

REINSPECTION REPORT

Workers' Educational Association Reinspection

09 December 2005



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION REINSPECTION

Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- learning and job preparation programmes funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

REINSPECTION REPORT

Workers' Educational Association Reinspection

Contents

Summary

Description of the provider	1
Scope of provision	1
About the reinspection	3
Overall judgement	3
Grades	4
Key findings	5

Detailed reinspection findings

Leadership and management	13
Equality of opportunity	13
Quality assurance	17
Visual & performing arts & media	20
English, languages & communications	24
Foundation programmes	27

REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. The Workers' Educational Association (WEA) is a large adult education provider with provision in every local Learning and Skills Council (LSC) region in England. It was founded in 1903 and is a registered charity. It receives 61 per cent of its income through an £18.6 million national contract with London East LSC. Some regions have additional contracts with local LSCs for co-financed European projects, and contracts with local education authorities and other funders of adult and community learning and vocational learning. The association's total income in 2004-05 was £30.7 million. In August 2004, the WEA's English districts were reorganised into nine regions and the Scottish Association. The WEA is a membership association governed by a national executive committee. Its members can be elected to governance roles at branch, regional or association level. Following a constitutional conference in October 2005, the WEA reorganised its governance. It is now governed by a board of trustees comprising four elected trustees, four trustees appointed from the English regions and Scotland, and four external, co-opted trustees. The general secretary is responsible for the overall management of the WEA and reports to the trustees. Each region is managed and led by a regional secretary and an elected regional committee drawn from branch members.

2. Each region manages a range of provision that is planned locally to contribute to the WEA's overall LSC contract. Regions are supported by a corporate services office managed by the general secretary and based in London. This office was recently restructured and provides education strategy, human resources, information technology (IT) and finance support. The general secretary, directors of the corporate services, regional secretaries and the secretary of the Scottish Association make up the association's management team. At the time of the inspection, the WEA employed 414 full-time staff, 373 part-time staff and 3,458 sessional tutors.

3. In 2004-05, there were 85,018 learners on 10,654 courses, of which 94 per cent were funded from the main LSC contract. Ninety per cent of these courses were non accredited. Of the learners, 74 per cent were by women and 9.2 per cent by members of minority ethnic communities. Twenty-three per cent of learners were from disadvantaged areas. Seventeen per cent declared that they had no qualifications, while a further 6.6 per cent declared qualifications at level 1. The WEA works in every local LSC area in England. Courses in visual and performing arts and media, and English, languages and communications are offered in all 47 local LSC areas. There are foundation courses in 46 of the local LSC areas. At the time of the reinspection, there were 40,073 learners on 3,539 courses funded by the main LSC contract.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Visual & performing arts & media

4. There are currently 11,869 learners taking visual and performing arts and media

WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION REINSPECTION

courses, representing about 24 per cent of the total provision. Seventy-seven per cent are female learners and 5.6 per cent are from a minority ethnic group. The average age of learners is 44. WEA offers 2,463 non-accredited and 44 accredited courses in art, craft, design, dance, music, media and drama. Subjects include printmaking, art, drawing, music appreciation, watercolours, quilting, photography, textiles, clothes making, upholstery, soft furnishing, ballroom dancing, singing, radio production, and calligraphy. Accredited courses are offered at levels 1 and 2. In 2004-05, 470 learners were enrolled on accredited courses and 23,118 on non-accredited courses. Courses are offered during the day, in the evenings, and at weekends, at a range of venues including church halls, community centres, schools, museums and art galleries.

English, languages & communications

5. The WEA offers 971 non-accredited and 63 accredited courses in literature, creative writing, modern foreign languages and communication. Literature courses include the study of poetry, plays, classic novels and modern American literature. Creative writing courses include general courses and courses designed for targeted groups. Eleven languages are offered, comprising French, German, Spanish, Italian, Welsh, Greek, Arabic, Latin, Urdu, Russian and British Sign Language. Community interpreting is also offered. Communication courses include lip reading, an internationally recognised communication programme for people with communication and learning difficulties, and sign-assisted English.

6. In 2004-05 there were 867 learners on accredited courses and 9,341 on non-accredited courses, representing approximately 10 per cent of the provision. At the time of the reinspection there were 5,868 learners, of whom 77.4 per cent were women and 6.4 per cent were from a minority ethnic group. Courses take place during the day and evenings and at weekends, in a range of venues throughout the country. In the East Midlands region, a curriculum leader is responsible solely for this area of learning. In the rest of the WEA regions, the curriculum leaders are responsible for courses in this area of learning and in humanities.

Foundation programmes

7. Foundation programmes represent approximately 13 per cent of the WEA's provision. Eighty-five per cent of the courses are in skills for life. Skills for life is the government's strategy for training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. These courses include non-accredited first steps provision and an increasing percentage of courses leading to skills for life national qualifications. Other programmes include learning at work courses, courses for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, and return to learn courses for priority target groups such as those who are homeless, those recovering from mental illness or addiction, and ex-offenders. Around half of the learners are enrolled on language courses, 28 per cent are on literacy courses and 7 per cent are on numeracy courses. Workplace provision has grown significantly since the previous inspection, with enrolments doubling between 2003-04 and 2004-05. Courses offered range from below entry level 1 to level 2. Twenty-seven per cent of all foundation courses lead to qualifications.

8. The WEA adopted a new skills for life strategy in July 2004. National co-ordination and leadership is provided by the skills for life education strategy manager. Each region has a foundation curriculum leader who plans the programme with the regional manager, with specialist input from regional skills for life co-ordinators and workplace co-ordinators. The plans for each region vary according to local needs but conform to an association-wide planning framework.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	20
Number of inspection days	301
Number of learners interviewed	1028
Number of staff interviewed	500
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	250
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	43

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

9. The ALI's previous inspection of the WEA, in March 2004, identified that provision was good in community development, and satisfactory in sciences and mathematics, business administration, management and professional, information and communications technology (ICT), hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, humanities, and family learning. The provision was unsatisfactory in visual and performing arts and media, English, languages and communications, and foundation programmes. Leadership and management were unsatisfactory, equality of opportunity was satisfactory, and quality assurance was very weak.

