INSPECTION REPORT

West Berkshire LEA

19 October 2002

ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

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 and Jobcentre Plus programmes. 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 training within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based training for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- training 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.

Overall judgement

In those cases where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:
- more than one third of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas, or
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

SUMMARY

The provider

West Berkshire Council became a unitary authority in April 1998. It subcontracts its general adult education provision to two main training providers, a further education college and a community school. It also funds learners on an individual basis to attend courses at an adult and community college. At the time of inspection, there were 3,601 enrolments on all courses run by the further education college, 411 enrolments on courses run by the community school, 229 learners on courses run by the adult and community college and 612 learners on taster days and community learning projects. Learners who attend courses at the adult and community college were not inspected separately. Evidence from the inspection of the adult and community college, which was carried out two weeks before the inspection of West Berkshire Council, was looked at by the inspection team and meetings were held with managers from the college. Six areas of learning were inspected, information and communication technology, sports and leisure, visual and performing arts, modern foreign languages, programmes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and community learning. The other seven areas of learning had too few enrolments to be inspected.

Overall judgement

The quality of provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Visual and performing arts and community learning are good. Training for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is satisfactory. Information and communication technology, sports and leisure and modern foreign languages are unsatisfactory, as is the leadership and management.

GRADES

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

Areas of learning	Grade
Information & communications technology	4
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	4
Visual & performing arts & media	2
English, languages & communications	4
Foundation programmes	3
Community learning	2

KEY STRENGTHS

- good promotion of equal opportunities through community projects
- very effective information and referral system
- productive local partnership arrangements for community learning
- good teaching in visual and performing arts and community learning

KEY WEAKNESSES

- inadequate quality assurance arrangements
- inadequate monitoring of health and safety arrangements
- poor monitoring of equal opportunities data
- poor planning of the general adult education programme
- deficiencies in the management of the subcontracted provision
- too much unsatisfactory teaching and learning

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better recording of key meetings
- better course details at local level

THE INSPECTION

1. A team of 22 inspectors spent a total of 110 days at West Berkshire Council (the Council) in October 2002. They interviewed 392 learners, carried out 54 interviews with staff and made 62 visits to different community learning sites. Inspectors observed and graded 73 learning sessions. Inspectors examined a range of documents, including learners' work, curriculum paperwork, promotional literature, policies, development plans, reviews, minutes and notes of meetings and adult learning plans. They also considered evidence from the adult and community learning college, which was inspected separately, two weeks before the inspection of West Berkshire LEA (the LEA).

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Information & communications technology	1	1	1	4	3	1	0	11
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	1	0	1	3	3	0	0	8
Visual & performing arts & media	2	8	1	2	0	0	0	13
English, languages & communications	0	1	2	6	2	2	0	13
Foundation programmes	2	3	1	2	1	1	0	10
Community learning	1	5	2	0	0	0	0	8
Total	**7**	**18**	**8**	**17**	**9**	**4**	**0**	**63**
per cent		**52.38%**		**26.98%**		**20.63%**		

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

2. West Berkshire Council became a unitary authority in April 1998, and the first lifelong learning development plan was submitted in October 1999. The five objectives for lifelong learning set out in the plan remain the key objectives for lifelong learning in West Berkshire. The LEA subcontracts its training to two main training providers and also funds individual learners to attend courses at the adult and community college. The college of further education is the largest subcontractor. It uses 61 community venues in addition to the college and takes 84 per cent of the general enrolments. Since 1998, the council has extended its provision to include 'first rung' opportunities for people in West Berkshire. Under these arrangements, smaller training providers, often local charities, can apply for funding under a bidding process. The council has used its community education fund and the laptop computer initiative to fund these projects, all of which are targeted at groups of learners who are identified as priorities in the adult learning plan.

3. The West Berkshire lifelong learning team is based at one of the council's offices in Newbury. There are 3.3 full-time equivalent staff and all posts are part-time. The council has membership of the local lifelong learning partnership (LLP), which is managed outside the council, and is chaired by the local business community. The partnership has active working groups which focus on information communications technology (ICT), marketing, family and community learning and information and guidance.

4. Enrolments on the LEA's subcontracted provision increased from 7,918 in 2000-01, to 8,081 in 2001-02. On community projects and taster days, enrolments increased from 963 to 1,854 in the same period. Attendance rates on subcontracted provision increased from 74.3 per cent in 2000-01, to 75.8 per cent in 2001-02. On community projects, attendance rates increased from 78.9 per cent to 81.3 per cent over the same period. Rates of retention increased on subcontracted provision from 89.9 per cent to 90.1 per cent between 2000-01 and 2001-02. For groups targeted specifically in the adult learning plan, the proportion of enrolments remained steady for those with disabilities, older learners and learners from minority ethnic groups, but there was an increase of two per cent in enrolments of male learners, and of 25 per cent for families and parents. The number of learners in rural areas who took advantage of the community information technology (IT) tasters rose from 67 in 2000-01 to 247 in 2001-02. Concessions of 50 per cent of the fee are offered to those aged over 60, those in receipt of means-tested benefits, those in receipt of a disability allowance or those who care for people with a disability allowance. No fees are charged for learners who attend tasters or an introductory course in the community, or those attending separate courses for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Seventy-five per cent of people who enrol on courses are women, which is in line with the national average for adult provision.

5. The Adult and Community Learning Service is funded through a contract with the Berkshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The population of West Berkshire is 145,000,

an increase of 5.6 per cent over the past 10 years. The area is one of prosperity, high incomes and low unemployment, with higher than average numbers of people qualified to national vocational qualification (NVQ) at level 4. West Berkshire is ranked among the 40 least deprived areas in England. However, there are four wards with lower than average incomes and 60 per cent of the district is rural. In May 2002, the unemployment rate in West Berkshire was 1.1 per cent, compared with a national rate of 3 per cent. The proportion of people from minority ethnic groups is 1.9 per cent, compared with the 6.2 per cent nationally.

