

Sheffield City Council Learning, Skills and Employment

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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
- Preparation for life and work
- Business, administration and law
- Family learning

The inspection did not separately inspect and report on the quality of provision in agriculture, horticulture and animal care; construction, planning and the built environment; retail and commercial enterprise; arts, media and publishing; education and training; the provision for learners aged 14-16.

Description of the provider

1. Sheffield Learning, Skills and Employment (LSE), established in 2007, is part of Lifelong Learning and Skills Service in the city council's Children and Young People's directorate. LSE contracts with the South Yorkshire LSC to provide provision through further education, personal and community development learning (PCDL), apprenticeships, National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and Train to Gain programmes. In 2007/08, LSE enrolled 7,751 learners on 1,303 courses. LSE subcontracts some of its provision to a number of other organisations.
2. In 2007/08, 30% of learners were on further education courses, 56% on PCDL and first step programmes and 2% were work-based learners. The specialist provision inspected represented 83% of provision for all learners and 84% of all enrolments.
3. Currently LSE has 472 learners in care and public services, 496 learners in information and communication technology (ICT), 538 in preparation for life and work, 870 in family learning, 185 in business, administration and law, 179 on apprenticeship programmes and 324 on Train to Gain provision. LSE also offers Entry to Employment (E2E) to 12 learners and vocational provision to around 105, 14 to 16 year olds.
4. LSE is managed by a head of service supported by seven managers and 179 staff, including 121 full- and part-time tutors.
5. Sheffield has the third largest population of any urban authority in England. Around 8.8% of the population of Sheffield are from minority ethnic backgrounds, slightly lower than the national average of 9.1%. Many wards within the local authority have high indices of deprivation. The unemployment rate in Sheffield is 6.7%, which is higher than the national rate of 5.5%.

Summary of grades awarded

Effectiveness of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Capacity to improve	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Achievement and standards	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Quality of provision	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Leadership and management	Satisfactory: Grade 3
Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4
Train to Gain	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
Preparation for life and work	Good: Grade 2
Business, administration and law	Inadequate: Grade 4
Family learning	Good: Grade 2

Overall judgement

Effectiveness of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Adult and community learning

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4

Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

6. The overall effectiveness of LSE is satisfactory, but it is inadequate for work-based learning. Success rates for most learners, most of whom have had very little experience of successful education or training, are satisfactory. Learners gain a good range of skills and develop self-esteem and confidence in their ability to progress to other courses or employment. Success rates and timely rates on apprenticeship programmes are generally low. In business administration Train to Gain, learners' progress is slow.
7. The quality of provision overall is satisfactory. The quality of provision in health, public services and care, in preparation for life and work and in family learning is good. However, in business, administration and law and in apprenticeships it is inadequate. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The extent to which programmes meet learners' needs and interests is good. LSE is particularly successful in engaging learners who are hard to reach. These include long-term unemployed learners or learners from deprived communities. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Support arrangements for learners are effective, and learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve as well as others.
8. Leadership and management are satisfactory. LSE has been very effective in strategic planning, and using partnerships to develop provision which focuses strongly on community, local and national priorities. Partnership working has been particularly effective in widening participation for under-represented groups. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements.

Capacity to improve

Satisfactory: Grade 3

9. LSE has a satisfactory capacity to improve. It has taken a number of effective actions to improve the quality of provision since the inspection of its adult and community learning provision in 2005, and of its work-based learning provision in 2006. Success rates for most learners have improved. In further education provision, success rates are now broadly in line with national averages at levels 2 and 3. However, for work-based learning and on further education short and level 1 courses further work is required to raise success rates. The quality of provision in health, public services and care, in preparation for life and work and in family learning has been maintained and remains good. The procedures for the observation of teaching and learning have been implemented satisfactorily and

the process is reliable. Quality arrangements are broadly effective in identifying areas for improvements. However, the quality of some aspects of the provision is not monitored sufficiently. The quality of apprenticeship programmes and business, administration and law programmes has declined.

10. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. The process is managed well and includes the views of staff, learners, stakeholders and partners collected through formal and informal feedback. The report is comprehensive, critical and evaluative and uses national averages for learners' performance well to evaluate its performance. Inspection findings generally matched the judgements in the self-assessment report. LSE underestimated the quality of its provision in health, public services and care and in preparation for life and work. However, the report did not identify the poor quality of provision for business, administration and law learners and overestimated the equality of opportunity grade. The self-assessment report is supported by a detailed development plan, which identifies priorities for improvement. The service's progress in implementing its development plan is satisfactory.