10. For the reinspection, inspectors reported on and regraded the three unsatisfactory areas of learning together with leadership and management, equal opportunities and quality assurance. They also sampled extensively the provision in hospitality, sport,

WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION REINSPECTION

leisure and travel and in humanities but did not regrade these areas. At the end of the reinspection process, standards had been maintained in science and mathematics, business administration, management and professional, ICT, and family learning. There had been many improvements in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel and in humanities. Standards in visual and performing arts and media, English, languages and communications, and foundation programmes are now satisfactory, as are WEA's leadership and management, equal opportunities and quality assurance.

GRADES

Grades awarded at previous inspection

grade 1 = outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak

Leadership and management	4
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	5

Sciences & mathematics	3
Adult and community learning	3

Business administration, management & professional	3
Adult and community learning	3

Information & communications technology	3
Adult and community learning	3

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	3
Adult and community learning	3

Visual & performing arts & media	4
Adult and community learning	4

Humanities	3
Adult and community learning	3

English, languages & communications	4
Adult and community learning	4

WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION REINSPECTION

Foundation programmes	4
Adult and community learning	4

Family learning	3
Adult and community learning	3

Community development	2
Adult and community learning	2

Grades awarded at reinspection

grade 1= outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak

Leadership and management	3
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	3

Visual & performing arts & media	3
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

English, languages & communications	3
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

Foundation programmes	3
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

11. Learners in English, languages and communications develop good skills in their chosen subject, ranging from fluency in modern foreign language to good analytical and critical skills in literature.

12. Some learners in arts and media develop high standards of work but for most learners, **social benefits and the development of confidence and self-esteem** exceed technical skills development.

13. **Achievement rates are good on foundation courses at work.** In some regions, over 90 per cent of the learners achieve a recognised qualification in literacy or numeracy.

Quality of education and training

14. **Teaching and learning have improved in all the curriculum areas inspected.** In ICT and humanities, none of the 31 lessons observed was inadequate. Inspectors only saw one inadequate lesson among the 12 observed in sport and fitness and one among the 42 observed in English, languages and communications. The biggest improvement in the quality of teaching is in humanities and in English, languages and communications.

15. **Tutors in arts and media are enthusiastic and good at making their lessons lively and enjoyable.** Many incorporate enrichment activities such as visits to exhibitions or the theatre to enhance their lessons and set the context for the work learners are doing. However a few do not always make their demonstrations of techniques clear enough for learners to be able to work on their own.

16. **Assessment has improved across most of the curriculum areas.** Most tutors are beginning to make good use of the processes underlying the recognition and recording of learners' progress and achievement. Some humanities tutors have interesting ways of assessing prior learning or establishing starting points, using, for example, quizzes or checks on word familiarity. Sport and fitness tutors have embraced the concept of monitoring learners' progress. However, a few tutors across all the areas still focus too much on the requirements of paperwork rather than on the measurement of learning.

17. **Teaching in English courses is particularly good** and nearly a third of lessons observed were outstanding. Most tutors are now making better use of a wider range of teaching methods to make their lessons more interesting. In modern foreign languages, most tutors now make much more appropriate use of the target language than in the previous inspection.

18. **Pre-course information is poor for learners in English, languages and communications.** It does not explain what levels mean in course descriptions or what learners need to know before joining a course.

19. There are **not enough progression opportunities for learners in arts and media.** There are very few accredited courses, and routes to other provision are not clear to learners.

Leadership and management

20. **Significant changes in both the structure of the WEA and in the quality of its provision have been well managed.** Leadership is strong and has enabled the WEA to re-establish a clear direction and purpose, and to restore its reputation as a provider.

21. **The WEA continues to draw on the skills of its volunteer branch members** and has improved the scrutiny of operations through better use of volunteers at senior level. Its **financial status is now much more secure.**

22. **Partnership working remains a key strength** of the WEA and is used very effectively to attract and support new learners, particularly in targeted provision. Around half of the learners recruited in 2004-05 were new to learning.

23. The use of data has improved considerably since the previous inspection and managers are now much better informed about what their provision costs, how many learners they have recruited in different categories, and how well learners have been retained. However, **the achievements of learners on accredited courses are not being recorded early enough or accurately enough to inform self-assessment reports.** Not all managers understand their data well enough.

24. Although there have been many improvements in curriculum management, **support for tutors in some regions and some curriculum areas remains weak.** Strategic planning is beginning to influence the curriculum offer in some regions, but there are still too many cases where courses are offered on the basis of what has run before, or on the availability of tutors.

25. Initial assessment is better and is used well in some of the targeted provision. It is still not used well enough in some courses to plan individual learning.

26. Quality assurance has improved significantly. The WEA now has a much more robust system for assessing the quality of its provision through regular observations of teaching and learning. Most of the weaknesses at the previous inspection have been dealt with, although a few remain, particularly in initial assessment, additional support and some curriculum planning.

27. The creation of quality circles, each consisting of three WEA regions, has improved the sharing of good practice and helped to identify regions in need of additional support.

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- strong leadership and management of change
- strong and active contribution of volunteers at all levels

WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION REINSPECTION

- effective action to restore financial and operational stability
- productive partnership working and effective targeted projects to widen participation
- effective action to secure improvement in the quality of provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient management and support in some subject areas and in some regions
- insufficient progress in securing effective additional support for all learners
- poor recording and monitoring of learners' achievements on accredited programmes

Visual & performing arts & media

Strengths

- good enrichment activities
- particularly effective use of arts to enrich individual learners' lives and communities
- significant actions to improve provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of assessment to aid learning and measure progress
- insufficient development of progression opportunities

English, languages & communications

Strengths

- good development of learners' analytical and critical skills on literature courses
- good development of learners' listening skills in modern foreign languages
- good teaching and learning on English courses
- very effective action to improve teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- poor pre-course information
- insufficient specialist resources in modern foreign languages
- insufficient strategic curriculum planning to widen participation

Foundation programmes

Strengths

- good achievement on workplace programmes
- particularly responsive provision to attract new learners
- effective action to improve provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of assessment information in planning for individual needs
- insufficient emphasis on the development of oral language skills

Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

Terminology varies across the range of education and training settings covered by the *Common Inspection Framework*. The table below indicates the terms appropriate to Adult and Community Learning

