

# Sunderland City Council

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Inspection date

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## Background information

### Inspection judgements

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

#### Key for inspection grades

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

Further information can be found on how inspection judgements are made on [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).

### Scope of the inspection

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

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

- Health, public services and care
- Information and communication technology
- Preparation for life and work
- Family learning

## Description of the provider

1. Sunderland City Council (the Council) offers learning and skills provision in adult and community and work-based learning, funded under a single contract by the Tyne and Wear LSC. The Council manages the provision in three directorates:
2. Children's Services manage the family, adult and community learning (FACL) provision. Currently 24 commissioned external providers, including the City of Sunderland College and the WEA, provide non-accredited courses in 11 sector subject areas. Of these, 22 providers are small voluntary and community sector organisations that do not have their own LSC contracts. Currently 1,077 learners are enrolled on FACL courses.
3. Sunderland City Information Technology Centre (ITeC), manages the work-based learning provision and provides apprenticeships for 124 young people. Currently 13 advanced apprentices are in electronic engineering, 21 advanced apprentices and five apprentices are in information and communication technology (ICT), 31 advanced apprentices, 42 apprentices and eight Train to Gain learners are in business administration, and one advanced apprentice and three apprentices are in customer service. ITeC also manages Riverside Training's employability training for 84 learners, delivered under subcontract from the main Entry to Employment contractor, Springboard Sunderland. Riverside also delivers construction apprenticeships for nine young people employed by the Council, and subcontracted for delivery and assessment to Sunderland College.
4. The Tyne and Wear Care Alliance (TWCA) manage the Train to Gain contract for health and social care, delivered through a consortium of three work-based learning providers. Currently 79 learners are taking National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) at level 2 and seven at level 3.

The following table shows the providers associated with the Tyne and Wear Care Alliance consortium. This is the first inspection of Train to Gain. Inspections for Northern Care and Phoenix were imminent and their provision was not visited.

Consortium members	Numbers of learners	Visited on inspection
Mobile Care Qualifications	42	Yes
Northern Care	26	No
Phoenix	18	No

5. The council has two new European Social Fund contracts for 2008-2010, for enhanced information, advice and guidance and as lead partner on behalf of the 'not in education, employment or training' strategy group. In March 2008, unemployment in Sunderland was 7%, compared with 5.5% for England. In some wards, this is far higher. The proportion of people from minority ethnic groups is 3%.

## Summary of grades awarded

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

## Sector subject areas

Health, public services and care	Good: Grade 2
Information and communication technology	Good: Grade 2
Preparation for life and work	Good: Grade 2
Family learning	Good: Grade 2

## Overall judgement

### Effectiveness of provision

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

6. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievement and standards are good. Most success rates are good and almost all are timely. Many learners in work-based and family and community learning progress well and develop good skills and confidence.
7. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The best sessions are interesting, well planned and meet learners' individual needs. The planning and monitoring of individual learning and progress in adult and community learning is insufficient. Learning provision meets most learners' and employers' needs well, but the timing of FACL sessions inhibits recruitment of employed people. Personal and learning support for learners is good. The provision of impartial information, advice and guidance is good for work-based learners, but arrangements at FACL are too new to assess.
8. Leadership and management are good. Good measures effectively assure and improve the quality of provision. The Council works well, with a wide range of partners, to meet strategic aims. Employer engagement is good. The management of subcontracted provision is good. However, processes to improve the quality of teaching and learning are insufficiently effective and those for recognising and recording progress and achievement in non-accredited learning are established insufficiently across the provision.
9. Social inclusion is good. Arrangements for equality of opportunity are good. Successful initiatives contribute to widened participation. The Council sets targets based firmly on local intelligence and increased participation of under-represented priority groups in the last year. Staff know how to respond if safeguarding or equality and diversity issues are identified.

### Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

10. The service has a good capacity to improve. It has successfully remedied most of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection and grades have improved. Most success rates show a rising trend and are particularly strong in work-based learning. However, in Train to Gain, although success rates are still above the national average, they have declined over the last year. The quality of teaching and learning has strong aspects in most sector subject areas. The Council has identified the need to expand provision to employed people by scheduling courses in the evenings and at weekends. The service has a good infrastructure for

improvement, and has done much good work in the last year to assure and improve the quality of provision. The implementation of the single contract with the LSC is managed well. Quality improvement is central to the service's strategy, and it has successfully attracted, retained and developed new learners from its priority groups.

