the overall success rate for all apprenticeships is 89%. The timely success rate is satisfactory at 44%. Achievement data in non-accredited learning is insufficiently robust to be relied upon for the purpose of making judgements. However, retention is high on most non-accredited courses. PALS/PCAE is currently working on an initiative to produce robust recognising and recording progress and achievement data.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

ACL	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
WBL	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
learndirect	Contributory grade: satisfactory: Grade 3

19. The quality of provision is satisfactory. Overall teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the most effective lessons, teachers make very good use of a range of teaching and learning methods and engage learners well. However, too many lessons are insufficiently challenging and do not inspire learners. Much teaching is pitched at the pace of the slowest learner. Not enough thought is given to meeting the individual needs of learners.
20. Procedures for recognising and recording progress and achievement in non-accredited learning are well thought out and staff have received training in recognising and recording progress and achievement procedures. However, many tutors do not apply the procedures in their courses. In the best examples, recognising and recording progress and achievement records clearly show that learners receive an initial assessment, a set of

group and individual learning goals and formative assessments to demonstrate achievement. In the less effective examples, targets are not clearly recorded or time-constrained and progress and achievements not recorded. These issues have been identified by PALS/PCAE.

21. The provision is flexible and responsive in meeting the needs of learners. PALS/PCAE works well with the local community to identify needs. In many areas links with local organisations are strong and used well to identify learners needs. PALS/PCAE works well to identify new funding opportunities. These are used well to extend the provision and meet the needs of the learners and the city of Peterborough. Links with employers are well established and provide additional opportunities for learners. These links are used well to take some aspects of learning into the workplace. PALS/PCAE is very proactive in advertising its programmes. Learners are given clear advice and guidance about their options.
22. Support for learners is satisfactory. PALS/PCAE has worked hard to improve this aspect of the provision. In many cases, well trained volunteers and learning support assistants work well with teachers to provide support for learners in the classroom. For example volunteers are used well in independent living and leisure skills. Advisors and tutors provide appropriate advice to learners on a number of topics. The assessment of, and support for, learners with additional needs has been improved. PALS/PCAE has established a post to co-ordinate this work and support is provided in a number of effective ways.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

ACL	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
WBL	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
learndirect	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Equality of opportunity	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

23. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the previous inspections, the provision has been significantly restructured. Senior staff are working well to establish a coherent strategy for development with a shared vision of adult learning. Change is being managed well and is showing clear improvements in a number of aspects of the provision. However, the management of **learndirect** lacks cohesion with adult learning provision, it is quite separate and managed by a council department. The reduced and revised Board of Governors now has expertise directly relating to PALS/PCAE strategic priorities. The management information systems have been significantly improved and produce a range of useful reports, which are used well by senior managers.
24. PALS/PCAE has strong and effective partnerships which are used well to widen participation in learning. Senior staff sit on key strategic groups across the city. PALS/PCAE is taking the lead on the city's adult learning and skills strategy group. PALS/PCAE is highly responsive to the demographic changes of the city, which have been significant since 2005. PALS/PCAE is highly successful in encouraging community cohesion, engaging hard to reach learners in their own communities. PALS/PCAE works well with the primary care trust, care groups and special schools, including vulnerable

young people and adults. Good and productive relationships have been formed with employers in work-based learning (WBL) provision across the region. Work with NEET and 'Team Peterborough' on the 14-16 agenda in preparation for the new specialist diplomas is widening age participation and providing good alternatives for young people who have experienced difficulties at school.

25. Overall accommodation and resources are satisfactory. The strategy for expansion is clear and PALS/PCAE have been very successful in gaining significant external funding. This is being used well to expand the Brook Street site for construction and catering vocational programmes, including a specialist kitchen for teaching independent living skills. A refurbishment programme of the Mansfield site to provide a base for the work-based learning provision is due to be completed in autumn 2008.
26. Staff development is satisfactory but participation is sometimes too low. Systems to communicate to and involve teachers who do not attend are not well developed. The revised part-time tutor contract introduced in 2007 has clarified responsibilities. All staff receive an annual appraisal. Completed documents are quality assured by the Principal, who also monitors to identify emerging trends.
27. Equal opportunities are satisfactory. PALS/PCAE demonstrates a strong commitment to social and educational inclusion and has widened participation responding well to the significant demographic change since 2005. Promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory overall. PALS/PCAE meets relevant legislative requirements. In a minority of lessons there is insufficient consideration given to adult learners' needs or to cultural and religious differences.
28. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. The observation of teaching and learning has been improved and is now rigorous and accurate. Observation reports are detailed and contain clear action points to help teachers make improvements. All staff are observed at least annually and new staff more frequently. The process is used well to identify staff training themes, but follow-up support is insufficiently managed. Reviews of programmes have been improved and are now inclusive of all staff and quite thorough. However, in curriculum areas where subjects are taught across different remits there is insufficient subject review and sharing of good practise across the remits. The use of information by staff to monitor the provision is not sufficiently established.

What learners like:

- The individual support – 'It is brilliant'
- Being treated like an adult
- The email support from tutors – 'It is very good and quick'
- The direction to improve skills – 'It is very helpful'
- The staff – 'They really adapt well and get to know us'
- The other people – 'They are nice and helpful'
- Meeting their friends

What learners think could improve:

- 'A quieter room needed to do practice tests'
- Somewhere comfy to sit and wait for the class to start
- The parking - 'There is not enough and it is too expensive'
- The lessons – 'They are sometimes too slow'
- Sometimes the lessons are too much just about personal research
- The size of the laptop screens – they are too small

Sector subject areas

Health, public services and care

Good: Grade 2

Context

29. PALS offers work-based learning apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships in health and social care, childcare and oral health. Adult and community education courses are offered at Levels 2, 3 and 4 in counselling and at Level 3 in dental nursing. In care, 33 learners are enrolled on apprentice programmes of which 20 are on Level 2, and 13 on Level 3. Thirty six learners are on childcare courses of which 34 are on Level 2. Fifty one oral health learners study at Level 3. Assessment is carried out in the workplace and there are day release sessions at the central training centres for key skills and technical certificates. On the adult community education provision 95 learners are enrolled on counselling with 50 on Level 2, 30 on Level 3 and 25 on Level 4. Twelve learners study the certificate in dental nursing. Currently on all provision 93% of learners are female and 19% come from minority ethnic groups. Nineteen per cent of learners have declared a disability. Courses are held in two centres in Peterborough, with oral health courses additionally held in Cambridge.

Strengths

- High success rates on the counselling Level 3 course
- High success rates on health and social care and childcare Level 2
- Good teaching, training and learning
- Very good links with employers
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Areas for improvement

- Low timely success rates on oral health Level 3

Achievement and standards

30. Achievement and standards are good. In 2006/07 overall success rates for work-based learning at Level 2 were high. Health and social care learners achieved 100% success and childcare learners 74% compared with national rates of 36% and 56% respectively. Timely success rates were also significantly above national rates. Overall success rates on oral health courses were satisfactory but timely success rates were very low at 4%. Counselling courses had good achievement rates. In 2006/07 85% achieved overall. At Level 3 success was 95% and many learners progressed onto the Level 4 diploma course. On the dental nursing course 83% achieved the qualification exceeding the national pass rate by 25%.

