

INSPECTION REPORT

Windsor & Maidenhead LEA

21 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
- **learnirect** 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

Windsor and Maidenhead Lifelong Learning Service manages part-time adult and community learning at 34 centres in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead. Those courses inspected were, information and communications technology, visual and performing arts and media and community learning. All adult and community learning, apart from community learning programmes, is provided through subcontracting arrangements with a local school, a college of further education and an agricultural college.

Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Windsor and Maidenhead Lifelong Learning Service's provision is good in visual and performing arts and in community learning, and satisfactory in information and communications technology. Leadership and management are satisfactory, as is equality of opportunity. Quality assurance arrangements are unsatisfactory.

GRADES

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

Areas of learning	Grade
Information & communications technology	3
Visual & performing arts & media	2
Community learning	2

KEY STRENGTHS

- good achievement of learning goals
- good teaching facilities in information and communications technology
- particularly knowledgeable visual and performing arts tutors
- effective management of community learning resources
- good range of projects to widen participation
- good range of childcare provision
- effective quality assurance framework for community learning programmes

KEY WEAKNESSES

- narrow range of teaching methods in information and communications technology
- ineffective curriculum management and support for tutors in the visual arts
- poor initial information and advice for learners
- poor assessment of learners' progress
- insufficient co-ordination of adult provision in the borough
- ineffective target-setting for providers
- ineffective monitoring of subcontractors' quality assurance arrangements

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- further encouragement of independent learning
- better planning for individual learner's needs
- more training for project sponsors
- better sharing of good practice

THE INSPECTION

1. A team of nine inspectors spent a total of 45 days with Windsor and Maidenhead Lifelong Learning Service (the Service) in October 2002. They made 32 visits to venues where lessons are held, where they held discussions with 218 learners. During these visits, they reviewed 133 learners' portfolios and examples of practical work. Inspectors carried out 66 interviews with teaching staff and managers, observed and graded 38 classes and examined 106 individual learning plans. Inspectors also reviewed a range of other documents, including the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead's (the Borough's) education strategy and development plan, its community plan and social inclusion strategy, the Service's adult learning plan, quality assurance documents, marketing materials, staff job descriptions, learning materials, prospectuses, and information on courses. Inspectors also reviewed the Service's self-assessment report produced in March 2002 and the most recent development plan produced in October, in preparation for the inspection.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Information & communications technology	0	2	2	1	4	0	0	9
Visual & performing arts & media	1	6	9	3	0	0	0	19
Community learning	0	2	3	5	0	0	0	10
Total	1	10	14	9	4	0	0	38
per cent	65.79%			23.68%	10.53%			

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

2. The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead became a unitary authority in April 1998. The Service forms part of the quality assurance unit of the Borough's education directorate. Since April 2001, adult and community learning has been funded by Berkshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The local education authority (LEA) also receives funding from the European Social Fund (ESF) and the local LSC's Local Initiative Fund (LIF) for a project to develop learning opportunities with the local Asian community.

3. The Service provides adult learning through contracts with a further education college, a college of agriculture and a secondary school. The Service also directly manages a number of community learning programmes in line with local and national priorities. These include family learning and adult education provision for people with learning difficulties and disabilities, and adults with mental health problems. Courses are held at 34 learning centres and involve 13 areas of learning. The Service uses a variety of sites in addition to colleges, including schools, church and village halls, day centres and community centres. In 2001-02, there were 5,827 enrolments on part-time leisure and recreational programmes and 562 enrolments on community learning programmes. Almost half of the Service's enrolments are for visual and performing arts and media courses. The LEA estimates that 4.1 per cent of the area's adult population took part in adult education in 2001-02. Forty-seven per cent of courses take place during the day, compared with the national Department for Education and Skills (DfES) figure of 54 per cent. Thirty-eight per cent of learners are aged over 60, which is higher than the national average.