11. The self-assessment process is good. It is inclusive and consultative. The draft report is adequately critical and evaluative. The Council has just compiled its first joint self-assessment report, which collates reports produced by the various remits of the service. Judgements are generally well supported by evidence, but the report is insufficiently concise and is overly descriptive in parts. Inspection findings reflect many self-assessed key strengths and areas for improvement, though the self-assessment report overstates some strengths, and misses some areas for improvement. Inspection grades matched those of the self-assessment report closely. In some cases, inspectors awarded higher grades.

## Key strengths

- Much good progress and achievement
- Good work-based learning provision to meet employers' needs
- Very effective arrangements to engage hard to reach groups through community based provision
- Good support for learners
- Very effective recent measures to assure and improve the quality of provision
- Good work with partners to meet strategic aims
- Good employer engagement
- Good management of subcontracted provision
- Successful initiatives to widen participation

## Key areas for improvement

- Insufficient planning and monitoring of individual learning in family, adult and community learning
- Insufficient range of provision in family, adult and community learning
- Insufficiently effective process to improve the quality of teaching and learning
- Insufficiently developed process to recognise and record non-accredited learning and progress

## Main findings

### Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning  
Work-based learning  
Train to Gain

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

12. Achievement and standards are good. Apprenticeship and advanced apprenticeship overall success rates are high and well above national averages over the last three years. Almost all success rates are timely. Train to Gain success rates at level 2 in care are good at 71%, 12 percentage points above the national average. Success rates at level 3 are satisfactory. Progression from Entry to Employment into training, education or employment is good and shows a consistently improving trend over three years. Many learners in work-based and FACL develop good skills and confidence. For example, learners in a calligraphy session used the library more for research as they became increasingly aware of the impact of the written word. Standards of work in many FACL sessions are good. Some family learners have progressed to gain childcare qualifications at level 2 and 3, and gained employment. Retention is at least satisfactory for most FACL areas. Attendance is broadly satisfactory. The self-assessment report identified this strength.

### Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning  
Work-based learning  
Train to Gain

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

13. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. The best sessions are interesting, well planned and paced to meet learners' individual needs. Tutors use a good balance and range of teaching strategies that effectively motivate learners. Tutors and learners in these sessions recognise the value of evaluation and recording their learning to inform future sessions. Learners are motivated by supportive feedback from tutors. In Entry to Employment, planning and monitoring of learning is very effective, and progress clearly recorded on an electronic individual learning plan. In weaker sessions, teaching is overly tutor led and lesson planning is not adapted to meet the particular needs of different groups and individuals.

14. The planning and monitoring of individual learning and progress in adult and community learning is insufficient. New documents for recording progress and achievement are not well understood by many tutors. Too few learners receive initial assessment. When conducted, results do not always accurately identify learners' starting points and are not used well enough for planning. A few learners with additional learning needs do not have these met from the start of



the course. Targets are often too broad to be achievable or measurable. Some learners and tutors are resistant to completing records of learning. Most learners record session activity instead of learning and progress.

15. Work-based learning provision meets employers needs well. The TWCA engages with over 700 employers through its employer network. Good use of the operating surplus from Train to Gain provision helps provide short courses to meet mandatory and locally identified needs. ITeC learners are carefully matched to their work-placements to benefit both employers and learners. Progression to permanent employment is very good. Employers receive thorough briefings and comprehensive handbooks to support their engagement in learners' programmes.
16. Very effective arrangements with community based voluntary sector providers use a wide range of community venues to engage with hard to reach groups and people living in areas of deprivation. The careful choice of subcontracted providers ensures a close match with the Councils' strategy to prioritise areas with high indices of deprivation and learners affected by disadvantage. Particularly good links with the Sunderland United Football Club Foundation help in engaging families, and particularly boys and men, in learning.
17. The range of FACL provision is insufficient to meet the needs of all learners. Scheduling is insufficiently sensitive to the needs of employed people. Little evening or weekend provision is available. Progression opportunities are too limited in most subject areas, particularly in view of the difficulty some learners have in using public transport. The self-assessment report identified all of these issues and much work to resolve them has begun. However, it is too early to assess how successful the actions will be.
18. Support for learners is good. ITeC provides very good, flexible individual support to meet the various demands of learners' workplaces. Work-placement problems are swiftly resolved. Good links with external agencies help effectively deal with personal and social problems. TWCA has thorough processes to identify support needs of new recruits and good arrangements to ensure that subcontracted training providers meet them. At Riverside, Entry to Employment learners receive very effective support from key workers. Skilled FACL tutors provide sensitive individual support to learners. A wide range of assistive and enabling technology resources are available for subcontractors to borrow. Other resources can be purchased when required but the process can be slow. Analysis of FACL data confirms good take up of additional support and significantly higher retention and achievement by those learners taking up the offer.
19. Work-based learners receive good information, advice and guidance. Prospective learners benefit from impartial advice from dedicated officers. ITeC applicants benefit from good schools liaison activities, effective links with Connexions and good links with further and higher education providers for those aiming to progress to higher education. An informative handbook provides Train to Gain learners with comprehensive information about all aspects of the programme. The self-assessment report identifies that arrangements to provide systematic impartial information, advice and guidance to FACL learners are inadequate.