Single term used in the framework	Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning	
Provider	Provider	Any organisation providing opportunities for adults to meet personal or collective goals through the experience of learning. Providers include local authorities, specialist designated institutions, voluntary and community sector organisations, regeneration partnerships and further education colleges
Learner	Learner	Includes those learning by participating in community projects, as well as those on courses. Learning, however, will be planned, with intended outcomes.
Teacher / trainer	Tutor	Person teaching adult learners or guiding or facilitating their learning.
	Mentor	Person providing individual, additional support, guidance and advice to learners to help them achieve their learning goals.
Learning goals	Main learning goals	Intended gains in skills, knowledge or understanding. Gains may be reflected in the achievement of nationally recognised qualifications. Or they may be reflected in the ability of learners to apply learning in contexts outside the learning situation, e.g. in the family, community, or workplace. Learners' main goal/s should be recorded on an individual or, in some cases, group learning plan. Plans should be revised as progress is made and new goals emerge.
	Secondary learning goals	These may include planned-for gains in self-confidence, and inter-personal skills. These should also be included in learning plans where appropriate.
Personal and learning skills	Personal and learning skills	These include being able to study independently, willingness to collaborate with others, and readiness to take up another opportunity for education or training.

Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

	Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning
Unanticipated, or unintended learning outcome	Adults often experience unanticipated gains as a result of being involved in learning. These include improved self-esteem, greater self-confidence and a growing sense of belonging to a community. Gains of this kind should be acknowledged and recorded in any record of achievement.
Subject-based programme	A programme organised around a body of knowledge, e.g. the structure and usage of the French language or ceramic glazing techniques. Students could be expected to progress from one aspect of the subject to another, to grasp increasingly complex concepts or analyses or to develop greater levels of skill or to apply skills to a new area of work.
Issue-based programme	A programme that is based on the concerns, interests and aspirations of particular groups, for example members of a Sikh Gurdwara wanting to address inter-faith relations in their town, or parents worried about the incidence of drug abuse in their locality. Issue-based learning tends to be associated with geographically defined communities, but the increasing use of electronic means of communication means that this need no longer be the case. Progress is defined in terms of the group's increasing ability to analyse its situation, to access new information and skills which will help it resolve its difficulties and generate solutions and its growing confidence in dealing with others to implement those solutions.
Outreach provision	Provision established in a community setting in addition to provision made at an organisation's main site(s). Outreach programmes may be similar to courses at the main site(s) or be designed to meet the specific requirements of that community.
Neighbourhood-based work	The provider's staff have a long-term presence in a local community with a specific remit to understand the concerns of the local residents and develop learning activities to meet local needs and interests.
Community regeneration	The process of improving the quality of life in communities by investing in their infrastructure and facilities, creating opportunities for training and employment and tackling poor health and educational under-achievement. Community regeneration requires the active participation of local residents in decision-making. Changes and improvements are often achieved either directly or indirectly as a result of the adult learning activities which arise from this.

WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION REINSPECTION

	Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning
Community capacity building	The process of enabling local people to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to take advantage of opportunities for employment, training and further education and to become selfmanaging, sustainable communities.
Active citizenship	The process whereby people recognise the power they have to improve the quality of life for others and make a conscious effort to do so: the process whereby people recognise the power of organisations and institutions to act in the interests of the common good and exercise their influence to ensure that they do so. Adult learning contributes to active citizenship.

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- strong leadership and management of change
- strong and active contribution of volunteers at all levels
- effective action to restore financial and operational stability
- productive partnership working and effective targeted projects to widen participation
- effective action to secure improvement in the quality of provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient management and support in some subject areas and in some regions
- insufficient progress in securing effective additional support for all learners
- poor recording and monitoring of learners' achievements on accredited programmes

28. At the previous inspection, several weaknesses, including the insufficiently secure governance, supported the overall judgement of inadequate leadership and management. Through strong leadership, the WEA has managed effectively an ambitious programme of change and improvement. It has made good progress in creating a sound basis for effective governance. A conference held in October 2005 agreed changes in governance that gave the trustees a much clearer idea of their roles and powers. The general secretary toured the country to consult the members and ensure that they understood the proposed changes. All of the planned changes have been implemented on time. There are clear distinctions between the responsibilities of the board and those of the WEA committee. There are now portfolio holders for education, finance and employment. The scrutiny of educational performance against national and regional targets is improving. Planned changes to corporate and regional management have strengthened the management of staff and provision. The association has reorganised itself from 12 districts into three directorates and nine English regions. It has introduced better ways of planning the curriculum to meet more effectively the needs of priority groups of learners. The WEA has a number of plans to establish clear routes for further growth and development. These plans form the basis for improvements in curriculum leadership, the quality and use of management information, curriculum review and planning, the performance management of staff, and regional management. The good reputation of the WEA and its national profile has been largely restored.

29. The previous inspection recognised the strong and active involvement of volunteers in the WEA's work. Learners continue to have high levels of involvement in branches

WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION REINSPECTION

and regional committees and remain strong advocates for the WEA and its values. Experienced volunteers hold positions of considerable influence on the national executive committee. They use their own specialist knowledge, in areas such as law and property development to add considerably to the range of skills available to the WEA. They are strong and committed advocates of the WEA's work. The WEA continues to improve volunteer training and strengthen the role of volunteers in regional management. In the Yorkshire and Humberside region, for example, committee members have attended interview training. Better trained committees have led to better scrutiny of education and finance matters. However, educational scrutiny is less well developed in some regions.

30. The measures put in place at the time of the previous inspection have gone a long way to restoring the financial stability of the WEA. A much more professional approach to financial management is in place and new finance managers have been appointed to three regions. Over half of the additional advance of £3 million from the LSC has been repaid. The incorporated charity has established the capacity to generate unlimited additional funds through its trading arm. The WEA has exceeded its financial targets during the past year and increased its reserves. Financial controls are stringent. The monitoring of financial performance against targets, both nationally and in the regions, is strong. Regions failing to meet their targets have received additional support in reducing the deficit. In the southwest region, the forecast deficit of £180,000 was reduced to £80,000. There is a much stronger focus on cost control and income generation.