Key strengths

- Good development of learners' personal and employability skills
- Particularly flexible and responsive provision
- Good strategic planning
- Particularly effective partnerships
- Good initiatives to widen participation

Key areas for improvement

- Low success rates on apprenticeship programmes
- Insufficient individualised learner target-setting and monitoring
- Not enough good teaching
- Late implementation of some quality improvement processes
- Insufficiently co-ordinated approach to the management of work-based learning and Train to Gain across the service

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

11. Achievement and standards are satisfactory, as identified in the self-assessment report. Learners' success rates on further education courses have improved consistently and are near the national averages at levels 2 and 3. However, they remain low on short courses and at entry level and level 1. Most learners develop self-confidence and a good range of practical and personal skills. The standard of learners' work in health, public services and care is high. Learners in family learning gain knowledge which helps them to improve the attainments of their children. Overall, Train to Gain learners' progress is satisfactory with care learners progressing well, but the progress of business, administration and law learners is poor. Progression on E2E programmes is satisfactory and in line with the national average. Retention rates on non-accredited provision have improved and attendance rates are satisfactory and high in care. The arrangements for recognising and recording progress and achievement (RARPA) in non-accredited learning are insufficiently thorough to assess success.

12. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are achieving as well as others. Success rates for learners from minority ethnic groups are generally higher than the rate overall. However, black learners' success rates have been consistently below other groups.

13. Overall success rates on apprenticeship programmes have improved since the previous inspection, although still significantly below the national averages. Timely success rates are still low and learners in business, administration and law are making slow progress. No learners on customer service achieved their qualification and the service has withdrawn this provision.

Quality of provision

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Adult and community learning	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3
Work-based learning	Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4
Train to Gain	Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

14. The quality of provision is satisfactory, as identified in the self-assessment report. Provision in adult and community learning and on Train to Gain programmes is satisfactory but it is poor in work-based learning. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In the best sessions, tutors produce detailed lesson plans and

carefully prepare sessions which interest and challenge learners and meet their individual needs. The weaker sessions lack variety and challenge. Too much teaching is just satisfactory and not enough is good or outstanding. In some sessions, a narrow range of learning activities and unimaginative learning materials are used. Little use is made of ICT resources to enhance learning. Tutors do not always correct learners' work. Arrangements to support learners with literacy and language needs are satisfactory.

15. Target-setting for learners is insufficiently individualised. In work-based learning, tutors use targets insufficiently to monitor progress. Targets in individual learning plans are not always sufficiently challenging or monitored effectively. RARPA procedures in non-accredited learning are not consistently effective. Too often learning objectives are generic and unrealistic. LSE has trained staff in the use of RARPA procedures, but these are applied inconsistently in most sector subject areas.
16. The extent to which programmes meet the needs of all learners is good. This is identified in the self-assessment report. Provision is particularly flexible and responsive. Courses are offered in 10 sector subject areas from entry level to level 4. In addition to adult and community learning and further education, LSE provides work-based provision, Train to Gain provision and provision for a significant number of 14 to 16 year olds. Learners attend courses close to where they live and at times that suit their personal, work and childcare commitments. The provision offers good opportunities for learners of all ages to secure their economic wellbeing.
17. Guidance and support arrangements are satisfactory. Learners with additional learning needs and/or disabilities receive appropriate support. Information, advice and guidance are satisfactory overall. However, some learners on family learning programmes receive inappropriate or inaccurate guidance about the most suitable courses for them.

Leadership and management

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Adult and community learning

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Work-based learning

Contributory grade: Inadequate: Grade 4

Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Satisfactory: Grade 3

18. Leadership and management are satisfactory, as identified in the self-assessment report. Strategic planning is good with many learners benefiting from the progression opportunities created by bringing work-based learning, further education provision and adult and community learning into one service. The development plan reflects the city's strategic priorities well. Progress with the implementation of the plan is monitored very effectively by senior managers who are closely involved with the provision and have a clear and realistic knowledge of

the challenges LSE faces. Senior managers have an open door policy and are accessible to staff at all levels.