Nearly 100 learners have benefited from new arrangements, using external specialists, being piloted during the 2008/09 academic year. However, it is too early to measure success in this area for improvement.

## Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

20. The council has taken good recent measures to assure and improve the quality of provision. Development plans clearly support strategic direction. Improvements in systems effectively prioritise those with a direct impact on learners. A revised and improved system for observing teaching and learning gives a much more accurate overview of the provision. Outcomes from observations of teaching and learning closely link to staff development and appraisal. The Council pays its staff to attend well-planned staff training that meets strategic requirements. All tutors are qualified or working towards qualifications. A quality forum closely monitors all aspects of learning. Business case reviews ensure that provision is well matched to the needs and aims of learners. A quality calendar ensures all processes and procedures are timely. The Council uses accurate data well to plan, monitor and analyse provision. Strong action to eradicate unsatisfactory provision includes terminating the use of some buildings, providers and tutors. Curriculum development is a key part of the quality improvement agenda, and successfully places provision in areas of greatest need. The self-assessment process is now much more effective and inclusive. The provider effectively uses comprehensive feedback from learners, staff and stakeholders to determine judgements.

21. The Council's work with a wide range of partners to meet strategic aims is good. Strategic direction clearly focuses on attracting under-represented groups into learning and employment and raising the aspirations of the local population. The commissioning process links very effectively with voluntary and statutory groups who specialise in working with specific priority groups. Their expertise and contacts are used to attract new learners into appropriate provision. Careful analysis of detailed research into local needs, contributes effectively to decisions about which partners to engage. Council staff share their specialist knowledge, through membership of key groups and committees, to inform and advise a wide user group. Pertinent training, such as disability awareness and drug awareness, delivered by experts, enables staff to engage with, and retain, vulnerable learners. The Council works well to promote community development and capacity building in conjunction with its partners. This strength is identified in the self-assessment report.

22. Employer engagement is good. The Council engages well with a large number of local employers and uses its links with them well to promote learning and employability skills. A well established employers' network is instrumental in

sharing good practice. Stringent requirements support dealings with employers, and ensure effective monitoring of performance. Network development officers support employers well and act as brokers between employers and the Council. Employers benefit from additional training to enhance their business, for example, in management and direction. This strength is identified in the self-assessment report.

23. The management of subcontracted provision is good. Procurement procedures for engaging new subcontractors are thorough. Subcontractor contracts are detailed and cover qualitative and quantitative aspects of the relationship. All teaching staff are observed at least annually. The use of paired observations of teaching sessions assures quality where a subcontractor has its own observation system. The routine collection and analysis of data supports regular monitoring of subcontractors' performance. Lifelong learning forums are used well to share good practice and discuss common issues.
24. Processes to improve the quality of teaching and learning are insufficiently effective. Observers' judgements are not always sufficiently objective, precise and comprehensive. The Council is aware of this. Subject specialists do not always observe lessons; generic observers miss subject specific detail, such as attainment. Many records of observations were over-graded. The Council's overall grade profile for 2007/08 shows 80% of sessions to be good or better, significantly higher than the grade profile for the inspection.
25. Processes for recognising and recording progress and achievement work effectively in areas such as ICT, but are insufficiently established across the provision. Individual learning plans are generally well designed, but learners have too little guidance to articulate personal targets. Reflective, evaluative practice is under-developed. The Council provides staff training in recognising and recording progress and achievement and more is planned. The need to improve this system is identified in the self-assessment report.
26. Arrangements for equality of opportunity are good. Successful initiatives contribute to widened participation. Target-setting for increasing participation of under-represented priority groups is comparatively new, but the Council set and met realistic targets in the last academic year. This year's targets are based firmly on local intelligence, and adequately challenging and achievable. Participation by men has increased six percentage points to 21%; minority ethnic groups by three percentage points to 5%, above the figure for the local profile, and people with disabilities by 13 percentage points. Many new learners benefit from provision and make a good contribution to their communities through voluntary work or membership of committees and pressure groups following engagement in learning. The Council celebrates learners' success well, providing good role models for new learners. Learners benefit from crèche facilities, help with transport costs or with accessing grants for clothing.
27. Comprehensive policies and procedures refer to relevant current legislation such as the Race Relations Act (Amendment) 2000, and the Disability Discrimination Act. Frequent, challenging staff training in equality and diversity is provided and

its application and impact evaluated through observation of teaching and learning. This process identified some poor practice in equality and diversity that was resolved to the advantage of learners. The learners' handbook satisfactorily explains their rights and responsibilities. This is particularly strong in work-based learning, where comprehensive systems are in place to identify and tackle any issues that may arise. Here, learners are well aware of their own and others' rights and responsibilities, and confident to challenge inappropriate behaviour, with great success. In some areas of provision, strong links with parents and carers support learners and inform their families of their progress and well-being.