Adult and Community Learning

6. There is good teaching and learning on courses in visual and performing arts, with some very high standards of work produced by learners. There are good activities, and learners are encouraged to work together. There are poor mechanisms for widening participation and some inadequate accommodation. On community learning programmes there is good teaching, using methods which are appropriate for the learners. There is very good support and guidance for learners. However, some of the venues are not suitable for learners with restricted mobility. Community projects for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well taught and learners are closely involved in decision-making. However, other courses for these learners are not always planned to meet their individual needs, and monitoring of progress is poor. There is much poor teaching in ICT, with a narrow range of teaching methods, and insufficient planning. Retention rates are good, and the use of taster projects to introduce more learners to ICT, have been successful in terms of recruitment. However, much of the teaching is over-ambitious and there has been poor planning for progression. In sport and leisure, there is good accommodation and teachers help learners to improve their skills. However, the teaching does not include sufficient reference to the wider aspects of exercise. There is insufficient attention paid to health and safety, and risk assessments do not meet health and safety standards. There has been effective action taken to increase the number of learners on modern foreign languages courses, but much of the teaching is unsatisfactory and learners' progress is not effectively monitored.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT   Grade 4

7. The Adult and Community Learning Service is managed by a team of five staff. All posts are part-time and the total hours equate to 3.3 full-time equivalents. The lifelong learning officer post is a job-share and the two officers are responsible for the management of the provision. A lifelong learning assistant (0.5), a lifelong learning project officer (0.5), a community information and communication technology manager (0.5) and a family learning co-ordinator (0.8) form the remainder of the lifelong learning team. The team reports to the pupils' and learners' services manager, who in turn reports to the head of pupil and student services. The lifelong learning team manages the annual contracts for general adult education and also manages a range of community projects as part of local partnership arrangements. These projects have been developed over the past two years, and account for approximately 10 per cent of enrolments. The lifelong learning team is responsible for equal opportunities, quality assurance, the management of all resources and the production of the adult learning plan. The adult learning plan for 2002-03 was completed in September 2002. The lifelong learning team is responsible for monitoring the implementation of strategic policy for adult and community learning in West Berkshire. The council has an equal opportunities policy and an equalities strategy. There is no policy for quality assurance although there are some written procedures. West Berkshire Council is accredited with the Investor in People standard. This is a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people. The lifelong learning team produced its first self-assessment report in March 2002 and an updated report was produced for the inspection, together with a quality assurance development plan for 2002-03.

STRENGTHS

- productive local partnership arrangements for community learning
- very effective information and referral service
- good promotion of equal opportunities through community projects

WEAKNESSES

- deficiencies in the management of subcontracted provision
- poor planning of the general adult education provision
- inadequate monitoring of health and safety arrangements
- insufficient opportunities to share good practice in teaching and learning
- poor monitoring of equal opportunities data

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better awareness of equal opportunities by staff

8. Communication of the council's strategic aims and objectives is effective among council staff. The lifelong learning team is fully aware of the commitment to the key objectives such as equality and diversity and widening participation, and these objectives feature strongly in the adult learning plan. The team has made considerable progress in furthering these objectives through its community projects. Working with a range of local partners, the lifelong learning team has developed a systematic bidding process, to enable small, local groups and charities to deliver programmes of community learning for specific groups of learners who have not taken part previously in adult provision. These groups include travellers, parents and older learners with dementia and people recovering from strokes. The community learning projects have increased opportunities to over 1,000 learners and have raised the profile of the LEA's work in these areas. Local partners speak highly of the work carried out by the LEA in supporting and helping to manage the partnership projects. The quality of teaching on many of the community projects is very good, particularly for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, family learning and the traveller community, although some of the teaching on the ICT projects is over-ambitious in its planning.

9. The LEA provides a very effective information and referral service to the general public. The wide range of activities required to support this service are well planned and reviewed frequently. Records of enquiries requesting information on learning opportunities within the area are detailed, and considerable time is often spent in dealing with them. An accurate and useful database is kept of all enquiries. Relevant and comprehensive information is sent out to clients supported by professionally produced, personal letters. A regular check is carried out on the information sources used by the LEA to ensure that they are up-to-date. Copies of information leaflets are available in Braille, on tape or in large print. Good feedback is received from clients on the high standards of the information service. The number of monthly enquiries for information from the LEA has more than trebled in the last year and enrolments on courses offered through the subcontracted providers have increased from 8,000 in 1999-2000 to almost 10,000 in 2001-02.

10. The management of the subcontracted provision has deficiencies. Although annual contracts issued to each of the three subcontracted providers indicate the target volume of enrolments and the weightings for particular categories of learners, they are not sufficiently specific about curriculum issues. There is regular contact between members of the lifelong learning team and staff at each of the subcontracted training providers and a number of meetings have recently been held to discuss aspects of the contracts. However, there are no agendas for these meetings, the minutes are poorly recorded and there are no clearly identified outcomes. There is insufficient consultation between the LEA and subcontractors over the agreement of new contracts. There has been poor practice in the way contracts are formally agreed with subcontracted providers. For example, one contract for 2001-02 has only recently been signed. Information needed to monitor the contracts is not always available during the review process. When formal reviews are carried out, there are no precise outcomes. Actions arising from the meetings are not always identified, deadlines for their completion are not set and there is no clear understanding of responsibilities.   A wide range of data on subcontractors'

provision are collected three times a year, and are used at LEA level as the basis for annual reporting. However, the data are not used effectively as part of the contract monitoring. The LEA has a plan for the management of data from subcontracted training providers, but this is not always adhered to. In some cases, feedback on the analysis of these data have not taken place until the end of the academic year.

11. The LEA is insufficiently involved in the planning of the general education programme with its subcontracted providers. There is poor curriculum planning in some subject areas, leading to a narrow range of provision and a lack of appropriate progression routes. New courses are frequently identified by existing learners or tutors, and in some cases, the opportunity to offer a new course is based on contact by a potential tutor who wants to teach a course. The local community school has developed some new courses which have attracted new learners, but progress overall across the provision has been slow. The programme of courses offered each year by the subcontracted providers is planned before the contract for the curriculum provision is agreed with the LEA. The LEA monitors courses that are cancelled because of poor enrolment figures, but there is insufficient discussion on how this information can be used to plan future provision.

12. The council does not fund discrete basic skills courses, as they are provided by the further education college. However, the council contributes to the lifelong learning partnership basic skills initiative by including basic skills in some of its partnership projects. In the community learning projects which include basic skills as part of the project aims, the literacy and numeracy teaching is an integral part of the activities for learners.