31. The use of management data and target-setting was a weakness at the previous inspection, but is now satisfactory. Improvements include the development of regular learning management reports that enable managers to analyse provision more effectively and to set and monitor targets. These reports supplement the established programme review statistics circulated electronically to all staff three times a year. The information systems group was set up to oversee the collection, use and reliability of data. Performance targets are set at all levels nationally and within regions, including for tutor organisers. Learning management reports enable managers to monitor trends more effectively and to take immediate action. The quality of data is robust. Regions have set targets for priority learner participation and equality and diversity impact measures for 2005-08. There are better tools for costing individual courses. However, not all middle managers are trained sufficiently in the use of the data and those in the southwest region have insufficient access to the data. Tutor organisers and middle managers do not always fully understand how their individual targets contribute to those of the region. Not all staff have suitable computers to access the data. There is not enough use of data in management in the northeast region.

32. The monitoring of health and safety was a weakness at the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. An up-to-date handbook listing revised health and safety procedures has been widely disseminated. One of the trustees is a portfolio holder for health and safety across the organisation and each region has a health and safety co-ordinator. Further information is available to tutors on the WEA website and there has been training on risk assessments. Senior managers have started to analyse reports on incidents and accidents in the regions. Since September, tutors complete risk assessments for their

courses. Regions have carried out their own audits and contribute to national audits of safe working. The audits identify the need for better staff awareness of health and safety procedures and risk assessment. Further work is needed to raise the profile of risk assessment and the learning environment. Accommodation checks and health and safety systems are incomplete in the southwest and northeast regions.

33. Arrangements for managing staff performance are now satisfactory. Processes have been updated and standardised documents are now used for tutors' contracts, job descriptions and application forms to ensure greater consistency. Performance management workshops are held to increase staff knowledge. There are annual reviews of the performance of all established corporate and regional staff. The association management team monitors more effectively the contribution of staff to monthly educational targets. Simpler models are being devised for reporting from regions. Regional managers monitor individual staff targets more thoroughly, although this is less well developed in some regions. Staff have a clearer understanding of line management roles and responsibilities. The northeast region is restructuring its management team and progress has been slower.

34. Communication with staff and members has improved. The WEA News keeps staff and members informed of developments. There are significant improvements in the range and quality of materials available through the WEA's website. Greater use is made of teleconferencing to enable staff to participate in regional and national management meetings. Pre-course information for prospective learners varies in quality and does not always provide sufficient information about the level of the course or what learners should expect.

35. There were weaknesses in the management of subjects and additional learner support at the previous inspection. In spite of some progress, weaknesses still exist in these areas. The management of, and support for, individual subjects is still not good enough in some regions and some subjects. There are generally clearer arrangements for line management, improved communications, and better sharing of good practice in most regions. Regions are beginning to plan their curriculum offer more thoroughly and to plot progression opportunities. There is a larger volume of targeted work and skills for life courses. For example, the workplace provision has grown by 18 per cent since 2004. However, there is uneven quality in strategic planning, the targeting of provision, the availability of specialist resources, pre-course information and specialist support for tutors. There is insufficient subject expertise and leadership in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and languages. The quality of teaching and learning in ESOL has not improved consistently in all regions. In most other areas of learning it is generally satisfactory, but not in all regions. In some regions, there remain unfilled vacancies for subject leaders. Curriculum planning is not fully effective in some voluntary branches.

36. At the time of the previous inspection, there was no overall strategy for the development of literacy, numeracy and language support, and arrangements for initial assessment were inadequate. There is still a weakness in the systematic application of initial assessment across all areas of learning and in all regions. Some improvements have been made. The revised skills for life strategy raised the profile of literacy,

WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION REINSPECTION

numeracy and language support in the regions. Additional training helped some tutors identify opportunities for the development of literacy, numeracy and language skills in their courses. Tutors receive additional guidance in their revised handbook. Support for learners is good and is fully integrated in courses targeted at priority groups of learners. However, the WEA does not have a comprehensive picture of the level of learners' additional needs. In foundation programmes, the information from initial assessment is not used sufficiently to plan individual learning. Targets to raise the level of literacy, numeracy and language support are modest but are not being met in some regions. Managers do not adequately monitor the effectiveness of the support provided. The take-up of support is very low.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

37. The strength in partnership working and the development of projects to widen participation identified at the previous inspection has been maintained. The WEA has continued its work with a wide range of partners including trade unions, community agencies, local authorities, and schools. The overall proportion of learners enrolled on targeted provision has increased from 51 per cent in 2002-03 to 54 per cent in 2004-05. Further work with trade unions has extended the provision in the workplace aimed at developing the skills of lower paid workers. The WEA makes use of a very wide range of venues to extend opportunities for learning in local contexts and to attract different target groups. Community provision is developed in response to the needs of a diverse range of learners.

38. Half of the learners recruited in 2004-05 reported that they had not participated in education in the previous three years. A quarter of learners live in areas designated as disadvantaged. The proportion of enrolments by learners with no prior qualifications has increased from 16.6 per cent in 2003-04 to 20.5 per cent in 2004-05, and with physical disability from 10.5 per cent to 12 per cent during the same period. The overall proportion of male learners, at 25 per cent, and the proportion of minority ethnic learners, at 10 per cent, have remained the same in each year. The proportion of minority ethnic learners is in line with the national profile and exceeds some local demographic profiles.

39. The planning of targeted provision has improved through feedback from partners and access to more detailed information on the demographic profile of recruited learners. Equality and diversity impact measures have been set at regional level for 2005-06, and regional targets have been agreed for the recruitment of WEA's priority learners.

40. The monitoring of equality of opportunity was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. The monitoring and promotion of equal opportunities are now satisfactory. A project group has been set up to promote diversity in the WEA's workforce and a new post of development and diversity manager has been established. The equality and diversity policies have been revised to meet new legislative requirements. There is a child protection policy with a named officer responsible for child protection nationally and in six of the nine regions. The policy has recently been amended to take account of responsibilities under the Children Act 2004. In November

2005 the WEA's equality and diversity policy was relaunched at a training day for regional secretaries, regional chairs and volunteers. Equality and diversity training packs have been developed for use in the regions with a particular focus on promoting disability awareness.

41. Guidance has been centrally provided to regions on the minimum requirements for accommodation. Of the 3,081 venues currently being used by the WEA, 61 per cent have been subject to a health and safety and access assessment. In some cases, minor adjustments have been made to buildings or action has been taken to find alternative venues. However, there remain a few venues which are unsuitable for the learning activities and size of classes. Disability Discrimination Act starter kits were supplied to all regions in July 2005, including learning aids such as trackballs, key stickers for IT, colour overlays, sheet magnifiers, radio microphones, headphones, and a loop system. Some tutors are awaiting training in the use of these aids.