28. Learning provision links well with the five *Every Child Matters* outcomes.

Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. Staff benefit from much training, and know how to respond if issues are identified. The Council uses the mechanisms of a single central register and point of contact successfully to support vulnerable learners. Access audits have been conducted for much of the provision, and unsuitable premises are no longer used. The service has a satisfactory skills for life policy. Arrangements for literacy, numeracy and language support are satisfactory overall and in some areas they are very good. Staff have adequate training in skills for life awareness, though sometimes, initial assessment does not happen and does not always identify fundamental needs. Arrangements to refer people to support at later stages of their programme where necessary are in place.

## What learners like:

- Helpful and friendly tutors who are easy to get on with
- Good work-placements leading to employment
- Good support from employers, assessors and tutors
- Opportunities to get out of the house and make new friends
- 'My health has improved since joining classes'
- Being treated as an adult
- 'Everything we are learning we can put into practice'
- 'Now I can help my children with their homework and I have learned something myself'
- 'My children respect me now'
- 'Everyone gets on and there is no bullying'

## What learners think could improve:

- Computers and software are not always reliable and up to date
- 'They need to offer a wider range of courses'
- 'Better use of time while waiting for a work-placement'
- Too much paperwork

## Sector subject areas

### Health, public services and care

Good: Grade 2

#### Context

29. The Council offers a range of FACL and Train to Gain provision, delivered by seven contracted providers at 12 venues across the city. Eighty-five learners attend non-accredited FACL courses including holistic therapies; healthy body; healthy mind; skills to promote healthy living; stress management and mental health awareness. Currently 86 learners are on the Train to Gain programme working towards NVQs in health and social care. The TWCA subcontracts Train to Gain to three private training providers across the region.

#### Strengths

- Good success rates for NVQ level 2 in Train to Gain
- Good support for individual learners
- Good employer engagement
- Effective management of subcontracted provision

#### Areas for improvement

- Weak monitoring of learners' progress

#### Achievement and standards

30. Achievement and standards overall are good. This is identified in the self-assessment report. Most Train to Gain learners are on NVQ level 2 programmes where success rates are good at 71%. Success rates are satisfactory for the small number of learners on NVQ level 3 programmes. Learners in FACL sessions participate well. Many show improvements in their health and well-being. Retention on FACL programmes is satisfactory at 84%.

31. Learners make good progress on Train to Gain programmes. They develop good vocational knowledge and skills including communication, motivation, teamwork, recording and increased self-confidence. They take responsibility for a wide range of tasks in the workplace and work to a good professional standard. Learners produce a good standard of evidence in their well maintained portfolios.

#### Quality of provision

32. The quality of provision overall is good. This was identified in the self-assessment report. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Schemes of work and sessions are well planned and set clear aims and objectives. Tutors' explanations and instructions to learners are very clear. Learners are actively encouraged to contribute and participate in all activities. Tutors use a good range of teaching methods to promote and extend learning, reinforce key learning points and check

that learning has taken place. Learners are well motivated. Tutors and assessors have a positive relationship with learners. Session evaluations are good.

