

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Camden LEA**

**09 December 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

Camden Adult and Community Learning Service is part of an inner London local education authority. It provides courses and other activities for adults in ten of the fourteen areas of learning. Most of the provision is subcontracted through other providers. Recently it has introduced directly managed information and communications technology provision throughout the UK online network.

### Overall judgement

The quality of provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. The service provides a wide range of courses at community-based venues throughout the borough. It is successful in widening participation through recruiting new learners and encouraging adults to return to learning. Leadership and management are satisfactory, as is equality of opportunity. Strategic management and partnership arrangements are particularly effective. Inspectors judged quality assurance to be unsatisfactory with insufficient measures to improve the quality of the provision.

### GRADES

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

Areas of learning	Grade
Information & communications technology	2
Visual & performing arts & media	2
Foundation programmes	4

### KEY STRENGTHS

- highly effective strategic planning
- very productive partnerships
- effective measures to widen participation
- good achievements by many learners

### KEY WEAKNESSES

- insufficient measures to rectify weaknesses in the service

#### CAMDEN LEA

- insufficient guidance and advice for learners
- poor accommodation at some centres
- insufficiently challenging learning goals for some learners

#### **OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- more effective measures to recruit men
- better sharing of good practice

## THE INSPECTION

1. A team of seven inspectors spent a total of 35 days at Camden LEA Adult and Community Learning Service (the service) in December 2002. They interviewed 93 learners, carried out 74 interviews with teachers and managers and visited 32 locations. They observed and graded 34 learning sessions. Inspectors interviewed teachers and managers from partner organisations and other external agencies. They examined a range of documents from the service and partner organisations, including learners' portfolios of evidence, learners' records, course documents, the service's plans, policies and procedures, internal inspection reports, promotional literature and records of internal and external meetings. Inspectors studied the service's second self-assessment report, which was produced in November 2002. Inspectors' findings matched many of those in the self-assessment report, but they gave a lower grade for one curriculum area and for quality assurance.

2. The inspection took place during the last week of term. A number of courses provided by subcontractors had finished the previous week, which reduced the scope of 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	6	2	1	0	0	11
Visual & performing arts & media	0	2	4	5	0	0	0	11
Foundation programmes	0	0	2	6	2	1	1	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>per cent</b>	<b>47.06%</b>			<b>38.24%</b>	<b>14.71%</b>			

## THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

### Context

3. Camden LEA is an inner London Local Education Authority (LEA) which falls within the London Central Learning and Skills Council (LSC) area. It provides courses and other learning activities in 10 of the 14 areas of learning. During the academic year 2001-02, 4,312 learners enrolled on 8,178 courses and activities in over 70 community venues across the borough. The service offers community-based learning in very diverse settings, such as libraries, community centres, schools, resource centres for older people, residential homes and college sites. Many of these sites are in disadvantaged areas of Camden, providing accessible learning environments for local people. Expenditure per head on adult education is £7.70, compared with the London average of £7.44. Enrolments on adult education courses is 39.8 per thousand population, compared with the London average of 42.18.

4. Since 1996 the LEA has subcontracted much of its adult and community learning provision. In Camden, four colleges have substantial programmes for adults, one of which is a large further education college and the other three are specialist adult education colleges. All attract learners from across London. The service contracts with two of these colleges. It also contracts with a national training provider of adult learning and has partnership arrangements with an extensive range of other training providers and organisations, including voluntary and community organisations in Camden and more widely across London. Since 2001-02, the service has led on a partnership project developing a community-based network of information and communications technology (ICT) learning centres through UK online. This has resulted in a significant amount of ICT provision being delivered directly in partnership with other departments in the local authority and with other organisations.

5. Camden contains some of the most deprived and some of the wealthiest areas in England. The unemployment rate in May 2002 was 2.2 per cent, compared with a national average of 3 per cent and a London average of 3.6 per cent. In 2001, the proportion of school leavers with five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 50 per cent, compared with the national average of 47.9 per cent. The 1991 census shows that the proportion of people in Camden from minority ethnic groups is 17.8 per cent, compared with 6.2 per cent nationally.

