

INSPECTION REPORT

Telford & Wrekin LEA

25 November 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

Telford & Wrekin Lifelong Learning Business Unit manages part-time adult and community learning across the borough. Courses are provided at 83 venues throughout the borough. All adult and community learning, apart from family learning, is subcontracted to a sixth form college, a college of further education and the Workers Educational Association. There are courses offered in nine areas of learning. Three areas of learning were inspected, hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, visual and performing arts and media, and family learning. Six areas of learning were not inspected.

Overall judgement

The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Telford & Wrekin Lifelong Learning Business Unit offers good provision in hospitality, sports, leisure and travel, visual and performing arts and family learning. Leadership and management are satisfactory, as is equality of opportunity. Quality assurance is unsatisfactory.

GRADES

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

Areas of learning	Grade
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	2
Visual & performing arts & media	2
Family learning	2

KEY STRENGTHS

- good strategic management of adult and community learning programme
- very effective partnerships
- successful action to widen participation
- good standard of teaching
- good range of courses
- good standard of work
- significant development of parenting skills on family learning programmes

KEY WEAKNESSES

- weak monitoring of subcontracted provision
- inadequate management information systems
- weak quality assurance arrangements
- insufficient initial assessment of learners
- poor monitoring of learners' progress
- no structured development of basic skills on family literacy and numeracy programmes

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better initial guidance on course requirements
- more investment in specialist equipment and materials in the visual arts
- more consistent approach to obtaining feedback from learners
- better opportunities for tutors to share good practice

THE INSPECTION

1. A team of seven inspectors spent a total of 35 days at Telford and Wrekin Lifelong Learning Unit in November 2002. They made 32 visits to centres. During these visits they reviewed 21 learners' portfolios and examples of practical work. Inspectors carried out 34 interviews with Local Education Authority (LEA) staff, 41 interviews with managers and staff from the subcontracted providers and had discussions with 153 learners. They observed and graded 33 classes. Inspectors reviewed a range of policy documents including the borough's education strategy and development plan, the borough's service action plan for education and culture, the social inclusion strategy and the service's adult learning plan. They examined quality assurance documents, marketing materials, staff job descriptions, learning materials, prospectuses and information on courses. Inspectors also reviewed the self-assessment report and development plan which was produced in April 2002 and updated in September 2002.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	2	8	4	0	0	0	14
Visual & performing arts & media	0	2	6	2	0	0	0	10
Family learning	1	2	4	2	0	0	0	9
Total	1	6	18	8	0	0	0	33
per cent	75.76%			24.24%	0.00%			

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

2. Telford and Wrekin became a unitary authority in April 1998 and gained borough status in 2002. The LEA is the lead partner for the Telford & Wrekin Lifelong Learning Partnership. The Lifelong Learning Business Unit (LLBU) forms part of the borough's directorate of education and culture. A lifelong learning manager was appointed in 1998, with responsibility for the management of the unit and the LEA's adult and community learning provision. Since April 2001, the adult and community learning provision has been funded by Shropshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC). A broad range of community-based neighbourhood learning programmes is co-ordinated and financed by the unitary authority, local providers and a range of external funding.

3. The LLBU contracts non-accredited adult learning through a further education college and a sixth form college. It also contracts with the Workers Educational Association (WEA) for the provision of active retirement courses for retired people in the area. The unit manages a variety of centrally funded development programmes, including family learning, and family literacy and numeracy courses. The LEA and other council departments have a strategic role in managing and developing community learning centres which are used by all adult and community learning providers in the borough. There are 83 venues across the borough, which in addition to the college sites, include primary and secondary schools, church and village halls, day centres and community centres.

4. In 2001-02, 3,893 learners enrolled on part-time leisure and recreational courses, family learning programmes and programmes for older adults. The LEA estimates that 3.4 per cent of the adult population participated in adult education in 2001-02. Sixty-nine per cent of enrolments are on daytime courses.

Adult and Community Learning

5. Most learners make good progress on adult and community learning courses. In all classes learners acquire a range of new skills and increased knowledge of their chosen subject. Learners make good progress towards their personal learning objectives. The provision is effective, through its family learning programme and programme for older learners, in widening participation and recruiting learners from disadvantaged communities. Many learners gain significant personal and social benefits, in addition to the knowledge and skills they develop on their courses. Learners on family learning programmes have significantly increased their motivation and confidence in their ability to learn new skills, and some have used these skills to find paid work. Progression routes for learners are developing, but are not yet well established across the borough. In some areas of learning, achievement is hampered by insufficient initial assessment and the ineffective monitoring of individual learners' progress.