33. Arrangements for Train to Gain assessments are satisfactory. Assessors are confident in their role and knowledgeable in the subject area. Well-planned assessments clearly outline the activity and assessment methods. Direct observations are well recorded and clearly referenced to NVQ requirements. Learners receive constructive verbal and written feedback.
34. Monitoring and recording of learners' progress is weak. This is not identified in the self-assessment report. Learners' progress reviews for Train to Gain have few clear targets to measure learners' progress and achievement. Record-keeping on the review form is insufficiently detailed. Some comments are vague and describe the discussion rather than evaluate the learner's progress and effectiveness of any additional support received. Employers are not always present at reviews. Dates of reviews are sometimes later than planned. Tutors do not routinely update or use individual learning plans as part of the review process. Processes for recognising and recording progress and achievement in FACL are insufficiently established. Learning and personal aims on individual learning plans are too broad and insufficiently challenging. Tutors monitor and record progress and achievement following individual discussions with learners, but records are unclear and insufficiently detailed.
35. The Council meets the needs of employers and learners very well. Employer engagement is good. This is identified in the self-assessment report. The Council has effective links with over 700 employers. Well-attended employer network meetings provide opportunities to share practice, ideas, provide support, recruit new learners and raise standards within the care sector. Regular consultation with employers contributes to programme planning by identifying additional, specialist, training courses that effectively support the wider development of their employees. The good range of NVQ programmes and short courses meets the needs within the care sector industry well. Good links with partners widen participation for potential new learners who are currently unemployed.
36. Train to Gain induction is satisfactory. It is well structured, effective and provides a good foundation to give learners confidence at the start of their programme and ensure they have a full understanding of all aspects of their training. Tutors ensure that learners are made aware of equal opportunities and the appeals and complaints procedures.
37. Support is good. Support for individual learning is good. This is identified in the self-assessment report. Tutors and assessors provide a wide range of timely and sensitive support on a regular basis, especially on FACL provision where many learners are older, frail or have mental health support needs. Tutors and assessors have a good range of current occupational experience and skills and use good verbal and non-verbal communication to engage learners in the sessions. Train to Gain tutors and assessors are easily accessible, responsive and flexible to meet learners' shift work patterns. Tutorials and site visits for Train to Gain learners are frequent.

38. Employers' support for Train to Gain is good. They frequently nominate and support learners to complete external training. Good in-house training, supervision and guidance ensure that learners have the appropriate range of workplace experience to develop competence and prepare for assessment. Workplace supervisors support, praise and encourage learners, to motivate them, build their confidence and help them achieve.

#### Leadership and management

39. Leadership and management are good. This is identified in the self-assessment report. The management of subcontracted providers for FACL, and Train to Gain provision managed by TWCA, is good. Communications are regular and effective. A wide range of thorough and effective quality monitoring processes ensures improvement. Resources are satisfactory. Training rooms are spacious, bright and fit for purpose. All staff use a good range of learning materials. Internal verification processes in work-based learning programmes are good and very thorough. Evaluation of courses and use of learners' feedback are good. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory and promoted well across the provision. Staff fully understand learners' diverse cultural backgrounds and needs. The self-assessment process is inclusive and identifies many of the strengths and areas for improvement. However, the report is not written in a concise way that is easy to use.



## Information and communication technology

Good: Grade 2

### Context

40. A curriculum co-ordinator manages 14 contracted providers of adult and community learning. Their 26 tutors support 180 learners. In 2007/08, 66% of learners were women, 27% had a disability and 3% were from minority ethnic backgrounds. Most were aged over 55 years old. Subjects offered include introduction to computers, digital imaging and personal computer (PC) maintenance. Sessions are held at local venues, in churches, libraries and community centres.

41. Sunderland ITeC provides work-based learning. An internal verifier and an assessor support five apprentices and 21 advanced apprentices. All but one are men. Two learners are working towards information technology (IT) user and 21 towards IT practitioner qualifications.

### Strengths

- Good achievements and standards
- Outstanding on-the-job learning
- Good additional support for learning
- Good partnerships to promote learning and widen participation
- Particularly effective management of work-based learning
- Good recent initiatives to improve provision in adult and community learning

### Areas for improvement

- Insufficient attention to personal learning needs in adult and community learning
- Insufficient sharing of good practice

### Achievement and standards

42. Achievements and standards are good. The proportion of apprentices achieving their qualification rose to 91% in 2007/08 following an improving trend in success rates. Apprentices develop very good technical skills, business awareness and enterprise skills. They make good progress and complete their programmes on time. Learners who remain on FACL courses achieve the course learning objectives. Many learners start nervously, but develop confidence and self-esteem as they progress. Most community learners progress to further courses. Attendance is good. Retention on community courses is satisfactory at 85%. Community learners make good progress in using the internet and benefit from this. Some learners make good use of their new skills outside the classroom. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report.

