

# Sefton MBC

## Inspection report

---

Unique reference number: 54317

Name of lead inspector: Kathryn Townsley HMI

Last day of inspection: 14 May 2010

Type of provider: Local Authority

Address: South Sefton Adult Education Centre  
Cambridge Road  
Seaforth  
Liverpool  
L21 1EZ

Telephone number: 0151 285 5057

## Information about the provider

1. Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council (the service) refers to the combined services of Sefton Adult and Community Learning Service (SACLS) and Sefton Families and Schools Together (FAST). The community learning manager leads the service, supported by a management team comprising: a newly appointed quality and contracts manager; six curriculum managers; a coordinator for Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities (NLDC); a management information manager; and an equality and diversity coordinator. The managers of two associated projects, one for substance misusers and the other for Bridge, a community project, also report to the community learning manager.
2. The service offers an integrated range of non-vocational and First Steps learning opportunities, funded by the local authority and Skills Funding Agency, to around 3,500 adults each year. Programmes are offered in over 100 community venues, including libraries, community centres, social services centres, children's centres, Sefton Carers Centre and sheltered housing accommodation. FAST delivers family learning in over 40 schools.
3. Programmes are available in 10 subject areas: five within interest and leisure classes; information and communication technology (ICT); modern foreign languages; preparation for life and work; family learning; and community development. Preparation for life and work is the largest area and includes literacy, numeracy, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), provision for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and employability. The service subcontracts an element of community development to the Bridge centre.
4. Sefton has a population of 282,958 and ranks the 83rd most disadvantaged area in the 2007 indices of multiple deprivation. Less than 2% of the population are from non-white minority ethnic groups. The proportions of adults who are unemployed, in receipt of low pay and have no qualifications or qualifications below level 2, are around national averages. However, Sefton is a borough of wide variations, with some of the most affluent and most deprived areas in the region and corresponding differences in unemployment and qualification levels. The service targets provision at the more deprived areas of the borough with more than 55% of learners from areas of deprivation and the majority with no formal qualifications.
5. The provider offers training on behalf of the following providers:
  - Halton Adult Learning Service
  - Wirral Adult Learning Service
6. The following organisation provides training on behalf of the provider:
  - The Bridge Project

---

Type of provision	Number of enrolled learners in 2008/09
Provision for adult learners: Learning for social and personal development	3,463 part-time learners
Employer provision: Train to Gain	163 learners

## Summary report

Grades: 1 is outstanding; 2 is good; 3 is satisfactory; 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness of provision	Grade 2
Capacity to improve	Grade 3
	Grade
Outcomes for learners	2
Quality of provision	2
Leadership and management	2
Safeguarding	2
Equality and diversity	2
Subject Areas	
ICT for users	2
Literacy and numeracy	3
Family learning	2

## Overall effectiveness

7. Overall effectiveness is good. Outcomes for learners are good. Most learners achieve their qualifications or learning goals. Most groups achieve equally well. Learners enjoy attending their sessions. They improve their skills and confidence significantly and use these well in their daily lives. Progression to work is good for many. Learners feel safe, and demonstrate high levels of awareness in relation to safeguarding issues. Many learners make particularly good contributions to their community through fundraising and community events.
8. Teaching and learning are good. Most tutors plan their sessions well, using a good range of different methods. Some use information and learning technology (ILT) effectively to enhance sessions but others are less effective in its use. Initial assessment is used well in ICT, but is less effective in other areas. Provision is well-targeted and places a clear focus on meeting the needs of disadvantaged communities. Learners are well supported in moving to other provision, either within the service or with other local providers when their

course ends. Strong, wide-ranging partnerships support the service in meeting the needs and interests of the community.

9. The service's excellent strategic direction focuses clearly on improving learners' skills and employability. An effective review and refocusing of the provision to fit with council priorities has also significantly improved the value for money. Arrangements for safeguarding are good but e-safety is not sufficiently reinforced. The promotion of equality of opportunity is good. Very effective partnerships with a wide range of multi-agency groups ensure the best use of provision for learners in the area. Quality improvement and self-assessment arrangements are satisfactory but data for retention and achievement are unreliable.