19. LSE has particularly effective partnerships. Strong links with other providers are used well to meet local needs and minimise duplication of courses and programmes effectively. LSE takes a strategic role in the development of the city wide skills strategy. In many partnerships, it has instigated very effective collaborations and takes a strategic lead in the resulting developments. A number of partnerships have enabled access to funding such as the neighbourhood learning in deprived communities' fund. These partnerships use innovative strategies to engage community groups and have promoted community cohesion significantly.
20. LSE does not have a sufficiently co-ordinated approach to the management of work-based learning and Train to Gain. Significant differences exist in the effectiveness of the management of these programmes across the sector subject areas. Good practice is not identified systematically and shared with areas where performance is poorer. No centralised data system is in place for work-based learning and Train to Gain programmes to allow monitoring of learners' progress and achievement. In some areas, the response to inspection findings has been poor.
21. The self-assessment process is satisfactory and inclusive. The report includes many of the strengths and areas for improvement identified during inspection. The development plan provides a satisfactory basis for further improvement.
22. LSE has been slow to implement some quality improvement processes. Detailed quality assurance arrangements have been developed since the new service was established. The observation of teaching and learning process is thorough and managed well. Arrangements for internal verification are satisfactory. However, other aspects of the quality assurance system are not implemented or monitored systematically. LSE makes few checks of the content or delivery of learners' inductions or progress reviews across the service. The quality of provision for work-based learners and in business, administration and law has declined.
23. LSE does not apply RARPA arrangements across all areas of the provision consistently. Judgements about success on non-accredited provision are not yet based on verified data and are not sufficiently reliable.
24. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. LSE has many good initiatives to widen participation. Participation rates of learners from minority ethnic groups are significantly higher than the proportion of these groups in the population as a whole. LSE uses neighbourhood deprivation data very effectively to develop courses in targeted venues. Community engagement workers use a range of particularly effective initiatives to meet with, and identify the needs of, hard to reach learners. Equality of opportunity is promoted and practiced across the service well. However, not all staff have had recent training on equality and diversity matters.

25. The management of safeguarding is satisfactory. LSE closely follows the policy and procedures set out by the council's safeguarding board. The policy has clear arrangements to ensure Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks are carried out for tutors or risk-assessments are in place for new tutors while checks are carried out. During induction, learners are informed who to contact if they have safeguarding concerns.

What learners like:

- 'I am out of work; it is giving me a chance to start to re-train to get a job'
- 'It is very rare that you get an opportunity to learn about emotions and conflict resolution. I am now telling my sister how to handle her children from what I've learnt on the course'
- 'I've learnt a lot and am confident to talk to tutors'
- 'It's helped me so much to help my children with their mathematics'
- 'I received support when I needed it'

What learners think could improve:

- The range of provision – 'We need more mathematics sessions'

Sector subject areas

Health, public services and care

Good: Grade 2

Context

26. Currently 472 learners are enrolled on programmes. Of these, 66 are on work-based apprenticeship programmes and 183 on Train to Gain programmes at levels 2 and 3 in health and social care and levels 2, 3 and 4 in childcare. An additional 193 learners are enrolled on certificates in health and social care and children's care at levels 2 and 3. A further 23 learners are on the national award in working with children at level 1 and seven are on the award at level 2. The provision is managed by one manager, and is offered across the city by a team of 13 full- and part-time tutors. Two subcontractors, Brockwood and Out of School Network, offer NVOs in care at levels 1 to 3 to around 6% of learners. In 2007/08, 71% of learners had additional learning needs and/or social needs and 69% of learners did not have a qualification above level 1.

Strengths

- Good progress for Train to Gain learners
- High standard of learners' work
- Good sessions which interest and challenge learners
- Good learning support
- Good range of provision meeting the needs of the community and hard to reach learners

Areas for improvement

- Low success rates for apprentices
- Insufficient use of ICT to support learning

Achievement and standards

27. Achievement and standards are good, as identified in the self-assessment report. Train to Gain learners make good progress and 12 have already achieved their qualification before their planned completion date. Current learners are making good progress towards timely completion.

28. The standard of learners work is good. Classrooms include very good displays of learners' work. Learners develop good craft skills necessary for working with children. Learners' portfolios are organised well and the work is highly appropriate for the level of their qualification. Learners make good and relevant links between theory and vocational practice. They use their work-placement experience well to illustrate theoretical points. Learners' progression to higher level courses and to related employment is very good.

Quality of provision

29. Teaching and learning are good. Sessions are planned and prepared very carefully. Schemes of work and lesson plans are detailed and based on initial assessment of learners' specific learning, and where relevant, personal needs. Individual learning outcomes are clearly discussed and agreed with learners. This information is used well by tutors to plan and deliver interesting sessions. Tutors use an effective range of teaching methods and learning activities which are matched well to the specifications and level of award. Learners work productively with their tutors and with each other. Group work is managed well and activities are organised effectively according to the task set and the planned learning outcomes. Tutors ensure that all learners take part in sessions and check individual learners' understanding well. Individual homework activities are set in many sessions and are linked clearly to the assessment requirements of the award.
30. Additional learning support is good. All learners have a thorough induction programme which prepares them well for their specific course. Tutors and learners discuss the specific concerns linked to returning to study for learners with few previous qualifications. All learners complete a literacy and numeracy skills test. Reviews are planned well, regular and include clear and achievable targets which are agreed with learners and monitored effectively. Learners are able to discuss their progress, which is monitored carefully and recorded clearly, with confidence. Workplace supervisors contribute to the quarterly reviews appropriately. Tutors and workplace supervisors contribute constructively to action planning and provide support to enable learners to overcome any barriers to progress that may be related to their work roles.
31. Tutors do not use ICT sufficiently to enhance the quality of learning. In many centres, learners have insufficient access to computers and too many do not have the opportunity to use ICT for research and presentation of their work.
32. The extent to which programmes and activities meet learners' needs and interests is good. LSE offers a wide range of courses from entry level to level 4. Provision meets the skills priorities of the local community very well. Many of the courses are offered at employers' and care providers' premises in the city, including the city council workforce development unit, the Out of Schools Network and the Pre-School Learning Alliance. The provision makes a very significant contribution to disadvantaged communities in training local people to contribute to early years and care provision in their neighbourhoods.
33. Advice, guidance and support are satisfactory. Learners are supported appropriately by their tutors who know them well. A designated member of staff has a guidance and support role at the Sheaf centre. Learners who require more specialist support, such as for homelessness or emotional difficulties, receive this through the links with specialist support services within the city.