## Quality of provision

43. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are good overall. In work-based learning, on-the-job training is outstanding. Employers provide much valuable extra training. They ensure learning and assessments are well co-ordinated with job roles. The assessor provides a wide range of very good training: off-the-job day release, additional sessions outside working hours, and online key skills training. Employers and the assessor support learners well with monthly assessment meetings and quarterly reviews.
44. Much teaching and learning observed was outstanding or good. In the better sessions, teachers use a range of activities that engage and enthuse learners, and use individual learning plans well to promote reflection on skills learned, building confidence and self-esteem. In these sessions, learners progress rapidly and develop the confidence to use their skills outside the classroom.
45. FACL provides good additional learning support. Classroom assistants support learners well in larger sessions. Tutors develop a good rapport with learners that helps them overcome barriers to learning. Many tutors help learners with additional learning needs by supporting their coping strategies. In all sessions, tutors develop an atmosphere conducive to learning that is sensitive to the age and confidence levels of the learners. Learning resources are appropriate. Initial assessment is satisfactory.
46. In poorer community learning sessions, tutors do not pay sufficient attention to learners' personal learning needs or use learners' personal learning goals to plan activities. Some do not provide sufficient support for learners to understand the differences between their home computers and those in the classroom. Some teaching and learning is insufficiently varied with an over-reliance on worksheets. Some workstation furniture is inappropriate and some learners do not have sufficient awareness of how to maintain a safe posture. The self-assessment reports identified these strengths, but not the areas for improvement.
47. Programmes and activities meet the needs and interests of learners well. The Council has good partnerships to promote learning and a very effective programme to widen participation. Employers provide very good placements for work-based learners. Managers make good use of information to identify areas where there are fewer learners, and develop partnerships with groups in those localities. Community groups host classes, using equipment loaned from the Council where necessary, and benefit from increased local involvement. In the current year, nearly 75% of learners are new to learning. The programme has insufficient evening provision. The self-assessment reports identified these strengths and area for improvement.
48. Support for learners is good. Initial advice and guidance are good. Provision for additional learning needs is good. Managers effectively seek learners' views through course reviews and learner focus groups. They incorporate learners' recommendations on timings and venues where possible. Staff receive training in

disability awareness and have access to a particularly wide range of assistive technology. The self-assessment report identified this.

## Leadership and management

49. Leadership and management are good. Management of work-based learning is particularly effective. Target-setting is good. Timely success rates have improved each year. Links with, and marketing to, employers are good. ITeC managers made good use of a national government initiative to support staff development. Internal verification is thorough but supportive. An annual quality cycle is effective in maintaining learners' progress and identifying areas for improvement.
50. Recent initiatives to improve provision in adult and community learning are good. Managers have improved support to community groups, developed staff through paid training, improved the lesson observation programme, and made better use of data for decision-making and programme development. Internal communications are good and keep staff informed of developments. Managers use key priorities such as retention to develop performance targets with subcontractors. Overall quality improvement arrangements are good. Self-assessment report processes are comprehensive and consider stakeholders' views. The self-assessment reports are critical and evaluative. Inspection findings matched the proposed grades but identified further strengths and areas for improvement. However, the Council's teaching and learning observers awarded higher grades than inspectors, and did not focus sufficiently on learners' attainment and progress.
51. Provision for equal opportunities is good. The Council is very successful in recruiting many learners who have not been involved in learning recently. Learners are confident they would recognise harassment and know how to complain if necessary.
52. Good practice is insufficiently shared. Staff in FACL do not benefit from the same access to the national government initiative to support staff development. The good practice identified when observers grade sessions as outstanding is not routinely shared. The better practice in use of individual learning plans, demonstration techniques and planning learning in computer workshops is insufficiently widespread.

## Preparation for life and work

Good: Grade 2

### Context

53. Currently 119 learners are enrolled on 17 FACL programmes in literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), managed by a full-time member of staff. Courses do not lead to accreditation. Learners usually attend for two hours per week and most programmes are delivered over a ten-week period. Of the learners, 70% are women.

54. Eighty-four learners are on employability training through Entry to Employment programmes, of whom two are women following foundation business administration programmes. The remaining learners are following foundation construction and joinery programmes. Learners usually attend for 16 hours each week.

### Strengths

- Good progress within and from employability training
- Very effective planning and monitoring of learning in employability training
- Very effective personal support for learners
- Good collaboration between staff to improve the learners' experience

### Areas for improvement

- Inadequate monitoring and recording of progress and achievement in adult and community learning
- Insufficiently challenging teaching for ESOL learners

### Achievement and standards

55. Achievement and standards are good on employability training programmes. Progress in and from the programmes is good. The progression rate stands at 68% and shows a trend of continuous improvement over the last three years. Of the learners who progressed in 2007/08, 36% moved into further education, 48% into employment, 14% into apprenticeships and 2% into the armed forces. The development of learners' personal skills and confidence are good. Many learners have won external recognition for their progress and the barriers they have overcome.

56. In FACL the processes for recognising and recording achievement are not reliable and it is not possible to make a judgement on achievement. The retention rate is 86%, which is satisfactory. Attendance is satisfactory and work is mainly of an appropriate standard.

