

Halton Borough Council

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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' 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:

- Preparation for life and work
- Family learning

Description of the provider

1. Halton Borough Council Adult Learning and Skills Development division (HALS) receives funding from Greater Merseyside LSC. It offers adult and family learning provision across the borough in 64 venues and is directly responsible for provision in seven sector subject areas. HALS offers family literacy, language and numeracy (FLLN) programmes, mainly within schools, and a range of wider family learning programmes across Children's Centres and other community settings. It also offers adult literacy and numeracy and manages a borough wide Skills for Life assessment programme on behalf of the Local Strategic Partnership. HALS also provides neighbourhood learning in deprived communities (NLDC) and a range of First Steps and personal and community development learning (PCDL) courses. HALS is the borough-wide lead on workforce development and skills, including leading on the implementation of Halton's Workforce Development strategy. In September 2008, Greater Merseyside LSC awarded HALS a Train to Gain contract to provide 240 Skills for Life programmes for learners.
2. During 2007/08, HALS ran 517 courses, with some 3,830 enrolments, of which 37% were from adults residing in one of the borough's seven most disadvantaged wards. Some 47% of all enrolments across the service came from learners living in Runcorn, with 53% from Widnes residents.
3. The local economy in Halton is varied. Unemployment is 6.7% and above the national average of 5.3%. The proportion of adults without qualifications in Halton is almost 20%, well above the national average of 13%. According to the 2001 census, the proportion of people in Halton from minority ethnic backgrounds is 1.8%, compared with 9.1% for England as a whole. In 2007/08, the proportion of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds was 4.2%.

Summary of grades awarded

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

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
Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

4. The overall effectiveness of the provision is good. Achievement and standards are good. Learners develop good skills and produce work of a good standard. They develop personal, employability and social skills and increase their confidence. The quality of provision is good. Provision is good in both sector subject areas. Teaching and learning are good, particularly in family learning, but some aspects of teaching are uninspiring. Leadership and management, including arrangements for equality of opportunity, are good.

Capacity to improve

Good: Grade 2

5. HALS has a good capacity to improve. Learners' success and achievement rates have improved. The service has a strong focus on clearly defined targeted provision to attract hard to reach learners. Financial management is good. Suitable procedures are in place for recording safeguarding checks for staff, and quality assurance systems are thorough. However, data and management information are used inconsistently. HALS has made good progress in resolving the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. For example, at the previous inspection the council did not monitor HALS's performance sufficiently. This has now improved and is satisfactory. HALS plans and manages its resources effectively, although information learning technology is not used sufficiently in a few venues. Equal opportunities practices are good. Although management information is used well to monitor equality and diversity measures, weaknesses exist in the accuracy and analysis of data to measure performance in some sector subject areas.
6. The self-assessment process involves all staff and includes judgements from sector subject area staff. It does not include feedback from some significant partners or include the views of all learners. The report covers most aspects of the *Common Inspection Framework* and is evaluative and critical, but it is overly descriptive in places. The self-assessment report underestimated the grade for equal opportunities and overestimated the grades for capacity to improve and achievement and standards.

Key strengths

- Particularly effective Skills for Life assessment service
- Good development of social and employability skills
- Effective strategies to attract hard to reach learners
- Good teaching and learning in family learning
- Clear and effective strategic direction
- Particularly effective partnerships and team working
- Very good arrangements to support individual learners' progress

Key areas for improvement

- Uninspiring teaching in literacy and numeracy
- Poor use of targets to drive improvement
- Insufficient action planning for equality and diversity