## Main findings

- Most learners achieve their qualifications or learning goals. Learners develop good personal and employability skills. They enjoy their learning and make good progress. Good advice and guidance help learners to progress to further programmes or employment. Many learners participate in supportive social networks.
- Learners feel safe and most have a very good awareness of safeguarding issues. On family learning programmes learners discuss safeguarding, both in relation to their children and to themselves, intelligently and knowledgeably.
- Learners' contribution to the community is good. In family learning, many are active in parent-teacher groups. The range of NLDC projects is helping significantly to build volunteer provision within the community.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good. Tutors are motivational and enthusiastic. Better sessions use a variety of teaching methods and ILT well. Weaker sessions rely too heavily on a small range of teaching methods. Recognition and recording of progress and achievement are inconsistent across provision. The use of initial assessment to plan for individual needs is poor in some areas.
- The provision is highly flexible and responsive to the needs of learners and partner organisations. The service works well with partners to plan progression routes for learners. However, the service and partners do not use joint action planning sufficiently to fully maximise the options for learners.
- Partnership working is good. The service uses a good range of partnerships to actively benefit and engage the local communities in learning. Partnerships are also used well to provide care, guidance and support for learners.
- Managers are highly effective in promoting ambition and raising standards of the service. The service is effective in meeting the council's aims to support families and communities, improve employability and narrow the achievement gap. Management of curriculum areas is good.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are good. The service has a very strong and visible culture of safeguarding and a clear and effective strategy to safeguard

vulnerable learners. Learners are very clear about safeguarding issues. Although e-safety is included in training and induction, it is not sufficiently reinforced throughout programmes.

- Promotion of equality and diversity is good. The service is very successful in using partnership work to widen participation and support learners from underrepresented groups and deprived areas to overcome barriers to learning. The service actively celebrates diversity and achievement. All premises used by the service are fully accessible.
- A newly implemented learner forum has added to the effectiveness of learners' engagement in the service. The service collects and uses learners' views on a regular basis. Self-assessment takes account of learners' views but learners themselves have not yet been fully involved in the process.
- The service monitors the quality of provision and shares good practice but does not make best use of all the findings. Data on attendance, retention and achievement are unreliable and do not match with accepted measures of success. Observation of teaching and learning is effective but there is insufficient emphasis on learning.
- The self-assessment report is largely accurate but does not involve all users and stakeholders. Inspectors agreed with most of the grades in the report but it did not identify all areas for improvement. The report is too long, largely descriptive and lacks critical evaluation.

### What does Sefton MBC need to do to improve further?

- Conduct a full review of the collection and use of data across the service. Revise systems as soon as possible to enable the effective use of and comparison of data with national benchmarking information both at service and programme levels.
- Adopt a more self-critical, evaluative approach to the self-assessment process to ensure continuous quality improvement. Ensure that all stakeholders are fully involved and that data and key quality improvement processes, such as the observation process, more accurately inform the report.
- Further develop the observation of teaching and learning to ensure a better focus on the quality of learning taking place. Collate and analyse the outcomes of observations to identify trends for improvement and the identification of good practice, particularly in the use of different teaching methods and ILT.
- Investigate the use of the process for the recognition and recording of progress and achievement (RARPA) across the provision to identify and share good practice in order to ensure highly effective target setting and moderation processes in all curriculum areas.
- Build on the good practice in meeting the needs of learners and partners further by developing joint action plans so that all partners have a clear vision of strategy and their role within it.
- Ensure that all aspects of safeguarding, including e-learning, are fully reinforced for all learners.

## Summary of the views of users as confirmed by inspectors

### What learners like:

- being helped to realise that they are valued as individuals and have a lot to offer their families and local communities
- learning how to cope with stressful situations in everyday life and becoming more confident, calmer and well rounded members of society
- tutors who are very patient, flexible and explain things clearly
- being surprised at how much they have learned, and how much more self-confident they are
- very helpful staff who sort out problems
- mixing with other carers or parents and making new valued friends
- when they see their children's behaviour improve, and their relationships with them improve too
- getting a job as a result of new skills and confidence
- programmes that are easy to get to
- gaining the confidence to read to their children.

### What learners would like to see improved:

- having to fill in the same forms with the same information every time they do a course
- not being able to afford the computer programs the teacher uses
- when it takes a long time for computers to be repaired
- yoga rooms that are poorly ventilated and crowded with other furniture
- not having readily available tutors for distance learning programmes
- making family learning available for teenagers.