6. The service's strategy is to target provision and resources within the most deprived wards. It aims to reach learners who are not recruited by other providers and, through its partnership arrangements, to create effective opportunities for learners to progress to more specialist and higher-level courses provided by other local organisations.



## **Adult and Community Learning**

7. Most learners achieve their individual learning goals and make good progress. Many older learners learn new skills and rediscover others. ICT learners quickly gain confidence in information technology (IT) and improve their English and communication skills. On arts courses, learners produce and display work in a variety of media. They recognise their achievements and talk confidently about the progress they are making. Most of the learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve their individual learning goals. They work well together, enjoying the company. Learners' attendance on family learning courses is irregular, and poor record-keeping restricts their capacity to achieve their individual learning goals.

8. Most of the teaching is well planned and highly effective. Of the lessons observed, 85 per cent were satisfactory or better. Most teachers devise tasks which suit the abilities and aims of individual learners. Some of the teachers who deal with learning difficulties and/or disabilities show detailed knowledge of their learners and are highly sensitive to their needs and preferences. Some teaching is not sufficiently challenging and some lessons are insufficiently differentiated to meet individual learning needs. Learners are given much positive support and encouragement. The recently installed ICT equipment is of industry standards. Some accommodation is not suitable for adults, particularly in schools where it is shared with other users. Some venues are not sufficiently accessible to learners with restricted mobility. Most teachers are well qualified and experienced. Learners are given good informal assessment and feedback, but assessment decisions are not sufficiently recorded, particularly on family learning courses. The service offers a wide range of courses at diverse venues throughout the borough. Most learners receive effective personal support from their teachers, but the overall quality of information, advice and guidance is not sufficiently accessible or coherent.

**LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT****Grade 3**

9. The service provides a range of adult and community learning courses and activities throughout the borough of Camden. It is managed by the adult learning development manager supported by two recently appointed staff, a family learning development officer and a senior administrator. A quality assurance and standards officer has recently been appointed to be in post from January 2003. The adult learning development manager also manages the accountable body role for the central London learning partnership. The service has subcontracted its adult and community learning (ACL) provision for a number of years. It subcontracts 75 per cent of its provision to a local further education college and to two adult education establishments. Most of the remainder is provided by Camden library service, with some other courses directly contracted to local schools. Contact with the subcontractors is maintained through a number of different forums, the main one being the adult education contracts steering group. Camden borough has placed a strong emphasis on reducing social exclusion and this has been the main element of the strategic planning for ACL. A recent development has been the introduction 29 UK online centres for ICT learners. Programmes are offered in a range of venues including local schools, community centres and residential homes for the elderly. The service produced a self-assessment report in 2001 and 2002. It also produces an annual adult learning plan which sets out the strategy for the following year. The adult learning development manager is responsible for ensuring equality of opportunity and quality assurance across the programmes.

**STRENGTHS**

- highly effective strategic planning
- very productive partnerships
- very effective measures to widen participation

**WEAKNESSES**

- insufficient measures to improve quality assurance
- insufficient guidance and advice for learners
- insufficient information for learners about their rights and responsibilities

**OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- better sharing of good practice
- better access for learners with restricted mobility

10. Camden Borough Council has a clear strategic vision and is strongly committed to social inclusion. The strategic plan clearly identifies this as one of its key objectives. Operational plans identify specific under-represented groups, and projects are designed

to recruit them. The service has been particularly effective in bidding for additional funding to support its strategic priorities. The strategic planning process includes wide consultation with many local organisations and community groups as well as with providers. The outcomes from the self-assessment report are also used as a basis for the planning process. The process results in a programme of courses which reflects the strategic objectives of the service. Secure management information systems ensure that in most areas accurate data are available for planning purposes.

11. The service has very strong partnership arrangements which effectively support its main strategic aims. It works successfully with a wide range of external organisations, for example, voluntary groups, charities and local community groups, to provide educational opportunities for adult learners across Camden. There are also very effective partnerships with other departments in the local authority and the service works closely with them to identify and meet local educational needs. These strong partnerships provide clear benefits to individual learners and to the wider community in Camden, and are particularly successful in bringing ACL opportunities to the most deprived wards in Camden. There is also an imaginative and successful programme of courses to meet the needs of elderly people, for example those in residential care homes.

