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Literacy, numeracy and English for
speakers of other languages: a
survey of current practice in
post-16 and adult provision



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

HMI 1367



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September 2003



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Introduction

Purpose of report

1. This report evaluates quality and standards up to and including level 2 in literacy, numeracy and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) in a range of post-16 education and training contexts. These include general colleges of further education (FE), specialist colleges, sixth form colleges, adult education institutes, local community organisations, providers of work-based learning for young people and adults, providers of New Deal training for long-term unemployed people, *learn*direct providers, and provision in adult prisons and in young offender institutions. The report draws on evidence from every type of publicly funded post-16 education or training provider, with the exception of universities and sixth forms in schools.
2. The report encompasses learning support in literacy, numeracy and ESOL for learners who have other learning aims, as well as discrete provision for learners whose course is principally focused on improving their literacy, numeracy or English language skills.
3. The structure of the report follows the seven key questions of the *Common Inspection Framework* used by Ofsted and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI). It compares and contrasts achievement, teaching, learning and the availability and management of resources in different learning contexts. It also investigates how well the provision is managed and considers the effect of this learning on the lives of the learners.

Background

4. Since the publication in 1999 of *A fresh start*, the report of the working group chaired by Sir Claus Moser, much national attention has been focused on the need to improve literacy, numeracy and ESOL. The Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit has been formed, within the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), to lead a new national strategy, Skills for Life. The strategy is aimed particularly at adults receiving unemployment or other benefits, prisoners and people serving sentences in the community, public sector employees, those in low-skilled employment and others at risk of social exclusion, including young people who have underachieved at school and are ill-equipped to achieve in further education or training. The Confederation of British Industry and the Trades Union Congress give strong support to the strategy. National curricula and standards in literacy and numeracy have been devised, published and promoted throughout England. The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Jobcentre Plus, both relatively new organisations, increasingly emphasise, to the education and training organisations they fund, the importance of good literacy and numeracy provision, characterised by good teaching and effective learning. There have been major staff training initiatives in FE colleges, in particular the Basic Skills Quality Initiative. Local education authorities (LEAs) and voluntary sector organisations have promoted family learning and supported small learning centres in the heart of communities. There are now over 2000 *learn*direct centres offering literacy and numeracy online courses. Increasing attention has been given to literacy, numeracy and ESOL in prisons, where 60% of offenders are functionally illiterate or innumerate. This review surveys current practice throughout the diversity of post-16 education and training and considers the challenges ahead.

The review

5. A team of 35 inspectors from Ofsted and the ALI jointly conducted the review. They consulted the delivery plans of the 47 local learning and skills councils and examined the findings of over 650 full inspections carried out between 1 April 2002 and 31 May 2003. These included area-wide inspections and inspections of some of the largest providers of work-based learning and Jobcentre Plus in the country, adult and community learning providers and *learn*direct centres, and over 100 colleges. On the 16 prison inspections, inspectors conducted detailed research into the provision and management of literacy, numeracy and ESOL. Inspectors also carried out this survey in a representative sample of 40 colleges across the country which included visits to each of the colleges. On these visits, as on inspections, inspectors observed sessions, studied learners' work and spoke to them as well as their tutors and the managers of the provision.

Executive summary

6. The Skills for Life initiative has been highly successful in increasing the number of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners and in raising the profile of this area of learning, but there needs to be a sharper focus on the quality of the education and training that is available. Few providers, other than the best colleges, are monitoring retention and achievement rates or measuring the effectiveness of their learning support. Weaknesses in initial assessment and the poor quality of most individual learning plans (ILPs) mean that it is difficult to assess the progress of individual learners, especially those who are not working towards external accreditation. There are examples of very good provision in all sectors, but most expertise is concentrated in the colleges. However, inspections of colleges show that the proportion of good provision is much lower in literacy, numeracy and ESOL than it is in any other area of learning and there is significantly more unsatisfactory provision.

7. The rapid increase in the number of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners has resulted in a serious shortage of qualified and experienced teachers and the delay in introducing the new teaching qualifications has aggravated the problem. The shortage of qualified staff is particularly acute in Jobcentre Plus provision, work-based learning for young people, prison education and *learnirect* provision. Many of the learners with the greatest need are with providers with the least qualified staff, the fewest resources and the lowest budget for staff training. This is of major concern.

Main findings

Achievement and standards

- The Skills for Life initiative has been successful in rapidly increasing the numbers of learners on literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses.
- Many who start courses do not complete them successfully. Around two thirds of learners who start foundation apprenticeships in the service industries of retailing, care, hairdressing and hospitality do not achieve their key skills qualifications.
- Those who do complete their courses often improve their oral communication.
- The most successful learners develop their interpersonal skills and acquire computer skills as well as improving their literacy and numeracy. They also gain in self-confidence, take greater control of their lives and find jobs or improve their job prospects.
- The quality of assessment of learners' progress and achievement in literacy, numeracy and ESOL is poor in all sectors. In many cases, neither the learners nor their teachers know what progress they have made. Even more often, learners cannot see how what they have learnt is useful to them in their work, their studies or their life in general.
- Too few managers and tutors measure achievement and retention rates or set targets for improving them.
- In colleges, the high absenteeism and persistent lateness of many ESOL learners hinders their progress.

Quality of education and training

- Many tutors in Jobcentre Plus and work-based learning provision and in some prisons are expert at inspiring disengaged young people and long-term unemployed adults to return to learning or to work. In general, however, they lack the expertise to teach literacy and numeracy well.
- In most provision, many tutors do not identify learners' precise learning needs and, when planning their learning, do not set specific learning targets. Many tutors do not understand the different functions of screening tests and diagnostic assessments.
- Most teachers of ESOL pay insufficient attention to developing learners' listening comprehension and speaking skills.
- Too few ESOL learners have any work experience to enrich their language learning and improve their employability.
- Family learning courses in adult and community provision are often very successful in encouraging parents with low levels of literacy and numeracy to take a greater interest in their children's education, but too often family learners tutors pay insufficient attention to the specific learning needs of the parents.

- In some of the most effective vocational training, most often found in the best colleges, vocational tutors also teach their learners the requisite literacy or numeracy skills. In these cases, learners are attentive and learn rapidly. Too often, however, there are not enough links between literacy, numeracy and the curriculum of the vocational specialism.
- In some colleges, tutors mark learners' work well, and give them clear, constructive verbal and written feedback. Elsewhere, few tutors have the skills to help students improve through good marking and appropriate oral feedback on their work.
- In most provision, there are weaknesses in the initial assessment process. Many providers are using a screening test but are not following this up with a diagnostic assessment and, in many cases, the results of the initial assessment are not being used to inform the individual learning plan (ILP).
- Many ILPs are poor. Targets are unclear and the review process is weak.
- Too few learners understand how key skills development can assist them in their career or their life in general.
- Resources and accommodation are good at most colleges' main sites and in most *learnirect* centres. Elsewhere, for example, in colleges' smaller sites, community venues, Jobcentre Plus and work-based learning provision, the standards of accommodation and resources vary widely. Some accommodation is very good, but some is cramped, poorly lit, drab and inadequately resourced.
- There is still a shortage of good learning materials. Too often, teaching relies on poorly copied worksheets, which have apparently been selected at random, have little relevance to learners' needs or interests and are not marked.
- There is a shortage of teaching expertise in literacy and numeracy in all sectors, but particularly in Jobcentre Plus provision, work-based learning for young people, in prison education and in *learnirect* provision. There is a severe shortage of ESOL tutors, especially in London.
- The poor literacy or numeracy skills of a minority of tutors in all sectors are a cause for concern.
- There is much confusion in all sectors about which teaching qualifications are required, relevant or available. There is a shortage of appropriate training courses for work-based learning and Jobcentre Plus tutors.
- New tutors have been unable to start their teacher training because of the delay in introducing the new teaching qualifications.
- Numeracy is taught less frequently than literacy although there are as many adults with poor numeracy skills as there are with poor literacy skills.
- In colleges, the quality of discrete provision is usually better than that of in-class learning support.
- Teaching and learning in prisons and young offender institutions are seriously hampered by the lack of effective behaviour management schemes and measures to minimise the detrimental effects of the shifting population.

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- The literacy, numeracy and language needs of long-term unemployed people are not being adequately addressed.

Leadership and management

- Quality assurance arrangements are generally poor, except in a few colleges. Few work-based learning providers have any quality assurance arrangements for literacy, numeracy or ESOL. Many do not allocate management responsibility for the development of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills.
- In a few colleges, managers have found that good learning support has improved achievement rates in other areas of learning. In most cases, however, managers have not attempted to establish the effect of learning support upon the achievement of other learning aims.
- In colleges, the best practice is often found in discrete provision. However, this expertise is rarely used to teach learners on learning support programmes or in work-based learning. Good practice is not shared throughout colleges' work, whether with colleagues in other departments in prison education or with voluntary sector partners.
- Many Life Skills and New Deal providers and some colleges collaborate well with partners to widen participation in literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes. Many have strong links with the probation service, social services, voluntary organisations and advisory agencies.
- Most providers do not effectively promote equality of opportunity to learners who have literacy, numeracy and language learning needs. Policies and guidelines are often written in complex language. Few learners with literacy or numeracy needs have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities in relation to equality of opportunity. Too many materials do not reflect cultural diversity.
- In prisons, work-based learning and Jobcentre Plus provision, few learners with dyslexia or similar learning difficulties are being identified and supported.
- In most prisons there is no overall strategy for literacy and numeracy across education and training provision. Too often, education and training are not linked. Often there is no continuity of education when learners move from one prison to another.
- There is not enough literacy, numeracy and language provision in young offender institutions.