## Main inspection report

### Capacity to make and sustain improvement

Grade 3

10. The service's capacity to improve is satisfactory. The service has very successfully realigned itself with the local authority's strategic aim of improving the community and the lives of its residents. From a position of financial vulnerability, the service has made significant changes and improvements in the provision and now provides good value for money. Nearly all areas for improvement from the last inspection have been addressed and grades have all improved. A recently appointed manager has a strong focus on quality improvement.
11. Senior managers know the service well. The self-assessment process is inclusive of partners and staff but, although the views of learners are used, learners are not actively involved in self-assessment. The self-assessment report is largely accurate but it does not identify the key weakness relating to data. Inspectors agreed with most of the grades in the report and many of the key findings but it is too long, largely descriptive, and insufficiently evaluative. Data are unreliable and accurate comparisons with external benchmarks are not possible. However, despite the unreliability, the use of data in its current form by the service has been consistent in recent years and is effectively used to plan developments.

### Outcomes for learners

Grade 2

12. Learners develop good levels of skills, confidence and self-esteem. They enjoy their learning and make good progress in relation to their often low starting points. Many learners progress to higher-level programmes or employment. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities develop good training skills to enable them to provide disability awareness-raising programmes throughout the community.
13. Success rates based on the service's own data are high and increasing. All groups of learners perform equally well. However, although the service has used the same method of recording for a number of years, and so measures success consistently, data for accredited and non-accredited programmes are aggregated and unreliable. It is not possible to separate success rates for accredited programmes from the overall data. In Skills for Life, pass rates for national tests are accurate and at satisfactory levels. Train to Gain programmes are new but success rates to date appear satisfactory.
14. Learners significantly improve their economic and social well-being. Older learners in ICT gain good support through increased communication with the outside world and better access to affordable shopping options. Many family learners gain employment as teaching assistants or in related fields. More than half of learners on employability skills programmes gain employment. Learners at the Bridge project can join a self-employment project to turn their skills into businesses.

15. Many learners have a high awareness of safeguarding issues. Health and care learners recognise the limitations of confidentiality on their work with vulnerable adults. Learners on family learning programmes spoke eloquently of how safeguarding measures protect them and their children. Learners all showed at least a satisfactory awareness of health and safety measures.
16. Learners make suitably informed choices about their own health and well-being. Skills for Life learners are actively encouraged to think about health issues and apply them to their own and their families' lives. The service offers programmes on cooking on a budget and drugs awareness, and projects to encourage parents and families to become more active through sporting activities, including football.
17. Many learners make good contributions to their communities. Some family learners are active in parent-teacher groups, influencing how the school works within the community. Many learners are active in raising funds for various charities; others use their skills to benefit the community, for example, acting as trainers and support workers to carers and helping run voluntary clubs. Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities projects are highly effective in building volunteer capacity in communities.

## The quality of provision

Grade 2

18. Teaching and learning are good. Tutors are motivational and enthusiastic, providing excellent role models. Most use a good variety of methods and materials to stimulate and encourage learners. In less effective sessions, the range of teaching methods is limited. Tutors are particularly effective in providing the practical support for learners with multiple barriers to life and learning. Resources are good in family learning and satisfactory elsewhere. However, the use of ILT by tutors is inconsistent across and within programmes.
19. Initial assessment of learners' needs is generally effective and gives a useful starting point for planning but some tutors do not use the information well to plan sessions. Session plans do not always clearly identify the individual needs of learners or how support will be used. Skills for Life support needs are clearly identified and learners are directed to provision but the use of the support is low.
20. The use of RARPA is inconsistent. ICT tutors use RARPA well, identifying specific and measurable targets for each learner. In Skills for Life, family learning and wider programmes, targets on individual and group plans are insufficiently specific to be measurable. Internal moderation and standardisation are inconsistent on some programmes.
21. The service is highly flexible and responsive to meet the needs of learners and partners. The provision focuses on three sector subject areas that reflect its aim to reach the most vulnerable learners. However, it also recognises the value of

a small number of leisure classes across other subject areas, such as sport and leisure, very effectively including awareness of skills for life within them. The service responds well to requests for provision or changes in programmes from learners and partners and uses a range of funding to maximise opportunities for learners. Managers use NLDC funding well by delegating most of it to VOLA, a local voluntary agency that specialises in networking with voluntary and community projects. Many learners transfer between providers in the borough with ease but the service does not do enough joint action planning to maximise fully the options for learners.