Leadership and management

34. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Communication between the tutors is productive and improves teaching and learning. Many tutors provide the same unit of the NVQ to different groups of learners in different venues. Tutors meet weekly to evaluate their teaching sessions, share good practice and amend lesson plans.
35. Continuing professional development for staff is effective. All tutors have suitable vocational experience and are supported to complete assessor and teaching qualifications. One care tutor has completed English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) training to improve the support, teaching and assessment for learners in the workplace. A further two tutors are enrolled on the next ESOL course. Tutors attend many short courses to support curriculum and professional development.
36. The process of observation of teaching and learning is thorough and effective. Arrangements for improving the quality of provision have been effective and standards have improved. Feedback from learners is collected routinely through surveys and used satisfactorily. The self-assessment report is critical, inclusive and mainly accurate in its judgements, although it underestimated the quality of the provision.
37. The promotion of equality and diversity is satisfactory. Learners are offered detailed information about their rights and responsibilities in care settings. The provision makes a very significant contribution to disadvantaged communities.

Information and communication technology

Satisfactory: Grade 3

Context

38. Currently 476 learners are enrolled on ICT courses from entry level to level 3. Some 64% of courses are short, 22% are long courses at level 1, and 14% long courses at level 2. LSE also offers work-based learning, based at the city council training site, with 20 learners on apprenticeships at levels 2 and 3. The programme is managed by a sector subject area manager who is supported by two team leaders and nine full-time and 14 part-time tutors. Around 22% of the provision is subcontracted to City Learning Centre North, City Learning Centre South, City Learning Centre West and Birley Community College to deliver accredited ICT courses at community venues and schools. Each organisation has a dedicated member of staff who acts as the contract manager and they appoint their own teaching staff, overseen by the LSE contract manager.

Strengths

- Good development of learners' ICT skills and knowledge
- Particularly responsive provision
- Good communication and team working

Areas for improvement

- Low success rates on accredited short courses
- Insufficient range of teaching methods
- Late implementation of actions to raise standards

Achievement and standards

39. Achievement and standards are satisfactory, as identified in the self-assessment report. The development of learners' basic computing skills and confidence is good. Many learners produce work of a high standard. Beginners are soon able to use ICT equipment confidently. They are able to complete tasks successfully and in a timely fashion. Learners are well motivated and are sufficiently confident after a few weeks to experiment on their own by looking for specific websites, and altering images or layouts of documents. Many of the work-based learners gain employment. Learners taking the higher level courses use them to gain promotion or to secure permanent employment.

40. Success rates on accredited short courses are low at 66% overall and below the national average. Success rates on courses at levels 1 and 2 have improved and are near the national rates. Recent changes are having a good effect with the learners' success rates in some centres now at 80% for short courses. However, retention rates are low in some centres. Success rates on apprenticeship

programmes are low, although work-based learners are now making satisfactory progress.