31. Learners gain useful communication, vocational and personal skills on their courses. On work-based learning they develop good practical skills and demonstrate increased confidence and maturity in dealing with clients, relatives and staff. Learners on counselling courses develop good listening and questioning skills that enable them to carry out challenging practice sessions. They work well in groups, develop trust in other

class members and work sensitively in accordance with counselling practice. Portfolios are of a high standard. In work-based learning they contain a wide range of diverse evidence sources and are well organised and presented. On counselling courses, portfolios and learning journals are of a good standard, with sound self-reflection on counselling practice.

Quality of provision

32. Teaching, training and learning are good. Theory and practice are effectively integrated by well qualified tutors and assessors. Knowledge and technical skills are effectively developed in well planned on- and off-the-job training. Flexible arrangements for training ensure that learners are given good access to appropriate support. Group theory sessions are arranged in different sites across the county and at various times. Assessors visit workplaces frequently and regularly at times convenient to the learner to explain tasks and return assessed work. Assessors use a good range of assessment methods including observation, oral questioning and professional discussion. In counselling lessons tutors set challenging tasks and successfully encourage learners to reflect on their experiences. Role-play is particularly effectively used to engage learners in practical sessions. Assessment practices are good. Assignments are carefully cross-referenced against performance criteria. Clear feedback enables learners to improve. Monitoring of progress is regular and detailed
33. The programmes successfully meet the interests and needs of employers and learners. Links with employers are very good. Courses successfully meet the needs for qualified staff in care, childcare and oral health. Employers are fully involved in the training programmes and work in close co-operation with the assessors. The oral health qualification meets the new requirements for registration from September 2008 and the college is the main provider across a wide regional area.
34. Support for learners is satisfactory. Tutors and assessors provide very good personal support. Initial assessment successfully identifies individual learning needs. However, the findings are not integrated with the planning of lessons and activities are not sufficiently tailored to meet the individual needs of the learners. Individual learning plans are effectively used to review learners' progress and to set targets.

Leadership and management

35. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Internal verification processes are thorough with regular standardisation meetings. Staff work well together and informal communications are good. Curriculum management in work-based learning has recently been reorganised following a gap of several months in the appointment of a manager. It is too early to judge if the measures recently taken to tackle issues have been effective and a plan for formal meetings has yet to be developed. In adult and community learning the curriculum management is good. The counselling team meet regularly to review course evaluations and share good practice. The self-assessment report process is thorough with regular staff consultation. Equal opportunities are satisfactorily promoted throughout the curriculum and staff are sensitive to the diverse cultural and social backgrounds of their learners.

Information and communication technology

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

36. PCC provides 22 ACL in using ICT. It employs seven part-time tutors who teach in six community venues and the college. It provides apprenticeships in ICT. PALS/PCAE also operates a **learndirect** centre providing ICT courses. In quarter one there were 199 enrolments for **learndirect**. There are 328 learners on ACL courses and four apprentices in work-based learning. Three of the apprentices are employed.

37. Twelve ACL courses currently lead to qualifications at Levels 1, 2 and 3. Non-accredited courses include computers for fun, using your digital camera with your personal computer, and computing for the active retired. Programmes help learners to develop their computing skills and to increase their self-confidence, self-esteem and motivation.

Strengths

- Very high success rates in employer led training
- Good development of ICT skills and knowledge
- Particularly responsive **learndirect** staff
- Good widening of participation

Areas for improvement

- Low and declining success rates for accredited courses
- Narrow range of accredited courses
- Insufficient action to ensure **learndirect** provision meets community needs
- Insufficient impact of actions to improve teaching

Achievement and standards

38. Success rates in employer led training are very high. In the period 2006/08, 173 learners employed by a major local employer began training for the ECDL Level 1 qualification. Of these, 97% successfully achieved the award. Learners develop good ICT knowledge and skills and become competent users of word-processing, spreadsheets, email and the internet. They are well motivated and proud of the skills they are developing. Self-confidence and self-esteem increase and in many cases learners considerably exceed their own expectations.

39. Success rates on **learndirect** courses have been improved and are now satisfactory. Progression is also satisfactory in **learndirect** provision. The success rates on other accredited courses for the period 2005/2007 were low and declining. In 2005/06, only 67% of learners gained a qualification and in 2006/07 the success rate dropped to 59%. It is too early in the current academic year to identify the trend. Success rates on non-accredited courses for 2006/07 are good at 88%. Retention is satisfactory but attendance is declining. The college are aware of this and have put in place measures to deal with it. It is too early to judge their effectiveness.

Quality of provision

40. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In **learndirect** provision staff at the centre are qualified and experienced. They are particularly responsive to learners' needs. Tutors respond very quickly and give clear and effective help and support. In other provision some lessons are well planned and executed with a good range of activities used. Students are fully engaged in the lessons and progress well.
41. In the poorer lessons, some of the tasks given to learners are not well matched to their ICT learning needs. Some learners are not challenged and their ICT skills and knowledge are not fully extended. Sometimes there is too much teacher-centred learning where learners proceed at the pace of the slowest learner in the group. In some ICT sessions there is

insufficient variety and learners spend too much time reading, and working through, the text in learning manuals. The range of learning resources is too limited. Some of the PALS/PCAE-devised workbooks are poor quality.

42. Initial advice and guidance is satisfactory. Initial assessment is also satisfactory. However, the results of the assessment are not always used effectively to design learners' individual learning programmes. Resources are satisfactory overall. The rooms are light, well decorated and pleasant learning environments. ICT hardware and software are satisfactory. Two of the rooms have recently been re-equipped with new laptop computers (each with an external keyboard and mouse) to replace slow desktop computers. For some learners, however, the screens are too small and the position of the laptops causes neckache. Before installation, there was insufficient consultation with tutors and learners about the suitability of laptops to replace the desktop computers. Adaptive technology is available and can be obtained when needed. Two of the rooms used for ICT in community learning venues visited during the inspection are too small, cramped and unsafe. Not all learning venues have internet connections, which prevents learners from developing internet and email skills. Overall, induction is satisfactory.
43. The range of accredited courses is narrow. Opportunities for progression are limited. As PALS/PCAE acknowledges, there are too few entry level courses that lead to vocationally-related qualifications and no advanced awards are available. The ECDL advanced programme is not being delivered as there is only one member of staff qualified. The apprenticeship programmes for ICT users and practitioners are under-developed. Currently, there are only four apprentices. PALS/PCAE has too few ICT work-placements available for apprentices to gain practical and relevant on-the-job experience. Actions to ensure the **learndirect** provision meets the needs of the community are insufficient. Opening hours are not sufficient and have not taken account of learner feedback. Links with other organisations have not been maintained sufficiently. PALS/PCAE is aware of this and actions are in place to widen the opening hours and re-establish links.