22. The service is highly effective in developing partnerships that actively benefit the people of the area. These include work with schools and children's centres and drug and alcohol services. The service identifies gaps in provision and works with a highly respected agency to recruit the appropriate voluntary or community group to deliver projects to build capacity and individual skills. Partnership with Sefton@work is highly effective in helping long-term unemployed back to work.
23. Arrangements for care, guidance and support are very effective. The service has a good partnership with nextstep to help learners decide on the best course and progression opportunities. Enrolment and initial assessment arrangements quickly identify support needs and speedily provide any support. Administrative staff are all trained to level 2 in support, and are effective in questioning learners and identifying issues. A specialised project, 'Equip', has a good bank of resources available to learners and wider community groups. The service uses its excellent range of partners very well to give additional support to learners where this is required. Tutors are supportive of learners, providing extra time and resources when needed.

## Leadership and management

Grade 2

24. Managers are highly effective in promoting ambition and raising standards of the service. Strategic drive is good and aligns well with the council's aims to support families and communities, improve employability and narrow the achievement gap. Service plans take good account of regional and local priorities and ensure the service meets the needs of local areas of disadvantage. Management of curriculum areas is good with examples of staffing adjustments to improve effectiveness. The service has excellent working relationships with other council departments. For example, it provides Skills for Life support for employees on Train to Gain programmes.
25. The management of safeguarding arrangements is good, resulting in well-planned and very effective arrangements across the provision. The service has a clear and effective strategy to safeguard vulnerable learners who have a range of barriers to learning. All staff receive high quality and innovative training and records are up-to-date and accurate. The service has a very strong and visible culture of safeguarding and there are several examples of staff identifying issues with learners, resulting in appropriate action with relevant agencies. Learners are very clear about safeguarding issues and there are good

examples of how they have applied this knowledge effectively in their daily lives. Although e-safety is included in training and induction, it is not sufficiently reinforced throughout programmes.

26. The promotion of equality and diversity is good. The service is very successful in achieving its aims of widening participation and supporting learners from underrepresented groups and deprived areas to overcome barriers to development. Challenging equality and diversity targets are set and monitored at service and programme levels. Many of the targets have been exceeded. Managers quickly identify gaps in achievement and instigate effective action to address them.
27. A designated post holder for equality and diversity works very effectively and enthusiastically with a wide range of community groups to promote and engage minority groups of learners. Training for all staff is highly effective as is the promotion and monitoring of equality and diversity. All learning materials are scrutinised and actions are taken to improve them whenever necessary. The service actively celebrates diversity and achievement. All premises used by the service are fully accessible.
28. A newly implemented learner forum further strengthens the strong culture of learners' engagement in the service. Learners' views are collected, using a variety of methods, including electronic and social networking sites as well as face-to-face consultations and questionnaires. The service responds well to the feedback it receives from learners. Self-assessment takes good account of learners' views but learners themselves have not yet been involved in the process.
29. Quality improvement processes are satisfactory. The service has a strong and effective culture of monitoring the quality of provision and sharing good practice across the service. However, insufficient use is made of the outcomes of intelligence, for example, feedback from learners. Action plans are clear, detailed and effective in driving improvements. Targets at service level are clear but there is little analysis and use of targets at curriculum level. The management and use of data are poor. Data are inaccurate and do not match with accepted measures of success. Curriculum managers have a poor understanding of the contribution of their area or individual programmes to general service targets. The service has an inclusive, well-used system for the observation of teaching and learning that results in effective action planning. Some grades awarded are inaccurate and there is insufficient emphasis on learning.

## Learning for personal and social development

Other learning for qualifications provision considered as part of the main findings but not separately graded : languages, horticulture, hospitality and catering, sport and leisure, visual arts and humanities

### ICT for users

Grade 2

#### Context

30. In ICT there are 155 learners enrolled on 19 programmes, including using common IT programmes and the internet, and digital imaging. Programmes range from beginners to intermediate level and are held at the main learning centre and 14 community venues. Most learners are women, 98% are White British and 65% are over 60 years old.