Quality of provision

41. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most lessons plans, schemes of work and learning materials meet awarding body standards. Learning plans include detailed information on learners' previous experience, training or skills. Long-term learning goals are identified, but are usually the same as the outcomes for completing the course. Learners with specific needs are provided with very well produced materials, especially those learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, ESOL learners and learners with visual impairment.
42. Arrangements for initial assessment and individual target-setting are satisfactory. All learners assess their ICT skills and identify if they need support or help in any specific areas. On some courses, learners' learning goals are detailed and measurable and their achievement and progress are monitored and recorded well. On other courses the learning goals are too broad and not easily measurable. In these courses, the use of a suitable range of learning materials or individual worksheets is insufficient. Most learners receive satisfactory individualised verbal feedback about how to improve their work.
43. The range of teaching methods and learning activities is insufficient to interest all learners and promote high standards. Individual teaching is relied on excessively and too often the same learning points are discussed with each learner. Learners do not have sufficient opportunities to discuss the aspects of software which all find difficult or to share experiences. Tutors do not encourage learners who are more competent with ICT to practise the more complex features of software sufficiently. Too much teaching is only satisfactory.
44. The extent to which the provision meets the needs and interests of learners and the communities is good. Provision is particularly responsive to the local skills and employment needs. A wide range of courses is available from entry level to level 3. LSE offers provision in building, maintaining and networking computers, which significantly enhances the employment opportunities of learners. Those wishing to be more creative gain skills in publishing, web-page design or digital imaging. A wide choice of venues throughout the community allows easy access, with training available during the day and early evening. Venues are spacious, welcoming and are located conveniently for learners. Some venues are professional and equipped and maintained especially well.
45. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory as identified in the self-assessment report. Initial advice and guidance are effective. Where courses are subcontracted, staff in partner organisations provide appropriate progression.

Leadership and management

46. Leadership and management are satisfactory, as identified in the self-assessment report. Communication and team-working are good between all staff including those from subcontractors. Staff use monthly meetings particularly effectively to discuss and resolve any operational issues and to share ideas. Email and telephone contact are used well to ensure that staff are informed about any new developments. Staff make good use of web-based computer software to share resources and discuss different aspects of the provision.
47. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. It is thorough and includes the views of tutors and partners effectively. The self-assessment report was mostly accurate in its judgements and the resulting action plan is a good tool for improvement.
48. Actions to raise standards were implemented late. Success rates for the long courses, and particularly for short courses, have been slow to improve. Actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning have not been effective in improving outcomes for all learners. Observations of teaching and learning have not been effective in improving the quality of teaching and not enough good or better teaching takes place.
49. Equality and diversity are covered well at induction and learners receive sufficient information about how to complain or express their concerns. However, the range of methods used to assess learners' knowledge is too narrow.

Preparation for life and work

Good: Grade 2

Context

50. In 2007/08, 1,778 learners enrolled, of whom 314 were on further education courses, 1,181 were on adult and community learning non-accredited and 283 on adult and community learning accredited provision. Currently 76% of courses are at entry level, 16% are at level 1 and 8% are at level 2. Of these, 64% are ESOL courses, 18% are literacy courses and a further 18% are numeracy courses. LSE offers training to 35 E2E learners each year. Over two-thirds of learners are from minority ethnic groups. LSE offers courses in a wide range of community venues and at two other training providers. It also subcontracts around 5% of its ESOL provision to voluntary sector learning providers.

Strengths

- High success rates on accredited entry level programmes
- Good planning for individual learning needs in literacy and numeracy
- Very responsive provision
- Extensive childcare support for learners
- Good sector subject area management

Areas for improvement

- Poor retention on non-accredited provision
- Insufficient learning support for ESOL learners

Achievement and standards

51. Achievement and standards are satisfactory, as identified in the self-assessment report. Success rates on accredited entry level programmes are high. Learners apply the skills and understanding gained from courses outside the classroom well. Entry level ESOL learners can confidently and independently make hospital appointments and travel arrangements. They become confident in attending parents' evenings and talking to school teachers about their children.

52. On higher level courses, learners take part in voluntary work in the community or write for their community newspaper. Literacy learners increase the range of their reading and develop ways of checking their own spelling and punctuation. Learners on numeracy courses can help their children with homework or use calculations and manipulate numbers to get the best value from their budgets.

53. Progression rates into work or further education on E2E courses are higher than local averages but in line with the national rates. Retention rates in some centres are low. Success rates for the minority of learners on level 1 and 2 courses are also low.