4. The Borough is a small, affluent, unitary authority with a population of just over 133,000. It is a mixture of urban and rural areas, with the population concentrated in the towns of Windsor and Maidenhead. The 1991 census found that 4.8 per cent of the local population are from minority ethnic groups, compared with a national average of 6.2 per cent. In May 2002, the unemployment rate in the Borough was 1.3 per cent, compared with the national average of 3 per cent. The Borough ranks among the 25 least deprived districts in England. The average income is 15 per cent higher than the national average. This relative affluence disguises pockets of deprivation in some rural areas and in some urban wards in Maidenhead and Windsor. Locally, information technology (IT) and tourism are the largest industries. However, the Borough has become a residential area for staff working in technology industries along the M4 corridor.

Adult and Community Learning

5. Most learners make good progress. There are no data for learner achievement at the level of individual courses, but the Service's summary data indicate a steady improvement in the retention of learners. The Service's community learning programme is effective in widening participation and recruiting learners from disadvantaged communities. In addition to the knowledge and skills which they develop on their main programme, many learners achieve significant personal and social development. Learners on community learning programmes have increased their motivation and confidence in their ability to learn new skills. Progression routes for learners are developing, but are not well established throughout the borough. Few programmes provide learners with sufficient information about what they could do next. In some areas of learning, achievement is hindered by the ineffective planning and monitoring of individual learner's progress.

6. Teaching is generally good. Of lessons observed, 66 per cent were good or better and 90 per cent were satisfactory or better. The only unsatisfactory teaching observed was in the area of information and communications technology (ICT). Teachers and learners enjoy positive relationships and learners support each other well. Most teaching is well matched to individual needs, but few learners have adequately detailed, written individual learning plans. Most teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced, although some are not qualified to teach adults. In some classes, learners receive insufficient feedback on their progress and achievements. Resources are generally adequate, and teaching facilities in ICT are good. There is a good range of basic computing courses in ICT and a range of established courses covering different aspects of the visual and performing arts. Many learners attend courses in the visual arts for many years, often with the same tutor. The main programme of recreational and leisure courses does not attract many new learners from under-represented groups. Learners are given good support on most programmes, but do not always receive sufficient information about courses before they enrol.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

7. The Service was established in 1998, when the Borough took over responsibility for adult education. It forms part of the quality assurance unit of the Borough's education directorate. A lifelong learning officer is responsible for the strategic and day-to-day management of the service. The lifelong learning officer reports to the head of quality assurance and co-ordinates the Service's adult learning plan and its self-assessment process. The head of quality assurance is a member of the senior management team, which is led by the director of education. An administrator and a clerical officer provide administrative support for the lifelong learning team. The administrator monitors the budget and manages and analyses data. A lifelong learning development co-ordinator is responsible for developing and co-ordinating directly managed community projects and advising providers on all aspects of quality assurance. A bilingual community outreach worker has been appointed to develop learning opportunities for minority ethnic groups. Only the lifelong learning development co-ordinator is employed full time with adult and community learning. The Borough's policies for equal opportunities, dignity at work and racial equality cover all aspects of the Service's work. The Service's quality assurance framework applies to the whole of its adult learning provision. The Service's most recent self-assessment report was produced in March 2002.

STRENGTHS

- good identification of community development needs
- well-developed strategic planning
- good range of projects to widen participation
- effective quality assurance framework for community learning programmes

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient co-ordination of adult learning provision in the Borough
- ineffective target-setting for subcontractors
- inadequate communication of the adult and community learning strategy to tutors
- ineffective monitoring of subcontractors' quality assurance arrangements

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better sharing of good practice

8. The Service has researched and accurately identified the local communities development needs. Although there is little social deprivation, a small number of wards have been identified as an area of social need. Research identified minority ethnic communities which do not traditionally participate in adult learning, and areas where

initiatives such as family learning projects could be developed. The Service has successfully involved a number of local voluntary organisations in the development of specific projects. Providers can apply to the LEA's lifelong learning development fund for funding to set up adult learning projects. This fund has enabled an increasing number of people to become engaged in learning. The Service is the lead partner in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Learning Partnership. This partnership successfully involves a wide range of agencies, including schools, further and higher education, careers, local businesses and voluntary and community groups, and aims to co-ordinate local learning activities, make efficient use of shared resources and attract new learners.