#### Key findings

- Learners develop good IT skills, gain high levels of confidence and enjoy their learning. They gain new skills, such as creating word documents and spreadsheets. They also make new friends. Their quality of life is enhanced, for instance, when they learn how to email distant family or make videos from treasured photographs. Learners develop good employment-related skills.
- Teaching and learning are good. Learners progress well in the relaxed and welcoming atmosphere created in the well-equipped centres. Handouts are good, particularly those that help learners with home computers that are different to those in the classroom. Most tutors motivate learners well and maintain a good pace of learning but in a small minority of whole-class activities, the pace is too slow for more able or experienced learners.
- Tutors use assessment well to promote progress. Staff and learners jointly assess whether they have achieved the course aims. Managers monitor the process rigorously. Learners gain confidence from learning diaries that help them reflect on their progress to date. However, tutors make insufficient use of initial assessment information to plan sessions.
- The programme meets the needs and interests of users well by providing programmes at different times of day and in a range of venues across the district. A good range of programmes is available, often in response to learner or employer demand. However, some programmes use software that many learners in the key target groups cannot afford. The service does not re-use initial assessment information and many learners dislike repeating health and safety, administration and initial assessment activities only a few weeks after completing the same activities.

- Good partnership work is effective in attracting learners from target groups. Partnerships help the service develop its IT infrastructure, or contribute to staff development. Programmes complement partners' own aims well, for instance in a children's centre where parents' new IT skills enable them to help their children better.
- Support and information, advice and guidance arrangements for learners are satisfactory overall. Guidance on programmes, both internal and external, is good. Initial assessment is effective at identifying additional needs and the small numbers of learners who receive additional support succeed at a better rate than their peers. The service identifies literacy and numeracy support needs accurately but take-up of support is low.
- New teachers benefit from mentoring by more experienced teachers. Staff development is good, particularly for safeguarding and equality and diversity. Teaching rooms are good and the service works well with partners to provide value for money.
- Safeguarding arrangements are good. Managers give appropriate priority to ensuring all staff are trained, and that appropriate checks are made on all staff and volunteers. All staff know whom to contact if they have safeguarding concerns. Learners feel safe and tutors pay good attention to health and safety. However, they do not effectively reinforce and promote e-safety to learners.
- Staff promote equality and diversity well. The service targets and reaches learners from disadvantaged groups well. Managers monitor the recruitment and achievement of different groups of learners and take good actions to address issues, for example, recruiting younger learners. Teaching materials are monitored to ensure that images avoid cultural stereotypes and tutors are encouraged to assess their own practice.
- Quality improvement processes are satisfactory. Staff make good use of peer observations. Grades from the observation of teaching and learning are largely accurate but there is insufficient emphasis on effective learning. Tutors routinely share good practice with colleagues. However, data on achievement and retention are unreliable and managers fail to collate an overview of other key data such as attendance. The self-assessment report is insufficiently self-critical.

What does Sefton MBC need to do to improve further?

- Improve the pace of learning and degree of challenge for all learners by improving tutors' skills in delivering differentiated learning.
- Improve tutors' skills in embedding literacy and numeracy support in IT, and in promoting Skills for Life programmes by assessing existing practice and sharing the best of this across provision.
- Improve initial assessment by improving the effectiveness of capturing learners' personal aims and agreeing with them how to assess achievement of these. Develop practice so tutors see this as an on-going process. Include these in the planning and assessment of learning and progress, for instance by facilitating greater use of homework and peer-assessment.

- Ensure initial assessment information is re-used where possible when learners take successive programmes.

## Literacy and numeracy

## Grade 3

### Context

31. The service provides literacy and numeracy classes from entry level to level 2. Some provision is accredited. At the time of inspection, nearly 500 learners had enrolled on classes at seven different venues, learning alongside an additional 39 learners funded through Train to Gain. Classes run both in the day and in the evening.

### Key findings

- Learners develop good personal and social skills and enjoy their classes. They like the small supportive groups and the opportunity to mix with a range of other adult learners. They extend their social skills and increase their confidence. The knowledge and skills they acquire make a positive contribution to their social and economic well-being. Pass rates on national literacy and numeracy tests are satisfactory.
- The initial assessment process is good and works effectively to identify learners' specific needs and interests. Staff assess new learners individually to ensure they enrol on an appropriate learning programme. Initial assessment information is used appropriately at the start of programmes to plan sessions for new learners.
- Teaching and learning sessions are satisfactory overall. In many sessions, tutors use good real-life materials and the pace of learning is good: in a small number of others, there is an over-reliance on worksheets. Teaching on some programmes relies too heavily on preparation for taking the national tests rather than on developing the broad range of skills learners need for life and work.
- Tutors make insufficient use of individual learning plans (ILPs). In many sessions, learners make little use of their ILPs, which the tutor writes. Some targets are vague and difficult to measure. In other ILPs, tutors use language from the core curriculum that is over-complex for learners. However, many learners make good use of the learner journey logs to record their weekly learning.
- Tutors make insufficient use of ILT to support teaching and learning: too few learners have the opportunity to use computers to develop their skills. However, a new computer suite is now in use at the main site and tutors are completing training in using interactive whiteboards.
- The range of provision meets the needs of users satisfactorily. The service has an appropriate number of programmes. It is extending these to offer learners the opportunity to take national literacy and numeracy tests in response to learner demand. There is effective use of community venues to widen participation with over 85% of provision taking place in areas of high deprivation.