Issues for action

Staff training and continuous professional development

In all provision, there is a need for greater expertise, particularly in teaching English to speakers of other languages, and in teaching numeracy.

Priority areas

There is an urgent need for training for staff working on Life Skills and Entry to Employment (E2E) programmes, Jobcentre Plus provision and in prison education, where many staff are unqualified and where the most disengaged, but needy, learners are to be found. Staff training needs to focus on two key areas:

- tutors' own levels of literacy and numeracy
- tutors' teaching skills.

Short courses

In all provision, there is a need for short courses in many aspects of teaching and learning for both new and more experienced tutors. These should cover:

- identifying learners' needs
- planning learning to meet learners' needs
- setting specific learning targets
- learning theory and motivational techniques
- locating and making learning materials relevant to learners' vocational needs or other interests
- using computers to facilitate the learning of literacy and numeracy
- marking learners' work and giving useful feedback
- assessing learners' progress
- arranging good work placements for ESOL learners.

An initial training programme should be developed for new tutors who do not have a teaching qualification to introduce them to the essential techniques of teaching before they start work. This should be easily accessible and available throughout the year.

Vocational tutors

In colleges and work-based provision, there is a need for courses for vocational tutors to

learn how to assess and teach the literacy and numeracy skills integral to the vocational curriculum. Some vocational tutors also need to develop their own literacy and/or numeracy skills.

Vocational relevance

In all provision, specialist literacy, numeracy and ESOL tutors need to pay greater attention to ensuring that what they teach is relevant to learners' vocational needs and their broader interests.

Work-based learning

Greater attention should be paid to improving the literacy and numeracy of the young people employed in construction work and in the service sector, in particular, hospitality, care work, retailing and distribution. There needs to be greater clarification and publicity regarding the nature of support for providers with learners with dyslexia or similar learning difficulties.

Jobcentre Plus provision

More attention should be paid to improving the literacy, numeracy and language skills of long-term unemployed people.

Quality assurance

Retention, achievement, success and progression rates must be carefully monitored against realistic but ambitious targets.

There is a need for simple but effective systems to assess the effect of learning and language support on learners' achievements in their main programmes of study.

Sharing good practice

There is a particular need to share good practice between college departments and with college partners.

Prison education

There is a need for a better education strategy in prisons and, in particular, better co-ordination between tutors in different departments and between different prisons.

More literacy, numeracy and ESOL provision should be made available to meet the needs of young offenders.

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?

8. Achievement for learners on discrete literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses can mean either gaining externally accredited qualifications, being awarded the provider's own certificate on completion of the course or achieving individual learning goals. Achievement for learners receiving additional literacy, numeracy or language support is either not measured or measured solely as the success in the learners' main qualification. New qualifications in literacy, numeracy and ESOL have been introduced, based on the national standards. They are being used in most colleges and by Adult and Community Learning (ACL) providers and also in some voluntary and private training organisations. Knowledge and use of the new standards are not as developed in the work-based learning and Jobcentre Plus sectors because tutors are less able to see the relevance of the standards to their teaching.

9. Across the post-16 sector, there is little use of data to quantify achievements or to compare performance in this area of learning. Where good practice exists in some colleges, accurate data on retention, achievement and attendance are being carefully monitored against ambitious targets. A number of colleges and training providers are monitoring the take-up by students and trainees of the learning support on offer, but there is scant information on the effect of literacy, numeracy and language support on learners' achievement of their main qualifications. The achievement of key skills qualifications is low across the post-16 sector. Learners are often reluctant to take the tests and, when they do, pass rates of less than 10% are common.

10. On discrete literacy, numeracy and language courses in colleges, funding is no longer dependent on the learners working towards external accreditation and, in many colleges, there are few learners who are preparing for an external examination. Some providers, particularly of New Deal 25+ and work-based learning for adults, are not offering learners the opportunity to take qualifications in literacy, numeracy and language, although they would benefit from doing so. The poor quality of most ILPs and weaknesses in initial assessment mean that it is very difficult to quantify and assess the quality of the learning that has taken place. There is little information about the progression of learners on both college and ACL courses.

11. In prisons there has been a move to more suitable accreditation. A unit award is being increasingly used as it can be assessed at any time and is enabling learners to gain some credit and self-esteem quickly. In the best young offender institutions, learners are achieving as many as three or four units of accreditation per month. Elsewhere, and much more commonly, usually where the resources are inadequate and there is a high turnover of learners, achievement is negligible at less than half a unit per month. Significant numbers leave without achieving anything.

12. In contrast, the learning of the most successful students and trainees is having a very positive effect on their lives. Learners who were unable to read or write are now able to read magazines and newspapers and no longer have to depend on other people to write cheques or complete official forms. Learners on the Life Skills and Jobcentre Plus programmes develop both their social and their oral communication skills for everyday life and work. Many ESOL learners have become more independent, having developed the skills and confidence to arrange appointments by telephone and to write letters. They have also

made friendships and contacts outside their own community. At one college, students from the local Italian community, which is traditionally very tightly knit, have used their new contacts to find employment beyond their community. Some learners have also become more efficient at work. Retail staff can now handle money with confidence and restaurant staff can record food orders more accurately. A student from Lancashire was unable to read or write when he first attended college. He was working at a store where he had to remember over 300 items as he could not read the store directory. He now writes stories and is working with Radio Lancashire on a project promoting the Skills for Life agenda.

13. Some learners on literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses also develop information and communication technology (ICT) skills enabling them to produce professionally presented letters. Coupled with the improvement in their literacy skills, this has given them the confidence to apply for jobs and to write formal letters. A group of learners from a college on the south coast was engaged in drafting a constitution for a committee to oversee the running of the community centre in which their lessons were taking place. As well as developing their literacy skills, the learners were also acquiring skills in diplomacy and negotiation. Some literacy courses in rural areas of Staffordshire are held on the bus that has been equipped for ICT classes and the learners are now able to contact relatives around the world via e-mail. Many learners also develop their time-management and study skills.

14. Building the confidence of the learners is an important factor in the teaching of literacy, numeracy and language. One work-based learning provider, who was supporting bilingual learners on a manufacturing course, encouraged them to keep two portfolios – one for the national vocational qualification (NVQ) and the other for recording their personal approaches to practical work. This was a positive contribution towards increasing their confidence and self-esteem and provided them with a useful reference book when their training was complete. A number of providers give awards and hold presentation events to celebrate success in literacy, numeracy and language. One establishment holds annual poetry days to encourage prisoners to submit work for a national prison competition. Prize money is awarded and poems are published by the in-house professional printing services. A college in the south west holds a very successful annual awards evening to celebrate the success of its literacy, numeracy and language learners. The principal and other senior managers attend the event and many learners, their friends and families travel from communities across the district to take part. In prisons, learners' responses to gaining accreditation are very positive. Most places have displays of what has been achieved and many learners are given laminated certificates, which they keep in their rooms.

15. Frequent absence from class hinders progress and often leads to learners leaving without completing their courses. Colleges are using a range of strategies to improve attendance. One college offers incentives, such as cinema tickets, to learners whose attendance is higher than agreed targets. Other colleges contact students on the day of their absence and have retention workers who support those students whose attendance is giving cause for concern. Across the sector, a high proportion of those learning ESOL are asylum-seekers who are frequently relocated to other areas in England. They also have to attend court hearings and meet with lawyers. These factors have a detrimental effect on the attendance, retention and achievement rates for ESOL courses. In colleges generally, the attendance rates on ESOL courses are significantly below those for literacy and numeracy. Some absence can be attributed to the learners' inability to manage their time well. Providers who make it clear to their ESOL learners that good attendance is a condition of their retaining a place on the course report higher attendance rates.

Quality of education and training

How effective are teaching, training and learning?

16. Evidence from inspections of colleges over the past two years shows that teaching is generally much weaker in literacy, numeracy and ESOL than in other areas of learning. The proportion of good teaching is lower and the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching higher than the average across all subject areas. Lesson observations carried out on visits to the sample of 40 colleges show that some of the weakest teaching is in ESOL and in learning support sessions.

17. In all sectors of provision, where teaching and learning are good, planning is thorough, the needs of all the individual learners are met, an appropriate range of activities and learning materials is used, tutors employ skilful questioning techniques, they give constructive feedback and the learning is made relevant. Tutors introduce demanding activities but take care not to present them in ways that are threatening to learners. They explain the tasks clearly so that learners know what they will be aiming at during each session and tasks are well structured, using manageable activities that build learners' confidence.

18. Where staff have not been trained to teach, there are poor strategies for checking whether learners understand what they have been taught. For example, untrained tutors ask questions which are too general, such as 'does everyone understand?', rather than setting specific tasks which require learners to demonstrate their understanding. Learners rarely respond well to general questions.