9. Substantial progress has been made in changing and developing the Service through effective leadership and well-developed strategic planning. A community development project initiative began in 1999-2000 and there are now clear objectives for, and a far greater emphasis on the development of community-based education and the recruitment of non-traditional learner groups.

10. There is insufficient co-ordination of the Service's recreational and leisure programmes for adults. Providers plan their programmes independently and there is no systematic co-ordination of new or existing courses in the Borough. When providers ask tutors to suggest new courses they are not always aware of the Service's priorities and key areas for development. Progression routes for learners are not clearly identified and few tutors are sufficiently aware of the range of courses available in the Borough to be able to advise learners. There are few formal arrangements for tutors of related subjects to share expertise and compare good practice. Systems to monitor and record learners' achievements are not yet in place, but the Service has launched a pilot initiative with its partners to develop models of good practice.

11. Providers are aware of the Service's strategic objectives, but do not receive sufficient guidance about how they are expected to contribute to their achievement. The subcontracted providers are not set measurable, individual targets to ensure that their local strategic planning contributes to achieving the targets in the Borough's adult learning plan. Strategy meetings take place three times a year to monitor the performance of each provider. There is insufficient use of quantifiable targets as a way of measuring the success of individual providers in, for example, meeting the Service's targets to increase the number of learners from minority ethnic groups.

12. Communication with adult and community learning managers and with the partner organisations who are responsible for the community learning projects is satisfactory. Tutors receive little information about the Service's overall aims and objectives. Although a newsletter is produced regularly and circulated to partner organisations, it is not always passed on to tutors. Some tutors are well informed, but many are not aware of how they can contribute to the achievement of the adult learning plan. Many tutors are unaware that changes to established programmes are linked to the priorities in the plan.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

13. The Service sponsors a wide range of projects to target new learners from under-represented groups. This strategy has been successful in widening participation, and adults who would not normally do so have joined classes. Target groups include the Asian community, lone parents, men, unemployed adults, mental health service users, adults with learning difficulties and disabilities, parents from areas of social deprivation and need, learners in rural isolation, and elderly people in residential homes. Good use has been made of external funding to develop a well-supported and extensive programme of courses in a ward with a relatively large minority ethnic population. In 2000-01, all funded projects, except one, exceeded target numbers and recruited a total of 433 new learners. In 2001-02, the projects recruited a total of 637 new learners. Many of these learners join more than one course.

14. Well-staffed crèche facilities are available to learners free of charge on programmes managed directly by the LEA and to learners on the main site of two contracted providers. One provider also has a mobile crèche to provide support for learners based in the community. Another provider offers crèche places, and fees may be refunded through access funds. The provision of childcare significantly reduces barriers to access for women and male carers, and learners report that without these facilities they would not be able to attend classes.

15. The Borough's equal opportunities policy applies to the Service. There is a monitoring procedure and a clear, easy to use complaints procedure for both employees and learners. The Service asks to see equal opportunities policy documents from each of its providers, but does not regularly review these. One provider does not have a policy that relates specifically to work with adult learners. The LEA collects data on gender, ethnicity, age and postcodes from the three major providers and from directly managed projects. These data are analysed and used to generate strategic targets for widening participation. Those tutors interviewed stated that they have not received training in equal opportunities.

16. The Service has been less successful in meeting its targets to widen participation in the main programme of leisure and recreational classes for adults, which constitutes approximately 80 per cent of the total programme. Providers are encouraged to work towards the achievement of the LEA's targets through financial incentives. However, participation in these programmes by learners from under-represented groups, remains low. In 1999-2000, 5 per cent of learners enrolled were from minority ethnic groups. This declined to 3.7 per cent in 2001-02. The LEA has agreed a target to increase the numbers of men on the Service's courses. In 2001-02, the proportion of men was 21.4 per cent, against the target of 30 per cent.