12. Initial guidance and advice for learners are insufficient. Information on adult and community educational programmes is available through the Camden library service and the Camden 'daylight' database, but in many community venues, learners are not given comprehensive advice and guidance. Learners are not sufficiently aware of the wide range of progression routes available locally. Written guidance and promotional materials are not sufficiently available in languages other than English.

**Equality of opportunity****Contributory grade 3**

13. The service has very effective strategies for reaching out to communities which do not traditionally participate in education. The mix of learners from minority ethnic groups reflects the proportions in the local community. The staff profile is representative of the local communities served. The service has achieved this through a number of measures. Some of the more recently appointed staff are bilingual with one able to speak five of the languages which are used in the Camden community. Many of the programmes offered are run at local learning centres to meet the needs of the local community. The service recognised this strength in its self-assessment report. However, it also recognises that men are under-represented throughout the provision.

14. Although training providers have clear policies and procedures on equality of opportunity, they vary in quality and effectiveness. The service does not have a charter for learners or equal opportunities statement to inform learners of their rights and responsibilities. Most of the staff are clearly committed to, and aware of, equality of opportunity. For example, they are conscious of the need to ensure that there is no bullying, harassment, discrimination or verbal abuse during their lessons. However, on many community-based programmes, learners are not informed of their rights, or of how they should expect to be treated by tutors and other learners. Neither are they informed about how they should behave towards other learners. Many learners are unaware of what they should do if they wish to complain. Subcontractors deal with complaints from learners, but there is no system for routinely recording and notifying the LEA of such complaints. Learners are not sufficiently aware of the standards they should expect from the service, as distinct from those of the subcontractor.

15. Some of the centres are not accessible to wheelchair users. In one centre, access is along a narrow set of stairs which are unsuitable for learners with restricted mobility. Many centres provide special equipment to help learners with disabilities. For example, some of the ICT centres have large keyboards or extra-large monitors to assist those with a visual impairment. One centre has a sewing machine with large dials to help learners with restricted manual dexterity. In many centres, however, there are no easily adjustable height tables to meet the needs of wheelchair users.

**Quality assurance****Contributory grade 4**

16. There are insufficient measures to improve the quality of the provision. Each of the main subcontractors has a well-recorded quality assurance system and their annual contracts include detailed targets for learning. The targets are monitored each term through Camden adult education contracts steering group. However, the service's quality assurance systems do not sufficiently monitor the quality of teaching and learning. There are few observations of teachers and classes. As the service recognises, there has been too much reliance on the subcontractors' data and quality assurance systems. There is insufficient verification by the service of individual learning plans, schemes of work and assessment practice. Learners' feedback is not sufficiently evaluated by the service. Other areas of weakness, such as in the provision of advice and guidance and the promotion and marketing of the UK online centres, have been identified by the service. However, the current level of staffing is not sufficient to ensure the operation of a thorough quality assurance process across the service. The service has recently introduced a 'quality toolkit' to improve consistency of standards across the provision, but it is not yet sufficiently implemented or established. The service has recognised that there are insufficient measures to improve quality assurance, and an additional member of staff has been recruited to strengthen the quality assurance process.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Information & communications technology

### Grade 2

17. Camden LEA provides ICT programmes for 920 learners at 25 venues throughout the borough, including libraries, schools, tenants' halls, community centres and the premises of voluntary sector organisations. The libraries and community centres have benefited from an investment through UK online. The programmes range from six-hour taster courses to accredited courses. Learners can take a basic computer literacy qualification or an examination-based qualification in IT. A technical IT course is offered at one of the sites. Learners are able to progress to higher-level courses usually in the same centre. More courses at new venues are planned for the next few months. Learners include unemployed people, older people, lone parents and members of minority ethnic groups. A third of the learners are over the age of 60 and approximately 76 per cent are women.

18. The service subcontracts training to two main providers, a local further education college and the borough's library service. The library-based service is available for 50 weeks of the year. The courses in the schools and community centres are run during term times only. Both subcontractors operate from some of the sites. There are five full-time and 10 part-time teachers and 13 learning resource assistants who directly support the learners. Three librarians also spend part of their time each week in the learning centres. Each subcontractor has a manager who has overall responsibility for the ICT provision.