42. Improvements have been made in the collection of data on tutors. The number of tutors for whom no ethnicity data is recorded has significantly reduced in the past year, but still constitutes 13 per cent of all the tutors employed. The proportion of minority ethnic tutors is recorded at 6 per cent and remains below the profile of many of the WEA's learning communities. However, 86 per cent of the minority ethnic tutors are working in the targeted provision. The proportion of minority ethnic volunteers is also below local profiles. There are currently no minority ethnic members on the WEA's committee or on the board of trustees

43. There is too much variance between regions in the number of learners receiving support to overcome barriers to learning. The activities which take place in the regions to support learners are not always systematically recorded. There is insufficient sharing of good practice between regions in the way funds are used and in the forms of support provided. Recent centrally produced data reports on the use of funds have usefully identified specific areas for action at regional level. In 2004-05, a separate self-assessment report was produced for the provision of information, advice and guidance, and learner support. This has identified actions to remedy the weakness in the use of support funds. Induction materials for learners have been revised to more clearly identify the support available. The materials are available in community languages.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

44. At the time of the previous inspection, arrangements for quality assurance were insufficiently established. They are now satisfactory. A quality improvement framework has been developed and adopted across the organisation. Additional policies and procedures have been devised which cover all key stages of the learners' experience. Tutors are issued with a comprehensive handbook which includes good practical advice for new tutors. Guidance for tutors is supplemented by further materials in some regions.

45. There has been effective action to secure improvement in the quality of provision. A well-devised quality improvement strategy has been developed by the WEA and is being effectively implemented in the regions. Good progress has been made in dealing with

WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION REINSPECTION

many of the weakness identified at the previous inspection. For example, there has been significant improvement in the use of initial assessment in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel. Exercise and fitness tutors now assess learners' physical condition when they start the course, even if they arrive after the first week. They have embraced the concept of monitoring learners' progress, linking it to the staged process of the project in recognising and recording progress and achievement. Of the 12 sport and fitness lessons observed during the reinspection, only one was judged inadequate and half were good or better. In humanities, the curriculum is managed in a more systematic and cohesive way across all regions. Teaching and learning is now better and there is much greater consistency around the regions. Eighty-two per cent of the humanities lessons observed in the reinspection are good or better, compared with 62 per cent at the previous inspection, and the rest are satisfactory. All three areas of learning graded as unsatisfactory at the previous inspection are now satisfactory. In the overall grade profile for lesson observations, the proportion of unsatisfactory sessions has reduced from 13 per cent at the previous inspection to 8 per cent at reinspection. In the three areas graded as unsatisfactory at the previous inspection, the proportion of unsatisfactory teaching has reduced from 18 per cent to 10 per cent. Progress in reducing unsatisfactory teaching has been particularly marked in English, languages and communications, where less than 3 per cent of lessons are now inadequate, compared with 21 per cent at the previous inspection. However, there remains too much unsatisfactory teaching in ESOL.

46. Good progress has been made in developing quality circles over the past year. Regions work in groups of three to discuss quality improvement issues, such as training tutors to carry out observations of teaching and learning, moderating lesson observation reports, and the development and scrutiny of curriculum and regional self-assessment reports. The access to performance data has improved, and it is used more effectively to monitor programmes at national and regional levels. However, not all programme managers have a good enough understanding of the data or how to use it.

47. The WEA's procedures for observation of teaching and learning have been revised. Thorough written guidance has been issued and training provided for observers. More observations are being carried out in most regions, and the overall coverage by curriculum area and region is now accurately monitored centrally. Priority has been given to carrying out observations in curriculum areas graded as unsatisfactory at inspection and in observing new tutors. All observations are now graded and result in identified action points. Unsatisfactory sessions result in follow-up observations. Branches are now better informed about what criteria are used to judge teaching, and are less swayed by high praise from learners who are not necessarily aware of alternative approaches or better provision around the regions. The revised scheme has been effective in generating constructive discussion among tutors and managers about teaching and learning, and in the identification of good practice. A useful cross-regional moderation exercise has been carried out which has identified a need for greater consistency in grading and in improving the quality of reporting in some cases. However, the number of observations carried out in some regions and in some areas of learning remains too small.

48. Tutors are being given guidance and training in the further development of procedures to recognise and record progress and achievement in non-accredited programmes. The WEA has been implementing these procedures over two years with different schemes being trialled in the regions. In some curriculum areas, such as English, languages and communications, progress has been satisfactory. However, the staged process is less well established in other curriculum areas. Some tutors in visual and performing arts and media do not have a good understanding of the process and in some cases there is insufficient recording of learners' progress. In foundation programmes and visual and performing arts and media, tutors are setting learning objectives which are too general or not measurable.

49. There is no common approach to collecting learners' feedback. There has been nationally organised sampling of learners' views on specific developments, for example the use of revised induction materials, and equality and diversity. Some of the paperwork used in the regions to collect feedback elicits general responses that are not evaluative or critical enough to guide planning and development. Revised guidance has been issued to tutors and learners on complaints and appeals procedures. A free telephone line and e-mail box for suggestions and feedback have been introduced. Common procedures have been introduced for the logging of complaints at regional level.

50. The self-assessment process has been revised and the most recent report closely matches many of the inspectors' findings in leadership and management. National and regional guidelines have been developed and consultative processes have improved. The WEA's work is scrutinised and challenged effectively through the work of quality circles, the volunteer educational portfolio holder at regional level, and the education board and education scrutiny panel at national level. The assessment process incorporates in-year review as well as annual reporting. Course reports and regional curriculum reports vary in quality, and inspectors identified additional weaknesses to those in the self-assessment report. Some reports are well structured around the key questions in the Common Inspection Framework, but others are too descriptive and insufficiently evaluative. Some make insufficient use of learners' feedback. Course reports have not provided timely and accurate assessment of learners' achievement, particularly for the 14 per cent of learners on accredited programmes.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Visual & performing arts & media

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	11869	3

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- good enrichment activities
- particularly effective use of arts to enrich individual learners' lives and communities
- significant actions to improve provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of assessment to aid learning and measure progress
- insufficient development of progression opportunities

Achievement and standards

51. The development of learners' subject skills is satisfactory. A few learners achieve high standards. For example, in a lesson of abstract art, learners completed large, complex abstract paintings based on the work of Kandinsky and Miro. Most learners gain self-confidence and self-esteem from sharing their interests and learning new skills. For example, learners with mental health issues who completed a creative textiles course had gained sufficient confidence to become learning support workers at the centre. Some courses offer good stepping stones to other opportunities. For example, in a radio broadcasting class aimed at unemployed male learners, live radio programmes are produced using commercial software. Learners have progressed into the media industry or into further education. However, in too many lessons there is too much emphasis on the social benefits to learners rather than on skills development. Success rates on the small number of accredited courses are low. In some art lessons there is too much copying from photographs, postcards and magazines, much work is not experimental enough, and the focus is narrow.