19. Teachers in prisons and young offender institutions face particularly challenging circumstances and a quarter of literacy, numeracy and ESOL lessons are unsatisfactory. Most of the learners have been excluded from school, have previously attended special units for learners with educational and behavioural difficulties or have truanted frequently. Classes have a high turnover. In the worst lessons, vacancies are filled on a daily basis with learners from a waiting list or from cancelled lessons. The constantly changing composition of groups undermines the chance of building a stable social climate with established group dynamics within which learners can settle and begin to make progress. Learners are sometimes actively engaged but more frequently they are merely compliant. Over half the lessons are good; the clear mutual respect between learners and staff contributes to purposeful learning. A quarter of literacy, numeracy and ESOL lessons are unsatisfactory, however. Behaviour is sometimes unacceptable with learners moving around the room, disrupting others and using foul language. The increasing use of learning support assistants who can work with individuals is having a beneficial effect. Quite sophisticated behaviour management schemes with valued rewards and rapid feedback are being introduced in a few places.

20. In some of the best examples of provision for vocational students, there is close co-operation between vocational staff and the literacy, numeracy and language teachers, with the two teams sharing the responsibility for the development of skills. Programmes are designed that develop literacy, numeracy and language skills through subject-specialist content. Vocational tutors and literacy, numeracy and language tutors who have familiarised themselves with the vocational area work together to devise activities to develop and reinforce their respective skills. In a very good foundation-level lesson in childhood studies at a sixth-form college in London, learners were working on an assignment to produce a

menu for a children's party. They had to consider the nutritional value of the foods. The literacy support tutor had prepared them in advance by practising the spelling of some of the complex scientific words. The vocational tutor was fully aware of the basic skills levels of the learners and was recording the progress of individuals against the national standards. Vocational tutors at one Lancashire college are piloting a new learning profile which is used on vocational courses where learning support is integral. On the foundation childhood studies course, assignments are mapped to the national curriculum and achievements are recorded at the end of every lesson against the national standards. The use of the new learning profiles has raised vocational tutors' awareness of the new literacy and numeracy curriculum.

21. When the teaching of literacy, numeracy and language is integral to everything else that is being learned, learners enjoy the process and are more receptive to improving their basic skills. Some literacy, numeracy and language tutors observe learners in the workplace or on the main programme so that they can tailor their teaching to meet the precise requirements of the learners. For example, at one college, tutors visited motor vehicle studies learners in the garages where they work. This helped them to identify what learners needed such as a good grasp of alphabetical order to use the index in a workshop manual effectively.

22. In some provision, literacy, numeracy and language skills are taught by vocational tutors. In the best provision, these tutors have very good literacy, numeracy or language skills and they have had initial training in teaching basic skills. At a number of colleges, some vocational specialists began their teaching career by working as part-time members of the learning support team. They have experience and training in literacy, numeracy and/or language development and are able to incorporate these elements effectively into their vocational teaching. Some learners find it easier to understand what is required when literacy, numeracy or language skills are built into practical and vocationally relevant activities rather than taught in a generic way. In the weakest provision, the vocational tutors lack either the necessary literacy or numeracy skills or the expertise to teach and develop them in the learners or both. Errors and misconceptions go unnoticed. A tutor's own use of incorrect grammar or poor spelling hinders the development of the literacy skills of the learners. Numeracy is too often taught rote learning rather than by developing understanding of numerical concepts.

23. Discrete literacy, numeracy and language provision in colleges and adult and community learning is often good. Topics are chosen that are relevant to the learners and lively class discussion is followed by students working on individually tailored and well-planned activities. In a numeracy class, learners had a productive discussion based on a selection of sectors of circles made out of laminated coloured card. This led to individual work on a range of topics including pie charts and equivalent fractions. In a literacy class, students discussed waste disposal and landfill sites using the pilot Skills for Life materials and articles from the local newspaper. This led to a range of activities, including tape-recorded interviews, letter writing and the development of a questionnaire. The tutors in both these lessons had good skills in classroom management, enabling them to give learners individual attention when necessary. As a result, the learners were enthusiastic and highly motivated. In the weaker provision, the range of activities is very narrow and often involves little more than the completion of worksheets, some of which are not at an appropriate level for the learners concerned.

24. There is some good practice in discrete ESOL provision. This is often found in colleges where ESOL provision is well established and substantial. In one ESOL class, the learners were using a leaflet on tackling house fires to develop their use of the imperative. A spate of house fires locally meant that the leaflet was of general interest and the learners

participated enthusiastically in the group discussion and worked effectively on the follow-up tasks. The tutor dealt very skilfully with a question about the different uses of the word 'practice', as in 'fire practice' and 'practice nurse', which engaged and extended the learners. In another lesson, women with a wide range of language skills focused on common ailments. The lesson was very well planned and included class, group and individual activities that engaged and stretched all the learners. There is much poor practice in ESOL provision, however. In one class, learners were copy-typing for the entire session and, although they worked hard, very little language learning took place. In another session, the volunteer tutor used a level of language that was too advanced for the students and this was hampering their progress.

25. When learning support is well planned and delivered, it is a very effective way to raise levels of literacy, numeracy and language. A skilled tutor can employ careful questioning to tease out any misconceptions or barriers to understanding and then use their expertise to develop and consolidate learning. Too often, those delivering learning support are the least experienced tutors, however, and, although they work hard, they do not have the pedagogical skills to do the work effectively. Inexperienced support tutors often focus on completing assignments and tasks at the expense of developing the learners' understanding and skills. They look words up in the dictionary rather than show the learner how to do it. They research topics rather than teach the learner how to use a search engine, library catalogue or the index in a book. Often, they are so intent on making speedy progress that they answer their own questions before the learner has had time to think. In lessons where learning support tutors are working with an individual or small group of learners, they do not always liaise closely with the class tutor and often arrive at the lesson unprepared. Lack of collaboration and planning also means that opportunities are missed to prepare those students who are receiving support to be able to take a full part in the lesson. For example, students receiving learning support in a psychology lesson were inadequately prepared for a class debate. They had not done any preparatory work with the language support tutor and were unable to participate effectively.

26. A few work-based learning providers have developed work-based projects to improve literacy, numeracy and language skills, but employers are rarely involved in either the design of the activities or in making opportunities available to learners to carry out projects effectively. In some instances, once learners start a work placement, their training in numeracy and literacy comes to an end. When literacy or numeracy support is offered as part of work-based learning, it is usually given at specific times in an off-the-job location by tutors who have an interest in numeracy and literacy, but no specialist vocational knowledge. Some vocational tutors in both colleges and work-based provision have inadequate levels of literacy or numeracy and are therefore unable to offer effective support. Nor have they had training in appropriate teaching strategies. This is a cause for serious concern.

27. Increasingly, literacy, numeracy or language support forms a part of employability training on programmes such as Life Skills and on Jobcentre Plus programmes. Employability skills are usually taught well. Learners develop relevant skills such as using the Internet to find jobs, reading and interpreting job advertisements, writing a letter of application, drawing up a curriculum vitae and coping with interviews. Learners become more confident in speaking in front of others. In the best provision, these skills are developed through lively, well-designed activities that incorporate well-structured discussions. The main weakness in such provision is the lack of training in the literacy, numeracy and language skills needed to sustain employment.

28. Some learners have little confidence in speaking to other people, even in familiar

settings. In all types of provision, most dialogue is between tutors and learners rather than between learners themselves. This impedes the development of essential oral skills. There are some exceptions, however. Some lessons, particularly in foundation work-based learning and New Deal, provide good opportunities for learners to develop spoken skills through structured practice and discussion with each other. They often gain confidence and increased self-esteem in this way.

29. Similarly, on a programme for learners with learning difficulties, sessions were skilfully designed to help learners develop their speaking skills. For example, one exercise was based on a jewellery project. One group of learners worked on market research; designing questionnaires and analysing the best ways of drawing information from people. Another group worked on budgeting and designing order forms. A third group designed the jewellery. All three groups had to take account of the work of the others to make decisions on how to proceed. Tutors encouraged learners to share ideas informally throughout the sessions, giving them the confidence to make semi-formal presentations at the end of each session. Often, however, improvement takes place despite a lack of structured planning to develop individual learners' skills. Outside foundation programmes, less attention is usually paid to improving learners' speaking skills.

How are achievement and learning affected by resources?

30. Accommodation on the main sites of colleges is usually good, but elsewhere the standard of accommodation varies considerably. Some providers have good accommodation that is well decorated and has stimulating wall displays. Learners' own work is presented in creative and positive ways. There are poor learning environments for much of the Jobcentre Plus provision and for some work-based learning provision where rooms are often too small, noisy, drab in appearance and have inadequate lighting. Accommodation is improving on the main sites in colleges and some significant improvements have occurred between visits to a number of colleges included in the survey. Most colleges have at least some of their provision centrally and conveniently located in the best accommodation. The accommodation in community venues varies considerably from training rooms that are fully equipped, with high-quality resources to rooms that are shabby and have only basic equipment.