6. The quality of teaching is generally good. Of lessons observed, 76 per cent were good or better, the remainder were satisfactory. 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. In some classes, learners do not receive sufficient feedback on their progress and achievements. Most teachers are appropriately qualified and experienced and, if necessary, receive further training and development. Resources are generally adequate. The venues used for sport and fitness courses are good. There is a good range of sport and fitness courses and a range of established courses covering different aspects of the visual and performing arts. A significant number of learners attend courses in the visual arts for many years, often with the same tutor. Learners are well supported, but do not always receive sufficient information about courses before they enrol.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

7. The LEA's adult and community learning provision is managed by the LLBU which forms part of the borough's directorate of education and culture. The LLBU contracts with a sixth form college and a college of further education to provide non-accredited leisure and recreational programmes. The LEA also contracts with the WEA for the provision of active retirement courses for older learners. The LLBU directly manages a range of family learning programmes in partnership with voluntary and community organisations. The unitary authority has established four community-based learning centres, with an outreach worker based in each centre. These learning centres offer a range of learning opportunities and services to local communities and provide communities with access to information and communications technology (ICT).

8. A lifelong learning manager was appointed in 1998. He is responsible for the management and development of adult and community learning in the borough. This includes responsibility for quality assurance, equality of opportunity and ensuring that resources support the local authority's strategic priorities. He co-ordinates the process of self-assessment and the production of the adult learning plan. The lifelong learning manager is supported by an administrator and a family learning team which consists of a family learning co-ordinator, a family literacy co-ordinator and two tutors.

9. The borough's cabinet, together with LEA staff develop the corporate strategy for adult and community learning. The unitary authority controls the corporate functions of payroll, health and safety, personnel and staff development, where the training is provided by the LLBU unit itself. For the subcontracted provision, these functions are the responsibility of the individual subcontractor. The unit considers the adult learning plan every year. The current adult learning plan was produced in March 2002.

STRENGTHS

- good strategic management of adult and community learning programmes
- effective management of resources
- very effective partnerships
- successful action to widen participation

WEAKNESSES

- weak monitoring of subcontracted provision
- inadequate management information systems
- inadequate collection and analysis of equal opportunities data
- weak quality assurance arrangements

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better opportunities for tutors to share good practice
- more consistent collection of feedback from learners

10. There is a clearly focused strategy for the development of adult and community learning within the LEA's broader lifelong learning strategy. This development strategy is being implemented through the borough's lifelong learning partnership, of which the LEA is the lead partner. The LEA has established clear objectives to widen participation in learning, and deal with social inclusion and community regeneration. There is a strong emphasis on maintaining and developing a coherent provision within the community, working in partnership with other local and national organisations. Funding is used effectively to support strategic priorities, most being used to develop provision aimed at social inclusion, family learning and widening participation. There is a good understanding of the strategic aims by staff and providers.

11. The LLBU makes good use of the limited resources available to support adult and community learning. Most funding is used to support targeted priorities, for example, family learning and programmes for older learners living in disadvantaged areas. Generally, adult and community learning is provided by subcontracting to other providers, with the LEA making a financial contribution. The LEA and its subcontractors work in partnership and pool resources where appropriate, for example in the use of accommodation. There is effective use of external funding from a variety of sources to meet the learning needs of the community. Information on the unit costs of different aspects and types of provision is used to help make decisions on the feasibility of supporting learning programmes, and to ensure that where new learning opportunities are developed they can be sustained.

12. The monitoring of subcontracted providers is weak. Progress review meetings take place three times each year to monitor the performance of each provider. But providers are not required to prepare any qualitative reports relating to their contractual obligations. The contents of the meetings and any actions which are agreed are not recorded. There is however frequent, informal communication between the LLBU and the providers. There are not enough monitoring systems to ensure that the learning provision is appropriate, or to promote developments and improvements. New contracts for 2002-03 require providers to have their own quality assurance framework, equal opportunities policy and code of practice. The LLBU specifies minimum requirements for these. However, the monitoring process does not include a routine approach to gathering information on how the policies and proceedings are put into practice and what effect they have on learners.

13. The manual management information system used by the LLBU provides information for reports produced for external bodies, as well as the LLBU's management of the organisation's budget. For operational purposes, the current system is unsatisfactory and inadequate. Its capacity to deal effectively with large-scale and

complex data, for example, data on learners' progression and evidence of achievement, is insufficient. The current systems do not readily support the regular analysis and comparison of data relating to the wide range of provision. Some data monitoring is inconsistent, however this is being dealt with through the introduction of a contractual requirement to provide enrolment information, the hours learners spend in learning and equal opportunities data, to a standard format. The LEA has recently secured funding to establish a computerised management information system. The LEA is currently considering the computerised systems available.