Leadership and management

44. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Widening of participation through the delivery of ICT in various community venues is good in ACL provision. Good partnership arrangements have been developed with a variety of external organisations, such as a mental health charity, a minority ethnic group, a sheltered housing association and various schools. When necessary, laptop computers are taken into the venues and ICT courses are delivered to a wide range of learners, many of whom would be reluctant to access training in more conventional establishments. **learndirect** staff have taken effective action to improve achievement rates. Good use was made of a visit to another, better performing, **learndirect** centre.
45. Communications are satisfactory. Staff meet regularly to discuss issues such as curriculum planning, learner support and staff development. Staff performance is satisfactorily monitored through half-termly reviews at which learner retention, achievement, success and other relevant issues are monitored by the manager and individual members of staff. Continuing professional development is satisfactory, although too few staff have recognised teaching qualifications and advanced ICT qualifications. This is a matter that PALS/PCAE recognises and action is being taken to ensure staff gain these awards.

46. The impact of actions to improve teaching are insufficient. Some observation reports do not focus sufficiently on learners. Observation feedback is not always used effectively to help tutors improve. Some of them are not familiar with an appropriate range of teaching and learning strategies applicable to ICT. Too much teaching is satisfactory. The provision is accurately graded through self-assessment and the self-assessment report is sufficiently judgemental. However, not all the strengths and areas for improvement were identified.

Retail and commercial enterprise

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

47. The college offers apprenticeships and advanced apprenticeships in hairdressing. There are 32 learners on hairdressing apprenticeships. Of these learners 17 are non-employed apprentices following a programme led pathway. Of the 32 learners, 15% are from minority ethnic groups and 9% are male. Two learners aged 14 to 16 attend the college to study NVQ Level 1 in Hairdressing. Currently 73% of learners match the LSC's criteria as requiring additional learning support.
48. All learners follow the college induction process and employed status apprentices then attend off-the-job training one half-day each week for hairdressing theory, literacy, numeracy, key skills, portfolio-building and some practical training. The programme led apprentices attend college for 16 hours per week and attend a placement either in the college salon or with an employer for between one and three days per week. Employers take the primary responsibility for occupational training and the skill development of their learners. Progress reviews are carried out every eight to twelve weeks.

Strengths

- Good development of hairdressing skills
- Good teaching of practical topics
- Good management of employer relationships

Areas for improvement

- Poor monitoring of learner progress
- Limited range of assessment methods to assess learner knowledge
- Lack of rigour in progress reviews

Achievement and standards

49. Achievement and standards overall are satisfactory. Learners develop good hairdressing skills. They work confidently and professionally while providing services to clients. Good commercial salons provide the employed status learners with continued exposure to good quality customer care and technical expertise. Many learners nearing the end of their apprentice programme are already working as salon stylists. Advanced apprentices are knowledgeable and offer highly commercial styling services for their clients.
50. Apprenticeship overall success rates are satisfactory; over the past three years the trend has fluctuated from 50% during 2004/05 to 83% during 2005/06 and 58% during 2006/07. Timely success rates have significantly improved from 20% in 2004/05 and 2005/06 to 55% in 2006/07. The current year is continuing with a positive trend in success and timely success rates. However, some learners following the programme led pathway are making slow progress.

Quality of provision

51. Teaching and learning of practical skills are good. Tutors carry out many demonstrations according to the needs of the learners and the learning taking place. Good support is given during practical lessons. Mini demonstrations, use of diagrams and learning aids are all used well to improve the learner's skills, knowledge and understanding. Tutors are responsive to learner needs, providing good individually tailored learning and coaching in practical lessons. Learners and tutors develop a good rapport and learners are confident in asking for additional clarification.
52. Teaching and learning of background knowledge is satisfactory. ICT is used to deliver the background knowledge. However, some learners have difficulty working through tasks on their own. Monitoring of learners' progress is poor. Learners experience difficulties in identifying what they have completed and what assessments are outstanding. Tutors and learners routinely have to search through portfolios to set targets and plan assessments. The monitoring of learner attendance is weak and individual attendance is not calculated or monitored during progress reviews.
53. Assessment is satisfactory. When planning practical assessments a wide variety of methods are used to suit PALS/PCAE and the learner, however, tutors use a limited range of methods in the assessment of learner knowledge which does not meet individual learning needs. Many experience difficulties and make slow progress with assignments and written tests. Internal verification is satisfactory, however, alternative assessment methods for learners with additional learning needs has not been identified. Enrichment is satisfactory. Learners experience a range of additional activities. For example, visit shows and seminars such as Salon International, visits to shows at neighbouring colleges, in-house competitions, visits to local competitions and manufacturer training sessions at the college.

54. Additional learning support is satisfactory. Some 73% of all learners are identified as requiring additional learning support. The learning support is delivered during key skills lessons and individual sessions; however, progress reviews lack rigour and target-setting is sometimes weak. A few programme led apprentices had not received a review for several months.

Leadership and management

55. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff appraisals take place annually. Hairdressing teachers demonstrate a good level of technical skills. Staff professional development in hairdressing is of good quality and sufficient. All staff have recently attended training on child protection issues. All staff are involved in the self-assessment review, however, the report is insufficiently evaluative. Important areas for improvement of the provision identified during the inspection were not recognised.

56. The management of employer relationships is good. Employers are happy with the support they receive from the centre; they particularly like the flexibility and responsiveness of the tutors in responding to their requests for support. Employers state that the college is very understanding about their business needs. Employers are committed and engaged with their learners' training, with many offering training nights for their learners and support for the college on joint training plans. Resources are satisfactory. The salon is fit for purpose but tired and outdated; the area is due to relocate to new premises in the next few months.

57. Communication is weak. Problems with a stable network connection leave the hairdressing team cut off from the main college site and other colleagues. Meetings are often informal and not recorded. Learner records are held at the Mansfield Centre while replica files are kept at the Lincoln Road site where the hairdressing provision is situated; essential information such as timesheets and initial assessment results is often not repeated and cannot be accessed by the assessor during learner reviews.

58. Equality and diversity are covered well at induction. Issues are discussed with learners during tutorials and while studying the employment rights and responsibilities aspect of the apprenticeship framework. However, the range of methods to assess learner knowledge is too narrow.

Arts, media and publishing

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

59. Forty-three courses are offered in six venues. At the time of inspection there were 270 enrolments and a total of 566 learners. Courses include art, drawing, painting, upholstery restoration, silver jewellery making, pottery and sculpture, dressmaking, lace making, guitar, latin and ballroom dancing, singing and woodworking. Seven per cent of the provision is accredited creative crafts at Levels 1 to 3.