Equality of opportunity   Contributory grade   3

13. The LEA has taken satisfactory steps to implement the most recent legislation on equal opportunities. It has revised its disability policy and is carrying out an audit of all premises. Bids for funding to improve access in some buildings have been already submitted. There is an action plan in response to the amendments in the race relations act, but this has not yet been implemented. The number of learners from minority ethnic groups is small, but reflects the local population. The LEA has adopted West Berkshire Council's equal opportunities policy, but the equalities strategy recognises shortfalls in the current arrangements. An action plan to resolve this is being implemented.

14. Effective action has been taken to promote equal opportunities in the community, by focusing on specific target groups who are under-represented. Detailed demographic research forms part of the adult learning plans of 2001-02 and 2002-03. Priority groups have been identified and funding concessions have been agreed. Groups include learners with disabilities, male learners, minority ethnic groups, and the elderly, specifically those over 75. As part of the widening participation agenda, those in rural areas with poor transport links and those in the most deprived wards have been identified as priorities. The partnership projects have been particularly effective. For example, provision for the traveller community includes a bus which visits the site. There are visual displays on the bus which challenge stereotypes. Tutors visit both travellers' sites and support learners in developing their skills. Some learners have passed the driving theory test. A West Berkshire councillor takes a particular interest in the partnership projects and has active involvement in their promotion.

15. The LEA has a well-established system for monitoring enrolments in respect of age, gender, race and disability. However, there has been little use made of the information in relation to subcontractors. This is the first year that targets for specific groups have been included in the contracts. The monitoring of the promotion of equal opportunities by subcontractors has not been satisfactory. The further education college gives all staff an induction pack, which includes information on the new legislation, but there is no monitoring to check how it is used. There are considerable variations in staff awareness of the implications of equal opportunities in the classroom. For example, many individual staff support learners with disabilities by enlarging text, but some did not know how to obtain professional guidance. Some staff show little awareness and make judgements based on stereotypes. Others use language which is inappropriate and might be offensive to some learners. The LEA has a complaints procedure, but does not monitor complaints to subcontractors. The LEA has recognised the need to monitor subcontractors and has developed a system to do this. It is in the process of being implemented, but it is too soon to evaluate its effectiveness.

Quality assurance   Contributory grade   4

16. The LEA belongs to the pan-Berkshire adult and community learning officers group which has quality assurance as one of its focuses. Meetings are held every six months to discuss developments which affect provision, but there has been no joint forum for monitoring the quality of subcontractors. Such a forum is planned, but has not yet met.

17. The arrangements for monitoring the quality of subcontracted provision are not adequate. They are over-reliant on the systems of the subcontractors and the data supplied by them. The further education college and the adult and community college have well-established quality assurance systems, and the community school has recently implemented a system with the support of the LEA. All contracts contain a service guarantee, but this only states broad principles of performance standards. There has been little monitoring of the overall effectiveness of the quality of general adult education provision, other than by scrutiny of the data. The LEA does not currently have quality assurance mechanisms in place to ensure that the systems of all of the subcontractors are effective. Although the LEA is committed to improvement, the current quality assurance arrangements in subcontracted provision do not provide sufficient information to plan for improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. There is a strong focus on targets relating to widening participation, with data supplied by a range of subcontractors, but little information in relation to the quality of experience of learners in the classroom. The learners' questionnaires show different levels of satisfaction, but there is no common system among subcontractors for the collation of information, and meaningful comparisons are difficult to make. There is no systematic monitoring or internal moderation of the lesson observations carried out by the subcontractors, and the LEA does not currently have a strategy for dealing with problems.

18. Arrangements for the community learning projects are evolving, and some are too new to evaluate fully. However, the LEA has more direct involvement with quality assurance and has helped training providers to develop their systems. The new arrangements include monitoring visits to the projects, and lesson observations.

19. The LEA has no system to monitor the health and safety arrangements of subcontractors. Inspectors identified examples of poor practice in health and safety, particularly in relation to sport and leisure, where risk assessments are inadequate. The LEA was not aware of this poor practice.

20. Professional development is satisfactory for council staff, but is less satisfactory among subcontracted providers. Each of the three subcontracted providers has a staff development and training policy. There are good staff development opportunities in some subject areas, for example visual and performing arts, which are scheduled at appropriate times for adult and community learning tutors. However, in most other programme areas, there is a lack of planned staff development and staff are not given enough training on the subjects they teach. Staff records are not always kept up-to-date and there is insufficient sharing of good practice among tutors. Opportunities to share good practice in subject areas across the subcontracted providers are very few and this

has a marked impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

21. The self-assessment report identified many of the weaknesses in the quality assurance arrangements. It recognised some of the weaknesses in areas of learning, but did not identify the wide variations in the quality of teaching and learning. The process currently is over-reliant on self-assessment by the subcontractors.

Good Practice
A quality toolkit has recently been developed for community projects. The toolkit is used to support those bidding for funding community projects and to assist them with their self-assessment processes.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information & communications technology   **Grade 4**

22. At the time of inspection, there were 152 enrolments on ICT courses at the further education college and 18 learners at the adult and community college. There were no courses at the community school during the week of inspection, although there were eight enrolments. There were 57 enrolments on ICT community projects and a further 360 occasional users of drop-in provision. Courses take place in over 20 centres using facilities in schools. Tutors take laptop computers to a range of community centres, village halls and residential homes, as well as a mobile resource centre equipped with a further two laptops, known as the community learning information vehicle. Nine centres have been established as part of a national network of community-based computers. ICT courses include three-week tasters, six-week introductory sessions, short specialist courses in specific applications and 20-week courses in programming. About 50 per cent of the classes take place in the daytime, and about 25 per cent of the evening classes take place at the further education college. Provision is targeted at specific groups, including disabled people, elderly people and those in rural communities where transport difficulties limit access to the larger IT learning centres in urban areas. Most tutors work part-time.

STRENGTHS
- good rates of retention
- good initiatives to widen participation

WEAKNESSES
- narrow range of teaching methods
- poor strategic planning of provision
- insufficient planning of learning to meet individual needs

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED
- better course information for learners
- better feedback to learners on their progress

23. There have been consistently good retention rates over the past three years. In 2001-02, the retention rate was 86 per cent. Good attendance levels have been maintained at approximately 75 per cent between 1999 and 2002. Most learners demonstrate progress towards learning goals.