Quality of provision

54. Teaching and learning are good. Tutors plan carefully to meet individual learning needs. Individual learning plans are designed well and have clear, measurable targets. Plans make good use of initial and diagnostic assessment which is thorough. In the best ESOL sessions, detailed individual targets complement group goals and are very motivating for learners. Progress against learning targets across all programmes is regularly reviewed. In mixed level numeracy sessions, tutors prepare good individual plans and pair learners at the same level. In ESOL sessions, tutors group learners at similar learning stages so they can support each other effectively. Tutors make good use of real life materials in numeracy to ensure effective learning. Activities in E2E literacy sessions are short and interesting. When computers are available, literacy tutors identify appropriately different online activities with good use of computers to meet learners' varied grammar and spelling needs. Learning materials are often designed and presented well, but not all materials downloaded from websites are of good quality. Although tutors' comments are always encouraging, a few give insufficiently detailed feedback on how to improve.
55. Access to, and the use of, ICT in teaching is generally satisfactory. Tutors make the best use of sometimes insufficient ICT resources although few do not have enough experience in using ICT to incorporate it in their teaching with confidence. Accommodation is generally satisfactory. For E2E learners, access to varied and well designed gardens for horticulture is excellent but teaching rooms have too little natural light and are often poorly ventilated. LSE prioritises and values accessibility of provision. However, many rooms in community locations and schools are too small for the numbers using them.
56. The programme meets learners' needs and interests very well. LSE's provision responds well to needs of the diverse communities which LSE serves. Provision is offered in many schools, children's centres and community venues. Learning champions provide a good range of ESOL courses for parents. LSE has offered bespoke ESOL training for the fire service, the police force and a cleaning company. A partnership with a local newspaper has allowed the service to offer an ESOL course in writing for a community newspaper. Accredited courses have been carefully chosen to best meet learners' needs. Progression routes from ESOL are developed well and include a three stage language based training programme in childcare and another to allow learners to become teaching assistants.
57. Guidance and support are satisfactory overall. LSE provides extensive free childcare support for ESOL learners, without which very few learners would be able to attend. Learners have easy access to good information, advice and guidance through an extended network of community partners. Most recruitment to ESOL is by personal recommendation. Guidance about progression routes and specific next steps courses for individual learners is included in their individual learning plan review process. Personal support is particularly good for E2E learners.

58. ESOL sessions do not have sufficient support for learners who need to practise their skills. Dyslexia awareness among tutors across all programmes is low and screening for dyslexia is insufficient. Strategies to support dyslexic learners are not developed adequately.

Leadership and management

59. Leadership and management are good. The self-assessment report underestimated this aspect. Actions to improve the programme have been very effective. Observations of teaching and learning are reliable, supportive and accurate. Communications are good and tutors are supported well with good continuous professional development opportunities. A wide range of strong community partnerships facilitates the development of the programme over a large geographical area.

60. Arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory. LSE's approach to equality focuses on the development of the curriculum to create opportunities for work, community involvement and individual empowerment. The Skills for Life strategy is designed well but not yet fully established across all areas of the service.

61. Management information is analysed carefully but is not always up to date. LSE depends heavily on its sessional workforce. The turnover of staff, particularly in literacy and numeracy, is high as tutors leave to take up permanent posts elsewhere.

62. The self-assessment report is sufficiently inclusive. The report is broadly accurate and matched the strength and areas for improvements identified at inspection.

Business, administration and law

Inadequate: Grade 4

Context

63. Currently 35 apprentices and 10 advanced apprentices are enrolled in business administration. An additional 99 learners are on Train to Gain programmes, of whom 46 are on business administration and 53 on management programmes. Eleven adult learners are currently working towards a certificate in administration. LSE has 20 school pupils aged 14 to 16 working towards the NVQ level 1 in business administration and 10 are working towards a level 2 first diploma or certificate in business.

Strengths

- High success rates on NVQs for adults in 2007/08

Areas for improvement

- Low success rates on apprenticeship programmes
- Slow progress for many learners
- No initial assessment of literacy and numeracy for Train to Gain learners
- Weak use of targets to promote learning and monitor progress
- Inadequate leadership and management
- Insufficient development of learners knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity

Achievement and standards

64. Achievement and standards are inadequate overall. The self-assessment report judged this aspect to be satisfactory. Success rates on NVQs for adults in 2007/08 are high. They improved significantly from 38% in 2005/06 to 89% in 2007/08 at level 3 and from 27% to 71% at level 2.

65. Learners produce satisfactory standards of work as appropriate to the level of their programmes. Apprentices acquire satisfactory vocational skills and apply safe working practices. Train to Gain learners reflect more on their working practices.

66. Success rates on apprenticeship programmes are low, and remain well below the national averages. Overall rates for advanced apprentices were 50% in 2007/08 although much improved from 0% in 2005/06. Timely success rates remain very poor at 12% in 2007/08. Overall success rates for apprentices have declined from 54% in 2005/06 to just 47% in 2007/08. Timely rates have declined significantly to only 20% in 2007/08.

67. Many learners make slow progress. This was identified as an area for improvement at the previous inspection in 2006 and has not improved adequately. LSE has not identified this in the self-assessment report. Too many learners on all programmes have exceeded their planned period of study significantly. Progress towards NVQ achievement is poor for just under half of apprentices. Over half the learners on Train to Gain programmes make poor progress. For example, 28 learners who have been on programme between six and 11 months have completed a third or less of their NVQ. Several learners who started in 2007 have yet to complete. However, very recently enrolled learners on the management Train to Gain programme are making good progress.