31. Half of colleges have good learning resources that include a wide range of well-produced worksheets, access to high-quality audio-visual equipment and a range of other learning resources from games to weighing scales. The remaining colleges have poor learning resources. Their range of worksheets is narrow and many are scruffy and the copy quality is poor. They have very little additional equipment. In one numeracy class a learner was unable to complete an assignment on weighing because some of the weights were missing and in a few colleges, ESOL students do not have access to dictionaries. In a quarter of the colleges visited as part of the survey, either the learning resources or the rooms used for ESOL lessons were of a lower standard than those for literacy and numeracy.

32. There are some innovative and effective uses of resources in literacy, numeracy and language teaching and training. For example, learners on an ESOL programme developed their own dictionary of 'street' language and used this for reference purposes. Some teachers make very effective use of newspapers, timetables, catalogues and magazines and others make very simple and effective resources themselves. Conversely, others miss opportunities to use readily available material. For example, an ESOL teacher attempted to draw different types of housing on the board when the advertising leaflets produced by estate agents would have been more effective.

33. In work-based learning, Life Skills provision and prison education, the materials used for teaching literacy, numeracy and language are generally poor and do not match the needs of learners. The learning materials developed by the Offenders Learning and Skills Unit are very well produced and attractive, but some are too childish for use with young offenders. Very few providers outside colleges have a good variety of learning materials at different levels of difficulty and for different vocational needs. In one training location, for example, where half the learners were receiving support for reading, the materials were poorly photocopied and inappropriate in style and content. Many materials are written in language that is too complex for learners to understand at their current levels of literacy. In some provision, there are simply too few books available, or learners are using books designed for children.

34. Across the post-16 sector, learners are making increasing use of the Internet to research personal projects and to search for jobs. More providers are encouraging the use of digital cameras to support the teaching of literacy, numeracy and English. Learners use their photographs as a stimulus for writing. In general, however, computers are not used sufficiently to support the development of literacy, numeracy or language skills. Learning packages are sometimes available, but often staff are not familiar with them or some of the packages are unsuitable. The use of computers is often limited to word processing. In some

lessons, learners are not given sufficient guidance on how to use ICT productively and spend their time surfing the Internet aimlessly.

35. In colleges, there is usually good access to ICT at the main centres, but access is not always as good in community venues. Laptops are increasingly being used, but there is not always access to the Internet or a printer. Some colleges are making very good use of ICT in the teaching of literacy, numeracy and ESOL and there is a much wider range of good-quality software available. At one college, learners make very good use of a scanner that reads back the text and, at another college, ESOL students make very effective use of e-mail to improve their literacy and language skills. In one college, however, learners were reluctantly using computers, but lacked the confidence and skills to make the activity a positive or enjoyable learning experience.

36. In *learnirect* provision, the online materials for literacy and numeracy are gradually improving. Too often, though, learners do not have access to a specialist tutor who can help them learn more effectively.

37. As a result of the Skills for Life agenda, there has been a rapid expansion in the number of literacy, numeracy and language learners. This has resulted in many experienced college managers being promoted and experienced teachers and trainers moving into managerial positions. Coupled with the growth in provision, this has meant that there is a shortage of experienced and qualified classroom teachers in some areas. In some provision, none of the staff teaching foundation programmes have been trained to teach. Very few training providers have staff who are qualified and experienced to teach literacy, numeracy and other aspects of language development. Many prison education departments have inadequate strategies to cope with staff absence or operational closures. To counteract great difficulty in recruiting suitable staff for foundation programmes in its prison education provision, one college developed a two-year training programme and advertised six salaried training posts. The programme included an intensive introduction to teaching, leading to a stage 1 qualification. Mentor-supported teaching practice leading to a stage 2 qualification and a certificate in education followed. Trainee teachers were also offered the opportunity to take basic skills, key skills and assessors' qualifications. Part of the programme involved the development of much needed appropriate learning materials for use across the department.

38. Many colleges are training new staff or re-training existing teachers to meet the shortage and are concerned about the delay in the availability of the new qualifications. Some colleges have strategies and implementation plans for the introduction of the new qualifications. One college, for example, is planning to use unit 1 of the level 2 qualification with all front-line staff, and tutors working on courses below level 2 will have to acquire the level 3 qualification. There is an urgent need to give the current teachers and trainers who lack the necessary experience some of the essential 'tools of the trade' to enable them to teach effectively during the time that it takes them to acquire the new qualifications.

39. Most colleges have staff who are trained in the new national curricula, but the knowledge and understanding of this by tutors in other types of provision varies from unsatisfactory to good. Colleges have a number of different strategies for training and updating staff. A few colleges have weekly meetings that both full- and part-time staff attend and which are used to share information about internal and external training events. Two colleges either side of the Yorkshire/Lancashire border hold training sessions on Saturday mornings that are very well attended. Some providers report, however, that they are training staff only to find that they are 'poached' by neighbouring organisations.

How effective are the assessment and monitoring of learning?

40. The best providers carry out a comprehensive initial assessment of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills. They also screen learners for dyslexia and determine their preferred learning styles. Detailed ILPs are then drawn up, based on the results of initial assessment. In the best work-based provision, initial assessment forms part of an extended induction. In some colleges, skilled practitioners are used to carry out follow-up diagnostic assessments and to develop ILPs.

41. Almost all providers carry out some form of initial assessment, but this is often just a screening test. The results of the initial assessment of full-time students are mainly used to identify those who require additional learning support. The information is not always used to develop ILPs and vocational teachers make little use of the results of initial assessments when planning their lessons. The identification of learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs is not always closely linked to the requirements of their programme. A group of North Yorkshire colleges is working in partnership to develop a series of vocationally relevant screening tests. Many providers are dissatisfied with their initial assessment system and are anxiously awaiting the new initial assessment that was due out in September 2002. Training providers sometimes assess learners, using the same tests that have been used by the referring agent.

42. In prisons, the results of any initial assessment do not always follow the learners when they are transferred to different institutions and they are rarely used to inform ILPs. Testing on arrival has been found to be unreliable. For many, there is the shock of their first experience of prison and others are going through withdrawal from drugs. One or two places are exploring an extended three-week induction period with a range of tests including dyslexia indicators, but there is generally not the expertise to identify special needs nor to prescribe methods for dealing with them.

43. ILPs are generally weak across the sector. They do not contain specific short- and long-term targets. Targets are frequently vague and expressed too generally such as 'improve writing skills'. The quality of the ILPs can even vary across an organisation. In some colleges, their quality depends on the expertise of the teacher and, in others, the quality of the ILPs varies between different areas of the provision. The weakest ILPs are usually found in ESOL, work-based provision and learning support. In some colleges, managers sample and internally verify the ILPs to ensure consistency and quality. In most colleges, learning plans are cross-referenced to the national standards, but in work-based learning the knowledge and use of the national standards are less well developed. At the very best colleges, ILPs are reviewed regularly and they are clearly understood working documents. Targets are referenced to the national standards, but they are written in the ILPs in language that the learners can understand and learners are closely involved in reviewing and monitoring their targets. Learners in these colleges have a clear understanding of the progress that they have made and what they need to do to improve further. In many colleges, however, learning plans are not reviewed effectively and learners do not feel part of the review process. Many learners are unaware of their targets and the progress that they have made.

44. Assessment is sometimes used in constructive ways to develop learners' understanding. The standard of marking and of the feedback given to students varies and is largely dependent on the skill and expertise of the tutor. Some learners' folders contain work that has not been marked or work that has been ticked, but where no suggestions for improvement have been given. Too few tutors recognise that marking is a skill which, when used well, can promote good learning. Internal verification systems usually meet

awarding-body requirements on externally accredited courses, but internal verification is not always carried out on non-accredited programmes. There are a few notable exceptions where ILPs and lesson plans are audited and moderated twice each year and there is an effective internal verification system in place to moderate achievement on non-accredited courses. A small number of colleges are also working with others in their locality to develop an internal moderation system to ensure that standards of assessment across their institutions are consistently high.

How well do the programmes and courses meet the needs and interests of the learners?

45. The number of partnerships between providers and other organisations who are working together to widen participation in skills for life provision is on the increase. Providers are making contact with those in the community who are often difficult to reach through voluntary and statutory organisations. Jobcentre Plus and work-based trainers are successfully reaching some of the most disaffected learners. There is still a lack of co-ordination of some of this work at local level in many areas, although a small number of providers co-ordinate their work and resources so that they can be more efficient and effective. For example, members of one learning partnership work in close collaboration to reach learners in rural communities. Family learning is also used to reach parents from the hard-to-reach groups who need help with literacy and numeracy. This activity is very effective in building links between these parents and their children's schools and successfully encouraging parents to take a greater interest in their children's education. Too often, however, teachers pay insufficient attention to the learning needs of the parents. Collaborative workplace provision has developed at a slower pace, but there are initiatives in place, including the brokerage scheme, to promote its development. For example, one college included in the survey has provision in 18 workplaces.

46. A large number of young people employed in the service sector, particularly in the hairdressing, retail and care industries, have low literacy and numeracy skills. They are being given insufficient tuition to help them to improve their key skills to the level demanded by their apprenticeship programme irrespective of whether they attend a college or any other type of provider. Many of these learners do not see the relevance of key skills and are not interested in achieving a key skills qualification. This is an issue that demands urgent attention.