Quality of education and training

52. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most of the weaknesses in classroom management seen at the previous inspection have been overcome. Tutors are enthusiastic and their passion for their subject inspires learners. Many learners are highly motivated and keen, and enjoy their lessons. In music and arts theory lessons, tutors successfully encourage lively debate and discussion. Tutors provide sensitive individual

advice and helpful guidance during lessons. They carry out skilful demonstrations of techniques but these are not always broken down into separate processes that can be easily understood by learners. For example, in a practical art class a tutor spent a long time demonstrating a complex technique without breaking down the learning points or providing any aids for learners. When learners tried this for themselves they were unable to complete the task without extensive help. Some tutors do not always plan lessons well and learners are left waiting to be seen to continue the next step of an activity.

53. The WEA continues to provide good enrichment activities in many classes, including trips to galleries, theatres and exhibitions. These were strengths at the previous inspection, and they remain so. Most tutors plan their schemes of work carefully to include preparation for visits and discussion afterwards. Many tutors use the visits as an integral part of the course, designing projects and activities that are highly relevant. Trips are planned by tutors, volunteers and learners to enhance learners' aesthetic awareness. For example, learners visited French cathedrals with their tutor to learn about stained glass windows, extending their experience and perceptions of this art form. Learners are encouraged to share their experiences with other learners. For example, in an Italian architecture appreciation course, learners who had visited Paphos and Rimini gave talks about their experience to the group.

54. As in the previous inspection, the WEA continues to use the arts particularly effectively to enrich individual lives and communities. Inspired and innovative projects are designed with community groups throughout the provision. For example, in Liverpool, 15 community organisations and 137 learners from diverse groups worked with Channel 5 and the Arts Council to produce work that was exhibited in two galleries. Another thought-provoking project, called Ten Feet Away, involved homeless people learning to use video equipment to make a film, which has been featured at festivals in London and promoted on the WEA website. In a radio production class, unemployed learners were learning to produce and present a local radio programme using broadcast standard software. This experience enabled them to find employment in the media industry.

55. Support for learners is satisfactory. Tutors are sensitive to the needs of all their learners and give good individual support. If additional learning needs are identified, support is provided. However, there is no formal, consistent way of identifying these needs. For example, in a practical art class a learner with an identified medical condition was given effective individual support in class by a volunteer from a charity associated with the condition. In targeted classes, organised additional support is good. For example, in a clothes-making class aimed at Asian women, a support worker acted as a translator and encouraged learners' understanding of English. A complex needs dance group was well supported by three additional staff, enabling learners to participate fully. However, support for literacy, numeracy and language needs is not provided systematically. The WEA does not adequately check whether learners require additional literacy, numeracy or language support.

56. Most tutors have adequate lesson plans and schemes of work, and pay good attention to safe working practices. Assessment was inadequate at the previous

WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION REINSPECTION

inspection. There have been improvements, and tutors now make sure learners record their progress using weekly diaries or progress sheets. However tutors still do not make sufficient use of assessment to aid learning or measure progress. They do not place enough emphasis on challenging, extending and developing learners' skills. Initial assessment is informal and does not always identify individual learning goals. Tutors are not setting clear individual learning objectives. Many objectives are too general and not measurable. Some learners attend similar courses for many years and do not progress to higher levels of work. There is poor ongoing feedback to learners on their progress, and some assessments only record the completion of a project. Learners are encouraged to complete learning diaries but the written feedback that tutors give on these is often congratulatory and not developmental enough.

57. The WEA does not offer enough progression opportunities for learners. Many learners are repeating classes with no opportunity to progress to higher levels. Some mixed-ability classes do not differentiate between beginners and advanced learners. Course descriptions do not specify a level. The WEA offers some accredited provision mainly in the northwest region, in fashion and dressmaking, but little accredited provision elsewhere.

Leadership and management

58. Curriculum management and quality assurance were weak at the previous inspection. The WEA has restructured the way the curriculum is managed and this is now satisfactory. Since the previous inspection, a new team of regional curriculum managers now co-ordinates the curriculum, and planning is improving. Managers are reviewing the performance of tutors and effectively and clearly communicating their expectations about new systems and procedures. Volunteers continue to help staff, for example by introducing new staff to existing learners at the start of courses, and helping to organise external trips. However, staff in the regions do not yet use systems and procedures consistently well, and strategic planning is still incomplete. In some regions, courses are offered for historical reasons rather than in response to careful analysis of local need.

59. Managers have taken significant actions to improve aspects of the provision. They have carried out a satisfactory number of observations of teaching and learning, which they now grade and moderate. Actions set for tutors are clear and are followed up well. Managers are beginning to share the good practice they observe in teaching and learning, and there are early signs of improvement. Tutors and curriculum managers with extensive experience of web-based media have developed a particularly good website with good course information and online taster courses to demonstrate the fundamental principles of the arts curriculum. Learners' work is highlighted, and initiatives and projects are shared with learners and staff. A well-written handbook for tutors, which includes clear guidance about the observation of teaching and learning, is improving tutors' understanding of what they should be doing. Staff development is generally good and staff have free access to all WEA courses. Recent training events have been held to explain to tutors the recognition and recording of progress and achievement, and the

staged process.