Quality of provision

68. Teaching and learning are inadequate overall. All learners receive a satisfactory induction to their programmes. LSE has recently improved arrangements for off-the-job training and apprentices now receive satisfactory training for technical certificates and key skills early in their programmes. Employers provide appropriate training to help learners carry out their job role. The Train to Gain programme does not include any formal training but assessors provide satisfactory individual coaching where appropriate.

69. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and use an appropriate range of methods. Assessors have a good understanding of the occupational standards. They make accurate judgements about learners' achievement and give clear, detailed and constructive feedback after each assessment visit. However, assessment planning is not sufficiently individualised and assessors do not make maximum use of opportunities for observing learners.

70. Arrangements to identify and meet Skills for Life additional support needs are satisfactory for apprentices. However, no initial assessment of literacy and numeracy skills is carried out for Train to Gain learners.

71. The use of targets to promote learning and monitor progress is weak. Learning plans are insufficiently individualised. Assessors do not identify individual learning objectives adequately or set sufficiently challenging goals relative to learners' prior experience. They do not make adequate use of targets to help learners to progress effectively. Assessors do not set sufficient learning targets related to the workplace or the building of personal and practical skills. The service does not involve workplace supervisors sufficiently in setting goals to maximise benefits for learners and employers. Progress reviews for apprentices do not adequately reflect on their overall progress and development. Some apprentices have not had progress reviews for many months. For example, four have not been reviewed for nearly a year. Actions set for completion between assessors' visits to the workplace are not always sufficiently specific or challenging. Assessors have not received adequate training in how to carry out progress reviews and how to use targets effectively. Co-ordination of on- and off-the-job training does not provide a cohesive learning programme to maximise opportunities for evidence

collection. Workplace supervisors are not sufficiently aware of the requirements of learners' programmes and unable to support learners as fully as they might.

72. The extent to which programmes meet learners' needs and interests is inadequate. Programmes broadly meet the employers' needs. However, they do not always adequately match learners' aims and potential, nor sufficiently build on their prior attainment and experience. LSE has recently developed some new community provision and courses for learners aged 14 to 16 in response to local needs.
73. Information, advice and guidance are satisfactory. Learners receive appropriate advice and support from their tutors and employers. However the provision of ongoing advice and guidance is not consistently effective.

Leadership and management

74. Leadership and management are inadequate. The self-assessment report does not identify this key area for improvement. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Communications and the sharing of good practice have improved recently through regular team meetings. Resources are satisfactory.
75. Insufficient progress has been made to raise the quality of provision since the previous inspection. The use of data and other arrangements for monitoring learners' progress are insufficiently accurate and have failed to adequately identify the slow rate of progress for many learners. Observations of training and assessment have improved and are beginning to link more effectively to staff training and development. However, observations of other learning processes, such as inductions and progress reviews, do not take place.
76. The self-assessment process is satisfactory but the report is insufficiently critical and does not identify the significant areas for improvement found during inspection. Where LSE has identified areas for improvement, it has not always acted quickly enough. Some initiatives have been implemented but these have not improved the quality of provision or the rate of learner progress and achievement sufficiently.
77. Arrangements to promote equality of opportunity are insufficient. The development of learners' knowledge and understanding of equality of opportunity and health and safety throughout the programme is insufficient. Learners receive adequate information at the start of their programmes but assessors make poor use of this to identify the level of learners' knowledge and understanding. Subsequent monitoring of learners' knowledge is very superficial and does not test or raise learners' awareness adequately.
78. Participation by learners from minority ethnic groups is good. However, their success rates are 8% lower on NVQs for adults and 18% lower on apprenticeships than White British learners.

Family learning

Good: Grade 2

Context

79. Currently 870 learners are on family learning courses. Of these, 94% are women and 8% have a declared disability. Some 66% of learners are white, 18% are from Asian heritage and 16% are from other minority ethnic groups. Family language, literacy and numeracy courses are between six to 15 weeks long and wider family learning courses are between one and 10 weeks long. The provision is run by a family learning manager, four co-ordinators and 15 tutors.

Strengths

- Good development of learners' confidence and skills to help children learn
- Good range of teaching activities to motivate and interest learners
- Innovative and responsive sector subject area development to meet learners' needs and interests
- Very good leadership and management
- Very effective partnerships to promote and widen participation

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient emphasis on development of literacy, numeracy and language skills
- Insufficiently individualised initial advice and guidance

Achievement and standards

80. Achievement and standards are satisfactory, as identified in the self-assessment report. Learners develop good levels of confidence and skills to help their children learn. Many learners feel more confident to support their children and raise their attainment in school. In particular, learners find learning about the social and emotional aspects of learning very useful and often apply them well. They develop skills to deal with conflict among children at home and in schools. They are confident to discuss difficult issues, such as bullying, with their children. Learners develop good approaches to support other parents from different cultural backgrounds. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory.