24. Thirty-six per cent of the teaching and learning is unsatisfactory. Initial assessment is superficial, often with a brief discussion with the learner about their previous experience of computers. Schemes of work are inconsistent in format and level of detail, tending to focus on the features of particular applications, rather than on the skills to be learned. Lesson plans are variable in quality. There is little planning to ensure that lesson content and methods are appropriate for the wide levels of experience and ability within groups. The planning of courses for beginners is especially weak. The content of many lessons is over-ambitious, with learners moving rapidly from one feature of the software to the next, with little time to develop skills and consolidate learning. One lesson for older beginners included inserting a digital photo into a text document, and creating an e-mail address book. In another lesson, beginners who struggled to open the word processing application were introduced to mail merge. However, there is good planning of learning on a project for people with learning difficulties. In one lesson observed, planning was at an individual level and learners developed and reinforced their ICT skills as part of the development of life and work skills. However, this good practice has yet to be shared. In all of the unsatisfactory sessions, the teaching was not varied and depended too much on tutor direction. Tutors instruct from the front of the class using a data projector to demonstrate long sequences of key-strokes which learners find difficult to follow. Many tasks and learning materials are poorly designed, and include obscure language and content that is of little interest to most learners. In some lessons, learners' chairs are facing the wall and they have to turn to see the demonstrations.

25. There are insufficient resources to meet learners' needs. There are fewer than 12 laptops, so there are insufficient to meet the demand for several courses at the same time. The Internet is not usually available to learners on the laptop project, and printing facilities are limited, so that learners are unable to appreciate fully what they have achieved during the lesson. There are too few reference materials and handouts. The learning material that is available on most courses is dull and uninspiring. Full consideration is not given to the creation of a comfortable working environment and there is inappropriate seating in many locations. Lighting is rarely adjusted to enhance visual presentations. Some classrooms are cramped and some are poorly laid out. In one classroom, the roof was leaking onto the laptop. Where there are adjustable chairs, the learners are unfamiliar with how to adjust them. Many learners are working at the wrong height and their posture is poor.

26. Assessment and monitoring of learners' progress is satisfactory overall. Most feedback is given orally and is helpful. However, in some cases, the lack of printing facilities limits the opportunities for tutors to give feedback. There is insufficient space on the learning cards and record books to record progress in a meaningful way, and some tutors do not record feedback to learners.

27. Specially designed initiatives bring ICT resources to a wide variety of learners. Use is made of laptops and other mobile facilities across a wide geographical area. The 'e-mpower' project and the community laptop project are used to bring learning to day centres and voluntary groups, where learners would not otherwise have access to ICT.

Over 50 per cent of current classes are targeted at priority groups. These initiatives contribute positively towards West Berkshire's adult learning plan. However, learners are not always clear where they can study locally after the six hours introduction to ICT.

28. Learners are encouraged to enrol using a variety of methods including postal enrolments. However, course descriptions do not give detailed information on the level and content of the course and some course titles are misleading. On request, learners are given telephone advice from course tutors or centre heads. However, learners are often sent inappropriate information in the form of a scheme of work which contains terminology they do not understand and some learners enrol onto the wrong course. All tutors are given a booklet outlining the learning support service, but learners on community courses do not have access to this service.

29. The current strategy to promote ICT learning in the community is in its early stages of development. For example, the laptop project has raised expectations for progression, which cannot be fully met. There has been insufficient planning and work with local training providers to provide comprehensive information. There has been insufficient consultation with existing full- and part-time teaching staff to use their technical expertise to improve the curriculum and overall learning experience. There are few opportunities for tutors to share resources. The quality assurance processes do not identify the weaknesses in teaching and the need for greater local planning. Although staff are given an information pack which includes equal opportunities, there are a few examples of tutors using inappropriate language.

30. Learners welcome being able to learn at times and in locations that are convenient. Learners on beginners' courses welcome the fact that they do not have to work towards a qualification. Learners attend classes for a variety of reasons including improving confidence, improving employment prospects and becoming more familiar with ICT. Older learners say they feel more included in society generally as a result of their participation in community ICT projects. Learners on specialised college courses value the opportunities to develop skills that will help them get a better job. However, learners would like more handouts and clearer information to help them choose the most appropriate course. Learners who have completed short courses in community venues would like more progression opportunities locally. Learners on the community laptop project would like better access to the Internet. Learners recognise the limitations of some of the community venues, but prefer to learn there rather than travel.

Good Practice
Volunteers from the local volunteer bureau who work on the community projects, are able to work with learners and develop their teaching skills. If they want to become qualified tutors, they are able to access staff development to help them to achieve this aim.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel   Grade 4

31. Sport and leisure courses are offered at 15 locations across West Berkshire, including rural neighbourhood community venues, schools, social services facilities, and college premises. Programmes include bridge, yoga, tai-chi, badminton and a range of exercise and fitness activities. These programmes usually run for up to 12 weeks for 2 hours a week. Most of the learners are women in the 50+ age group. Much of the provision is offered by the further education college and is overseen by four centre heads who work on a part-time basis. Most of the tutors are employed on a part-time basis. Sport and leisure provision accounts for 2,809 enrolments in 2001-02. At the time of inspection, information shows that there are 251 learners enrolled on further education college courses, 155 on the community school courses and 37 learners funded to attend adult and community college courses.

STRENGTHS
- good support to improve techniques and skills
- good standard of accommodation

WEAKNESSES
- unsatisfactory teaching
- insufficient attention to safe working practices
- insufficient understanding of the benefits of exercise by learners
- poor curriculum planning and development

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED
- more precise learning goals
- more updating of tutors
- better recording of learners' progress

32. The achievement of learning goals is satisfactory overall. Many learners achieve their learning goals related to health, well-being and improved stress management. Older learners acknowledge improved flexibility and mobility, after attending yoga and tai chi sessions. In bridge classes, learners are able to develop a good mental awareness of the game and tactical skills. However, learning goals are often identified without full prior knowledge of the programme and are often stated in a very imprecise form on the record cards. Retention rates across all training providers are satisfactory. In 2001-02, the average retention rate was 78 per cent and this has been maintained for the past three years. Similarly, attendance rates are satisfactory, averaging 73 per cent

in 2001-02.