### STRENGTHS

- wide range of courses and venues meeting the diverse needs of the community
- highly effective teaching of IT skills
- good industry-standard hardware available at most learning centres
- good course management

### WEAKNESSES

- very few men taking part in learning
- poor accommodation at some centres

### OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- clearer progression guidance
- better learning materials to reflect the diversity of the local community
- better analysis of learners withdrawal

19. Learners make very good progress and quickly develop or improve their IT skills. Learners over the age of 60, many of whom have no previous experience of using a computer, gain good knowledge and understanding of IT and this improves their confidence. Most of the learners view the technology, and in particular the Internet, as an essential tool. For example, some learners competently use the Internet to research job availability, while others investigate health and medical issues, holidays and weather maps. Learners help and support each other during their lessons. In a minority of lessons, learners who are developing poor keyboarding skills are not helped by their teacher to correct this.

20. Many learners, after attending a short taster course, are keen to progress to one of the externally accredited computer literacy courses. Those who are not yet ready to follow an accredited course, or do not wish to do so, are assessed by their teacher and their skills are recorded. They are given a certificate which is produced by the college or the libraries and this encourages them to progress further. Many learners speak English as an additional language and have poor communications skills, but they make good progress on the IT courses as well as enhancing their English language skills. Learners on the examination-based courses are also making good progress. Many who join the course without any IT skills have passed the first word-processing module and are now making good progress on the spreadsheet module.

21. At the time of inspection, religious festivals affected the learners' attendance. However, it is usually good, and learners inform the centres if they are unable to attend. In one class the attendance rate has been almost 100 per cent since it started in September 2002.

22. ICT teaching is highly effective. Lessons are well planned and the teachers' praise and encouragement improves learners' confidence. Many classes are small, enabling teachers to provide individual support for learners. The learning resource assistants also offer guidance in the learning centres. Learners are from diverse backgrounds and collectively 23 languages are spoken, in addition to English. In one observed lesson, the teacher and the learning resource assistant spoke five languages and were able to interpret some of the technical terms to the learners.

23. Most of the centres have benefited from UK online investment and contain industry-standard equipment. Networked computers, scanners and printers are available at all the libraries and at many of the community venues. At one library there is an Internet café. Many of the centres offer a drop-in service to enable learners to practise their skills between lessons. However, some of the community centres have poor accommodation. One of the centres has inadequate access for people with restricted mobility and at another, learners use tables and chairs fixed at inappropriate heights. This directly affects the quality of learning, and is potentially dangerous. Some specialist equipment is available for learners with disabilities.

24. There are many handouts and learning materials available, but some of them do not reflect the diversity of the local community. Few centres make effective use of display materials.

25. Staff have good opportunities for professional development. Many of the learning resource assistants have taken certificated IT and teacher training courses at the further education college.

26. Learners have individual learning plans which are used to review their progress. Reviews either take place at the end of each lesson, or every six to eight weeks, depending on which subcontractor is offering the course. The process of using the learning plans has only recently been introduced and the service recognises that it is not yet in full use. Nevertheless, it provides a useful way of assessing the progress learners have made. Some teachers give good written feedback to their learners, praising their work and indicating ways to improve it. However, some teachers' feedback is restricted to correcting work.

27. The service is achieving its aim of widening participation in ICT training. Short taster courses are offered throughout the year, and the number of learners in each class is restricted to five, to maximise the attention they are given. Taster courses introduce learners to keyboarding and mouse skills, the Internet and e-mail. Learners can progress onto a range of courses at levels appropriate to their needs. Open access drop-in facilities are available at the libraries and at a few of the community venues. Most of the training is free. Less than a third of the learners are men, and the few strategies to remedy this have so far had little impact. Few courses are available at evenings and weekends, although 'drop in' facilities are available at these times. ICT courses are not sufficiently marketed or promoted at some centres.