## Quality of provision

57. The quality of provision is good. Teaching and learning are satisfactory across the provision. Planning and monitoring of learning in employability training is very effective and draws on a wide range of information. Learners' employment aspirations, barriers to learning and support needs are clearly identified and recorded. Tutors fully consider the assessment of learners' literacy and numeracy skills in planning to meet their particular needs. Learners, key workers and vocational tutors regularly review progress each month. They make good use of the learners' electronic individual learning plan to set and record new targets.
58. Most tutors plan and prepare sessions well. In the better sessions, tutors incorporate a range of learning activities to motivate and maintain the interest of learners. Learners on employability training programmes have good opportunities to gain employability skills, through vocational training, literacy and numeracy and personal skills development. Written work is appropriate and checked for accuracy. However, in FACL, tutors rely too heavily on learners completing worksheets to develop skills.
59. In family, adult and community learning the monitoring and recording of progress and achievement are inadequate. The better learning plans reflect individual needs and are completed jointly by the learner and the tutor, but many are insufficiently detailed. Short- and long-term learning goals are too general with comments such as, 'understand punctuation' or 'read a book'. Some learning plans contain the same targets for all learners.
60. Teaching in some FACL sessions for ESOL learners is insufficiently challenging. Learners' existing knowledge and experience are not always recognised. Some language teaching is not well structured and explanation of grammatical conventions is insufficient. The supply of language resources is limited and sometimes dated.
61. The range of provision generally satisfactorily meets the needs and interests of learners. However, no accreditation is available in the FACL provision. The Council has identified this.
62. Personal support for learners is very effective throughout the provision. In employability training programmes, every learner has a key worker as a personal tutor, in addition to their vocational tutor. All staff encourage learners to develop the skills that will enable them to enter the world of work. Learners know and trust the small staff team and feel comfortable talking to them about sensitive personal concerns. All learners attend sessions on sexual health, which provides access to a free advice and guidance service and free contraception. Practical help is provided for life skills such as budgeting and healthy eating. In FACL, good bilingual learning support in ESOL sessions and learning support assistants in sessions for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, enhance the good support from tutors.

## Leadership and management

63. Collaboration between staff to improve the learners' experience is good. The commitment to bring about improvement is strong. For example, in FACL quality improvement forums share good practice and strengthen links across areas of learning. A recent development has been the 'learner involvement strategy' which collects learners' views in the third week of their programme and feeds information back to the tutors to contribute to their planning. In employability training good collaboration between vocational and specialist tutors fosters literacy and numeracy skills within the vocational context. Team teaching is used very effectively in practical sessions.
64. Access to staff development is good. All staff have received much recent training in equality and diversity, recognising and recording achievement and progress and the self-assessment process. All Entry to Employment staff achieved a level 2 qualification in equality and diversity. Centres are generally well equipped and welcoming. Resources are satisfactory overall. The use of ICT in classrooms is being developed. However, some sessions are under resourced and reliant on out-dated materials and worksheets.
65. The systems for the regular observation of teaching and learning are well established, but observation feedback is often descriptive with insufficient judgements. The use of specialist observers is insufficient. The self-assessment report is evaluative and mostly accurate. All staff contribute to writing the report and are appropriately involved.

## Family learning

Good: Grade 2

### Context

66. The Council offers family literacy, language and numeracy (FLLN), and wider family learning (WFL) courses through 14 contracted partner organisations. FLLN provision includes introductory workshops, and 40-hour literacy and numeracy courses. Learning sessions are mostly in the daytime. WFL includes family learning through football coaching, creative cookery, and dance and movement courses. In 2007/08, 168 courses were run in 88 venues across the city. Some 386 adult learners participated in FLLN, 2% of whom were men. Around 492 adult learners participated in WFL, 15% of whom were men. Of family learners, 7% are from minority ethnic groups, and 6.6% have disabilities. Currently 253 learners are enrolled on family learning courses. The family programmes project officer manages family learning and the 23 tutors.

### Strengths

- Good development and application of learners' skills, knowledge and confidence
- Good teaching and learning
- Good support for learners
- Very effective use of partnerships

### Areas for improvement

- Insufficient monitoring and recording of learner progress

### Achievement and standards

67. Achievement and standards are good. The self-assessment report identified this strength. Learners develop good skills, knowledge and confidence, and apply these well in their lives. Learners have a greater understanding of what their children are learning at school and are better able to support them. Families benefit by improved relationships and higher aspirations for parents and children. The college partnership offers opportunities for learners to take national tests at local schools. Of learners who achieved national tests in literacy and numeracy, 82% progressed to college courses. Many other learners progress into employment, further learning, and voluntary activity. A learner from family learning through football has set up a youth club and won funding for a mini bus. The standard of learners' work is good. For example, families on a cookery course enjoy cooking together, and now cook more fresh and healthy meals at home.