17. There are adequate access arrangements to most sites for learners with mobility difficulties. There are problems of access to some older buildings and community venues. One project, based in a primary school, has purchased special furniture suitable for adult learners. Another, where whole-day programmes are provided, has low chairs

which are not suitable for adults.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

18. There has been a strong focus on improving the quality of the learning provision over the past two years. However, managers recognise that considerable progress still needs to be made. This is acknowledged in the self-assessment report. Inspectors' judgements matched many of those in the self-assessment report.

19. The Service has a framework for quality assurance, which applies to the whole of the provision. The Service has a thorough approach to quality assurance and knows where improvements should be made. The quality assurance of directly managed community development projects is effective. Clear guidance is given on monitoring and other requirements, evaluative reports are produced and recommendations made to the providers. Procedures are in place to ensure that projects meet the needs of learners and that the good quality of teaching and learning is maintained. Community development projects are thoroughly and regularly reviewed. This process is complemented by a teaching observation system that provides useful feedback to help tutors improve their teaching. A member of the Service team carries out most teaching observations. Some of the project sponsors have expressed a need for further training in the operation of quality assurance systems and in carrying out teaching observations. Learners complete evaluations at all stages of the courses they attend and this feedback is used in the planning of future programmes.

20. The quality of subcontracted adult and community education is not monitored effectively. Progress towards the agreed objectives is discussed each term, at the meetings held with the main providers. But no measurable individual targets are set to improve performance or to determine whether objectives are being achieved. The contract with providers requires them to monitor the quality of teaching through observation. With some providers, few tutors receive feedback on their teaching. Lesson observations are not linked to staff development and do not result in action plans to improve performance. This weakness has been identified, but no action has yet been taken to improve the situation. The Service is not often able to make judgements about the quality of specific adult and community programmes or classes. In many cases, the Service has very limited information on the quality of the learners' experience.

21. Not all providers have comprehensive self-assessment procedures. In some cases, providers' self-assessments are not sufficiently critical and do not provide a thorough analysis of performance. The Service has enlisted the help of a consultant to identify quality assurance issues with each of the providers. However, it is too early to judge the impact of this.

22. The Borough has an established staff appraisal system for all members of the lifelong learning team. This process is satisfactory. Key priorities are identified and staff have received appropriate development, linked to their job roles and responsibilities.

Good Practice

A community learning project is based at a primary school in an area with a large minority ethnic population. Many of the mothers have few nationally recognised qualifications and find it difficult to help their children with their schoolwork. Few parents go into the school to discuss the education of their children. There was an existing English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) class with low enrolment. A bilingual project worker was appointed to research the needs and interests of potential learners and classes were put on to meet the identified needs. The project aimed to recruit 35 new learners to a new programme of classes three days each week. Classes now take place on four days and most are full, with over 70 learners on programme. In addition, there are now four ESOL classes. Some mothers help in the school and more parents come to parents' evenings. The school's standard attainment tests (SATs) results have also improved significantly.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information & communications technology

Grade 3

23. In 2001-02, there were 525 enrolments on courses in ICT, accounting for 9 per cent of all enrolments on recreational and leisure programmes. Most learners are enrolled on courses offered by the LEA's three main subcontracted providers. There were 143 enrolments on ICT courses offered by these providers at the time of the inspection. Courses include computing for beginners, word processing, spreadsheets, databases, desktop publishing and Internet use. Most courses provide learners with basic skills in computing and do not lead to qualifications. There are some intermediate level courses and two of the providers offer progression to more advanced accredited courses which are not part of the adult and community learning programme. There are also some courses which are managed directly by the service as part of the community learning programme. These target specific groups, such as minority ethnic groups. Classes are held at the providers' main sites, at college outreach centres and local primary schools. Childcare facilities are available at two locations. Classes are held on weekday mornings, afternoons and evenings. Courses vary in length from single session taster courses to programmes lasting 12 weeks. In 2001-02, just over 70 per cent of enrolments were made by women and 37 per cent were made by people over 60 years of age. Just over 3 per cent of enrolments were made by learners from a minority ethnic group. Approximately half of the tutors have permanent, full-time contracts, which include teaching for up to four hours each week on adult and community learning courses. Other tutors are employed on an hourly paid basis working for up to 12 hours each week. Adult and community learning programme managers for each provider are responsible for planning the curriculum, quality assurance and budgetary management.