60. Most courses are held for two and a half hours weekly for between 10 and 21 weeks. Classes are held in the day and the evening, with a range of saturday workshops and short taster courses. There is a full time co-ordinator and two learning support assistants. Seventy five per cent of learners are female, 11% are from minority ethnic groups, 44% are aged over 60, 7% have a declared disability and 4% have learning difficulties.

Strengths

- Excellent success rates on accredited courses
- Good development of practical skills
- Wide range of courses

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient development of individual creativity
- Insufficient use of data to monitor provision
- Insufficient development of learners' and staff awareness of equality and diversity

Achievement and standards

61. Success rates on accredited courses are excellent at 100% for 2006/07. Retention is good at 93% with a three year improving trend. Development of learners' practical skills and self-confidence is good. In upholstery classes learners strip down and restore Victorian chairs to a professional standard. In art classes learners work with a variety of media to good effect, developing technical skills including how to frame and present their finished pieces. In a pottery class one learner worked confidently making a large vessel using the potter's wheel. One new learner in a dressmaking class was making her wedding dress.

62. On the accredited art course, learners' sketchbooks include comprehensive visual research and development of ideas to a high standard. Some learners set up their own websites and sell products at craft fairs. Learners are encouraged to exhibit their work. Enrichment is

good, including visits to national exhibitions such as Tutankhamen. Learners have improved understanding through these activities. In the week of inspection attendance was good at 81%.

Quality of provision

63. Teaching is satisfactory. In the best lessons the facilitation of individual learning is good, with complex tasks broken down into bite sized chunks by the tutors. Lessons are well prepared with resources laid out ready for the learners. There is good contextualisation and teachers show examples of the work of others to inspire learners. Tutors regularly give good individual verbal and written feedback, with constructive criticism enabling learners to improve. Learners are motivated by the expectations of high standards of work.
64. Development of individual creativity is insufficient. In the poorer lessons, teaching is insufficiently challenging. In these lessons teachers do not always plan their lessons sufficiently well to challenge all learners. Insufficient use of observational drawing is made and too much of the working is from secondary sources. Learning outcomes focus on acquisition of skills rather than design or creativity. Some handouts are insufficiently informative, outdated and poorly produced. Tutors' skills in Information and Learning Technology are low.
65. Formative assessment is satisfactory with some examples of very good implementation. Where it is used well, the staged process tracks the learners' journey clearly. Tutors adapt the system well to meet the needs of their learners. For example in one drawing and painting class learners take pride in using sketchbooks and photographs to set considered targets and record and evaluate their progress. However, a few tutors do not fully understand individual learning planning and progress in these lessons is too slow. A new system has been introduced recently to monitor and record overall achievement of groups of learners. This is working well.
66. Accommodation is good for specialist courses with a wide range of resources available for learners, particularly the provision of a range of basic materials to help learners who are just starting. Upholstery classes have storage for large work. The art room is light and spacious with good access.
67. PALS/PCAE provides a wide range of courses for learners. A street survey is used well to identify local needs and interests. PALS has secured funding to develop neighbourhood learning in deprived communities. A pottery class is in place as a result. In 2006/07 a free Romany art course brought travellers and the local community to work together. A Romany guest speaker contributed to the resulting exhibition.
68. Support for learners is satisfactory and has been improved since the previous inspection. Information and guidance (IAG) is satisfactory. An accredited programme has been established and this provides opportunities for learners to progress. Various methods of support are in place including voluntary help for a student with learning difficulties in an art class. Arrangements are frequently made for learners to visit current exhibitions. In upholstery class, learners had the opportunity to visit a specialist fabric manufacturer and purchase materials at a beneficial rate.

Leadership and management

69. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Tutors feel well supported and communication is good with highly effective team meetings. Quality improvement is satisfactory. Observation of teaching and learning grades are broadly in line with those given in inspection. However, feedback is sometimes too descriptive. It does not identify the impact of teachers' actions or explain clearly what teachers need to do to improve. Some good work has been done in improving progress monitoring where teachers and learners are developing SMART learning objectives. However, these are almost always skills based and do not identify wider, more creative, learning objectives. Annual appraisals are in place for all staff and there are good opportunities to improve teaching through focused staff development. Course reviews include useful feedback from learners and this is collected systematically. Group records of progress have been introduced. Accuracy in the monitoring of achievement is greater.
70. The use of data to monitor provision has improved since the previous inspection. However, it is still insufficient. The development of learners' and staff awareness of equality and diversity is not sufficient. There has been no specific training for teachers and there little reinforcement of learners' understanding. The self-assessment report is clear and judgemental but it overstates some strengths and a few areas for improvement are not recognised. However, the actions identified and progress to date have been carefully monitored.

ESOL

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

71. PALS/PCAE provides 24 ESOL classes, 11 from pre-entry level to entry Level 2, and 13 from entry Level 3 to Level 2. Classes are held at two locations in the City with 318 learners currently enrolled out of an LSC target of 470 for 2007/08. There were approximately 710 learners in 2006/07. Three classes are at outreach centres and the remaining 21 are located at the adult education college in the city centre. There are 16 part-time tutors, one full-time tutor and one quality team leader. All provision is accredited externally except for pre-entry level classes which are accredited by recognising and recording progress and achievement. Learners attend between two and five hours per week.

Strengths

- Particularly effective measures to improve attendance and success rates
- Very good support and guidance for learners

Areas for improvement

- Poor recording of learners' progress and achievement in individual learning plans
- Insufficient range of resources to support learning

Achievement and standards

72. Measures to improve attendance and success rates have been particularly effective. Success rates have been significantly improved and are now satisfactory. In 2006/07 success rates were at 28% and in 2007/07 rose to 72%, slightly above the national average. Staff have devised an effective system for monitoring attendance and punctuality. Learners agree to a policy on attendance and punctuality which is rigorously applied. Absences are followed up with reasons and outcomes monitored and recorded. The policy has been appropriately adapted for shift workers. Incentives to attend include a competition with prizes for good attendance at examinations which are now scheduled once a term rather than annually to increase success rates.

73. At pre-entry and entry levels recent arrivals to the country and migrant workers develop confidence and social skills which are important and valuable to them. Retention is satisfactory and improving from 61% in 2005/06 up to 84% in 2006/07. However, attendance is still poor in some classes. PALS/PCAE is aware of this. Attendance overall has been improved from 46% in 2006/07 to the current figure of 71%.

Quality of provision

74. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. In the better lessons learners engage well with learning and are challenged to achieve their potential. Good use is made of different

activities to suit learners at different levels and appropriate to their work and social requirements. In the poorer lessons tutors use a narrow range of teaching styles.. Some lessons do not engage and inspire learners. Learners develop skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing at a satisfactory rate and more rapidly in the better taught sessions.