Main findings

Achievement and standards

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning
Train to Gain

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

7. Achievement and standards are good. This grade was overestimated in the self-assessment report. Learners develop good verbal, reading and writing skills. They gain confidence, self-esteem and develop a range of skills in information technology (IT), literacy and numeracy. They develop useful skills to improve their employability. Learners produce very good standards of work on family learning courses in creative games, storybooks and illustrations. Portfolios of work are good. On accredited courses, learners make good use of photographic evidence and tutors provide them with a camera for this purpose.
8. Learners make good progress in the IT First Steps introductory programme, quickly developing keyboard skills as they work on a keyboard familiarisation programme. On community art courses, learners contribute their ideas confidently. For example, they plan how their different skills and approaches might contribute to an exhibition of Old Runcorn effectively. Some unemployed learners have gained sufficient confidence and skills to gain employment or become volunteers. Learners on Train to Gain programmes are well equipped to cope with workplace challenges. Learners on family learning programmes use the new skills they gain to good effect when relating to their children. They become aware of how children learn, and feel more confident about helping their children with homework and school activities. Parents can model the teaching practices they observe in sessions effectively when working with their children.
9. The proportion of accredited courses is small. However, an increasing number of learners have the opportunity to access accreditation as an additional benefit to their learning. In 2006/07, 31% of learners achieved a qualification and this increased to 43% in 2007/08. Achievement rates in national tests are high. In 2007/08, 100% of those entered for accreditation at entry level achieved, 96% achieved at level 1, and 93% achieved at level 2. Arrangements for recognising and recording learners' progress and achievement have improved since the previous inspection, and are thorough.
10. Of the 49 learners enrolled on Skills for Life qualifications through Train to Gain, 11 have so far achieved and three have withdrawn, with 25 still on programme.
11. HALS has maintained the strength of good development of personal and learning skills identified at the previous inspection.

Quality of provision

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning
Train to Gain

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

12. The quality of provision is good, as identified in the self-assessment report. Teaching and learning are good. Courses are planned very well. Tutors use detailed lesson plans with clear aims and objectives to support the schemes of work. They plan sessions well and adapt them quickly to meet learners' needs. HALS compiles accurate learner profiles and tutors have a good awareness of the range of learners' needs. Tutors have a good understanding of what individual learners are hoping to achieve from the course.
13. HALS's arrangements for recognising and recording progress and achievement are well developed and tutors use them when appropriate. Initial assessment is good, as is the monitoring and recording of learners' progress. Individual learning plans are adapted to each course. They include skills and personal learning goals, and tutors refer to them effectively during sessions.
14. Tutors manage sessions well with a range of activities including individual, small and whole group work including good practical activities. Sessions are paced well and learners are actively involved. For example, learners in a digital photography workshop participate fully, taking photographs and acting as models. Tutors make learning fun. They use questions effectively to check learning and develop learning points. Tutors manage both whole group and individual work effectively.
15. Teaching accommodation is mostly good. Resources are plentiful, of good quality and free to learners. Tutors make good use of information learning technology to support learning and use interactive whiteboards effectively. Learners have access to good interactive materials. Learners taking qualifications are able to take practise tests, and get instant feedback on their performance. However, in a few cases accommodation is cramped and too warm.
16. In a few courses, teaching is uninspiring and tutors use an insufficient range of teaching methods. In the less successful sessions, tutors do not explain tasks clearly enough, leaving learners unaware of what tutors expect from them. Tutors rely too heavily on worksheets to practise exercise development. They do not always integrate practice exercises for external tests on accredited courses into sessions successfully. Too often they are carried out as separate tasks unrelated to the learning.
17. In some sessions, learners have a wide range of ability. Sometimes tutors' classroom management is poor. Insufficient time is allowed for less able learners to complete tasks, and insufficient challenge for learners that are more able.
18. The extent to which courses meet learners' needs and interests is good. Progression opportunities are good. For example, community art courses have clear progression routes for learners who have progressed from First and Next Steps to Art and a PCDL course in art multimedia. A suite of non-accredited IT courses at the Kingsway Centre in Widnes offers progression within the same and to higher levels of learning. Tutors refer learners who want to gain accreditation to **learndirect** courses offered in Halton libraries and to the local further education college.
19. Support and guidance for learners are good. Very effective information, advice and guidance are given to all learners about progression to other accredited and non-accredited courses, voluntary work or employment. Good individual support is available to help learners develop numeracy skills in employability skills sessions. The environment for

learners is supportive. Tutors are skilled at creating a relaxed but focused learning environment where learners feel comfortable and confident to express themselves. Tutors give good levels of ongoing support and encouragement. At the previous inspection, learners' additional support needs were identified too late in the course but HALS has rectified this, and recognises this improvement in the self-assessment report.