47. In the college sector, most learners have access to an appropriate range of courses. Most colleges have extended their range of provision over the past few years and are offering literacy, numeracy and language courses on different days, at different times and in a range of venues to meet the needs of as many learners as possible. Although the lack of numeracy skills among the adult population is as severe as the lack of literacy skills, there is less demand for numeracy provision. In a small number of colleges, work-based learners can only have access to appropriate provision at inconvenient times and the timing of lessons is not suitable for many of the other students. For example, learners on one course were leaving the lesson early every week, to collect children from school, but no consideration was given to changing the time of the class. In a small number of colleges, students are not offered any appropriate learning support until the second term of their course. Many colleges offer courses that appeal to the interests and needs of the learner, but also improve their literacy and/or numeracy skills. At a college in the south west, for example, a suite of introductory courses is offered in subjects such as local history, art and managing children's behaviour, which have a high literacy and/or numeracy content plus clearly identified progression routes to mainstream courses.

48. There is a shortage of places on ESOL courses in some areas. In areas of London, for example, there have been significant increases in demand; over 100% increase in the last decade. The ESOL courses offered do not always match the learners' needs, but more colleges are developing modular courses that better meet the needs of asylum-seekers. One northern college has developed a full-time course for new entrants to the UK that develops their language and literacy skills and also gives the learners vocational tasters and the

opportunity to go on work placements. This opportunity is not widely available across the country, however. Many providers are failing to cater for the wide range of learners in ESOL classes. Often, learners who are barely literate in their first language are in the same class as learners with university degrees. ESOL provision in prisons is inadequate to meet the identified needs.

49. In many prisons, there are also too few literacy and numeracy classes on the timetable and few opportunities to progress from level 2 to higher-level courses. During 2002/03, the Youth Justice Board published its National Specification for the education of juveniles in custody. The scale of provision envisaged was well beyond that in place, at 30 hours of education and skills per week with 5 hours specifically for each of literacy and numeracy and integrated literacy and numeracy across the curriculum. During 2002/03, the actual weekly curriculum hours achieved was as low as 5 hours and, in some cases, there was little or no numeracy. In others, the hours were closer to 15 with perhaps 3 hours each of literacy and numeracy.

How well are learners guided and supported?

50. Personal support for learners is good on all types of provision and is particularly good on most work-based learning foundation programmes. The welfare and support services available at the main sites of colleges are usually very good and the advisers work closely with other agencies who can offer specialist advice when required. A range of strategies is used to make the services accessible to learners based at community venues. These include visits from a mobile learning centre and the use of peripatetic advice and guidance staff. In some colleges, teachers working in community venues are given initial training in support and guidance. Colleges are also responding to the additional support needs of asylum-seekers, for example, an asylum-seekers' support team visits one college each week, offering legal, welfare and health advice.

51. Careers guidance is also available in colleges, but many learners are not receiving sufficient guidance and support to encourage progression onto courses in other areas of the college or elsewhere. Effective strategies to promote progression include individual interviews at the end of the course during which learners are made aware of possible progression routes, use of progression workers and targeted marketing of suitable courses. For example, at one college in the Midlands, a course has been introduced that develops basic skills through an introductory childcare course. A programme of speakers and visits to the childcare department has been used to motivate the learners and inform them about possible future courses. At another college, students on literacy, numeracy and language courses discuss their future plans in detail and they all develop action plans for progression. In one city, the college works with other partners in the area on a bridging project to facilitate progression between the college, training providers, and adult and community learning programmes.

52. In other areas of provision, personal support is often very good. Many staff are well qualified to give personal support or have relevant experience in youth and community work. Learners are given effective advice to help them tackle a wide range of problems, such as homelessness, substance misuse and financial difficulties. Most learners follow short induction programmes that introduce them to important topics, such as health and safety and equal opportunities. Learners' recall of such induction material is good, especially when it is reinforced in the rest of the programme. The revisiting of induction messages does not occur frequently enough, however, in most provision. Other learners receive very poorly produced induction materials or none at all. Important information about the programme and about matters such as their rights and responsibilities are not always presented in ways that learners are able to read, understand or remember. Learners are not usually informed at induction about how the development of literacy, numeracy or language skills is relevant to their programme and how they will be supported in developing these skills.

53. The availability and quality of learning support are variable. Few providers, other than colleges, screen for dyslexia and similar learning difficulties and very few are able to offer specialist support when it is needed. Few work-based learning or Jobcentre Plus providers know what financial support or advice is available from their funding bodies. Some providers actively promote the benefits of learning support from the beginning of the application process. Their learners are initially assessed as early as possible and learning support is put in place within a few weeks. Learners in other provision do not receive the necessary support for many months. In colleges, the take-up rate for learning support varies considerably from 50 to 100%. The take-up rate is usually high where the quality of the support is good and carefully matched to the needs of the learner and where all staff are aware of the benefits of learning support and actively promote it. Too much learning support

is ineffective and of poor quality. Many training staff view learning support as a way of helping learners to achieve their main qualification rather than as an opportunity to develop transferable literacy, numeracy and language skills. For example, tutors will act as scribes for learners rather than supporting them to develop their own writing skills. Some learning support tutors are being used to read and correct assignments prior to them being handed in for marking and no attempt is being made to teach the learners how to avoid making the same errors again.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?

54. Leadership and management of this area of learning are often weak. Co-ordination and management of the provision are often unsatisfactory, quality assurance systems are generally underdeveloped and there is a lack of reliable data to monitor retention, achievement and progression.

55. Local learning and skills councils have produced Skills for Life development plans for their areas after consultation with their local providers and learning partnerships. Some are more advanced in preparation and planning for implementation than others, but all have set targets for recruitment. Many local learning and skills councils have presented a thorough analysis of local need, with realistic incremental targets to increase participation, retention and pass rates. Conversely, a minority of local learning and skills councils is still establishing the baseline information such as the scale of basic skills needs and capacity of providers. Some local learning and skills councils are producing a local directory of providers. Others have implemented marketing and promotional plans. It is essential that local providers are able to cater for any demand generated by local awareness and advertising campaigns. One such campaign generated over 3,000 local telephone responses.

56. Many development plans recognise the need to identify and disseminate good practice and to address the shortage of qualified and experienced teachers. Some local learning and skills councils are planning to establish Basic Skills Partner Resource Centres. Other local learning and skills councils have set up training and development workshops for providers. Although local learning and skills councils' development plans include targets for recruitment, few recognise or tackle issues relating to retention. Very few have strategies for dealing with dyslexia and dyspraxia.

57. In much of the provision, strategic and development planning are in the very early stages of development. Few work-based learning providers have a strategy for literacy, numeracy and language teaching. Discrete programmes are developed in accordance with local learning and skills council contracts. These contracts are primarily based on existing programmes and the need to meet local learning and skills council targets for recruitment. Most providers' overall strategic plans do not identify specific objectives to expand their programme. Few work-based learning providers have a policy for meeting learners' literacy, numeracy and language support needs. In the best colleges, strategic planning is well established and development plans are being implemented successfully. A number of colleges reported that the Basic Skills Quality Initiative (BSQI) facilitator was a great help when they were developing their plans and their quality systems. In the weaker colleges, there is a lack of a comprehensive strategy and a related delivery plan. Increasingly, the adult learning plans of ACL providers identify strategic targets for literacy, numeracy and ESOL learning programmes. In most prisons, education and training are not well linked and too often prisoners' literacy, numeracy and language needs are not being addressed adequately.

58. Co-ordination and management of the provision are generally weak. In work-based learning, few colleges or other providers allocate management responsibility for the development of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills. The provision is not

adequately co-ordinated in most prisons and teaching staff do not collaborate sufficiently across departments. In the best colleges, the provision is well co-ordinated and managed, but too often in colleges there are areas of the provision, usually learning support, where the management is weak. Often learning support and discrete provision are managed separately and the two areas do not share resources or expertise. This is sometimes to the detriment of both, but more often it is learning support which suffers. Too often, colleges do not share their good practice with other departments on the college's main site, or to help learners in other provision, for example, community venues, work-based learning or, in some cases, prisons.

59. The local learning and skills councils' targets for recruitment are, for many providers, the only numerical targets which they need to meet. Most *learnirect* hubs have been unable to meet their targets for recruitment to Skills for Life programmes. Few providers, with the exception of the good colleges, are monitoring retention, achievement or progression rates. In many colleges, there is a lack of reliable data especially on progression. Few providers are measuring the effect of learning support on retention, achievement or progression. Teaching staff are not given adequate direction to help them to identify whether their programmes are successful when they do not lead to nationally accredited qualifications. At the start of 2002/03, the Offenders Learning and Support Unit of the DfES, set achievement targets in literacy and numeracy that the contractors providing education were expected to achieve with learners. During the year, new targets have been set that are better related to the starting standards of the learners and their length of time in custody.