STRENGTHS

- good progress by most learners
- good teaching facilities
- good range of courses

WEAKNESSES

- narrow range of teaching methods
- some poor monitoring of learners' progress
- poor initial information and advice

24. Most learners make good progress towards achieving their personal learning goals at a rate which is appropriate to their needs and abilities. Many courses are for learners with no previous experience of computers, and learners successfully increase their

confidence in using a computer at an elementary level. For example, many learners who enrol with no knowledge of computers achieve sound, basic word processing skills. On other more advanced courses, learners follow a programme of challenging tasks and activities to increase their skills and knowledge. In these sessions, learners demonstrate an appropriate level of competence and are well motivated. After gaining basic computing skills, many learners take additional courses at the same level, in subjects such as the use of databases and spreadsheets, or progress to a more advanced course. Some learners gain sufficient skills to use computers independently at home. Learners are pleased with the progress they are making.

25. Teaching facilities and resources are good. Most venues have good, up-to-date hardware and software. In one learning centre, the equipment is older, but is adequate for the current range of courses. Most teaching rooms are modern and well lit with a range of appropriate equipment and software. The equipment includes data projectors and specialist demonstration software. In some venues, however, the lighting is poor and fails to meet the standards required to prevent eye strain. Software which adult learners find useful for improving mouse control is not available on computers in schools.

26. A good range of elementary and basic courses is available. There are good opportunities for progression to other courses provided by the Service and to more advanced courses at local colleges. Beginners courses offer an effective introduction to learning and learners soon become confident. Many learners progress through the range of courses on offer and become familiar with the main applications such as word processing and databases.

27. The quality of the teaching varies. Forty-four per cent of lessons observed by inspectors were graded good or very good, and the same number of lessons was graded as unsatisfactory. The best lessons are well planned and well structured with clear objectives. Tutors use a variety of teaching approaches and learners are actively involved in the lessons. Tutors give clear, jargon-free explanations and provide good individual learner support where required. Learning materials are of a good standard and the range of materials is adequate to meet individual learner's needs. Some tutors make good use of demonstrations and brief introductions to explain the principles of computer applications. Other tutors use a narrow range of teaching methods and give lengthy explanations, leaving learners little opportunity to practise the applications. In some classes, learners spend too much time working independently through worksheets, often waiting for long periods for assistance. In some sessions, learners follow the tutor's instructions, but are unable to demonstrate any real understanding and are not given the chance to apply what they have been taught to relevant tasks.

28. Learners' progress is not monitored effectively in all classes. For example, where tutors ask the learners to follow their instructions for most of the session, they do not take the time to check whether the learners have understood. Insufficient use is made of a range of methods to monitor progress, such as marked assignments, direct, close observation of performance, peer review and self-evaluation. Few teachers spend

sufficient time with each learner to form a judgement about how well they are progressing. Not all tutors keep adequate records of learners' progress and achievement. In some lessons, teachers do check learners' understanding with practise exercises about work from previous lessons. In three classes observed, regular use was made of a checklist on which learners indicate whether they feel confident in a number of key areas or need more help. Learners find this useful.

29. Learners are not given enough guidance about whether courses are suitable for them before they enrol. Most learners rely on brochures which generally do not provide enough information for learners to make an informed choice. Specialist tutors are not always available to talk to learners, assess their previous experience and existing skills, and help them choose the most appropriate course. Some learners start courses that do not match their personal learning goals. Additional information is available by telephone and on the Internet, but few learners are aware of this.

30. Learners enjoy their courses and value the commitment of the staff. Most learners are happy with the courses that they are taking, although some feel that they are not on the best course to meet their needs. Learners value the fact that courses are available close to their home. Other learners value the childcare facilities, without which they could not attend.