Leadership and management

Good: Grade 2

Adult and community learning
Train to Gain

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade: Good: Grade 2

20. Leadership and management are good. HALS has a very clear and effective strategic direction, which thoroughly reflects the objectives of the local and regional skills strategies and of national initiatives in adult learning. The objectives of the adult learning service link clearly with those of the council in extending arts development and day services for adults. The objectives are clearly outlined in the detailed development plan that has clear targets and action plans. HALS has consulted comprehensively with partners to extend its provision in a targeted manner to reach disadvantaged and disaffected learners, and to enable progression towards level 2 qualifications, so meeting its strategic priorities.
21. HALS works very effectively with a wide range of partners including five other Greater Merseyside councils to develop and manage its provision. Staff continue to make a good contribution and use their links with voluntary and community organisations well to improve its responsiveness to community needs. The range of provision is good and planned well to meet the needs of the community. Partnerships are in place with Riverside College to ensure a good mix of accredited and non-accredited provision is available at all levels, providing good progression opportunities. Teamwork and co-operation between partners and between council departments are very good. HALS has a strong focus on improving the learners' experience. Regular meetings take place with partners and subcontractors and communication is good at all levels. Detailed service level agreements are in place with subcontractors, which clearly specify the quality standards HALS expects. Meetings are frequent with a clearly focused agenda to drive improvement. Managers monitor performance well. Tutors and managers discuss curriculum development and strategies to improve learners' performance. Action plans are formulated but these are not always monitored effectively or followed up at subsequent meetings. Too many actions are recorded as ongoing. A good quality newsletter is very effective in communicating news and information to staff and learners. It is well received by most learners.
22. Staff development is focused well on improving the service. HALS offers frequent continuous improvement workshops that are attended well by staff. Managers choose workshop topics taking account of staff suggestions. Workshops are very effective in sharing the good practice identified through the thorough observation of teaching and learning. All tutors have plenty of opportunities to attend relevant training and development. Staff appraisal is satisfactory. HALS offers all staff an annual development review and a six-monthly progress review. Managers and staff discuss development needs

during the meetings and agree support arrangements. However, HALS makes insufficient use of targets to drive improvement. Despite achieving 87% retention for each of the last three years, targets for retention on programmes were only set at 80% across the service. No individual targets are set for retention, achievement or success rates at course level. Staff have no individual targets to clarify how they contribute to the council's targets regarding learners' performance. Collection of learners' views does not always result in a representative sample and although views are analysed and reported, staff do not always convey actions for improvement to learners effectively.

23. Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements. Tutors have received training. HALS requires all tutors to have appropriate background checks, and the council's personnel department monitor these. HALS has identified the need to plan for the implementation of the most recent legislation.
24. Equality of opportunity is good. HALS has a very effective strategic focus on social inclusion, which it identifies as a strength in the self-assessment report. It successfully targets wards of high deprivation and priority groups, such as long-term unemployed residents, young offenders and young parents. Approximately 40% of learners live in the seven most disadvantaged wards, an increase from the previous year. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic backgrounds and learners with disabilities exceeds the borough profile. Success rates for these groups of learners compare well with the rate for all learners. Subsidised fee arrangements, and the crèche provision in both main centres and some outreach centres, widen access further. HALS has an integrated approach towards planning its provision, building in good progression routes and easy access to information, advice and guidance across the borough. Improved liaison between the adult learning service and the employment and enterprise teams has facilitated this.
25. HALS has very good arrangements to support individual learners' progress. The thorough enrolment, induction and assessment procedures, the range of support, and the flexibility of the staff, all enable learners to achieve, whatever their starting point. Comparative data on retention and success shows learners receiving support succeed at least as well as other learners. Enrolment, induction and initial assessment procedures are designed well and focus on the needs of the learners. HALS offers support to all learners with additional needs, including literacy and numeracy, dyslexia, visual and hearing impairment. Tutors provide adaptive equipment where needed. They encourage mutual respect among learners in the classroom, and encourage and celebrate achievement. The successful completion of a floristry course by a blind learner illustrates the service's inclusive and learner-focused approach.
26. HALS makes particularly good use of equality impact data to improve the quality of learning, a strength maintained since the previous inspection. The inclusive learning co-ordinator analyses data at whole service level and identifies areas of concern. Sector subject area leaders check that participation and achievement in areas of social deprivation reflect service priorities. Tutors use course level reports to contribute to evaluations. The analysis of this data is used very effectively to bring about improvement, helping HALS to increase the uptake of Skills for Life training, for example, and to identify groups of learners at risk of leaving early.
27. HALS has taken a positive approach to promoting equality and diversity. Satisfactory policies are in place. Good practice is shared with other providers through a regional