- The quality of distance-learning programmes to support learners unable to attend sessions regularly is poor. Learners have insufficient access to tutors to gain the flexibility of support they need to learn successfully at a distance. Retention and progress are poor.
- Information, advice and guidance are good. The service has a good partnership with Nextstep advisers, who make regular visits to classes and are available for individual appointments at the main centre. Tutors give good advice on progression to learners. They provide guidance sheets with information about progression routes, both within the service and to other providers.
- Support for learners is satisfactory. Tutors are supportive and flexible in their approach to learners. Class numbers are very small so tutors can give individual help easily. Staff identify wider support needs appropriately and learners have good access to a range of adaptive equipment.
- Leadership and management arrangements are satisfactory with good communication and regular staff training. Comprehensive tutor files, along with the learner journey logs, ensure that tutors are able to cover sickness absence without disrupting the learning.
- Arrangements for safeguarding of learners are good. Learners feel safe and welcomed in sessions. They understand their rights, responsibilities and the complaints procedures. Staff are suitably trained and knowledgeable and have all had appropriate criminal records bureau checks.
- The service's arrangements for equality and diversity are satisfactory. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equality and diversity issues. Staff introduce issues at induction at the start of the programmes but do not always sufficiently plan to reinforce equality and diversity in teaching sessions.

#### What does Sefton MBC need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and learning by encouraging tutors to use more real-life materials and situations and fewer worksheets. Give more time to active learning and to the development of writing skills in literacy classes and improve the observation process to give a more accurate grading assessment of teaching and learning.
- Share good practice in the use of learner journey logs and ILPs, so that they are owned and used by the learners as part of their own record of progress as well as being regularly reviewed by tutors. Ensure that all targets are specific and measurable to fully inform the RARPA process.
- Develop the use of technology to enhance and support learning in both literacy and numeracy by further training staff and using the observation process to assess effectiveness.
- Review the Skills for Life distance learning programmes for quality and effectiveness and take actions to either improve the provision or find an alternative programme of delivery.

## Family Learning

## Grade 2

### Context

32. The service offers programmes in family language, literacy and numeracy (FLLN), wider family learning (WFL) and family learning impact fund (FLIF) in partnership with local schools and children's centres. Of the 136 learners enrolled at the time of inspection, 45% are on FLLN programmes, 40% on WFL and 15% on FLIF.

### Key findings

- Outcomes for learners are good. They enjoy their studies, are extremely motivated and develop very good parenting skills. Parents of babies develop good strategies to work at a very early age with their children. Many learners make inspirational learning journeys often while dealing with complex personal issues and multiple barriers to learning. Attendance and punctuality are good.
- Learners very effectively increase their employability and their ability to contribute to the community. Progression to employment is good. In one school, of the 16 learning assistants employed, the head teacher recruited 13 from family learning programmes. Many learners voluntarily give much time to their school or wider community. They raise funds for the community and promote communities working together.
- Learners' understanding of safeguarding issues is good. Parents are well aware of safeguarding issues and a number of them actively use their knowledge to protect their families and friends. Learners feel very safe and are confident that their children are safe. Learners and staff adopt safe working practices. School premises, nurseries and children's centres are secure, and staff rigorously scrutinise access.
- Tutors use a wide range of teaching and learning methods and activities very well to engage learners and retain their interest. Tutors ensure that learning is fun, encouraging parents to continue with extension activities at home. They plan lessons well and use double staffing on FLLN sessions to meet the needs of a wide range of abilities in sessions.
- Tutors give good one-to-one support to learners and provide clear and effective feedback. Learning resources are good and individualised. The use of ICT in most sessions is satisfactory but in some, there is insufficient use. The standard of learners' work is good. Tutors use attractive photographic records of learners' work effectively as evidence for accreditation.
- Initial assessment is satisfactory but tutors do not use the results effectively to set specific and measurable individual learning targets. The plans do not record the specific needs and abilities of learners well and staff do not always record wider evidence of progress. Tutors' recording of what learners need to do to improve their learning is insufficiently detailed.