Poor Practice

In one computer room, keyboards are positioned beside computer monitors, instead of in front of them. This causes strain and discomfort as learners have to turn to one side while working. It also causes particular problems for left-handed people, who have to place the mouse some distance from the keyboard.

Visual & performing arts & media**Grade 2**

31. Visual and performing arts and media is the Service's most popular area of learning. In 2001-02 there were 2,780 enrolments on arts-based courses, accounting for 48 per cent of all enrolments. Most learners are enrolled on courses offered by the LEA's three main subcontracted providers. Classes are held at main sites and in local secondary schools. A small number of development projects take place in community venues. At the time of the inspection, there were 786 enrolments on courses in visual and performing arts. Learners participate in a range of non-accredited creative arts courses. These include drawing and painting, jewellery making, soft furnishing, singing, and Latin American and ballroom dancing. Most adult and community courses are offered from September to July, during the day and in the evening. There are some short summer schools, and weekend and one-day workshops. A few courses are offered at a range of levels. Current provision broadly matches that offered in previous years. In 2001-02, 84 per cent of learners were women, 43 per cent were over 60 years of age, and 4 per cent were from a minority ethnic background. There are 33 tutors, three of whom work an average of 10 hours a week, the remainder work on a sessional basis. Tutors report to adult and community learning programme managers who are responsible for the planning and delivery of the curriculum, quality assurance and budgetary management.

STRENGTHS

- particularly good achievement of technical skills
- exceptionally good tutor knowledge and professional expertise
- good technician support

WEAKNESSES

- ineffective information and guidance
- ineffective curriculum management and support for tutors

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- further encouragement of independent learning

32. Achievements levels are good at all the subcontracted providers and learning is adapted effectively to meet individual needs. Learners achieve very good standards of technical expertise in a wide range of subjects, such as watercolour painting, calligraphy, jewellery, upholstery and soft furnishing. They are proud of their achievements and enjoy sharing skills and knowledge. For example, many learners have produced soft furnishings, such as curtains, covers for three-piece suites and bedding, to

professional standards. Learners develop skills in using a wide range of materials. They have clear learning goals and understand what they need to do to achieve them. Learners are well motivated and make good progress. Attendance rates are good on all courses.

33. Tutors demonstrate very good specialist knowledge and expertise, and inspire the learners to produce good work. This was partly recognised in the self-assessment report. Learning sessions are well planned. Complex tasks are broken down into manageable stages to enable learners to complete challenging projects successfully. Teaching methods are appropriate and effective in supporting the individual needs of learners. In many cases, however, learners are not sufficiently encouraged to use their knowledge and skills to solve problems and develop independence from their tutors.

34. There is good technician support. Classes at the main centres take place in specialist accommodation and the learners use well-maintained equipment. Technicians are available on the main sites for many craft areas, such as jewellery, pottery and furniture crafts, for an average of five hours a week in each area. Technical problems are dealt with promptly and efficiently. Technicians often demonstrate technical procedures which require a lengthy preparation of materials and implementation of health and safety procedures. They also store learners' projects and fire the kilns.

35. Teachers are skilled and qualified in their subject area, but do not always have teaching qualifications. Specialist rooms are good, but some are too small for the numbers in the classes. Some classes are held in learning centres where there is poor signposting and walkways are badly lit. This discourages some learners from attending learning sessions in the evening. Some learning sessions take place in buildings which are in a poor state of repair.

36. Tutors do not carry out formal initial assessments with the learners. However, in most cases, tutors quickly assess individual learner's skills and develop appropriate activities for them. Individual projects are carefully planned to enable learners to develop appropriate new skills and techniques. In some sessions, individual learning plans are used to plan and support learning, and to document progress. This is not part of any formal monitoring and assessment procedures. Arrangements for giving learners feedback on their progress are satisfactory.

37. Learning sessions are available in a wide range of venues and at a variety of times. But the current provision does not attract a wide range of learners or substantial numbers of new learners. A large number of learners have attended courses for many years and this curriculum area is characterised by a predominantly unchanging learner profile and range of courses. Most providers do not have well-developed progression opportunities within the existing curriculum.