quality improvement network. Whole-service professional development sessions and tailored individual support by the inclusive learning co-ordinator have raised tutors' awareness of equality and diversity issues, including safeguarding and visual and hearing impairment. Principles of inclusion in lesson planning and teaching are developed through course review procedures. Improvement planning for equality and diversity is incomplete. The quality improvement plan and the single equality scheme contain detailed actions to improve equality and diversity. However, these are not linked to clear and measurable targets or timescales. Some identified actions have not been carried out, and the plans have not been monitored systematically. HALS did not identify this area for improvement in the self-assessment report. However, the self-assessment report contains much useful evidence on equality of opportunity and correctly identifies some key strengths of the provision, especially with regard to social inclusion.

What learners like:

- Learning is made fun
- Good, patient tutors who explain things at a suitable pace
- Good range of placements
- Working with each other in the group
- Enjoyable course
- Children like mum and/or dad to be with them in school
- 'I can now help my child with their school work'
- Availability of crèche facilities
- 'I love this course. It's made me remember how much I loved mathematics at school'
- Increased confidence and self esteem
- 'The opportunity to achieve better qualifications which provide the opportunity to get off benefit and into a job'
- Free training leading to a qualification
- 'I'm worried about redundancies at work. I thought a qualification might be a good idea, in case I need to look for another job'
- 'I wish I'd worked harder at school, but now I'm having another crack at it'
- 'No presumptions by the tutor about what you know or can do'
- 'Outstanding professionalism and sensitivity of tutors'

What learners think could improve:

- More courses
- More availability of the crèche - 'If it was available for an extra quarter of an hour at each end of the session I would not need to rush so much'
- The temperature in teaching rooms - would like a cooler room
- Less time waiting for other people to catch up
- More work on computers

Sector subject areas

Preparation for life and work

Good: Grade 2

Context

28. HALS provides accredited and non-accredited literacy, numeracy and employability courses from entry level to level 2. It has a borough-wide Skills for Life assessment service, provided by one full-time and one part-time assessor. Sixteen venues are used to meet diverse local needs in Runcorn and Widnes.
29. Courses are offered on a part-time basis, in the daytime and evening. In 2007/08, 1,097 learners enrolled, of whom 74% were women. In 2008/09 to date, 1,172 learners have enrolled. Some 260 learners are currently on programmes, 25 of whom are on Train to Gain Skills for Life courses. Four full-time tutors and four sessional staff teach on the courses.

Strengths

- Good development of personal, social and employability skills
- Good use of information learning technology to support learning
- Particularly effective Skills for Life assessment
- Effective strategies to attract hard to reach learners
- Extremely effective celebration of learners' achievements

Areas for improvement

- Uninspiring teaching

Achievement and standards

30. Achievement and standards are good. Learners acquire good verbal, reading and writing skills. They develop useful skills to improve their employability. Some unemployed learners have gained sufficient confidence and skills to gain employment or become volunteers. Learners on Train to Gain programmes become better equipped to cope with workplace challenges. An increasing number of learners have the opportunity to access accreditation as an additional benefit to their learning. In 2006/07, 31% of learners obtained a qualification, compared with 43% in 2007/08. Achievement rates in national tests are high. In 2007/08, 100% of those entered for accreditation at entry level achieved, 96% achieved at level 1, and 93% achieved at level 2. Arrangements for recognising and recording learners' progress and achievement have improved since the previous inspection and are thorough.

Quality of provision

31. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Tutors make good use of information learning technology to support learning and use interactive whiteboards effectively for whole

group work. Learners have access to good interactive materials. Learners taking qualifications are able to take practise tests, and get instant feedback on their performance.