- The service uses very effectively a wide range of extremely productive partnerships to engage the most disadvantaged learners. Staff work extremely well with health visitors to target parents of the most vulnerable children. Parents develop good parenting, coping and anger-management skills. Good work with schools results in effective training for teachers, raising their awareness of community issues and building capacity to provide family learning.
- Support and arrangements for information, advice and guidance for learners are good. Tutors respond sensitively to learners' needs and are extremely encouraging. Learners appreciate this individual care and support, which enables them to complete their studies. Advice and guidance are good and are adapted to individual learners' needs. Progression opportunities to all local provision are well signposted.
- Leadership and management are good with a clear management focus on quality improvement for the benefit of learners. There is a clear strategy for the development of the service and managers respond well to implementing national and local priorities. However, managers make insufficient use of data to plan and review provision. The service deploys resources effectively to support learning.
- The promotion of equality and diversity is good and learners treat each other with respect and value each other's contributions. Staff are very inclusive in their approach to learners. Resources appropriately reflect diversity and meet individual learners' needs well. Staff and learners understand their roles and responsibilities in relation to equality and diversity well.

What does Sefton MBC need to do to improve further?

- Improve the planning of individual learning through more rigorous target setting to record learners' progress more accurately. Identify good practice in this area both internally and externally and adopt these practices more universally. Use both the observation process and the standardisation processes in RARPA to be more critical in assessing target setting.
- Increase staff development in use of ICT in teaching and learning and use the observation process to ensure a more consistent approach to this issue in teaching and learning. Evaluate ICT resources that are available in partner premises.
- Improve the quality and use of data in setting and monitoring target setting for the programme.

## Information about the inspection

33. Two of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and three additional inspectors, assisted by the provider's Community Learning Manager, as nominee, carried out the inspection. Inspectors also took account of the provider's most recent self-assessment report and development plans, comments from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) or other funding bodies, the previous inspection report, reports from the inspectorate's family learning survey, and data on learners and their achievement over the period since the previous inspection.
34. Inspectors used group and individual interviews, telephone calls and emails. They looked at questionnaires learners and employers had recently completed on behalf of the provider. They also observed learning sessions, assessments and progress reviews. Inspectors collected evidence from programmes in each of the subject areas the provider offers.

**Record of Main Findings (RMF)**  
**Sefton MBC**

Learning types: 14 – 16: Young apprenticeships; Diplomas; 16-18 Learner responsive: FE full- and part-time programmes, Foundation learning tier, including Entry to Employment; 19+ responsive: FE full- and part-time programmes; Employer responsive: Train to Gain, apprenticeships Social and personal development: all adult safeguarded provision

Grades using the 4 point scale 1: Outstanding; 2: Good; 3: Satisfactory; 4: Inadequate	Overall	Social and personal development	Employer responsive
Approximate number of enrolled learners	2636	2629	113
Part-time learners			
Overall effectiveness	2	2	3
Capacity to improve	3		
Outcomes for learners	2	2	3
How well do learners achieve and enjoy their learning?	2		
How well do learners attain their learning goals?	3		
How well do learners progress?	2		
How well do learners improve their economic and social well-being through learning and development?	2		
How safe do learners feel?	2		
Are learners able to make informed choices about their own health and well being?*	3		
How well do learners make a positive contribution to the community?*	2		
Quality of provision	2	2	3
How effectively do teaching, training and assessment support learning and development?	2		
How effectively does the provision meet the needs and interests of users?	2		
How well partnerships with schools, employers, community groups and others lead to benefits for learners?	2		
How effective are the care, guidance and support learners receive in helping them to achieve?	2		
Leadership and management	2	2	3
How effectively do leaders and managers raise expectations and promote ambition throughout the organisation?	2		
How effectively do governors and supervisory bodies provide leadership, direction and challenge?*	n/a		
How effectively does the provider promote the safeguarding of learners?	2		
How effectively does the provider actively promote equality and diversity, tackle discrimination and narrow the achievement gap?	2		
How effectively does the provider engage with users to support and promote improvement?	2		
How effectively does self-assessment improve the quality of the provision and outcomes for learners?	3		
How efficiently and effectively does the provider use its available resources to secure value for money?	2		

\*where applicable to the type of provision

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this report in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester, M2 7LA

T: 0300 123 1231  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2010