33. Thirty-seven per cent of teaching is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient development of the learners' understanding of the wider benefits of an exercise programme. Learners are not always given sufficient information about the exercises they are performing. For example, learners are not told about the impact of the exercises or the postures, in terms of mobility or strength, neither are they given any explanation about why they were performing the exercise. There is no information about how the techniques of yoga or tai-chi can be applied or practised outside the classroom to help maintain mobility or for specific conditions. In most exercise lessons, learners follow precise instructions from the tutor aimed at developing specific techniques and postures. Instruction and demonstration techniques are satisfactory, but there is an over-reliance on these methods. Some of the tutors do not plan their training programmes in detail. Schemes of work and lesson plans show insufficient detail on how activities are to be undertaken and developed, and how health and safety considerations are to be taken into account. Aims and objectives of the lessons are not shared with learners.

34. In some lessons, learners have more individual attention and are clear about why they are doing specific tasks. Lessons are well-planned. In one very good bridge class, the learners were intellectually challenged and gained considerable skill during the lesson. The tutor had a detailed schedule of how activities could be differentiated for learners with particular disabilities. In an exercise class for those over eighty, the instruction was sensitive, with appropriate levels of information about the exercises.

35. Insufficient attention is paid to safe working practices, particularly in outreach centres. Health and safety considerations are not given high priority. At the further education college, risk assessments are carried out for each site, but they are superficial, and underestimate the probability and severity of potential problems. At the community school, the training provider uses the assessments carried out by the school, which are not appropriate for older learners. Risk assessments are often carried out without tutor involvement. Key information is missing from premise data sheets, for example the location of a first aid box, and this information is not always available to tutors working in the centres. There is no formal initial assessment of learners at the start of an exercise programme. Information about learners' medication and medical conditions is not systematically collected and recorded. Although tutors may carry out a health check at the beginning of the programme, it is not thorough. Checks at the beginning of sessions for recent illness or injury which may affect the learners' ability to take part, are not always undertaken. In one lesson, two learners had evident mobility problems and found the task too difficult. The tutor did not respond appropriately.

36. Physical resources and accommodation are of a good standard and provide a suitable environment for the activities undertaken. Most venues have appropriate access for learners who have a disability. Tutors have relevant subject-related qualifications, although only a small number have a teaching qualification. In most instances, qualifications have been held for a number of years, with very little recent

updating of skills or professional development.

37. Learners are given good feedback on their progress from the tutor during the classes. This feedback assists learners to improve their own techniques and levels of skill. The monitoring of progress throughout the course is less thorough and there are variations in practice. At the further education college, tutors are encouraged to complete records and to monitor the learners' progress on standard documents. However, several tutors do not use the documents and prefer to create their own. Others do not use any formal methods for reviewing and recording the progress of their learners. Where records are kept, they are often superficial or incomplete and do not reflect the wide range of ability and experience of the learners on many of the courses.

38. The range of provision offered across the local authority is poor. New courses are identified as a result of learners' satisfaction surveys and questionnaires, and the availability of suitable resources. Most of the current provision is based on the success of previous programmes, although there are some new classes in traditional subjects. Training providers have made considerable efforts to widen participation, but they have not been effective in attracting new groups of learners.

39. Course information is satisfactory, but there is very little guidance available before enrolment. Many rural programmes do not offer clear progression routes and learners at different levels attend the same class. Some learners attend the same class for a number of years and it is not always clear how they have progressed. There is a wide range of support services for learners available at the further education college, but learners from outreach centres do not use them. Tutors in these centres offer a high level of informal personal support, both during and outside the class.

40. Curriculum planning and development is poor. There is little subject input from specialists. The curriculum planning documents at the further education college are superficial and sometimes incomplete. They do not give sufficient information to support management decisions about programme developments. Team meetings are held regularly, but have insufficient focus on the strategic development of the curriculum area. Tutors at the college complete course record books to review completed courses, but they contain little evaluation and offer little direction for continuous improvement of the curriculum. A comprehensive induction pack is given to tutors outlining their role and responsibilities. Centre heads actively encourage tutors to implement new systems of record-keeping, but some tutors do not use the existing systems and procedures. The staff development programme is extensive and readily available to all staff. However, there is a poor take up of these opportunities by part-time tutors. Records of staff qualifications and professional development are out of date and do not include important details. Classroom observations do not include specialist subject involvement, and the feedback to tutors sometimes lacks critical evaluation and clear guidance for improvement.

41. Learners in village halls are happy with the accommodation provided for their activities, judging it to be clean, appropriate for the chosen activity and more readily

accessible to rural communities. They feel well supported by the tutors. Older learners have gained valuable opportunities for socialising within the group and experience increased mobility and flexibility after their exercise classes.

Poor Practice
In one lesson the tutor gave learners inappropriate medical advice. The tutor was not qualified or experienced to give this advice and did not make this clear to the learners.

Visual & performing arts & media   Grade 2

42. There is a wide range of visual and performing arts courses. These include art for the terrified, life drawing masterclasses, dancing, needlecraft, soft furnishing, upholstery, music and singing programmes. Course length varies from one-week tasters to 12- or 13-week courses. Individual lessons normally run for two hours, although most dance programmes are for one hour. Evening programmes represent 57 per cent of the total provision in this area of learning. Courses take place in schools, community centres, village halls and churches, many of which are in rural and remote communities. Information for the week of inspection showed 106 enrolments on community school courses, 877 on further education college courses and 67 learners on adult and community college courses. In 2001-02, 45 per cent of learners were aged 60 or over and 1.4 per cent registered as having a learning difficulty or disability. Staff are mostly part-time.

STRENGTHS
- high standard of work in crafts
- good teaching methods
- good additional activities and opportunities
- effective learning of skills and techniques

WEAKNESSES
- some inadequate accommodation and resources
- poor mechanisms for attracting new learners

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED
- further development of pre-course information and advice
- further development of course records

43. Most learners achieve a high standard of work in crafts. In practical sessions, learners work on individual projects producing finished work to a high standard. Learners frequently work independently at home bringing in additional work to discuss with the tutor at the start of the next class. They often receive detailed individual feedback before the lesson starts. Group criticism is also used effectively in art and design to raise achievement. However, in a few cases learners often have a wide range of learning goals and sometimes tutors try to offer too wide a range of activities to meet that demand. Too many activities are not followed through to completion.