60. Many providers have underdeveloped quality assurance systems. Many self-assessment reports do not include judgements on the quality of learning support. In some sixth form colleges, in particular, there is a very robust quality system elsewhere in the college, but this is not applied to literacy, numeracy and ESOL. In most provision, questionnaires are used to collect learners' views on the quality of their programmes, but these are often unsuitable for learners with low literacy or language skills. In the best colleges, appropriate questionnaires have been devised and focus groups or informal meetings with learners are also used.

61. Most providers do not promote effectively equality of opportunity to learners who have literacy, numeracy and language needs. Few of these learners have a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities and equal opportunities policies are often written in complex language. There is often little promotional material relating to issues of equality on display in classrooms and some learning materials reinforce information and communications technology gender stereotyping. Often, learning materials do not reflect the diversity of the learners.

62. There are, however, examples of an effective focus on equality of opportunity. Learners on a two-week New Deal Gateway to Work programme were shown a film about equal opportunities. The tutor carefully initiated a discussion about the barriers created by poor literacy and numeracy and used the opportunity to draw learners' attention to the support available. The tutor also made learners aware that poor literacy and numeracy skills were not necessarily linked to low intelligence and that they should not feel ashamed because they had not yet developed these skills fully.

Annexes

Annex A. Glossary

Adult literacy and numeracy

'The ability to read, write and speak in English and to use mathematics at a level necessary to function at work and in society in general.'

A fresh start – the report of the working group chaired by Sir Claus Moser, 1999.

Literacy covers the ability to:

- speak, listen and respond
- read and comprehend
- write to communicate.

Numeracy covers the ability to:

- understand and use mathematical information
- calculate and manipulate mathematical information
- interpret results and communicate mathematical information.

Language in this report refers to literacy in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). The term ESOL is used interchangeably with language (see ESOL).

ABSSU – Adult Basic Skills Strategy Unit.

ACL – adult and community learning.

BET – Basic Employability Training – a full-time programme for long-term unemployed adults, who are particularly disadvantaged in the labour market, often because of their low literacy or numeracy levels.

BSA – Basic Skills Agency.

BSQI – Basic Skills Quality Initiative, a staff training initiative begun in 2001/02.

Common Inspection Framework – introduced in April 2001, the framework sets out the principles applicable to the inspection of post-16 non-higher education and training.

Client – a person on a programme funded by Jobcentre Plus.

Discrete provision – provision of literacy, numeracy or language courses or programmes where the learning aim is the improvement of learners' literacy, numeracy or language (see also support).

E2E – Entry to Employment is a new (2003) LSC pre-vocational learning programme up to level 1 NVQ. The target group is unemployed 16–18 year olds.

ESOL – English for speakers of other languages – is used to describe learning sessions or courses or programmes where the learning aim is the improvement of the ability to communicate orally in English and/or to read or write English.

ETF – the six-month, full-time environment task force option of New Deal 18–24, comprising a work placement or project work and off-the-job training.

FTET – the six-, nine- or twelve-month full-time education and training option of New Deal 18–24.

GCSE – General Certificate of Secondary Education.

ILP – individual learning plans. The output of the initial assessment, setting out what the learner plans to learn, by when, the ways he or she will undertake the learning and the resources required to bring the plan into action.

Key skills – the key skills are communication, application of number, ICT, improving one's own learning and performance, working with others and problem-solving. Literacy, numeracy and/or language learning concentrates on developing skills, knowledge and understanding whereas key skills concentrate on application of this knowledge and understanding in a range of contexts.

LEA – local education authority.

learndirect – a term covering a wide range of courses provided by Ufi Ltd. Courses aim to help learners to study through the Internet, at home or at work or in one of the 2000 learndirect centres. Over 80% of courses are available online.

Learner – a student, trainee or apprentice.

Learning session – a lesson or training session.

Life Skills – an LSC-funded programme aimed at helping unemployed 16–18 year olds gain employability skills, including literacy, numeracy and language skills, where appropriate, and progress to further training, education or work. Life Skills will end as a programme in August 2003 (see also E2E).

Long-term unemployed – registered unemployed for at least six months.

LSC – the Learning and Skills Council. There are 47 local Learning and Skills Councils in England.

NVQ – national vocational qualification.

On-the-job learning – learning at work.

Off-the-job training – teaching or training that takes place away from the immediate working environment.

Provider – a college or any other organisation that has a contract with Jobcentre Plus or the LSC to provide training or education.

Skills for Life – the government's adult basic skills strategy.

Support – literacy, numeracy or language support for learners who need that support to achieve their main learning objective.

Tutors – used in this report for tutors or trainers in work-based or Jobcentre Plus providers, and for teachers or lecturers in FE colleges and ACL.

Workstep – a Jobcentre Plus programme to help disabled people gain or sustain employment.

Annex B. Background information about work-based learning

The term 'work-based learning' does not necessarily mean learning in a workplace. It refers to specific contracts with the LSC or Jobcentre Plus. These work-based learning contracts are for teaching or training young people aged 16–25 (work-based learning for young people), or for teaching or training unemployed adults (work-based learning for adults, or the New Deals). In either case, the learners may attend learning sessions away from the workplace. For example, many young learners in engineering, construction or hairdressing attend an FE college one day a week in term-time. This forms part of their work-based learning. Some young learners, particularly those in Life Skills provision, and some unemployed adults whose primary learning goal is greater fluency in spoken English, may not attend a workplace at all.

The main characteristics that distinguish much Jobcentre Plus and LSC work-based provision from most FE are that, usually, learners can start at any time of the year, and they follow individual learning programmes rather than fixed courses. Many programmes are not of a set length, although many have maximum lengths. Most programmes are geared towards achieving a national vocational qualification (NVQ) or gaining a job. Typically, work-based learning programmes for young people involve learners working towards an NVQ and, in some cases, key skills awards. Most modern apprenticeships comprise an NVQ and key skills at an appropriate level. Jobcentre Plus contracts for work-based learning for adults and for New Deal clients are focused on gaining sustainable employment. Training is often directed towards overcoming the barriers usually associated with, or resulting from, long-term unemployment, such as low self-esteem and lack of motivation.

There is a wide range of work-based learning providers – some private, some run by charities, some managed by local authorities. The number of providers has fallen over the past few years, and continues to fall as some close or merge or are bought by FE colleges. FE colleges make up 20% of LSC-funded work-based providers, and cater for around 20% of all young people in work-based learning. They also provide off-the-job training, usually in the form of term-time day-release courses, for many more. Many local authorities are providers of work-based learning. Providers that have a work-based learning contract to support the training of their own apprentices often have many more applicants than available places, and are highly selective. Other learning providers specialise in managing work-based learning for other organisations' young employees. Typically, these learning providers employ NVQ assessors who visit the young people at work, set them short-term learning goals and assess them against NVQ standards. Many providers also try to arrange work placements or employment for young people referred to them by Connexions. Other learning providers, many of which are charities, work almost exclusively with unemployed young people.

DfES surveys indicate that only 20% of 16 year olds in work-based learning have five GCSEs at grade C or above. Many work-based learners in all areas of learning, including land-based provision, construction, hospitality, care and retailing, and many of the learners on the pre-vocational, Life Skills or Entry to Employment programmes, have low levels of literacy and/or numeracy. Many New Deal clients on the least-favoured options, such as the environment task force, also have weak literacy or numeracy skills. Very few FE colleges offer these New Deal options or foundation programmes for work-based learners. The work-based learners with the lowest levels of literacy and numeracy tend to be based with providers other than colleges.

Learners on LSC-funded Life Skills programmes are usually young people aged 16–19 who face difficulties in entering the workforce or further training. From August 2003, Entry to

Employment programmes will replace Life Skills. These learners are generally the most disadvantaged or disaffected learners in their geographical area. Many have not received a full formal education and do not have qualifications. Usually, they are referred by Connexions. Many of these learners have emotional and behavioural difficulties, as well as social and learning needs. They rarely have experience of planning their future even over the immediate short term. The emphasis of most programmes is on building confidence and interpersonal skills and in helping young people to move into sustained training or employment. Lengths of programmes vary. Most courses include literacy, language and numeracy tuition as well as careers guidance, work experience or work tasters.

Jobcentre Plus runs a wide range of programmes, mainly targeted at long-term unemployed people, known as clients. Many clients have low levels of literacy or numeracy, but have not been involved in education since leaving school. In many cases, they do not take up a Jobcentre Plus programme by choice, but do so for fear of losing their entitlement to state benefits. In most cases, the clients, the providers and Jobcentre Plus see employment as the key objective of their training. An increasing proportion of clients need ESOL training. Most recognise that their weak spoken English is their major barrier to employment. The 600 Jobcentre Plus providers include organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors. Many Jobcentre Plus providers also contract with the LSC. Unlike most Jobcentre Plus programmes, Workstep is aimed at employed people as well as unemployed people. It is a programme to enable disabled people to gain unsupported employment or to remain in jobs which they may otherwise have lost because of their disability.

FE colleges are responsible for most education in prisons and young offender institutions and about one third of adult and community learning. Voluntary sector organisations also provide much adult and community learning, particularly family learning, an initiative that aims to improve the literacy and numeracy of parents and their children. **learnirect** is a brand name for a wide range of courses offered by Ufi Ltd at 2000 centres nationally, as part of the government's strategy to promote lifelong learning. Most courses are offered online, including many basic literacy or numeracy courses.