38. Few providers give effective information and guidance for learners. Pre-course guidance is not always available and some course descriptions give inadequate information. Course information is available, but many learners are not aware of this.

Many learners experience difficulties in gaining the information they require to choose a suitable course. In most cases, learners are not given sufficient information about progression opportunities. With some providers, there is no evidence of additional support and guidance. Most learners are unaware of the complaints procedures.

39. Tutors receive good day-to-day support from learning centre managers, but overall, management of the curriculum and support for tutors is not effective. At most providers, the key objectives of the LEA's adult learning plan are not clearly communicated to, or understood by, tutors. The reasons for changes to existing programmes are not always understood to be part of a planned programme of development. In many cases, tutors' skills and expertise are not used or developed effectively, to extend the range of courses. However, one provider's tutors are carefully selected to work on development projects, and the provider has introduced a number of new courses to meet strategic needs. All providers have a programme of lesson observations, but information from these is not used in planning and staff development. Tutors do not have the opportunity to discuss their teaching with their colleagues, or develop better practice. One provider's part-time tutors are invited to attend meetings, but less than a third actually attend.

40. Many older learners spoke with real enthusiasm about the way their learning had improved their quality of life and developed their skills. For many learners, the classes add an important aspect to their social lives, besides helping them to acquire and maintain manual dexterity and motor skills.

Good Practice

Many learners keep personal logbooks and sketchbooks which record their learning and allow them to look back at the progress they have made. Logbooks often contain detailed information and diagrams of projects which learners use to remember and develop the skills and techniques they have learned.

Poor Practice

In one session of jewellery making, silver was being heated to a molten state ready for casting. The technician gave clear instructions on health and safety and the use of personal protective equipment. The tutor, who was not wearing protective equipment, then leaned across the bench where the molten metal was being heated by a blowtorch to adjust the equipment.

Community learning**Grade 2**

41. The Service provides a range of programmes designed for adults who do not traditionally participate in adult learning. This provision was inspected as community learning and includes community development initiatives, family learning and work with adults with learning difficulties and disabilities. Community development initiatives are funded through the LEA's Lifelong Learning Development Fund and the family learning fund. Over 20 community initiatives were sponsored in 2000-01. Community learning targets disadvantaged learners, including those from minority ethnic communities and adults from areas of high deprivation. In 2001-02, there were 563 enrolments on these programmes. There were 141 learners enrolled on programmes at the time of inspection. There are 24 projects planned for 2002-03. These include parenting support workshops, health and fitness promotion, ICT, Asian sewing, art and craft activities, and contemporary dance and drama and research projects. Programmes are based in local schools, colleges, arts centres, day care centres and community centres. Organisations sponsored by the LEA to provide courses include a further education college, a college of agriculture and a range of voluntary and community groups. Some family learning programmes are provided in partnership with the Workers Educational Association (WEA). Learners are part time, attending a range of activities from short, single-session tasters to two-hours a week programmes, lasting up to 10 weeks. There are no charges to learners on any of the programmes. A lifelong learning development co-ordinator manages the community learning programme and reports to the lifelong learning officer. The LEA's lifelong learning officer has overall responsibility for subcontracted provision for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The co-ordinator manages two part-time crèche workers, a part-time community outreach worker and a part-time family learning teacher. There is a post for a family learning co-ordinator but it was vacant at the time of the inspection.

STRENGTHS

- good achievement of learning goals
- good childcare provision
- effective management of community learning

WEAKNESSES

- poor assessment of learners' progress

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better planning for individual learners' needs
- better collection and use of data
- more training for project sponsors

42. There is a good achievement rate of learning goals, with learners acquiring technical skills, developing greater confidence, and progressing to other areas of learning. In family numeracy classes, learners improve their ability to calculate, their understanding of mathematical concepts and their ability to help their children at school. Parents on family numeracy programmes report that they are now able to help their children with homework and support them more effectively. Adults with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities develop physical skills in trampoline classes and maintain flexibility in keep-fit classes. Other learners acquire creative skills through pottery, art, and fabric design. Projects designed to help people develop initiatives in their local community are successful in meeting their aims. For example, in a community centre, one group of adults is learning mosaic design in order to teach the skill at the local children's club, with the aim of making a communal mural for the neighbourhood. Personal and social skills are also acquired on most projects. Many learners gain the confidence to join further courses or apply for jobs.