Equality of opportunity**Contributory grade 3**

14. The unitary authority has an equal opportunities policy statement outlining the LEA's responsibilities to learners and employees, which also applies to the LLBU. The equal opportunities policy statement is translated into several languages. It is supported by detailed procedures that include the process for the recruitment and selection of staff, the grievance procedures and anti-bullying and anti-harassment at work policies. There is a clear complaints procedure for learners and guidance for employees about how it should be used. The LEA has an equal opportunities action plan for 2002-03 which prioritises areas for development.

15. The LEA has an adult learning plan with clear strategic objectives to widen participation. These objectives are well understood and widely shared by other departments in the unitary authority and the LEA's partners in the local community. The objectives are carried out effectively through the borough's lifelong learning partnership. These objectives are used as a basis for the criteria used to prioritise and target groups for new funding.

16. There is effective collaboration between the LEA, the education and culture directorate, the wider council, providers and local community groups, to remove barriers to learning, and to offer the maximum possible learning opportunities. Communications with partner organisations are excellent. Work with community learning centres, parish councils and other external agencies has led to a wider recognition of the value of developing community-based learning opportunities to attract those people who would not normally be involved. Through these partnership arrangements, the LEA supports a wide range of projects which target under-represented groups. These target groups include unemployed adults and those on low incomes, mental health service users, carers, older learners and adults recovering from drug and alcohol dependency. Staff work closely with local organisations to create imaginative approaches to learning. Many adults who would not normally do so have joined classes. There is good learner support on these programmes. Childcare is also available. Help with transport is provided for older learners with restricted mobility, mobile hearing loops are available and adaptive equipment is used for information and communication technology (ICT) classes. Support and advisory services provided by a range of agencies are well publicised in community centres. The lifelong learning partnership has an adult and community learning working group which includes all local providers and works effectively to plan provision across the borough and respond to identified community needs.

17. The LLBU does not request equal opportunities documents from each of its providers and does not regularly review them. Learners are not sufficiently aware of these policies. Provider's prospectuses do not contain statements on equality of opportunity.

18. Tutors' understanding of equality of opportunity and its relevance to their teaching and course content is inconsistent. Some tutors are not sufficiently aware of the provider's equal opportunities policies, and some show little awareness of cultural diversity. Arrangements for staff training in equality of opportunity are inadequate, as are

the guidelines for the sharing of good practice. There is no monitoring of the effectiveness of staff development across the borough. Staff development has been identified as an area for improvement in the LEA's equal opportunities action plan and some training is planned for the spring term.

19. The LEA's collection and monitoring of equal opportunities data are inadequate. The LEA monitors enrolments by age, gender, ethnicity and disability each term. However, there is no analysis of achievement of learning goals against equal opportunities criteria. There is, for example, no monitoring of retention rates, or progress made by learners with disabilities or those from minority ethnic groups. The LEA sets itself few measurable equal opportunities targets. There are no targets for the recruitment of men or of learners from minority ethnic groups, although these have been identified as priority recruitment groups in the equal opportunities plan for 2002-03.

20. The LEA has an accommodation strategy with targets for all buildings, to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (Part 4) by September 2003. There are adequate access arrangements for people with restricted mobility to many of the sites where courses are taught. In some schools, the furniture is not appropriate for adults.

Quality assurance**Contributory grade 4**

21. There are not enough established arrangements to evaluate and assure the overall effectiveness of the quality of the adult and community learning provision. This is acknowledged in the self-assessment report. There is no policy for the quality assurance of learning programmes directly managed by the organisation, although a quality assurance framework is being developed for the LEA's family learning programme. There is no evidence of a system to monitor subcontractors' health and safety arrangements. Initial assessments are not effectively documented, individual learning goals are not fully identified. The subcontracted providers each have their own quality assurance arrangements, however, the quality assurance systems used by some of the providers are not applied in full to the adult community learning provision, although the subcontractors are committed to seeking improvements. Although the existing quality assurance arrangements have been identified as a weakness within the self-assessment report, there is no associated action in the development plan to remedy the weakness.