44. All teaching is satisfactory and 91 per cent of teaching is good or better. Much of the good teaching is in crafts, music and dance. In these areas, teachers who are practising performers and craftspeople, inspire learners to progress to more advanced levels. They illustrate their teaching with references to their own work, frequently demonstrate, and bring in finished pieces and samples. Learners are encouraged to share their views and appreciate being treated as fellow artists. Tutors incorporate professional technical expertise through well-planned demonstrations to illustrate craft techniques. In bookbinding, the tutor showed learners specialist techniques of paring leather, and invited them to try the technique under supervision. In upholstery, the tutor employed the same teaching method to illustrate stitching of blinds. Learners build up detailed workbooks from samples and technical handouts which are a useful reference document. Learners work well and learn from each other in many classes. In singing and orchestra lessons, learners share experiences and gain from contributing to group achievement. More experienced players help new starters to gain confidence with their instruments.

45. There are good additional activities and opportunities for learners. Opportunities are arranged for learners to exhibit their work locally and to carry out commissions. For instance, one learner has progressed sufficiently in design to produce garden designs for potential clients. Tutors arrange for learners to attend additional workshops and activity days. For example, in lace making, tutors arrange visits to craft fairs. Learners can display their work, exchange practice and learn new skills. Finished work shows technical competence, creative ability and careful attention to detail. Learners studying art and design visit galleries, exhibitions and sometimes museums abroad. Learners in singing and orchestra classes perform locally in supermarkets and other venues to raise money for charity. One learner in singing gained the confidence and skills to join a local choir and perform a solo piece. The popular 'late starters' orchestra has a website which supports recruitment. Several members progress sufficiently to form their own ensemble and play locally.

46. There is inadequate accommodation and resources in some centres. In ceramics, a studio is cramped and inhibits the production of large and experimental pieces which learners express a desire to construct. There are inadequate storage facilities and learners have to take damp and fragile work home between lessons. No storage space is provided for needlework and upholstery, and tutors and learners have to carry machines and tools from home to class each week. Tutors often provide their own equipment for learners and in some instances paper and materials. Some classrooms are inappropriate. In one centre, craft classes are accommodated in biology rooms. At another centre, needlework learners are housed in a purpose-made room but are not allowed to use the equipment and have to bring in their own machines. There are few display areas where learners can exhibit finished work or put up ongoing work for review. Some venues have limited access for learners with restricted mobility. In a few lessons, inappropriate learning materials are presented, for example black and white photocopies are used for colour theory work.

47. There are poor mechanisms for identifying need, developing new courses and

attracting new learners. New provision is largely developed on the basis of existing learner demand. Provision is not planned in conjunction with the LEA or with other providers. Some centres exchange information and co-operate to ensure that learners who are enrolled on courses that do not fully recruit are accommodated on another course. Although one of the aims of the LEA is to widen participation in areas with priority postcodes, there has been no significant change in visual and performing arts.

48. Curriculum management is effective at centre level. There are good staff development opportunities, but some staff take do not them up. New staff have an induction which includes an introduction to equal opportunities. Awareness of equal opportunities among staff is generally satisfactory, and a few tutors support individual learners with disabilities particularly well. In lace making, the tutor provided additional lighting for a visually impaired learner and a life-drawing class was located in a refurbished village hall which allowed a wheelchair user to participate.

49. Learners enjoy their courses and speak highly of the tutors. They welcome the opportunity to attend courses provided locally at times to suit their needs. Learners are aware of the shortcomings of the pre-course information and advice and it is often difficult to be sure that the right course had been chosen.

Good Practice
The community school's local history project produced an excellent video. The project was inspired after the success of a textile piece produced by individuals and local groups in the village to commemorate the Millennium. The video includes interviews with older residents of the village and includes stories of their early lives, school days, the experience of war years and changes in the village up to the present day. Old photographs and images have been used effectively to illustrate their stories.

English, languages & communications   **Grade 4**

50. Modern foreign languages provision includes Japanese, Russian and Greek, as well as French, German, Spanish and Italian. However only French, Spanish and Italian are offered at a number of levels and venues. There were a total of 1,995 modern foreign languages enrolments during 2001-02. Most courses last for eight or 13 weeks for two hours a week. Approximately 25 per cent of the enrolments are for daytime courses. Many tutors are native speakers and most are employed part-time. The provision is subcontracted to the further education college, the community school and the adult and community college. Information shows 38 enrolments on the adult and community college courses, 103 enrolments on the community school courses and 289 enrolments on the further education courses.

STRENGTHS
• good rates of retention
• increasing enrolments from targeted districts

WEAKNESSES
• significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching
• inadequate teaching resources
• ineffective monitoring of learners' progress
• inadequate curriculum management

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED
• better pre-course advice locally

51. Retention rates have improved from 75.2 per cent in 1999-2000, to 83.4 per cent currently. Retention rates at the further education college, the main provider, have improved from 75 per cent to 87 per cent over the same period. Enrolments have increased over the past three years from 411 in 1999-2000 to 1,259 in 2001-02. Modern foreign language enrolments now account for nearly 12 per cent of provision and contribute to the overall aim of increasing participation from disadvantaged groups. For example, 14.8 per cent of learners enrolled by the further education college come from groups classed as disadvantaged by the LEA. This compares with 11.7 per cent the previous year. New courses have been provided in areas of rural deprivation.

52. Standards of work in lessons vary across a range of languages and levels. In some

lessons, learners demonstrate good comprehension and oral skills. They are able to communicate effectively in the foreign language and can confidently manipulate a range of vocabulary and language structures. However, in some lessons, learners' knowledge and skills have not developed well, often because the tasks are unsuitable and unchallenging. Many learners in these lessons are unable to understand the language and find it difficult to communicate fluently.