75. Support and guidance for learners is very good. Learners attend drop-in support sessions twice a week with computers, resources and tutor support available. An IAG worker helps learners to convert foreign qualifications to British equivalents and 33% of those seen so far are ESOL students. Advice on learner support funds and fees is also available and learner support funding has been designated for ESOL learners to assist in paying exam fees, cover travel costs and other expenses for learners who need additional support. Support staff have a good understanding of the new fee structures and fee remission for ESOL. An informative booklet and other learning materials are translated. The co-ordinator speaks Polish and is able to advise and guide new arrivals. One full time tutor is trained to support ESOL learners with dyslexia. Learners enjoy imaginative extension activities such as trips to London and golf. Childcare is provided at both venues
76. Initial assessment is broadly satisfactory though not always carried out by specialists. However, the information collected is not always used effectively to plan learning. Diagnostic tests are completed and recorded adequately. Arrangements for assessment and support for additional learning needs are satisfactory. The waiting list for places on ESOL courses is very long. However, this is a city wide problem. PALS/PCAE is working hard to provide as many places as possible within their existing resources and seeking additional funding to provide additional places.
77. Recording and monitoring of progress and achievement in individual learning plans is poor. Learning outcomes lack personalisation and are insufficiently monitored and used to focus teaching and learning. Outcomes are often too broad and are not time limited or broken down into achievable steps. Learning goals are sometimes described using language which is too complex for learners to understand. Feedback to learners is insufficiently personalised and tutor comments in individual learning plans are not always helpful in informing learners of what they need to do to improve. The recognising and recording progress and achievement process is insufficiently robust.
78. The range of resources to support learning is insufficient. Some teaching areas lack appropriate resources to promote the use of ILT. Two rooms visited used a data projector; a smart board is available but was not seen in use and where ILT is available it is insufficiently used. One tutor is an e-guide and there is a tutor portal to which learners do not yet have access. There is generally an over-reliance on paper based worksheets.

Leadership and management

79. Leadership and management are satisfactory. The focus on improving the quality of provision, particularly achievement, has improved. PALS/PCAE has recently made two full time appointments. Standards have been raised and quality improvement procedures are more robust and are satisfactory. Observation of teaching and learning has improved but the focus on the learners' experience is still not sufficient. However, the grade profile is more accurate and the observations are used better to aid staff development

80. Staff qualifications and experience are satisfactory. Staff training is carried out regularly. However, attendance at staff training events is insufficient at around 50%. The self-assessment process identified some of the strengths and areas for improvement but lacked detail and analysis of data. There is some insufficient attention given to promoting equality and diversity issues. Staff do not effectively monitor resources to ensure the diverse range of cultural backgrounds of learners are properly represented.

Literacy and numeracy

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

81. At the time of the inspection, there were 878 learners on literacy or numeracy courses. Most courses last for 10 weeks, either in the day or evening. Classes are generally two hours long. Courses take place at a variety of community venues including the main college, schools and partners' venues. Short courses are delivered in the workplace. Courses cater for mixed ability adults between entry and Level 2. Learners can work towards nationally recognised qualifications in literacy and numeracy at Levels one and two. External accreditation at entry level is being introduced. The provision is co-ordinated by a part-time programme manager supported by a full time literacy tutor and a full time development worker. Thirteen part-time tutors deliver classes for between two

and 10 hours each week. So far in the year 133 learners had enrolled on **learndirect** courses which are delivered in the centre in the library.

Strengths

- High success rates on work-place programmes
- Good initiatives to extend provision with employers
- Particularly responsive **learndirect** staff

Areas for improvement

- Insufficiently robust system to plan individual learning and record progress and achievement
- Insufficient staff with specialist subject teaching skills
- Insufficient action to ensure **learndirect** provision meets community needs

Achievement and standards

82. Success rates on work-place programmes are high. In the year to date 98% of learners on literacy and numeracy programmes in the workplace achieved their learning outcome. This is an improvement from 68% in 2006/07. On other programmes success rates are improving and have exceeded improvement notice targets. However, in 2006/07 achievement for many learners on non-accredited provisions was equivalent to completion. The system to record progress and achievement is not sufficiently robust to give accurate, meaningful data. In 2006/07 there was insufficient collection and analysis of progression data. This has now been improved and records show clear progression between levels. Success rates on **learndirect** courses have been improved and are now satisfactory. Progression is also satisfactory in **learndirect** provision.

83. Retention improved in 2006/07. In the current year it is good overall at 93%. Retention on college and community courses is satisfactory and ranges between 82% to 86%. Tutors pay good attention to attendance and monitor it closely. Attendance overall is now satisfactory. During inspection it was 80%, an improvement on 70% in the first term. However, there is substantial variation in attendance across college and community courses ranging from 43% to 95%. The standard of learners work is satisfactory. In GCSE English classes, learners show a good level of knowledge and skill development on an intensive course. Clients are productive in class and participate well in activities.

Quality of provision

84. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In **learndirect** provision staff at the centre are qualified and experienced. They are particularly responsive to learners' needs. Tutors respond very quickly and give clear and effective help and support. The best lessons in other provision are lively, challenging and memorable and tutors use an imaginative range of activities to reinforce and assess learning. Tutors' schemes of work and lesson plans successfully build on learners' interests and are purposeful. In the poorer lessons tutors do not differentiate sufficiently to meet individual needs. Some lessons focus too much on group objectives rather than individual needs. There is an over-reliance on the use of worksheets and too few varied teaching and learning methods. Some lessons are uninspiring.

85. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Printed worksheets are of an appropriate quality. Computers and laptops are available in the main college site and at some outreach locations. However, they are not sufficiently used to extend learning by all tutors. Initial assessment is satisfactory. Learners have clear information, advice and guidance on appropriate courses. Diagnostic assessment tools are used well by a few tutors, however, in some classes there is insufficient diagnosis of specific learning needs.
86. The process of setting learning targets and measuring progress is insufficiently robust. Targets set are not always based on rigorous diagnostic assessment. Some learning plans have no targets. Most targets lack specific short-term achievement dates. Many tutors set objectives for group work which do not reflect the needs of individuals. Learners' progress towards individual goals is restricted. Unachieved targets are not always carried over to subsequent plans.
87. Too few tutors have literacy and numeracy specialist teaching skills. Of the 13 tutors, two have a Level 4 qualification and three are working towards it. Support assistants have no specialist training. Opportunities for development and sharing good practice are not always well attended.
88. Initiatives to extend provision in the workplace are good. So far in 2007/08, 60% of all learners attended workshops in their workplace. Materials for teaching are well aligned to work tasks. Learners have increased confidence in carrying out work tasks. Employers value the provision. These initiatives contribute to increases in numbers of new learners. In 2006/07 there were 23% new learners. This rose to 45% in 2007/08. However, the skills for life strategy is underdeveloped and does not currently inform future planning for workplace learning or widening participations in the wider community. Actions to ensure the **learnndirect** provision meets the needs of the community are insufficient. Opening hours are not sufficient and have not taken account of learner feedback. Links with other organisations have not been maintained sufficiently. PALS/PCAE is aware of this and actions are in place to widen the opening hours and re-establish links.
89. Support for learners is satisfactory. Additional needs are clearly identified during initial assessment. Learning support assistants help in some mixed ability lessons. Tutors provide good individual support for learners. In GCSE English classes learners benefit from email support from their tutor. Information and advice are effective in guiding learners to appropriate classes.