22. Observations of teaching are not fully developed or implemented consistently throughout the provision. Observations are not necessarily carried out by a colleague with specialist experience or knowledge in the relevant area of learning. Lesson observations are not routinely linked to staff development and do not result in action plans that are monitored. There is no overall evaluation or moderation of lesson observations. There is no consistency in the lesson observations carried out by the LEA for its own provision. This was recognised in the self-assessment report. There are not enough opportunities for tutors to share good practice, this is especially true for outreach workers. The effect of the inadequate quality assurance arrangements on learners has, to some extent, been reduced by the quality of teaching and the expertise of tutors, supported in some cases by staff development.

23. There is insufficient use of feedback and review mechanisms to enable the organisation's continuous improvement. The approach to obtaining feedback from learners is not consistent throughout the provision. It is not possible to compare and evaluate aspects of provision for planning and development.

24. The development of thorough self-assessment arrangements for adult and community learning is not adequately established among all providers. In some cases, providers' self-assessment reports are not sufficiently self-critical and do not provide sufficient analysis of performance. Tutors were not sufficiently involved in the self-assessment process.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Grade 2

25. A small programme of sport, exercise and cookery classes is supported by Telford and Wrekin LEA. In 2001-02, 1,161 learners enrolled on courses in this area of learning, accounting for 30 per cent of all enrolments on recreational and leisure programmes. At the time of the inspection, 13 recreational sports courses and 10 cookery courses were being offered by two of the LEA's main subcontracted providers. There are also some food-related courses as part of the family learning programme. Leisure courses include yoga, keep fit, pilates, badminton, wine appreciation, cake decorating and French and Indian cookery. Most courses are open to all adults, but some exercise classes are designed for older learners. Many of these learners attend classes to improve or maintain mobility and general fitness. Courses do not lead to a qualification. A range of short taster courses has been developed recently, but most enrolments are for a 10-week course. In some exercise classes, payment can be made on a weekly or attendance basis. Classes are offered during the day and in the evening. They are held at locations across the borough at the providers' main sites, in schools and in community venues such as sports centres, and church and village halls. There have been 597 enrolments in the first term of this academic year. There are 482 enrolments in recreational sport and exercise classes and 115 enrolments on cookery courses. Just over 80 per cent of learners are women and almost 30 per cent are over 60 years of age. Four per cent are registered disabled and 1 per cent is from a minority ethnic group. A small number of tutors are full-time staff, but most are part time and are employed for six hours or less each week. A member of staff within each of the subcontracted providers is responsible for planning the curriculum, quality assurance and budgetary management.

STRENGTHS

- wide range of learning outcomes
- good standard of teaching
- good appropriate venues

WEAKNESSES

- inappropriate break in provision of exercise classes
- insufficient initial assessment of learners

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better initial guidance on course requirements

26. The programme of courses in this area of learning meets the needs and interests of a wide range of learners. In all classes, learners acquire a range of new skills and increase their knowledge of their chosen subject. There are good examples of the sharing of skills and knowledge, as well as good social and emotional support being provided to learners by their peers. Most learners have made substantial progress towards their personal learning objectives since the beginning of their course. In exercise classes, new movement skills, as well as movement combinations, are developed and the standard of performance in many cases is very good. Learners in cookery classes acquire new skills and refine existing skills. Many are surprised at the progress they are making, sometimes far exceeding their initial expectations. Learners carry out commissioned work for specialist cakes and one learner's work in cake decoration has received national recognition. Those learners interviewed find classes challenging and enjoy them. Confidence levels, communication skills and social interaction are developed in all classes. Many learners are now able to continue their activities at home. Some have taken up other learning activities, encouraged by the progress they have made, or through the personal contacts made during their courses.

27. Teaching is of a good standard and meets the needs of learners. Lessons are well planned and include a good variety of appropriate activities which develop learners' skills. Tutors make effective use of demonstrations to provide learners with a good understanding of the correct techniques they need to learn. Tutors use a range of teaching styles and techniques to meet the needs and abilities of the different learners. Well-developed schemes of work and individual learning session plans link effectively to the planned outcomes of the learning programme. In exercise classes, learners are offered a choice of activities to meet their individual aspirations and physical abilities. In cake making and sugar craft work tutors offer options that take account of differences in dexterity and the visual impairments of some learners.

28. The venues used for sport, fitness and cookery classes are good. Rooms are well decorated, well equipped and brightly lit. Exercise classes are held in rooms with appropriate wooden flooring, which is non-slip, and have a stage or raised platform for the instructor to use for demonstrations or leading classes. One venue also has specialist studio lighting that allows the instructor to vary lighting levels for relaxation sections of the class. The kitchens are satisfactory, although some of the equipment, such as ovens, is in need of some repair and better maintenance. There is a heavy reliance on the instructor and the learners to provide the specialist resources needed for these adult and community learning classes. In exercise, this includes music players and tapes, balls, weights, personal mats and resistance bands. In cookery it includes ingredients and other specialist equipment. Learners do not receive enough information regarding the specialist equipment needed for their course, or about the health and safety requirements for some of the courses.