53. Thirty-one per cent of teaching is unsatisfactory. In these sessions, lesson plans are mostly superficial and often only refer to lists of topics. There are occasional references to the grammatical points to be covered, but only rarely is there any reference to learning activities or precise outcomes. Activities in lessons are often limited in range and the content and pace are not stimulating. There are few opportunities for interactive pairwork or groupwork. Tutors frequently use English when use of the foreign language is more appropriate and there is an over-reliance on text books, and insufficient use of authentic materials, ICT and videos. In some lessons, there are linguistic errors in tutors' handouts and boardwork. In most lessons, there is little attempt to adapt materials and activities to meet the needs of all learners, despite the wide range of learners' levels of competence. In one intermediate level lesson, some learners completed a written task on weather conditions, long before the rest of the group, and were left waiting while the others finished. In another lesson, the tutor led a lengthy oral skills activity involving repetition of phrases by the whole class. No provision was made for variations in understanding and difficulties of pronunciation. In the best lessons, tutors make effective use of a wide range of stimulating activities and materials, and use the foreign language extensively. For example, in a beginner's class, learners used the foreign language to carry out classroom surveys on homes and jobs.

54. Accommodation is generally adequate, and most tutors have access to cassette and video recorders, whiteboards and overhead projectors. However, teaching and learning resources generally are poor. There is no central bank of teaching resources available for tutors, who often supply their own textbooks. There is little use of IT across the centres. Learners do not have the opportunity to use foreign web-sites to widen their knowledge. Some of the tutors do not have specialist language teaching qualifications and staff development is not consistent within and across centres.

55. Assessment arrangements and progress reviews depend on the providers' internal procedures. The monitoring of learners' progress is unsystematic and in many instances relevant documents are not completed. In one centre, a comprehensive monitoring process is operated effectively by tutors. In other centres, monitoring processes are not fully implemented. A recently introduced card system is operated by the largest contracted provider, but is not used consistently as a basis for assessment of all language skills.

56. Learners are given an outline of courses when they enrol which contains brief details of the course, with advice about how to study. Some learners are given oral advice and guidance about courses before enrolment, but this may not be from a specialist tutor. Generally, learners feel able to approach their tutors for specialist

advice and guidance once courses are under way. They are, however, less sure about how to seek more general support from the contracted provider, even though written details are available.

57. Curriculum management is inadequate for modern foreign languages. Some staff bring individual tutors together in informal ways, but they are insufficient to help a large group of tutors to work effectively. The quality assurance arrangements are poor. There are too few opportunities for staff to share good practice. There is no planning for tutors' professional development, and few lesson observations by managers with subject knowledge. Course reviews are not sufficiently detailed to lead to improvements.

58. Most learners value their lessons and feel at ease with their tutors and fellow learners. For some, lessons represent a welcome opportunity to maintain or acquire foreign language skills. Others appreciate the social and leisure opportunities afforded by their courses of study. Some are studying to add interest to a projected holiday or longer period abroad. A considerable number return to the same or similar courses repeatedly. However, some learners are concerned about levels of fees, the lack of refreshment facilities, parking, disabled access arrangements or classroom facilities.

Foundation programmes   Grade 3

59. There is a broad range of foundation programmes for people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These training programmes are attended by learners from target groups such as those with severe and moderate dementia, mental health problems, severe and moderate learning difficulties and/or considerable physical disabilities. Programmes take place in the day, and all learners are part-time. Most programmes are organised into six- or 13-week modules and are primarily activity based. Two programmes run throughout the year and are designed over several years to build particular social and employment skills. All the training provision is either free to participants, or offered at concessionary rates. There are 221 learners on the programmes which are broadly divided between community projects and college programmes. There are 125 enrolments across 19 programmes at the further education college, 13 learners are funded on programmes at the adult and community college and there was no provision at the community school during the week of the inspection. There are 96 learners on the community programmes.

STRENGTHS
*   broad range of achievements
*   excellent teaching on community projects
*   good initiatives to widen participation
*   close involvement of learners in decision-making

WEAKNESSES
*   insufficient specialist resources and expertise
*   ineffective planning to meet individual needs of learners on college programmes
*   poor monitoring of progress

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED
*   better awareness of equal opportunities by staff

60. Achievements on community projects are diverse, reflecting the broad range of requirements and interests of learners. For example, some learners enter employment much earlier than anticipated. As most programmes are practical, some aspects of group and individual achievements are visible in the end products such as artwork, gardens, meals they have prepared or poems they have written. There are some good examples of photographic records of group and individual achievements. Some achievements, such as making contact with people, or an increase in confidence occur

over time.

61. There are examples of outstanding teaching on some community projects. Tutors and learning support assistants involve learners exceptionally well throughout the lessons. They use a wide range of creative strategies and activities for introducing new topics and for reinforcing learning. They maintain motivation, and enable learners to take on challenging tasks. Literacy, oral communication and money skills are built into the curriculum and are taught through meaningful tasks related to learners' interests, daily work and employment goals. Learners are helped to carry out all tasks for themselves, wherever possible. For example, they gain literacy skills through creating their own materials and use a combination of hand-written words, writing with symbols, images and photographs.

62. For many college-based programmes, there is insufficient planning to ensure that individual needs and requirements are met. Lesson plans do not contain enough information about individual's learning, communication and support needs. Although lesson plans generally include at least one activity for each learner, the tasks are sometimes very restricted in scope and time. The initial assessment is not always used as the basis for planning alternative activities for learners. Some learners have communication difficulties which are overlooked in lessons. Staff are ready to offer generalised praise, rather than supporting learners to deal with challenges.

63. There are good initiatives to widen participation. The lifelong learning team is active in identifying community groups who need resources and in responding to requests for assistance. Programmes have been developed to provide opportunities for a wide range of groups who would not otherwise be able to participate. Good use is made of feedback from user groups in programme planning. A system for the observation of teaching has been piloted, and well-structured, detailed and critical observations have been carried out. Teaching on some of the partnership projects has not yet been observed. All staff use the required documents, but some are not aware of how to make best use of the procedures in order to improve learning. Some staff are not aware of their responsibilities for the promotion of equal opportunities.

64. Learners are closely involved in the decision-making about programmes. There are user groups for every programme and learners have been trained to take part in a steering group for people with learning difficulties. Imaginative strategies are used to raise the profile of provision. For example, fine art produced by learners is presented in an annual exhibition. However, there is very little written information for learners about their programmes. Some information is provided in writing with symbols in the further education college prospectus. Marketing leaflets are not designed in a way that would easily attract target groups.