28. Learning resource assistants give initial advice and guidance, sometimes in the learner's first language. They assess learners' skills at the beginning of the induction and again at the end. This gives learners a checklist showing their progress after only six hours of study. Some learners attend the induction and/or taster sessions, but do not continue their learning and the service does not sufficiently analyse why learners do not complete their courses, or return after taster sessions. The provision has insufficient guidance on possible progression routes. Publicity materials, a few of which are printed in some of the community languages, are produced by the subcontractors to promote their own programmes. However, they do not cover all the courses offered by the service.

29. The courses are well managed. For example, each subcontractor uses its own standard schemes of work, learner monitoring documents and learning plans. However, the two subcontractors do not jointly develop and review learning materials. Staff are well supported and are given clear guidance. Both subcontractors provide handbooks for their IT staff who meet termly to review the quality of the education and training. They also meet more frequently, usually weekly, with their line manager to discuss



progress. Resources are used effectively. However, data on learners are collected manually at some local centres, and are not combined to show trends across the borough. They cannot easily be used to provide management information. Each subcontractor has a thorough self-assessment process.

30. Learners speak highly of their learning experiences and value the amount of individual support they are given. They comment that their teachers are caring, enthusiastic and eager to see them succeed. Learners show confidence in their newly acquired skills and comment that their fear of computers has been removed and a new world of learning has been opened up for them. Many learners are keen to continue their studies at higher levels. Learners appreciate the drop-in sessions and use the facilities to receive and send emails, keep in touch with friends and relatives as well as practising their skills. Some of the older learners, many in their seventies and eighties, commented on how easy it is to use the technology once they had overcome their initial fears.

#### Good Practice

*One female learner who had come to this country eight years ago started her learning on a basic skills course. She was given initial guidance about the IT taster course in her first language and has progressed onto a longer course. She has developed her word processing skills and this has also improved her use of the English language. She now has the confidence to apply to the local college to study GCSEs and eventually hopes to study accountancy.*

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

31. There are over 80 courses in visual and performing arts and media, most of which are held at college sites and are open to all learners. Some are targeted at specific groups of learners. There are approximately 1,150 enrolments, 367 of which are on courses for older learners, 138 on courses for women and 584 on courses open to all adults. Eight learners attend a course for young unemployed adults. Most of the provision is managed by a local further education college apart from the youth project which is run by a voluntary trust. Most classes have a mixture of new and experienced learners. Most learners are aged 50 or over and most are women. Many classes are held in local community venues and most take place in the daytime. During 2001-02 there were almost 1,300 individual learners, of whom approximately 16 per cent were men. Courses vary in length from two days to two hours a week for 30 weeks. The range of subjects includes most arts, crafts and performing arts, photography and music technology. Courses are advertised as suitable for beginners or advanced students.

**STRENGTHS**

- good achievements by many learners
- effective planning to meet the needs of individual learners
- extensive range of courses and subjects targeted at new learners

**WEAKNESSES**

- insufficiently challenging learning goals for some learners

**OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

- better sharing of good assessment practice
- more effective measures to recruit men to learning
- better accommodation at some centres

32. Many learners achieve their main learning goals. In the course for young unemployed adults, learners make a CD of their own music and design an original CD sleeve for it. Learners' work is publicly displayed in many centres. The displayed work ranges from paintings inspired by mosaics, and tapestry produced by learners who started with little experience of the medium. Much of the finished work is of a good standard. Learners receive recognition for their finished work and there is an annual show. One group of learners in a residential home for the elderly produced a recording of their own radio play. A long established group of dancers publicly performs a wide repertoire of dances celebrating many diverse styles. In many lessons, learners are able

to demonstrate and talk about the progress they have made since starting a course. Some who may have suffered physical injury or experienced medical problems have made considerable progress. All learners talk positively of a growing confidence in their abilities.