Annex C. Organisations involved in the review

Evidence in this review was drawn from 18 area-wide inspections and inspections of the organisations listed below. All inspections were conducted between April 2002 and May 2003.

18 area inspections

Bromley

Camden

Ealing with Hammersmith & Fulham

Halton

Kensington & Chelsea

Leicester

Manchester

North Tyneside

Oxfordshire

Sefton

Sheffield

Shropshire

St Helens

Stoke-on-Trent

Sunderland

West Cumbria

Wirral

Wolverhampton

27 learndirect hubs

Army Torch Hub

ASSA Hub

Barnsley, Rotherham & Doncaster Hub

Birmingham and Solihull Hub

Cheshire and Warrington Hub

County Durham Hub

Coventry and Warwickshire Hub

Cross River Partnership

Devon and Cornwall Hub

Environment and Landbased Hub

Greater Nottingham Hub

Hampshire and Solent Hub

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Hub

Leicestershire Hub

Lincolnshire and Rutland Hub

North and West Lancashire Hub

North West London Hub

Northumberland Hub

Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Hub

Suffolk Ufi Hub

The Essex Learning Hub

The Open Learning Partnership Hub

Trade Union Sector Hub

West London Hub

West of England Hub

Wigan and Leigh Learning Hub

York and North Yorkshire Hub

16 prisons and young offender
institutions (YOI)

HMP Albany

HMP Birmingham

HMP Brinsford

HMP Brixton

HMP Bullingdon

HMP Channings Wood

HMP Gloucester

HMP Littlehey

HMP Maghaberry

HMP Swaleside

HMP The Verne

HMP Winchester

HMP & YOI Chelmsford

HMP & YOI Forest Bank

HMP & YOI Holloway

HMP & YOI Parc

45 adult and community learning
providers

Barking & Dagenham LEA

Bath and North East Somerset LEA

Bedfordshire LEA

Bracknell Forest LEA

Bristol LEA

Cambridge Women's Resource Centre

Cambridgeshire LEA

Camden LEA

Cheshire LEA

City Literary Institute

Cumbria LEA

Doncaster LEA

Dudley LEA

Elfrida Rathbone (Camden)

Elfrida Society

Gateshead LEA

Harrow LEA

Hartcliffe & Withywood Ventures Ltd

Herefordshire LEA

Hillcroft College

Hillingdon LEA

Islington LEA

Kirklees LEA

Lewisham LEA

Luton LEA

Mary Ward Centre

North Somerset LEA

North Yorkshire LEA

Northern College for Residential Adult
Education

One Love

Plymouth LEA

Reading LEA

Rotherham LEA

Sandwell LEA

Shalom Employment Action Centre

Shropshire LEA

Slough LEA

Telford & Wrekin LEA	Cannock Chase Technical College
Torbay LEA	Canterbury College
Warrington LEA	Carlisle College
West Berkshire LEA	Carmel College
Windsor & Maidenhead LEA	City College Birmingham
Wokingham LEA	City of Sunderland College
Worcestershire LEA	Colchester Institute
York LEA	Cornwall College
121 colleges	Cricklade College
Abingdon and Witney College	Daventry Tertiary College
Alton College	Dearne Valley College
Amersham and Wycombe College	Derby College
Barking College	Dewsbury College
Barnfield College	Dunstable College
Barnsley College	Ealing, Hammersmith & West London College
Bexhill College	East Berkshire College
Bicton College	East Devon College
Bishop Auckland College	East Durham and Houghall Community College
Blackpool and the Fylde College	East Norfolk Sixth Form College
Bournemouth and Poole College of Further Education	East Riding College
Bournville College of Further Education	East Surrey College
Bracknell & Wokingham College	Eastleigh College
Braintree College	Furness College
Bromley College of Further and Higher Education	Gateway Sixth Form College
Bury College	Grantham College
Cambridge Regional College	Great Yarmouth College of Further Education
Cannington College	Hackney Community College

Halton College	Otley College of Agriculture and Horticulture
Hastings College of Arts and Technology	Palmer's College
Havering College of Further and Higher Education	Park College
Henley College (The)	Paston College
Henley College, Coventry	Penwith College
Henshaws College	Plumpton College
Herefordshire College of Technology	Priestley College
Hertford Regional College	Queen Mary's College
Highbury College	Redbridge College
Hugh Baird College	Richmond-upon-Thames College
John Leggott Sixth Form College	Rugby College of Further Education
Kendal College	Sandwell College
Kensington and Chelsea College	Selby College
King George V College	Sheffield College (The)
Lakes College, West Cumbria	Shrewsbury Sixth Form College
Lincoln College	Somerset College of Arts & Technology
Lowestoft College	South Leicestershire College (was Wigston)
Macclesfield College	Southport College
Meldreth Manor College	Southwark College
Myerscough College	St Helens College
New College Pontefract	St Mary's College, Middlesbrough
New College, Telford	Stamford College
Newcastle-under-Lyme College	Stephenson College
North Area College	Stockport College of Further and Higher Education
North Hertfordshire College	Stoke-on-Trent College
North Lindsey College	Stourbridge College
North West Kent College of Technology	Stratford-upon-Avon College
Northumberland College	

Strode College	Wolverhampton College
Sussex Downs College	Woodhouse College
Swindon College	Worthing Sixth Form College
Thanet College	Wyggeston and Queen Elizabeth I College
The Salford College	
The Stanmore College	
Thurrock and Basildon College	
Walsall College of Arts and Technology	
Warrington Collegiate Institute	
Westminster Kingsway College	
Weymouth College	
Whitegates Autistic Community	
Widnes and Runcorn Sixth Form College	
Wigan and Leigh College	
William Morris House	
Wiltshire College	
Wirral Metropolitan College	

434 work-based learning and/or Jobcentre Plus providers (excluding FE colleges)

5 C's Training	Achievement Training Ltd
5 E Ltd	Acorn Training Consultants
A & L Training	Action Consultants Training
A & P Falmouth Ltd	Action For Employment Ltd
AC Training	Acton Training Centre
Academy Of Training	Age Concern Training
Accenture HR Services	Aigburth Training Opportunities
Access Care Training Ltd	Alan Coles & Associates
Access Training (South West) Ltd	Allenvale Tools & Production Ltd

Alliance Learning	Birmingham Institute of Education, Training & Technology
Alnwick District Council	Biscom Resource Management Ltd
Alpha Retail	Blackpool Social Services Dept
Apex Leicester Projects Ltd	Blacup
APL Training Services	BNFL Westinghouse
Archon 2000 Ltd	Bolton MBC
Ariel Associated Training	Boost
Associated Neighbour Training	Bootstrap Enterprises
Aston ITEC	Borough Training Services
ATC (NW) Ltd	Bradford Distributive Training Services
ATS Community Centre	Bradford Hospitals NHS Trust
Automotive Personnel Training	Brentwood Training Services
Avon Vale Training	Brinsworth Training
Aylesbury Training Group	British Printing Industries Federation
B & K Management Services Ltd	British Racing School
Babcock-HCS	Broadland Council Training Services
Barber Bird Ltd	Broads Authority
Baris UK Ltd	BTCV Enterprises
Barnardos	Builders Merchants Federation
Barrowmore Industries	Building Engineering Services Training Ltd
Bath & North East Somerset Council Training Services	Burleigh College
Bedfordshire County Council	Bury MBC
Belgrave Development & Enterprise	Business Employment Services Training Ltd
Bells Training Services	Callow Training
Bennington Training	Cambridge ITEC
BETA Ltd (Basingstoke)	Cannon Engineers & Associates Limited
Birmingham Chamber Training Ltd	CANTO
Birmingham Electrical Training Ltd	Care Learning Centre

Care Training East Midlands Ltd	City Training Services
Care Training Services Ltd	Citywide Const Nottingham City Council
Carea Training 2000	Cityworks Training Section
Career Ahead	Clarkson Evans
Career Development Group	Colt Car Company
Career Development UK	Community Training Services Ltd
Carequest	Connexions – Somerset Ltd
Careskills	Connexions Staffordshire Ltd
Carillion Craft Training	Constant Browning Edmonds Ltd
CC Training	Construction Industry Training Board
Central Sports Management & Training	Continuing Education & Training Service (London Borough of Croydon)
Central Training Group	Cornwall Centre For Volunteers
CfBT Advice & Guidance	Craven Training Services
Chamber Enterprise Training	Crosby Training
Chamber of Commerce Training Co Ltd	Crown Secretarial College
Chamber Training (Humber) Limited	CSV Havelock Training
Charnwood Borough Council	D & B Training
Charnwood Consultants	D.I.S.C.
Charter Training Services Ltd	Damar Training Solutions
Chartered Surveyors Training Trust	Dartington TECH
Chelmer Training	DHP Southern Ltd
Cherwell Training	Discovery Training Company
Christopher Paul Training	Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council Vocational Team
Circulation Recording	Dunlop Aerospace
Cite (Associates) City Ltd	Durham Business Club Ltd
City Centre Training Ltd	Eastern Region Training Associates
City of Sunderland ITEC	Eastpoint Centre
City of Sunderland Riverside Training	