65. There are insufficient specialist resources and expertise to ensure all learners can complete the programme. Some tutors and learning assistants are very well qualified, but others are not trained to work with learners who have a disability and some have not had teacher training. There are some excellent new resources but they are not well

used. There is a lack of specialist support for certain programmes, such as scribes for the creative writing programme. Some teaching rooms are not accessible to people in wheelchairs. The LEA recognises the need for greater expertise and has plans to deal with some of the resource problems.

66. Monitoring of progress is poor. Targets for individual learners are not sufficiently precise and it is difficult to monitor and assess progress effectively. On some programmes, learners are encouraged to identify three personal goals as part of the initial assessment. However, insufficient support is given to help them formulate realistic, specific goals. Sometimes the goals are written by staff and are the same for all learners. Some learners may continue with the same subject for several years, carrying over the same goals from one term to the next. Progress during the programme is therefore difficult to measure. On some college programmes, there is little assessment or monitoring of progress.

67. Learners are generally positive about the importance of the opportunities being provided to them and the value this added to their life. Learners cite instances where keep-fit classes have improved their strength or dexterity. Several learners spoke about the positive effects on their families. Learners are very committed to becoming more independent in their lives. However, some learners are unclear about whether they have achieved anything over a long time. Learners expressed concern about reduced disability access at the new gym.

Good Practice
Learners who have severe learning difficulties role-play activities to help them understand equal opportunities and health and safety. This is carried out in precise detail to check understanding of basic rights and responsibilities. Learners then design their own materials to help them remember the information.

Community learning   Grade 2

68. West Berkshire Adult and Community Learning funds seven community learning projects across West Berkshire, some in conjunction with the further education college and the community school. Venues range from a mobile information and guidance unit, village halls, community schools, residential and day-care settings, youth and community centres and two travellers' sites. A further eight projects are planned to start from January 2003. The projects are collaborative ventures involving a range of voluntary and statutory agencies. There are currently 612 learners enrolled on community learning programmes, of whom 495 are women. There are 25 learners on foundation programmes which are basic skills initiatives, 15 of whom are women. There are 17 women enrolled on family learning programmes. There are a very low number of learners from minority ethnic groups, other than the projects for travellers. The community learning programmes are offered to learners free of charge.

STRENGTHS
- good achievement of individual and collective learning goals
- good teaching and learning
- good guidance and support for learners

WEAKNESSES
- some inaccessible community venues

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED
- better recording of meetings

69. Learners make good progress on the community learning courses. On the rural arts project, tutors set realistic goals and learners are encouraged to participate. They gain confidence and self-esteem, as well as producing some good art work. Learners on the practical parenting course and those on the family literacy course, progress to further courses or greater participation in community initiatives. For example, some mothers who completed the practical parenting course in the summer of 2002, progressed from an initial literacy course to IT and are now participating in school parent/teacher association activities. A project for learners with learning difficulties, has enabled the learners to gain skills in hospitality and catering through the provision of a snack bar in a local community centre. Of the 15 learners who started the course, one has already gained employment.

70. The teaching is good. Tutors prepare the lessons carefully, taking into account the

diverse needs of the learners. The emphasis in all of the projects is on the learning that takes place. Women on the 'rural arts' course learn and develop new skills by focusing on producing craft works using techniques such as wax painting. On the life skills courses tutors continually check learning and adjust teaching methods to best meet and challenge the needs of learners. Assessment takes place at the end of each lesson. In many projects, learners evaluate their lessons by working as a focus group and their views are recorded. This develops skills of evaluation and analysis, as well as valuing the learners' views and opinions. Projects have clear aims and objectives and learners are involved in shaping the course content before the start of the activity. More recent work with the traveller community involves laptop computer provision and basic skills support. Tutors and the community development worker teach on an individual basis and are sensitive to the needs of travellers. The course activities are appropriate to the learners' cultural interests. A family literacy project which involves parents and their children working together, includes activities that are of interest to adults and children. A quiz devised by a learning support assistant is used to good effect, building the confidence of both age groups.

71. Support and guidance are good. Learners are clear about the aims of their programmes and are helped to achieve their learning targets. Facilities and services are provided to enable participation in community projects and good access to crèche facilities is an integral part of the programmes. At the end of the community learning courses, guidance and advice on progression opportunities are identified and provided. There are exceptionally good learning support assistants who work with learners who have additional needs.

72. There is poor access for people with restricted mobility at the town community centre. The facility provides space for people with learning difficulties, some of whom have difficulty using stairs, and a number of classes are on the upper floor. Other community activities are in schools, village halls, community centres, day-care centres for older people and for people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities. Most are accessible for people with mobility difficulties, but are in isolated rural areas. Some venues are too small for the number of learners using the facility. Materials and equipment for learners on all courses are appropriate. Tutors are well prepared and health and safety is carefully considered. Risk assessments are carried out satisfactorily by the staff working with vulnerable groups. Tutors are well qualified in their subject area or as tutors and most are experienced in working with the specific community group.

73. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and are appropriate for the groups. On most projects, learners assess their own progress at the end of course by reflecting on what they have learned. For some projects, the assessment involves the evaluation of collective objectives. For learners who have individual learning goals, there is close monitoring of learning targets and immediate feedback from tutors, which are recorded and reviewed at regular intervals. The results are then used to modify the learning programme.

74. The foundation programmes that have been developed are as a result of consultation with specific groups of isolated or otherwise socially excluded learners. The council has used surveys and research to assess local need for specific initiatives, such as work with the traveller community and isolated rural groups. School heads and community development workers have made contact with under-represented groups and their needs have been acknowledged. Bids for funding have included crèche facilities to enable parents to attend sessions.

75. The lifelong learning team has a successful system of bidding to select projects, which are mainly funded from the community education fund. The lifelong learning team has regular meetings with the partners in the projects, but they are not well recorded. Most projects have been visited by a member of the lifelong learning team and there have been observations of teaching. The lifelong learning team has been particularly helpful in supporting the projects with advice and guidance. The projects make a significant contribution to the authority's strategic aims to widen participation and promote equal opportunities.

76. The practical parenting learners value the opportunity to develop confidence by working together to further the groups aims. They speak highly of the community development worker from a major voluntary organisation who works with the group, and they appreciate her skill, knowledge and approach. The group moved onto a further course run by the local college, but were disappointed with the crèche facility.

Language of the Adult and Community Learning

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.

	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.