Leadership and management

90. Curriculum co-ordination and management is satisfactory. The number of part-time tutors has been reduced and full time tutors appointed to give continuity and expertise. Communication with tutors is satisfactory through termly meetings, email and individual meetings. An e-learning strategy has been implemented and all tutors are required to demonstrate its use in classes.
91. Quality improvement arrangements are satisfactory. There has been good progress towards actions following the LSC notice to improve. The observation of teaching and learning is satisfactory. The profile of grades awarded during inspection is comparable with that of PALS/PCAE. The self-assessment process is satisfactory and includes tutor

and learner views. The self-assessment report was mainly accurate in its judgements. **learnirect** staff have taken effective action to improve achievement rates. Good use was made of a visit to another, better performing, **learnirect** centre.

92. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Dyslexia and ESOL training has increased tutor awareness. In one class learners are beginning to research cultural celebrations. There is insufficient analysis of performance by types of learner including gender, age and minority ethnic. However, PALS/PCAE has recently obtained new computer software to do this.

Independent living and leisure skills

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

93. PALS/PCAE manages 41 Supported Adult Learning (SAL) courses for adults with learning disabilities and/or difficulties, some of whom have additional and significant medical and social needs. Courses are mainly at pre-entry level but PALS/PCAE does make some entry level provision in basic skills. Almost all learning undertaken in this area is accredited. At the time of the inspection there were 207 learners which is similar to the number of learners recruited in 2006/07. Courses are provided on nine sites across the city including the College of Adult Education. In partnership with the local Primary Care Trust (PCT) PALS/PCAE also provides 17 courses for 44 adults with mental health issues. These are spread over nine PCT, ACL and community locations. This whole area of learning is managed by a part-time senior tutor overseen by a senior manager. There are 17 sessional tutors and a further 12 learning support assistants.

Strengths

- Good acquisition of practical skills
- Very productive partnership working resulting in a good range of courses and programmes
- Good support for learners

Areas for improvement

- Ineffective recognising and recording progress and achievement procedures
- Insufficient use of information and learning technology

Achievement and standards

94. The acquisition of practical skills is good. In one communication class learners worked closely with the speech and language therapist to use simulated social contexts to make significant improvements in their questioning skills. Learners progress successfully through the units of their accredited programmes at a good pace and many learners make important gains in their self-confidence and personal skills.
95. Success rates for learners following independent learning and leisure courses are satisfactory and exceeded 77% in 2006/07. Most learners are on a year long course so success rates are not available for the current year. At the time of the inspection retention had improved on 2006/07 and was very good ; withdrawals for any reason are rare.

Quality of provision

96. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most tutors prepare their lessons thoroughly and learners take part in a wide range of practical, challenging and relevant activities. In some classes there is insufficient peer interaction and paper based-resources dominate. Learners are rarely able to experience visually stimulating learning materials and too often classrooms can be dominated by overly didactic teaching. In an ICT class for learners with mental health issues a learner spoke powerfully of how the class had given her both new skills and increased confidence in social situations.
97. PALS/PCAE has very good partnership arrangements with the PCT, the local FE College, service users, private providers and other adult services in the city. These partnerships are used well to arrange a comprehensive course offer at locations that are convenient to learners. Six new courses have been added to the prospectus for the current year as a result of discussion with partner organisations. There is a good range of courses for learners with mental health issues in both health authority and community based locations. Staff work in a sensitive manner and are able to challenge learners to progress their skills as well as building confidence and self-esteem. In an art class one learner was encouraged to build on confidence gained from previously learnt skills to experiment successfully with observational drawing. PALS/PCAE is becoming increasingly successful in attracting new learners and just over 40% of the current learners are new to the provision.
98. Learners are well supported in their classroom activities. PALS/PCAE benefits from a large number of volunteers and carers who accompany learners from their residential homes. This additional support is well managed by teachers and clear guidance is given for all additional adults in the classroom. In one woodwork lesson additional adults were used effectively to spend time with each learner to help them evaluate their own performance and learning. Adaptive technology is available to support students who have difficulties with mobility and motor control. Where additional support is identified specialist resources have been made available promptly. In one class a deaf/blind learner was enabled to undertake a complex physical task by some sensitive and unobtrusive support.
99. Initial assessment is undertaken to ensure that the individual needs of learners are well understood before the course starts. The information from these assessments is not always used to inform planning for the group and individual learners. All learners have individual

learning plans but the targets set are often of such a general nature, for example 'improve behaviour', that they cannot be used to measure progress. Planning to meet individual needs, set and review targets is under-developed. The structured pre-entry course books show learners successfully completing parts of their programme but there is no effective way of measuring or demonstrating the progress made by individual learners. Although the recognising and recording progress and achievement process has been implemented it is not effective in enabling learners and staff to judge the improvements made by learners while on the course. The process is not sufficiently understood by all teaching staff.

100. Accommodation for learners is satisfactory. Outreach centres provide some good quality learning environments. Accommodation for learners with more complex and profound learning needs is cluttered and does not ensure easy access to facilities to meet the personal care needs of learners. The availability and use of information and learning technologies is insufficient.

Leadership and management

101. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communication between the senior tutor and sessional tutors and learning support assistants is good. Staff are well supported in all aspects of their work and additional staff training is properly identified and provided. Managers respond quickly and practically to support staff when necessary. All staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. All staff and volunteers have been appropriately checked by the criminal records bureau. Risk assessments on all the significant aspects of the provision are carried out in a rigorous manner.
102. The area's self-assessment process is sufficiently inclusive although a few areas for improvement are not fully identified. Processes for quality improvement are satisfactory. There is a well structured scheme for the observation of teaching and learning. The observation grade profile for 2006/07 shows a marked improvement on previous years but is higher than judgements made during the inspection. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory.

Employability training

Good: Grade 2

Context

103. 112 learners are currently enrolled on the E2E programme at PALS/PCAE. Of these 52% are male, 24% from black or minority ethnic groups and 51% identified themselves to be disabled or as having a health problem. Most learners are referred by Connexions and are aged between 16 and 18. They attend one main centre, while some also attend a metalwork and vehicle maintenance workshop at another site. The average length of the programme is 22 weeks. Learners join the E2E programme at any time of the year. The programme is managed by an E2E manager, assisted by two team leaders, a work-placement officer and a team of key workers and tutors.