33. In planning their lessons, teachers devise tasks which suit the abilities and aims of their individual learners. Teaching is characterised by strong support for individual learners. Each learner is given praise and encouragement and the teacher guides learners through carefully staged processes which usually increase in complexity. Older learners rediscover forgotten skills and learn many new ones. Many older learners have never painted before and have never learned to draw. They learn how to use a range of art materials and techniques. Through their interest in music, disaffected young people develop employability skills. They study successful role models and learn some of the essential skills needed to produce a magazine. They learn how to use keyboards, synthesisers and computer programmes to produce a CD of their own music. Asian women enhance their basic practical skills in sewing, pattern cutting and using a sewing machine. However, some learners are not set sufficiently challenging learning goals. Too many complete one task and are not given further tasks to extend their abilities. In some classes, there is insufficient encouragement for learners to work together and learn from one another. Some learners have worked on a larger scale and a few have collaborated on producing joint work, for example in painting and with mosaics.

34. Most of the rooms used for teaching in community venues are fit for the purpose, but some of the accommodation restricts the breadth of teaching methods and materials. There are rooms used for art which have no natural light, no easels and insufficient space for large-scale activities. Many community-based classes have to cope with noise from other activities taking place nearby. On one occasion, a drama rehearsal took place in the same room where learners were being taught crafts. This disrupted learning in spite of the best efforts of the teachers. There is little adapted furniture for less mobile learners. There is very good high specification IT equipment at the youth unemployment project. Most classes have an adequate range of equipment to support learning. Many teachers have teaching qualifications. Some are not qualified but have substantial experience and good subject knowledge.

35. Initial assessment is used appropriately to plan individual learning objectives and to identify additional learning support needs. Some teachers make very effective use of standard documents to assess and record learners' progress towards their learning goals. In these cases good, ongoing feedback is given to learners, which helps them to improve their work. Other teachers do not record learners' progress in sufficient detail and pay insufficient attention to identified learning goals.

36. An extensive range of courses is available at community venues. Most are targeted at first-time learners or those who have been away from learning for considerable time. Older learners are recruited in the social services residential, day or resources centres where the classes are held. The work with older learners gives them a good choice from an extensive range of subjects. There are specialist programmes in drama,

movement and creative activities for learners with dementia or sensory impairment. The work with women includes clothes making and crafts courses for Bengali women and a special project for women ex-offenders and those recovering from drug or alcohol misuse or from mental illness. The service has recognised the need for more effective measures to recruit men to community learning.

37. Individual learning needs are identified and effective, additional support is arranged for most courses. When additional support is offered, careful attention is given to ensuring that learners are respected and maintain their dignity. Teachers are very aware of the additional learning support needs of their learners. Young adults receive good support from staff from several different agencies. Several learners identify the need for clearer information on what a course involves before they join, in particular how much previous experience is needed.

38. A college manager from the subcontracted further education college directly manages most of the provision. Two of the four community support teachers liaise with part-time teachers and this has contributed to better communications between managers and teachers and a clearer identification of needs for resources. Teachers on over a quarter of the courses were observed during 2001-02 and they value the feedback given from these observations. The induction handbook for teachers gives useful guidance on procedures to assure the quality of training.

39. Learners value the range of courses available to them in venues close to where they live. They appreciate the support they are given by teachers while working towards their learning goals. Older learners are stimulated by the opportunities to learn new skills. They enjoy the dimension added to their social lives and value the opportunities to have their work displayed or performed publicly. They enjoy mixing with other adults and the positive ways in which all learners are treated. However, they would like to see more detailed information on what is included on courses before they join them. They would like to know more about the service's plans for adult and community learning.

**Foundation programmes****Grade 4**

40. The inspection of foundation programmes covers family learning and provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Findings from both of these areas were combined to form an aggregated grade.

41. The service funds family learning through contracts with a local adult college, a national provider of adult learning, and through its own directly managed provision. Learning takes place in schools throughout the borough and consists primarily of family learning and family numeracy courses. In 2001-02, 53 per cent of the 358 learners were from minority ethnic groups and 11 per cent were men. At the time of the inspection, the local adult college provides family learning courses for 84 learners in six primary schools. The national adult learning provider has 14 learners in one primary school. The service provides family numeracy programmes for 43 learners in two primary schools. The provision is offered during school term time only.