English, languages & communications**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	5868	3

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- good development of learners' analytical and critical skills on literature courses
- good development of learners' listening skills in modern foreign languages
- good teaching and learning on English courses
- very effective action to improve teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- poor pre-course information
- insufficient specialist resources in modern foreign languages
- insufficient strategic curriculum planning to widen participation

Achievement and standards

60. Learners on literature courses demonstrate well-developed analytical and critical skills. They discuss knowledgeably the form, style and content of poetry, prose and plays. They can compare and contrast authors' work with other pieces by the same or other authors. The quality of debate is good and learners show a high degree of insight. They produce good written work and many choose to research additional aspects outside the classroom.

61. Learners on courses in modern foreign languages develop good listening skills. In many classes they are able to understand recorded or live speech at native or near native speed and can use context to guess the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary. The development of speaking, reading and writing skills is generally satisfactory, although many learners are reluctant to speak the target language.

Quality of education and training

62. Teaching and learning are good on English courses. Seventy-three per cent of sessions observed during the reinspection were graded good or better, with 31 per cent outstanding and none unsatisfactory. The courses are stimulating. Learners take high levels of responsibility for contributing to course activities and course planning. There are many extension activities including visits to theatre productions and to locations with particular literary associations. At the previous inspection the range of teaching methods in literature courses was narrow. It is now satisfactory, with greater use of taped

readings, videos, small group discussion and learners' presentations. In foreign languages and in the area of learning overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. The major weakness in foreign languages at the previous inspection was the excessive use of English by tutors. Most tutors now use the foreign language throughout the lessons, including for most grammatical explanations and instructions. Learners value this use of language and recognise its contribution to their improved understanding. Most lessons are planned to include varied activities such as games and quizzes to practise new language. In the best lessons, tutors use group and pair activities well to allow learners to speak as much as possible. In more advanced classes, learners contribute to the content of the course and take an active part in making presentations. However, a few tutors of beginners speak too quickly when giving complicated instructions for activities. Others use English unnecessarily for incidental language in classes. There is too little use of oral work to improve pronunciation and to help less confident learners to speak. Teaching on sign language courses is good. Lessons are lively and stimulating with effective use of visual material to prompt communication.

63. Assessment was weak at the previous inspection. It is now satisfactory, as is the recording of learners' progress. Tutors of accredited courses keep detailed records of progress. Learners on non-accredited courses use a learner record to assess their own progress. Tutors also assess learners' skills at the end of courses. Tutors are very aware of individual learners' progress and some keep useful detailed weekly written records. However, most learners have no objective measure of their skills when they start a course. Some find it hard to assess their own skills. Learning outcomes are often too general to use as a measure of progress. Many tutors do not record progress weekly. A very few do not even distribute the learner records.

64. Pre-course information is poor. Courses are listed on the WEA's website. For people without access to a computer, there are local prospectuses. However, these are only available in libraries, or to former learners, by post. Much information is insufficiently detailed to help learners choose their courses. Course descriptions are sometimes inaccurate. Learning outcomes are often too general to give a clear idea of the course content. The terms used to describe the level of language courses are inconsistent. The publicity describes courses variously by level, stage, year, or the term intermediate or advanced, without indicating how these lead into each other or into national frameworks. The skills required to join a particular course are not identified. Tutors' individual support for learners is satisfactory, and on accredited courses, it is good. However, very few learners receive additional learning support or access learner support funds.

65. There are insufficient specialist resources for foreign languages. In some areas, tutors cannot obtain video players and a range of tapes, DVDs, audio recordings or real life materials. In others, such resources are available on request but tutors do not know how to access them. The tape recorders provided do not always have good enough sound quality.

Leadership and management

66. Curriculum management and quality assurance were weak at the previous inspection. Both have improved and are now satisfactory. Regions have designated staff responsible for the curriculum area, who support tutors and lead curriculum and staff development. Management data is used in quality improvement and programme development. Communications with tutors are conducted in person, by telephone and by e-mail. Attendance at staff development events has increased. In some areas, part-time staff lead aspects of the curriculum such as communications or community interpreting. Helpful guides to the staged process and good practice guides have been produced. However, most regions do not have separate specialists in foreign languages and English. Support and development for tutors from non-specialist staff is not always effective.

67. The WEA has taken very effective actions to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In the previous inspection, inspectors graded 21 per cent of lessons as unsatisfactory. At reinspection this figure had fallen to less than 3 per cent. Following the previous inspection the WEA introduced graded observation of teaching and learning by trained observers and moderators. Observations are generally carried out by specialist staff, particularly in foreign languages. Observers give tutors constructive verbal feedback followed by detailed written feedback accompanied by proposed action plans. Follow-up actions are effectively monitored and recorded. In the more recent observations, the percentage of unsatisfactory teaching and learning identified matches the proportion found at reinspection. The self-assessment report accurately identifies the strengths and weaknesses and is graded appropriately. However, there is considerable variation in the quality of regional self-assessment reports and accompanying action plans.

68. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. In some areas, targeted programmes, partnership work and accredited courses in sign language and community interpreting have increased the number of learners from disadvantaged communities. Equality and diversity statements form part of all learners' inductions. However, few tutors actively promote equality through course content or choice of materials. Work with disadvantaged learners is not given the same priority across the country.

69. Regions do not adopt a sufficiently strategic approach to curriculum planning in order to widen participation. Across the country, there is a varied programme of targeted courses designed to attract learners with qualifications below level 2 or those with particular needs, but these programmes are not equally available in each region. Some regions have a rich programme of sign language or lip reading courses, while others have little on offer. Creative writing programmes are available in all regions but writing courses targeted at homeless learners, ex-offenders, former drug misuse or those recovering from mental illness, are not. Writers' groups formed as part of the development of community networks in one region are not replicated in others.

Foundation programmes**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	8617	3

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- good achievement on workplace programmes
- particularly responsive provision to attract new learners
- effective action to improve provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of assessment information in planning for individual needs
- insufficient emphasis on the development of oral language skills

Achievement and standards

70. Learners' achievements on workplace programmes were good at the previous inspection and remain so. Learners develop useful study and literacy skills. The standard of work produced is good and learners progress well towards their individual learning goals. Learners on these programmes are particularly well motivated, and their retention and attendance rates are good. The achievement is high for those learners who are entered for qualifications. In 2003-04, 87 per cent learners who completed their courses achieved their qualifications. Four regions had particularly high achievement rates, ranging from 100 per cent in London to 93 per cent in the northwest region.