Eclipse Training Ltd	General Physics Corporation UK Ltd
EDA Training	General Welfare of the Blind
EDS Ltd	Gloucestershire County Council
Education & Business Partnership	Go Smart
Edutech Ltd	Gordano Training
EEF Technology Centre	Gordon Franks, Training & Personnel
E-Map Performance Ltd	Grace Landscapes Ltd
Employment Opportunities	Graham Austin Training
EMTEC Ltd	Graham Webb International
Endaim Ltd	Greater Brighton Construction Ltd
Enfield Training Services	Greenspring Training
Ensors	Greenwich Council
Enterprise Training Group	Greenwich Training
Essex Chamber of Commerce	GSS Personnel Services Ltd
Essex Training for Tomorrow	Guildford Secretarial College
Ethos Personnel Training Consultancy	Haddon Business Training Centre
ETS Training	Hairdressing Employers Association (HEA)
Euro-Mark (Contract) Trg Ltd	Hamnet
Eurosafe Training Ltd	Hargreaves Training Services Ltd
Fern Training & Development Ltd	Harrogate Training Services
Fitness Express	Haydon Training Services
Focus On	Headjogs
Focus Pathways Ltd	Headlines Hair & Beauty
Footballers' FE and Vocational Training Society	Henry Boot Training Ltd
Fortan	High Peak Training
Francesco Group Holdings Ltd	Hollingarth Day Nursery
Future West (WPSD)	Honda (UK) Institute
Gateshead Church Enterprises Ltd	Honeywell (Normalair-Garrett) Ltd

Horizon Training Ltd (Merseyside)	Kent County Council
Horizon Training Ltd (Taunton)	Key Training Ltd
House of Clive Hair & Beauty Ltd	Kingsbury Training Centre Ltd
Howarth Hancorn	Knowsley MBC
Humberside Fire Brigade	LAGAT Business & Vocational College
Hurricane Studios	Latitude
Huyton Churches Training Service	Leapfrog Day Nurseries
IMS Employ Ltd	Leeds Careers Guidance
Include	Leeds Training Trust
India House Training & Recruitment Ltd	Lex Harvey Ltd.
Instant Muscle Ltd	Lifestyle
Intec Business Colleges	Lighthouse Arts & Training Ltd
Inter Training Services	Lincoln Co-Operative Society
Into Work Ltd	Lite Ltd
Introtrain and Forum Ltd	Liverpool City Council
Intuitions	Local Solutions
Islington Education Department	London College of Beauty Therapy
ITM Childcare	Lunn Poly Ltd
J & J Training	Luton Borough Council
J A Training Ltd	Mainport
Jace	Mansel Training
James Kimber Education	Margaret Bardsley Management & Training Ltd
Jigsaw Day Nurseries Ltd	Marlborough Training Centre
John G Plummer & Associates	Martec Training
Joint Learning Partnership	Martin Dawes Ltd
K2 Development Services Ltd	mbA Training, Research and Development Ltd
Keighley and District Training Association	Mercia Computing Services Ltd
Kennedy Scott	

Mercia Management	North Yorkshire County Council Training Services
Meridian East	
Metals Industry Skills and Performance (Metskill)	Northallerton College Training Services
Metropole College Ltd	Northern & Yorkshire NHS Assessment Centre
MG Rover Group Limited	Northern College of Beauty
Michael John Training (Manchester)	Northumberland Guidance Company
Mid Yorkshire Chamber Of Commerce	Northumberland Training Agency
Milltech	Nottingham City Council
Milton Keynes Christian Foundation	Nottinghamshire Chamber Of Commerce
Mobile Care Qualifications	Nuneaton Training Centre Ltd
Mode Training	NVQ Consultants
Monarch Airways	Oakfield College
Mouzer Associates	Oakmere House
MS Training	Occupational Testing & Recruitment Ltd
NACRO	Oldham Engineering Group Training Ltd
National Construction College	Omnia Driving Ltd
Netherley Valley Childcare	ONCALL Call Centres Ltd
Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Services	Orient Gold
Norfolk Training Services Ltd	OSEL Enterprises Ltd
Nortec Training Ltd	Outset Ltd
North Derbyshire Chamber Of Commerce & Industry	Oxfordshire Ethnic Minority Enterprise Development
North Humberside Motor Trades GTA	Paignton Sec Info Tech Training Centre
North Lancs Training Group	Painswick Inn Project
North Somerset Enterprise Agency	Paragon Training (Dorset) Ltd
North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust	PDM Training and Consultancy
North Tyneside Training Service	Peabody Trust
North West Training Council	PECAN
	Pelcombe Training Group

Pentra	Roger Worth Training
Performance Through People	Rolls Royce plc (Bristol)
Perkins Engines Co Ltd	Rolls Royce plc (Derby)
Personnel Evaluation Consultants	Royal Borough of Kensington & Chelsea
Personnel Resource Management	Royal Liverpool University Hospital
Peter Pyne Training School Ltd	Royal London Society for the Blind
Peterborough College Of Adult Education	Royal School of Military Engineering (RSME)
PH Academy	RTT Training Services Ltd
Portsmouth City Council	S & B Training
Positive Approach Academy	Salford Consortium
Positive Outcomes	Sandra Robinson Language Training
Poyltec Training Ltd	Sandwell New Horizons
Premier Fresh Foods Ltd	SBC Training & Consultancy
Preston Borough Council	School of Sound Recording
Princess Christian Nurseries	Scientiam
Professional Development Services	Sefton Enterprises Ltd
Prospects College	Sentinel Training
Protocol Consultancy Services	Serve Wirral Trust
QLS	Shears
Quality Integrated Solutions	Sheffield City Council
RAC Auto Windscreens	Sheila Giles Associates
Rapido Training	Shildon & Darlington Training
Rathbone Training	Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Connexions Partnership Ltd
Retail Motor Industry Training Ltd	Skillnet
Ridgemoind Training	Skilltrain
Rochdale MBC	South Staffordshire Training Association
Rock House Training Ltd	South Yorkshire Training Group (SYTG) Ltd
Rocket Training	SPAN Training Organisation

Spire Training Services Ltd	The Harrington Scheme
Springboard Southwark	The Papworth Trust
Springboard Sunderland Trust	The Refugee Council
St Thomas Network	The SHAW Project
Standguide Ltd	The Training Network Group Ltd
Stepping Stones	The Training Partnership
Steps to Work	The Yorkshire College Of Beauty Therapy
Stockport Engineering Training Association	Three As Pertemps Training Ltd
Stockport Quality Training	Threshold Training
Stonham Housing Association	Tomorrow's People Trust
Straight A Training	Topps Tiles
Strategic Training Solutions	Topskills
Stuarts Training	Total People Ltd
Summerhouse Education & Equitation Centre	Touchstone Group
Supported Placements & Supported Employment Services	TQ Training Management Services Ltd
Surrey Springboard	Training Advice Centre
Swindon Pressings Ltd	Training and Assessment Services
Taurus Skills Foundation	Training and Manpower Ltd
Taurus Training Ltd	Training Enterprise
Taylors Hairdressing Training Group	Training Equation
TBG Learning Ltd	Training Plus
Technical Academy Northumberland	Transted Europe
Thames Valley Chamber Training Ltd	Transtec
The Assessment Company Ltd	UK Training & Development
The Development Training Company	Ultra Training
The Farriers Training Service	United Utilities
The Hair Study Group	Upper Cut Hair Salons Ltd
	Vale Royal Training Trust

Van Hee Transport Ltd
Vidal Sasson
Vista Training
Vocational Training Centre of Excellence
Vogal Industrial Training Services
Wakefield MDC
Walsall CAB
Walsall Hospital NHS Trust
Warwickshire GTA
Waverley Training Services
Way to Work
WBBC (Wigan Borough Chamber of Commerce)
Webs Training Ltd
Wessex Vocational Training
Westcountry Training & Consultancy Services (WTCS)
Westgate Nursery School
Westward Training & Personnel
Witham Technology Centre
Wolverhampton Training Services Ltd
Worcestershire County Council
WS Training Ltd
XL Training Services
YH Training
YMCA Training
York Training Centre
Yorkshire Post Training Ltd
Youngs Bluecrest Seafood Ltd

Annex D. The 40 colleges that were visited as part of the survey

Amersham and Wycombe College

Aquinas College

Bedford College

Blackburn College

Boston College

Brockenhurst College

Broxtowe College, Nottingham

Calderdale College

Craven College

Fareham College

Filton College

Godalming College

Hartpury College

Haywards Heath College

Hereward College of FE

Kingston College

Kingston Maurward College

Leek College of FE and School of Art

Nelson and Colne College

Newham Sixth Form College

North East Surrey College of Technology

North East Worcestershire College

Oaklands College

Oxford College of FE

Peterborough Regional College

Portsmouth College

Reigate College

Shipley College

Skelmersdale College

South East Essex College of Arts and Technology

Tamworth and Lichfield College

Telford College of Arts and Technology

Milton Keynes College

Varndean College

Wakefield College

Walford and North Shropshire College

West Cheshire College

West Thames College

Weston College

Worcester Sixth Form College