42. Most courses and activities for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are provided through a local further education college. A curriculum team leader manages the provision and most of the 18 teachers are part time. Classes are held during the daytime for two hours a week over 36 weeks. Most courses are practical and do not lead to externally accredited awards. At the time of the inspection, 15 courses are funded by the service. Thirteen take place at two college sites in the borough, and two are in other community-based locations. Learners can enrol for courses funded by the LEA, by the college or through a combination of both. At the time of the inspection, 83 learners were enrolled on 132 LEA-funded courses. Over half the learners are members of minority ethnic groups. Learners can progress from LEA-funded courses to other college courses. In addition, the college is developing progression routes in its pre-entry level provision.

**STRENGTHS**

- effective action to widen participation

**WEAKNESSES**

- insufficiently individualised learning which fails to meet the needs of learners
- inadequate assessment practices in family learning
- poor quality assurance of family learning
- failure of most school-based provision to meet the needs of adult learners

## OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more coherent planning of individual programmes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- better sharing of good practice in use of course documents for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities

43. Action to widen participation is effective. Courses are offered at schools in the most deprived areas. Most of the learners are women and from minority ethnic groups, but some are refugees and asylum seekers. Many learners have extensive language needs, or literacy and numeracy problems and some have mental health problems. Teachers have similar ethnic backgrounds to those of the learners and some are multi-lingual. Their skills as interpreters are valuable.

44. Insufficient records are kept of learners' achievement and progression on family learning courses. Individual learning plans are not thoroughly maintained, no learning goals are set, and there are no criteria for achievement. Learners are not sufficiently aware of group targets, although most achieve them. Arrangements for responding to irregular attendance are inadequate and there are no data on why learners leave. Many learners progress to further education or employment and some join parent-teacher associations, or become school governors. Learners' children achieve better language and skills development as a result of their parents' learning. Some schools report a better relationship between the school and parents. Learners' attendance is sporadic, and was only 52 per cent during the inspection.

45. Much teaching and learning on foundation programmes takes place through group activities which do not meet the needs of individual learners. Many family learning courses over-emphasise child development to the detriment of the adult learners. Teachers do not sufficiently respond to learners' literacy and numeracy needs and are not always aware of what individual learning has taken place. Many learners are not sufficiently challenged by their learning. In the family learning sessions observed, there was no specific teaching of communication, numeracy or cultural understanding. Learners support and help each other, but this is not through planning or management. Teaching methods are unimaginative and lack variety. On foundation programmes, 25 per cent of lessons in family learning and parent education are less than satisfactory and none are better than satisfactory. Of the 12 foundation lessons observed, the two graded good or better were for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

46. Assessment practices in family learning are inadequate. There is some initial self-assessment of learners' needs, interests and aims, but they are limited and are not usually used to plan the learning. Often, learning activities involve literacy or numeracy, but teachers do not match the activities to the learning needs of individuals. Verbal feedback is given but it is seldom recorded. Learning reviews are insufficiently recorded on family learning courses. When written records are made, they are usually for the

teacher's benefit rather than that of the learner. Learners are given positive feedback on the activities they carry out. For example, learners making cards for Christmas or Eid were given very positive verbal feedback on the cards and how well they had made them. However, feedback is usually in the form of positive encouragement rather than on how to improve performance. The three providers of learning all use different forms of assessment. One has an assessment policy, but there is insufficient evidence of its effective implementation. All learners have some form of self-assessment at the end of each term, but most of this is in the form of questionnaires which provide little useful evidence of progress or areas for further development.

47. Quality assurance of family learning is not effective. Procedures for ensuring the consistency of provision are not adequate. There is too much reliance on the effectiveness of subcontractors' quality assurance systems. Grades from lessons observed by the adult college were unrealistically high. Practical details like the length of classes or numbers on the registers are not accurately monitored. There is little evidence of sharing of good practice, or of an effective staff development programme for teachers of family learning. The service has recently appointed a family learning development manager to improve the co-ordination and effectiveness of the provision.

48. Most of the school-based provision does not meet the needs of adult learners. There is no clear understanding or joint vision between the schools and the subcontracting providers of the benefits of family learning. There is no agreement on the future development of the provision to meet the needs of individual learners. There are no internal service level agreements. The expectations of school staff do not always coincide with the objectives of the adult and community learning service, and there is no mechanism for improving this situation. Most schools expect the provision to help improve the performance of the children, but are not sufficiently interested in the learning needs of adults.

49. Learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities do not follow accredited programmes, but portfolios of evidence show a good standard of work. Learners work well together, enjoying each other's and the teacher's company. In the sessions observed, most learners achieved the learning objectives. They also contribute well by preparing for, and clearing up after, activities and helping each other.

50. In the best lessons for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, teachers are very aware of their learners' needs. They understand when learners make choices and decisions, and are able to respond effectively to those choices. For example, choices about preferred materials, resources or activities. Learners are given clear feedback about their progress and recognise their individual targets. In some lessons, teaching does not take account of individual needs. Learners work together on the same tasks with no reference to individual targets. Targets are not always recorded, but when they are, they are not in enough detail to allow progress to be assessed accurately. In some sessions, there is little feedback on learners' individual progress. Most learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities have adequate learning opportunities and experiences from individual courses, but there is no overview of how



the courses fit together for individual learners. Teachers are not aware of what learners do in other courses, so learning is not cumulative.

51. Much of the accommodation on family learning courses is not suitable for adult learners. One observed lesson was disrupted because the school had organised an event for other parents outside the group. This was held in the same room as the teaching activity while the group were learning. In one family learning class the crèche is held in the same room, again leading to disruptions. Some sessions are cut short because of the needs of the schools. In most schools, adults have to use the children's furniture. Many of the classrooms do not have adjustable tables for wheelchair users.

52. The experience and qualifications of teachers on family numeracy courses are mainly in working with children. Only one has an initial certificate in teaching basic skills. In provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, all teachers have teaching qualifications and significant experience of working with these learners. However, only one teacher has a specialist qualification.

53. Documents on courses for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well thought out and clearly written. They include schemes of work for individual courses which cover a range of personal and social development needs. However, some of the teachers do not use the documents effectively. The best course files show careful and thorough recording of learners' progress.

54. There are some good partnerships which support and develop learners. ACL teachers work productively with school teachers and head teachers to plan activities and share resources. In learning sessions there is often an adult education teacher and a school assistant who work together to support children and adults. Representatives of outside agencies are routinely invited into lessons to widen the content of the learning programme. These include health visitors, mathematics consultants, careers officers and other training providers. One group invited a representative of the council's translation service to explain its benefits to the learners.

55. Provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is adequately managed. Courses are well recorded and teachers understand their roles. However, there are significant variations in the use of course documents by individual teachers and insufficient sharing of best practice in monitoring and recording learning.

56. On courses for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, learners enjoy their work, the company of other learners and the encouragement they receive from their teachers. However, some learners are bored when their individual learning needs are not sufficiently met. On family learning and parent education courses, learners would like more challenging and interesting teaching, and better information about the progress they are making.



**Good Practice**

*In an art session for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, the teacher used the learners' work to review progress. This was done in a way that the learners clearly understood. One learner, with no prompting, recalled a session covering light and shade and related this to how her shadow looked.*

*Two schools had a home-school shop. The school buys learning materials and sells them to the parents at cost price. This provides an economical learning resource for parents and children.*

## 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	
<b>Provider</b>	<b>Provider</b>	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
<b>Learner</b>	<b>Learner</b>	Includes those learning by participating in community projects, as well as those on courses. Learning, however, will be planned, with intended outcomes.
<b>Teacher / trainer</b>	<b>Tutor</b>	Person teaching adult learners or guiding or facilitating their learning.
	<b>Mentor</b>	Person providing individual, additional support, guidance and advice to learners to help them achieve their learning goals.
<b>Learning goals</b>	<b>Main learning goals</b>	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.
	<b>Secondary learning goals</b>	These may include planned-for gains in self-confidence, and inter-personal skills. These should also be included in learning plans where appropriate.
<b>Personal and learning skills</b>	<b>Personal and learning skills</b>	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
<b>Unanticipated, or unintended learning outcome</b>	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.
<b>Subject-based programme</b>	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.
<b>Issue-based programme</b>	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.
<b>Outreach provision</b>	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.
<b>Neighbourhood-based work</b>	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.
<b>Community regeneration</b>	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
<b>Community capacity building</b>	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.
<b>Active citizenship</b>	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.