71. Standards of work and progress in other foundation programmes are satisfactory. In the better lessons, learners develop good teamwork skills and improve their confidence and self-esteem. They develop good oral skills and the confidence to debate their children's progress with his or her teacher. Their files are well organised into the areas of skill development. Punctuality is satisfactory and the tutors and other learners challenge lateness.

72. The retention rate remains good at 88 per cent overall. Learners' attendance has improved from 68 per cent during the previous inspection to 73 per cent. Formal monitoring and strategies to improve attendance have been introduced since the previous inspection and are beginning to have an effect.

Quality of education and training

73. The WEA is particularly responsive to local needs and is developing provision which attracts new learners. The range of provision is good, from below entry level to level 2, and includes ESOL, literacy, numeracy, study skills, return to learn and life skills. Partnership arrangements were recognised as a strength at the previous inspection. They continue to be used well to meet the needs of local communities and targeted groups, particularly those learners who have not had the confidence to access education before. Particularly effective partnerships have been established with local probation services, schools, libraries and local authority services. Good links have developed with community groups such as those for Turkish and Bangladeshi communities, and women's groups. A significant development has been the growth of provision for trade unions, national health service professionals and the Army. Targeted courses to attract new learners include ESOL for parents, ESOL with driving theory, and ESOL with IT for women. In the northeast region there are established literacy in craft and digital photography classes. In 2004-05, 77 per cent of enrolled learners were new to learning.

74. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall with just under 50 per cent of classes judged to be good or better, 40 per cent judged satisfactory and just over 11 per cent judged inadequate. In the better sessions, learners are well focused on their targets and are actively engaged in planning their progress. However, there is more inadequate teaching in language classes than other parts of the learning area.

75. Resources were unsatisfactory on some programmes at the previous inspection. They have improved on all programmes. Tutors in all regions have been given a clear policy and guidelines for the provision and use of skills for life resources. Learners now have better access to IT resources. In the best sessions, these are used well to develop word processing and research skills and to promote independent learning. Tape recorders are used effectively to develop aural skills and encourage discussion and debate. Digital cameras and IT equipment are used well to develop newsletters, which are distributed in schools and outreach centres to promote learning and the recruitment of new learners. However, most tutors do not make sufficient use of information and learning technology in learning. Accommodation is satisfactory, and some centres have crèche facilities provided in partnership with other organisations.

76. Learner support is satisfactory. Much advice and guidance is offered by the WEA, and the many partners that help identify need and support recruitment. Different areas have specific strategies to recruit and support learners, for example by using bilingual and outreach workers. There is a significant improvement in pre-course induction. Most tutors are aware of local progression opportunities and discuss them in classes to promote further learning. In some areas, learners attend short 'planning learning' courses, which include induction, initial assessment and identifying learning needs. These can be supported by skills for life specialists or bilingual workers. A few learners receive additional learning support, for example for dyslexia. The northeast region has attracted additional resources to support individual tutoring. However, there is no systematic assessment to ensure that all additional learning support needs are identified.

77. Tutors do not make enough use of assessment to plan activities and materials that will challenge more able learners or support the least able. This was also a weakness at the previous inspection. In the weaker sessions tutors do not sufficiently use initial and diagnostic assessments to plan for individual literacy and language development. In these sessions, learning is not sufficiently related to the lives and interests of learners. Evaluations of sessions are not sufficiently effective in recording individual progress and planning small steps in learning. In the weaker sessions, learning is planned for group outcomes only and there are no individual targets.

78. Tutors do not sufficiently develop the oral language skills of ESOL learners. In the best sessions, tutors work well to develop all the four language skills, of reading, writing, listening and speaking. However, in many language programmes, tutors do not understand well enough how language is learnt. Activities are too controlled and tutor-led. Learners are not encouraged to interact and support each other. In these sessions, learners do not have the opportunity to develop their listening and speaking skills. Although most learners are confident speakers, many are not fluent and accurate. Tutors do not correct language errors with sufficient regularity or rigour and do not develop their learners' reading and writing skills at the most basic level. There is not enough subject-specific help for language tutors to develop their own skills.

Leadership and management

79. The WEA has taken effective action to improve foundation provision. Clear quality improvement plans are implemented in each region within the national framework. A helpful skills for life strategy has been developed since the previous inspection. The tutors' handbook has been updated and improved to include useful guidelines on managing attendance, making teaching more varied, assessing and monitoring progress and using individual learning plans. Tutors are visited more frequently. Curriculum managers, trained in the new teaching observation scheme, are effective in helping many tutors improve their teaching skills. Grades are moderated in regular moderation sessions and cross-moderated with other regions through quality circles. The number of inadequate sessions seen has reduced from 18 per cent at the previous inspection to 11 per cent overall, although too much ESOL teaching is still inadequate. The tutor recruitment process is now more rigorous and more tutors are employed on part-time contracts rather than hourly paid. Tutors have action plans for continuous professional development that are relevant to their needs and linked to the performance recorded in their observation reports. Tutors are well supported by mentors.

80. Curriculum management in foundation programmes was a weakness at the previous inspection but is now satisfactory. Communications have improved with curriculum leaders giving greater support, particularly to new tutors and to tutors based in distant community venues. Staff development is satisfactory. All tutors now use standardised forms for all key stages of the learners' experience. The collection of information and the use of management data for target-setting and planning have improved. Far fewer classes experience changes in location or time, and there are fewer cancellations than at

WORKERS' EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION REINSPECTION

the time of the previous inspection. A new system to moderate learners' achievement against individual targets is effective.

81. Equality of opportunity arrangements are satisfactory. All foundation tutors are trained in equal opportunities awareness. A helpful equality and diversity checklist has been produced for tutors. Increased use of data includes monitoring for equality and diversity impact measures. Equality of opportunity and diversity are implicit in curriculum planning. Teaching materials are culturally diverse and learners' attitudes are challenged in class. Publicity leaflets reflect the diversity of the WEA's learners. Other community languages are used. Partnerships to widen participation provide relevant courses to enable disadvantaged learners to take their first steps in formal learning for many years.

82. Self-assessment is satisfactory. Most of the strengths and weaknesses found at reinspection were identified in the self-assessment report. All tutors are involved in annual course monitoring. The provider recognises that it makes too little use of on-course monitoring and feedback from learners to bring about course improvements.