32. Teaching is often uninspiring. Only 50% of sessions observed were good or better. In some sessions, tutors use an insufficient range of teaching methods. In the less successful sessions, tutors do not explain tasks clearly enough, leaving learners unaware of what tutors expect from them. Some tutors do not engage the attention of all learners before beginning explanations. In some sessions, worksheets to practice skills development are used excessively. Learning opportunities are missed. For example, in one session, tutors gave spellings of unfamiliar nouns to learners, with no attempt made to explore their meaning. Tutors do not always integrate practise exercises for external tests on accredited courses into sessions successfully. Too often they are carried out as separate tasks unrelated to the learning.
33. In some sessions, learners have a wide range of ability. Sometimes tutors' classroom management is poor. Insufficient time is allowed for less able learners to complete tasks, and insufficient challenge for learners that are more able. A few tutors allow learners to remain within their comfort zone of current skills, without extending them sufficiently.
34. The assessment and monitoring of learners' progress is satisfactory. Tutors use the outcomes of initial assessment effectively as a basis for individual learning plans. Most individual learning plans contain clear and measurable targets, which are reviewed regularly to monitor learners' progress.
35. Programmes and activities meet learners' needs and interests well. HALS provides a particularly effective Skills for Life assessment service on behalf of the Halton Strategic Partnership. It establishes accurate starting points for learners, and supports impartial decisions about the most appropriate provision in which to place them. In 2006/07, 160 assessments led to 95% of learners progressing on to a course. In 2007/08, this number rose to 497 assessments, with 82% of learners progressing on to a course. In 2008/09 to date, tutors have completed 568 assessments, with 93% of learners progressing on to a course.
36. Guidance and support for learners are good. Tutors help learners on courses linked to employability to improve their self-esteem. Learners progress well within the courses and to other learning opportunities, although progression data is not collected systematically. Information, advice and guidance are readily available to learners, and many take follow-on courses.
37. Effective strategies are in place to attract hard to reach learners. Almost 47% of learners come from disadvantaged backgrounds. Good links exist with community-based organisations to offer provision using local facilities. For example, HALS offers literacy provision in partnership with the Canal Boat Project, which works with young people including offenders. HALS has very good links with the council's employment staff. Information, advice and guidance workers for 'Halton People Into Jobs' are very knowledgeable about the Skills for Life provision available, and are able to guide learners towards relevant provision.

Leadership and management

38. Leadership and management are good. Managers have made quality improvement a high priority. Learners' achievements are celebrated extremely effectively at all levels. A high profile annual award ceremony is supplemented by more frequent award events at the main learning centres. Examples of learners' writing and poems, many linked to their learning journey and its effect on their lives, are featured in a good quality magazine for learners. Tutors display learners' work prominently and attractively in learning centres. Photographic evidence of learners' achievements also features in displays used for publicity purposes.
39. Tutors share good practice effectively through email and in staff development events. HALS has implemented a whole organisational approach to Skills for Life effectively. Managers review progress against targets regularly.
40. Course evaluations include a good analysis of data, and are used effectively to contribute to the self-assessment process. Managers use data effectively to plan sector subject area development. The strengths noted in the self-assessment report matched inspection findings. However, it did not identify the area for improvement in teaching. Processes for the observation of teaching and learning are thorough. However, they have not yet led to improvements in the proportion of teaching which is good or better. Equality and diversity is promoted well. Staff and learners treat each other with respect. Visually attractive posters relating to diversity are displayed prominently in all centres.

Family learning

Good: Grade 2

Context

41. Family learning courses are offered as first steps to learning for parents. Courses include those aimed at helping children with mathematics and reading, FLLN, and courses in managing family finances. Wider family learning courses include family social and emotional aspects of learning, working with young children, storybooks, a diploma in childcare and education, family guitar, family Spanish and French, and parents and toddlers.
42. Courses are offered in the daytime and vary in length from between one and a half hours to two hours each week for six to 11 weeks. The diploma course lasts 32 weeks. All courses are free, and a free crèche is available wherever possible. The times of the courses are planned to fit in with the school day or are scheduled at the end of the school day. In some courses, such as storybooks and family guitar, children in school join their parents for the session. In FLLN courses, children join their parents for part of the session.
43. Currently 188 learners attend 15 different courses. Courses are offered in a range of 22 venues, mainly primary schools and the two learning centres. Some 92% of learners are women.
44. National accreditation is offered at level 1 for FLLN, help your child to read courses, help your child with mathematics courses, working with young children, and at level 2 for the diploma in childcare and education course.