81. For many learners, family learning courses are the first courses they attend since leaving school. The enjoyment of participation in family learning leads to further learning and sometimes to employment.

82. As identified in the self-assessment report, achievement on accredited family learning literacy and numeracy courses and wider family learning courses is high at 84% and 86% respectively. However, only 15% of courses are accredited.

Quality of provision

83. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching activities are planned particularly well to motivate and interest learners. Tasks are interactive, practical and allow learners to think creatively. Learning is enjoyable and useful in helping learners to support their children. Learning objectives are very clearly set and linked to the topics which the children study in school. Often learners make use of aspects of the tutors' wide range of teaching methods to engage their children's interest in education. Arrangements for peer support are especially good with many parents sharing the approaches which they have developed and found effective in helping their children, with other parents.
84. Initial assessment arrangements are satisfactory. Learners assess their confidence at the beginning of the course. All learners' additional learning support needs assessed are satisfactorily. However, this does not always include a formal diagnostic assessment of their literacy, numeracy and language skills. When literacy and numeracy support needs are identified, learners receive satisfactory support.
85. Tutors give insufficient emphasis to developing literacy, numeracy and language skills. Learners' written work is not always marked or corrected for spelling and sentence structure. Many naturally occurring opportunities to develop and emphasise literacy, numeracy and language skills required to support children are missed. Learners' spoken language is not corrected for accuracy. LSE has identified the need for the increased development of literacy, numeracy and language skills in family learning courses.
86. The programme meets learners' needs and interests very well. Sector subject area development is innovative and responsive to meet the diverse needs of learners and their children. For example, a family numeracy course for parents was developed in response to a school's initiative to raise children's attainment in mathematics. A number of courses to help bilingual parents support their children have been developed. These have been well received by the community and attendance rates are high. The Family Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) course was received well by learners as it has helped them to understand and deal with their children's emotional and behavioural difficulties.
87. Support and guidance are satisfactory. Learners receive effective individual mentoring support to help them overcome social, personal or learning barriers. Tutors are patient and sensitive to individual learners' needs. Learners are encouraged to discuss any specific difficulties they experience and for more general support needs. However, as acknowledged in the self-assessment report, the quality of advice and guidance is inconsistent across all courses. Some learners do not know what to expect from the course and have enrolled on the wrong level of courses.

Leadership and management

88. Leadership and management are very good. Managers set a clear direction for the development of the provision and monitor progress very effectively. Management actions are very effective in bringing about improvements. The observations of teaching and learning are thorough and lead to effective actions to raise standards of teaching. Data is used well to evaluate the courses. Staff are appropriately qualified, committed and experienced. Cultural diversity is valued and promoted well in sessions.
89. Arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory. Partnerships are very effective and used well to promote widening participation. Most teaching venues, including the schools, are in disadvantaged areas. LSE works with the extended schools services and other organisations productively to identify and meet the needs of the schools and the parents. Much good joint planning and delivery of courses is evident. Good links with, and training for, early years staff in schools enables schools to develop family learning in their own schools to engage parents.
90. The self-assessment process is satisfactory and includes tutors' and learners' views. The self-assessment report is largely accurate and a good tool for further improvement.

Annex

Learners' achievements

Success rates on work-based learning apprenticeship programmes managed by the provider 2006 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	32	66	52	44	43
		Timely	30	37	34	23	27
	06/07	Overall	34	59	63	53	56
		Timely	35	31	43	26	38
	07/08	Overall	43	56	68	51	63
		Timely	39	33	48	31	44
Apprenticeships	05/06	Overall	186	64	57	54	52
		Timely	181	40	37	33	33
	06/07	Overall	192	54	64	52	60
		Timely	189	40	47	39	44
	07/08	Overall	146	54	67	48	64
		Timely	144	36	52	31	50

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

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

Success rates on accredited entry and level 1 (combined), level 2 and level 3 qualifications, by length, expected end year and age. 2006 to 2008, compared with national rates for GFE colleges.

Notional Level	19+				
	Exp End Year	Starts	Provider Rate %	National Rate %	Diff %
1 Long	2005/06	396	35	65	-30
	2006/07	600	48	70	-22
	2007/08	132*	57	-	
2 Long	2005/06	214	57	66	-9
	2006/07	460	62	69	-7
	2007/08	589*	65	-	
3 Long	2005/06	260	49	64	-15
	2006/07	210	59	68	-9
	2007/08	195	66	-	
Short**	2005/06	859	59	80	-21
	2006/07	700	65	83	-18
	2007/08	615*	68	-	

* ACL provider data not validated

** Courses over 5 weeks long