43. There is a good range of childcare provision, with childcare available for all but one of the courses targeted at parents with small children. Providers have a range of imaginative options for childcare issues. Where it is not possible to have crèches on site, alternatives are offered. One school reserves places in a nearby nursery. The mobile crèche belonging to one of the local colleges is used for some projects, and one headteacher releases a member of her staff to operate a crèche in a local school.

44. The development of community learning is well managed. There is a strong and active commitment to widening participation. Effective targeting of resources ensures that funding goes to projects which support the LEA's priorities, in areas with the greatest need. The good use of partnerships ensures that resources are used most effectively to help learners. There is good communication with and about projects. During the past year, reporting procedures have been strengthened and helpful additional guidance has been produced for sponsors to assist them in monitoring and evaluating initiatives.

45. All the teaching and learning observed during the inspection were satisfactory, 50 per cent was good, or better. In the best lessons, teaching is well planned and techniques are adapted to accommodate the range of capabilities in the group. Tutors make good use of a wide variety of visual aids and learning resources to engage learners' interests. In a family numeracy class, good use was made of learners' experience and everyday items familiar to learners, to introduce the concept of division. In the less successful lessons, the teaching is insufficiently challenging for many learners and the materials, approaches and planned learning outcomes do not meet the needs of all learners. In some sessions, there are insufficient opportunities to practise skills. There is, generally, little planning for individual learning needs and very few individual learning plans. There is insufficient liaison between tutors who teach adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to develop a more integrated learning

programme for the learner.

46. Staff managing community learning are experienced and well qualified. The community outreach worker and the crèche workers on one project designed to meet the needs of the Asian community are bilingual. But some staff on community learning projects are not qualified to teach adults. Some staff do not have specialist training in working with adults with learning difficulties and disabilities.

47. Programmes meet the needs and interests of learners. Needs analyses are carried out, often by local people, to identify which learning opportunities local residents would prefer. Taster courses are then offered by one of the local colleges, the WEA, arts projects or other local organisations, at convenient times and in local centres. Adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enjoy a variety of activities including animal care, trampolining, football and innovative arts projects.

48. Learners receive good support. Tutors and project sponsors are sensitive to the many social and personal issues affecting many of their learners and plan and adapt sessions to take account of them. Social services support staff accompany adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to classes and work with them. Learners find their courses useful and enjoyable. They gain confidence and develop greater self-esteem.

49. There are difficulties in collecting statistical information. The reporting of accurate participation data, such as the number of new learners, remains problematic in some cases. Some smaller sponsors have little experience of managing formal monitoring and reporting procedures and would welcome further training. LEA officers give very good support to the project sponsors for their development work with adults.

50. The assessment of learners' progress is poor. Most courses have no formal initial assessment of learners' skills. Once enrolled, learners receive a good deal of verbal encouragement and feedback, but there is insufficient systematic assessment or review of their progress. There is no assessment to confirm what learners have achieved at the end of the courses. End of course certificates are often issued and are valued by learners, but these do not specify the outcomes of the course or exactly what learners have achieved. There are few mechanisms for monitoring learners' progress through a variety of local learning opportunities and on to other activities or employment. There is anecdotal evidence of such progression, but this is not collected and analysed systematically.

51. Most accommodation is satisfactory. One school has a well-designed purpose-built area for adults and a well-equipped crèche. Some adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enjoy good, modern facilities at arts centres and social services day centres. Others attend a course in a poorly lit and poorly decorated annexe where unsatisfactory arrangements are made for learners to use sports equipment. Computing facilities are generally satisfactory, but in locations with no access to desktop computers, there are insufficient laptops for every learner.

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.