Strengths

- Good achievement and standards of work
- Good teaching and learning
- Effective partnerships

Areas for improvement

- Insufficient use of IT in a few centres

Achievement and standards

45. Achievement and standards are good. Learners gain confidence, self-esteem and a range of skills in IT, literacy and numeracy. Standards of work in creative games, storybooks and illustrations are very good. Portfolios of work are good. Learners are well motivated and enthusiastic about their learning programmes. They use the new skills they have gained to good effect when relating to their children. Learners become aware of how children learn and feel more confident about helping their children with homework and school activities. Where sessions include parents and children working together, parents value the special time they have with their child on an individual basis without the distractions of home life. Parents model the teaching methods they observe in the classroom effectively with their children. School staff recognise the benefits of family

learning programmes and parents become more confident about engaging with the school. Children make better progress in school and become keener to learn. Learners on accredited courses are provided with a camera to record evidence for their portfolios. HALS has maintained the strength of good development of personal and learning skills identified at the previous inspection.

Quality of provision

46. Teaching and learning are good. Tutors plan sessions well and quickly adapt them to meet learners' needs. At the start of each session, learners are given a clear outline and aims. At the end they reflect on what they have learned. Individual learning plans are adapted to each course. They include skills and personal learning goals, and tutors refer to them and use them effectively. Tutors manage sessions using a range of activities including individual, small and whole group work and good practical activities. Sessions are paced well and learners actively participate.
47. The teaching environment is very supportive for learners. Tutors are skilled at creating a relaxed but focused learning environment where learners feel comfortable and confident to express themselves. Learners are motivated and enthusiastic about their learning. Tutors give good levels of ongoing support and encouragement and make learning fun. They use questions effectively to check learning and make good use of the responses to learners' comments to develop learning points. Work-placements on the diploma course meet learners' needs.
48. The extent to which programmes meet learners' needs is good. The range of provision is good and planned well to meet the needs of the community. HALS has partnerships in place with Riverside College which ensures a good mix of accredited and non-accredited provision is available at all levels providing good progression opportunities.
49. Support and guidance for learners are good. At the start of courses, learners request any additional support such as literacy, numeracy and IT. At the previous inspection, learners' additional support needs were identified too late in the course but HALS has rectified this, and notes this improvement in the self-assessment report. Very effective information, advice and guidance are given to all learners about progression to other accredited and non-accredited courses, voluntary work or employment. At the end of FLLN courses, all learners are offered an appointment with an information, advice and guidance adviser to assist with a smooth transition to a further course. On the diploma course, visiting agencies help learners write curriculum vitae and prepare for employment. Many learners gain the confidence to progress on to other courses and gain accreditation or employment.

Leadership and management

50. Leadership and management are good. Partnerships are effective and strong. The service is very flexible and responsive to partners' needs. Any concerns are dealt with promptly and improvements are made to resolve difficulties wherever possible. HALS seeks the views of partners and learners on a regular basis. Learners' success is celebrated at special events, such as school assemblies, and in a prestigious town centre venue during Adult Learners' Week. HALS celebrates the successes of its partnerships at this event. All learners receive a certificate of achievement.

51. Staff are well qualified. Observations of teaching and learning identify the quality of teaching accurately. Schemes of work and session plans are clear and detailed. Handouts and resources are mainly of good quality and appropriate, with easy to read text and illustrations. Learners have good access to materials needed for craftwork.
52. Accommodation is mainly good apart from one room, which is very small, and some low tables in one centre. The previous inspection noted some unsuitable accommodation. The self-assessment report represents an accurate view of the family learning provision.
53. HALS offers some subjects, such as family guitar, specifically to attract men on to the family learning courses. Bright and colourful marketing leaflets and flyers are mainly given to parents via the schools. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. Recently, all family learning tutors have attended safeguarding training. Crèche facilities sited close to the learning areas are free and available wherever possible. HALS provides supply cover for schools to support joint sessions of adults and children.

Annex

Learners' achievements

Success rates on accredited entry and level 1 (combined) and level 2 qualifications, by length, expected end year and age.

2006/07 to 2007/08, compared with the national rates for general further education colleges.

Notional Level	Exp End Year	19+			Diff
		Starts – Transfers	College Rate	National Rate	
2 long	06/07	***	***	69%	
	07/08*	30	67%	N/A	
Short**	06/07	149	76%	83%	-7%
	07/08*	89	85%	N/A	

* ACL provider data not validated (use where complete, validated and produced using proprietary software)

** Courses over five weeks long

*** No enrolments