Strengths

- Good progression
- Good development of personal, social and vocational skills
- Flexible and responsive programmes to meet learners' needs
- Very good support for learners
- Good programme management

Areas for improvement

- Poor attendance
- Poor achievement of literacy and numeracy qualifications at Level 2

Achievement and standards

104. Achievement and standards are good. Progression from E2E programmes is good. In 2006/07, 62% of learners progressed to positive outcomes. Of these 22% progressed to work-based learning, including apprenticeships, 30% to full-time employment and 10% to further education. In the current year, 65% of learners who have completed their programme have progressed to one of these outcomes.

105. Learners make good progress in developing personal, social and vocational skills. For example one learner who had previously taken drugs, used abusive language and had little confidence in herself-progressed to full time employment. Many learners make significant gains in the interpersonal skills they need for working life, for example dealing with customers and time-keeping skills. Learners on work-placement make good progress in developing the practical and inter-personal skills required for employment. For example a group of E2E learners made metal robots and won a local "robot wars" competition competing against schools and colleges.

106. Retention is good, at 89% for 2006/07. Standards of learners' work in personal, social and vocational sessions are good, while in literacy and numeracy standards are satisfactory. Learners make satisfactory progress in developing their literacy and numeracy skills, although progress is slow in working towards Level two qualifications. Too few learners entered for the literacy and numeracy national tests at Level two gain those qualifications. In 2006/07, 28% of learners entered for the numeracy test at Level two passed, while 45% of learners at the same level passed the literacy test. Attendance on the E2E programme is low, at 68% for 2006/07. PALS/PCAE recognises this as a problem and is taking steps to deal with this.

Quality of provision

107. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Progress reviews are thorough and effective in helping learners develop. Trainers monitor learners' progress well against appropriate targets. They negotiate new targets together. Learners clearly understand their targets and are aware of the progress they are making. Tutors, key workers, the workplace co-ordinator, employers and learners participate well in reviews set in the workplace.

108. Learning activities are well paced and varied. Teachers praise and encourage learners effectively. Course and session planning is good. Sessions are evaluated thoroughly. Many learners participate well in sessions and work well together. Learners make good use of ICT to support learning, for example in using the internet for jobsearches. The monitoring and recording of learners' progress is satisfactory.

109. Some activities and learning targets are insufficiently challenging. Learners in some instances rehearse skills and knowledge that they have already acquired. In literacy and numeracy lessons targets are expressed in the language of the adult core curricula, rather than in terms more relevant to learners' needs and interests. Learners in literacy and numeracy sessions use too many worksheets, many of which are not linked to their interests or vocational needs.

110. Programmes are flexible and responsive to meet learners' needs. Learners attend a three tier programme. In each tier, or phase, they work on activities and sessions appropriate to their needs and interests at that particular time. Support sessions enable to learners to work on targets and topics of their choice, with individual support from tutors. Learners and staff negotiate suitable start dates for work-placements, while those who are not yet ready are given the opportunity to work on other programmes. Learners in the metalwork workshop work at their own pace, only moving on to more complex tasks when they are ready.

111. Support for learners is very good. PALS/PCAE supports learners on work-placements very well. PALS/PCAE has very good links with employers. Staff work hard to secure learners suitable, supportive placements. The focus on health and safety procedures is good and the provision for preparing employers to take on learners is good. Staff visit learners on placements frequently. Employers are very supportive of learners and work well to help them settle into employment. Employers and PALS/PCAE staff liaise closely in planning on and off-the-job training. Employers value the support that staff at PALS/PCAE offer both to themselves and to learners.

112. Staff provide good support in dealing with a wide range of personal, social, health and welfare issues. For example, on several occasions they have escorted learners to clinics. Staff offer support both to those learners who do not achieve positive outcomes and those who do succeed, for example who progress to employment or apprenticeships. Inductions are thorough and prepare learners well for the E2E programme. Information, advice and guidance is good. Learners receive detailed initial information and advice about the programme and progression options from both trainers and Connexions personal advisers. Identification and support of learners with additional support needs is good

Leadership and management

113. Programme management is good. Managers and staff communicate well with each other and with learners. Regular team meetings complement more informal sharing of views, concerns and ideas. Staff induction is good, new staff receive high levels of support from colleagues acting as mentors. Staff are valued and fully contribute to the decision making process throughout the organisation. Staff at all levels attend a good range of training and development programmes and activities.

114. Staff in the E2E programme actively promote equality and diversity well. Learners discuss equal opportunities issues at induction and before attending work-placements. Learners attend sessions intended to raise awareness of equality and diversity issues. The college celebrates various festivals, for example Diwali and the Chinese new year. The college has successfully targeted young Asian women, a previously under-represented group.

115. Management of quality improvement is good. Session observations are thorough and feedback is used well to help staff develop. The management team makes good use of information collected from the observation process, together with learner feedback. The standard of resources and accommodation is good. E2E learners make use of well equipped and comfortable premises, including a metal work and vehicle workshop. There is a plentiful supply of computers. The self-assessment process is inclusive and the report is accurate.

Business, administration and law

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

116. There are 23 apprentices and five advanced apprentices in business administration and one customer service advanced apprentice. Of these, 93% are women, with 31% from minority ethnic backgrounds. Twelve of the learners have identified additional learning and or support needs. Most learners are employed or in placement within a range of Council departments or divisions and associated organisations. Most assessment and learning is in the workplace with apprentices attending the College's training centre for one day a week for underpinning theory training. The team is made up of three qualified

assessors, an apprenticeship manager who monitors the whole apprenticeship contract and an IV who monitors the assessors. One assessor is also the trainer. The internal verification is subcontracted.

Strengths

- Good acquisition of workplace skills
- Good progress for current Administration apprentices
- Good learner involvement in managing learning in administration
- Rigorous internal verification practices

Areas for improvement

- Poor management of employers' involvement in the programme
- Insufficient arrangements for quality assurance of subcontractors

Achievement and standards

117. Learners are acquiring a good range of workplace skills. They are extremely confident in their use of information technology. They work well within their teams and many have been given additional responsibilities by their workplace supervisor. Many learners have enhanced their interpersonal skills and are now able to operate independently as receptionists and interact confidently with people they do not know.

118. Overall success rates for apprentices are satisfactory, with an upward trend in 2004/05 and 2005/06 of 52% and 60%, higher than the national average. The advanced apprenticeship success rate for 2006/07 was good at 88%, well above the national average. Timely success rates for both apprentices and advanced apprentices over the last three years are poor. However, the progress of current learners is good with all of the current learners progressing well against their target completion dates and seven out of the 10 leavers achieving ahead of their planned end date. Achievement of technical certificates is excellent. Attendance is good for the off-the-job training.

Quality of provision

119. The learner involvement in managing learning is good. The use of targets to monitor progress is good for administration apprentices. The learners have a strong ownership of these targets. Eighty per cent of learners are using electronic portfolios and are confident in their use. They often initiate assessment and are in regular email contact with their assessor. Learners also often are set their own targets for achievement which are over and above those within their individual learning plan. When they run out of work they set themselves more. Some learners using paper-based portfolios are progressing slowly.

120. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The training is well structured with clear lesson plans for each session. The range of learning methods used is good with plenty of practical activities. The focus is good on how learners apply theory in their workplace. Learners concentrate well and work productively in small groups. However, there is an over-emphasis on learners working at the same pace and little challenge for the more able learners. Self-study skills are a key strength of each learner and many are studying in their

personal time. One learner uses her local **learnirect** centre to access her electronic portfolio and the internet.

121. Assessment is satisfactory. A varied range of assessment methods are used across both types of portfolios. Assessment is frequent and there is productive assessment planning that learners follow. Learners are extremely well prepared for assessment and are confident during professional discussion. Good use is made of workplace evidence.
122. Transition arrangements for E2E learners onto apprenticeships and for new learners onto programme are good. PALS/PCAE makes good use of its links with other organisations uses its departments and associated organisations to provide supportive work-placements for apprentices. There is effective support for learners with additional learning or social support needs based on initial assessment of literacy, numeracy and learning styles.
123. Progress reviews do not use medium term targets and there is no inclusion of workplace activities and career development. There is little integration of in-company training into the learning programme content.

Leadership and management

124. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Informal communication between all team members and other associated staff is good. Team and senior management meetings are regular and informative. The internal verification strategy is particularly robust and demonstrates frequent and systematic observation of assessment and audit of evidence. The internal verifier interviews learners and employers in the workplace. Internal verification practice has been quick to address under-performance and appeals issues. A risk grading is attributed to each assessor and this supports the continuous professional development of team members. Observation of teaching and learning is well planned with clear action planning for improvement.
125. Promotion of equality of opportunity to learners by both their employers and PALS/PCAE is satisfactory. Learners are confident in how it relates to them in the workplace. One apprentice is a member of an equality and diversity steering group within her organisation and another has participated in a review of policies and procedures. Annual and ongoing staff development is clearly planned and includes in-house and external training.
126. The management of employers' involvement in the programme is poor. There is an over-reliance on the assessor to communicate with the employer on behalf of PALS/PCAE. Communication with, and support for, employers is insufficient. Learners are not given sufficient support to help them move into full-time employment. The quality assurance arrangements for subcontractors are insufficient. There is no contract with the internal verifier and a weak contract with the accounting subcontractor which has not been enforced. PALS/PCAE do not adequately monitor their subcontractor's performance. The accounting subcontractor has been identified as under-performing and PALS/PCAE have given notice to terminate the contract. However, arrangements to support the remaining few learners are inadequate.

127. Staff are involved in the self-assessment process but with little employer and learner input. The self-assessment report for work-based learning did not adequately cover the full range of programmes and significant judgements were not included. Inspectors agreed with the judgements in the self-assessment report but found additional strengths and areas of improvement. The quality improvement plan is weak.

Family learning

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

128. Peterborough City Council currently has 156 learners on family learning programmes. Courses include wider family learning and family language, literacy and numeracy, keeping up with the children, family literacy, family numeracy, play and language, family conservation, family cookery and family web page design. Courses are taught at a range of venues, including schools and family children centres.

Strengths

- Good development of personal skills and confidence

Areas for improvement

- Too much dull and uninspiring teaching

Achievement and standards

129. The development of personal skills and confidence is good. There are high levels of learner participation in lessons, and learners are well motivated to re-engage in learning. Learners are more involved with schools, and have the confidence to talk to teachers about their children's progress. Parents have gained a better understanding of how their children

learn. Transferable skills are being developed well to enable learners to continue working with their children at home. Many learners have made friends with other parents outside the classes. One parent has progressed on to become a volunteer in the family learning class and others have gained the confidence to continue learning.

130. Standards of learners' work are satisfactory. Learners are offered the opportunity to take qualifications but many of the courses are short courses and learners do not take up the opportunity. Some learners progress onto other courses outside family learning. Retention is good and attendance in the week of inspection was 84%.

Quality of provision

131. Where teaching is good, there is detailed lesson planning. Good practice is given in reading, listening, speaking, writing and practical skills. Previous learning is reinforced, and new vocabulary is planned into work to be done at home with the children. Support provided in lessons is good. Teachers and students work well together and establish a good rapport with each other and the rest of the class.
132. Too much of the teaching is dull and uninspiring. In the poorer lessons, lesson plans do not include sufficient differentiation. Tutors do not effectively plan how volunteers and learning support assistants should be helping learners. Lessons are not properly structured and some do not have a definitive beginning or an end. Some have one activity lasting a whole hour in some cases where some learners are left waiting for others to finish. Planning to reflect differences in learners' abilities is not always sufficient, and learning objectives are sometimes unclear. The pace of other lessons is not sufficiently challenging with a few lessons being too tutor led.
133. Appropriate initial assessment is used well to identify learners' needs and barriers to learning. Learners receive good advice about their current skills level. This advice is given clearly and sensitively and learners' appreciate the sensitive way that these issues are dealt with. They are clear about what opportunities are open to them. However, initial assessment results are not always used sufficiently well to plan learning. Learning outcomes are insufficiently clear for a few learners. Targets for some learners are not sufficiently precise. The use of individual learning plans to monitor progress is not sufficiently well established.
134. Initial advice and guidance is satisfactory. Tutors give learners information on their courses and advice workers visit classes to give learners information on where to go next and what other learning opportunities are available to them in the borough and how they can access them. Learners make good use of these visits to book time with advisers to talk about careers. The range of programmes available to learners is satisfactory. Support for learners is satisfactory. Crèches are provided on many of the courses to enable parents with small children to attend. Volunteers and learning support workers work well with the teachers to give good support to learners in class and on other issues.

Leadership and management

135. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Recent action to improve the quality of the provision has been effective. Documentation for recognising and recording progress and achievement is in place and tutors are being effectively supported to use them in the

classroom. Teaching and learning observation grades are in line with grades given by inspectors. Communication is satisfactory. Meetings take place regularly to keep staff informed but not all sessional staff can attend. Staff are visited in the classroom and are well supported by the manager.

136. Good links exist with schools and children centres. These are used well, for example to provide courses with joint lessons of adults and children where the school teacher collaborates with the adult tutor to deliver the lesson. The family learning manager represents the organization on many groups and forums in the borough. Some accommodation is cramped which impacts on teaching and learning. A few staff have insufficient qualifications or experience to deal with some individual learning needs. Most staff are part-time and staff training is not always well attended. Sharing of good practice within the curriculum area is insufficient and does not always cover key issues.
137. The self-assessment process is sufficiently inclusive. The report is broadly accurate and inspectors agreed with the strengths and areas for improvement. However, the report is overly descriptive. The promotion of equal opportunity is satisfactory. Family learning classes are open to all families. However, resources and activities used in the classes do not always reflect learners' cultures and traditions. Data is analysed by management and used well to monitor performance but not sufficiently well to plan teaching and learning and target under-represented groups, for example men.