68. Achievement on accredited FLLN provision is satisfactory at 75%. Attendance is satisfactory at 87%

## Quality of provision

69. The quality of provision is good. The self-assessment report identified this. Teaching and learning are good. Tutors plan sessions well to meet learners' individual needs and interests. They use a good range of innovative and enjoyable methods to stimulate learning. In a nutrition session, children enjoyed trying new foods in a 'bush tucker' challenge game. In a 'football basics' course, learners improved numeracy skills by calculating the size of the football pitch, and literacy skills by writing a match report. FACL celebrates learner success well at events and by presentation of certificates, awards, swimming session vouchers, and football match tickets.
70. Teaching and learning resources are good. Learners receive a dictionary on literacy courses, and a calculator on numeracy courses. Very effective partnerships add to resources and opportunities for learners. The football club partnership offers the incentive of match tickets to learners with 80% and above attendance. Sessions are run in the well equipped football stadium learning centre. Artists and musicians from cultural partner organisations contribute to learning sessions enhancing creative experiences for learners. Accommodation is generally good in comfortable rooms with appropriate furniture, good ICT equipment and play resources. However, a small number of sessions were in rooms which were cold or overcrowded, or where other people walked through.
71. Monitoring and recording of learner progress is insufficient. Many learners have broad and imprecise learning aims and personal goals, which are difficult to review and record. Tutors and learners use individual learning plans inconsistently. Plans are insufficiently detailed and are not regularly updated. The Council uses individual learning plans to produce a quantified achievement rate. In some instances, the focus is on the results or completing paperwork rather than the learning process. Football project courses use an effective alternative visual approach to review progress, and the Council is considering extending its use.
72. The provision meets the needs and interests of learners very well. The Council is responsive to and meets parents' identified interests and needs. Introductory workshops to generate interest in family learning are based on local interests. A good range of enrichment activities provides opportunities for families to enjoy outings together and introduces them to new experiences.
73. Support for learners is good. An additional tutor or learning support worker enhances support for individuals on many courses. The Council monitors the impact of support. Learners have good awareness of additional support and high levels of satisfaction with it. Hearing impaired learners on a "sign and sing" course received individual support, and a sign language interpreter supported a learner on a family literacy course. Younger children receive good quality childcare. Partnerships, such as the home school and college partnerships, enhance learner support through access to a wide range of external agencies, including counselling and welfare support provision. Information, advice and



guidance are improving and guidance workers come to talk to learners, on many courses, about progression.

## Leadership and management

74. Leadership and management are good. A wide range of very effective partnerships with voluntary organisations, the football club, a local university and college engage disadvantaged learners, and increase resources and opportunities for learners. The self-assessment report identified this. The Council has a clear strategy to engage families from disadvantaged communities in learning. Partners contribute well to the identification of areas of need and setting priorities. The Sunderland United Football Club Foundation (SUFCF) partnership is particularly successful in recruiting men, and the male tutors on their courses provide good role models for boys. Management of subcontracting arrangements is good at strategic and operational levels. Quality improvement has developed well in the last year. Monitoring audits in the third week of courses check quality indicators and obtain feedback from learners. Identified problems are swiftly dealt with. Tutors are well qualified and experienced, and receive good support from the family programmes' project officer. Communication between tutors is good. They meet tutors from other partner organisations at regular meetings and training events. Equality of opportunity is good. Positive action is taken to reach and support learners from disadvantaged communities. Tutors gained good understanding of equality and diversity issues at a recent drama based training event.

## Learners' achievements

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

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**	National NVQ rate**	Provider framework rate**	National framework rate**
Advanced Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	34			64.7%	42.9%
		timely	23			43.5%	25.3%
	06/07	overall	33			72.7%	56.5%
		timely	31			67.7%	38.1%
	07/08#	overall	43			83.7%	63.5%
		timely	43			79.1%	41.8%
Apprenticeships	05/06	overall	53			84.9%	48.5%
		timely	51			74.5%	31.2%
	06/07	overall	55			76.4%	59.1 %
		timely	55			74.5%	42.5%
	07/08#	Overall	58			75.9%	63.8%
		timely	60			73.3%	45.6%

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

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

# When available and validated by the LSC

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

Programme	End Year	Success rate	No. of learners*	Provider NVQ rate**
Train to Gain NVQ	2006/07	overall	108	90%
	2007/08	overall	196	69%

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

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

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