29. There is a long break from exercise classes during the summer period. Those

learners interviewed report that the gains in fitness they make during their courses are lost during the long period of inactivity in the summer. This is particularly significant for older learners who often find improving their fitness more difficult in the first few lessons. Learners also identify that other, social benefits of the provision are lost during this period.

30. For most classes, there is insufficient initial assessment of learners' abilities, prior learning or experience. Although all learners on exercise classes are encouraged to gain their doctor's approval before starting an exercise course, no records are kept of such approvals. Tutors and instructors do identify individual needs during sessions and over time, but have no records of prior experiences or achievements. In one class, a cookery tutor has developed a profile system for learners, identifying their skill levels. A pilates instructor has also developed a questionnaire to identify the medical histories of learners. Few tutors maintain written records of the progress and achievement of learners. All learners do however receive frequent verbal feedback on their performances and encouragement and support from their tutors and, in many instances, from their peers.

31. Learners enjoy their courses, find them challenging and feel that they meet their individual needs. They also value the social aspects of learning in a group and other social events organised in addition to the formal classes, but related to the course. Learners also report that fitness courses have helped in rehabilitation from medical problems, for example, following car accidents. They recognise and praise the open, friendly and welcoming culture of the classes. Some courses also allow parents to gain knowledge and skills that they can use to support their own children at home and in school.

Good Practice

A sports instructor has created a questionnaire to obtain additional information on individual learners' needs so that a risk assessment sheet can be produced for learners. This highlights specific areas, mostly medical in nature, that require special attention or additional precautions.

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

32. Visual and performing arts and media is the largest area of learning offered by Telford & Wrekin LEA. In 2001-02, 1,248 learners enrolled on arts courses, accounting for 32 per cent of all learners. Most learners are enrolled on courses offered by the LEA's two subcontracted providers. The provision consists of 35 courses offered at 27 venues across the borough. Venues include the college's main learning centres, schools, community centres and church halls. For the current year, there have been 575 enrolments on courses in visual and performing arts at the time of the inspection. Just over 75 per cent of enrolments are made by women. Approximately 30 per cent of learners are over 60 years of age. Eleven per cent of learners have a disability and 3 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. Courses operate for 30 weeks of the year. Most courses are scheduled on week days with some taster courses and workshops taking place at weekends and during the summer break. Courses are offered during daytime and the evening. Learners participate in a variety of non-accredited creative arts courses. These include drawing and painting, soft furnishing, music, dance, pottery and needlecrafts. There are 18 part-time tutors. Of these, nine tutors work for less than three hours each week and nine tutors work between three and 15 hours each week. One provider's learning is co-ordinated by two curriculum team leaders. The other provider's learning is managed by the community learning programme manager. These staff are responsible for the recruitment of learners, the management of courses and quality assurance.

STRENGTHS

- good range of courses
- particularly well-structured courses
- good standard of work

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient initial assessment
- poor monitoring of learners' progress
- inadequate use of reviews and feedback mechanisms

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more investment in specialist equipment and materials

33. A good range of courses is offered in visual arts. The providers have made considerable efforts to offer courses across a wide geographical area. Taster courses

are offered in a range of locations to introduce potential learners to the subjects, assess the level of interest in the proposed courses and promote the provision generally. The comments of existing and potential learners are taken into account when courses are scheduled and the location decided. Tutors offer study and research opportunities for learners during vacation periods to enable them to continue with their studies and maintain their interest. For example, learners on a painting course had the opportunity to join a study holiday over the Christmas break. Gallery visits are a regular feature of the provision both during and outside of the college terms.

34. Courses are particularly well planned and well structured. All courses have detailed schemes of work with information on intended outcomes, resources and health and safety issues. Tutors use their extensive subject knowledge to develop stimulating learning activities. These are designed to take account of the varied experiences and abilities of the learners. Learners benefit from the high standards and professional techniques demonstrated by tutors, many of whom are practitioners in their field of expertise. Where learners attend the same course for more than a year, tutors plan the course content to include more complex and challenging tasks for the more experienced learners. In a needlecraft class, the tutor offers a workshop facility for advanced learners to pursue individual projects which use the skills they have acquired. The tutors' own work is used as a valuable learning resource alongside a wide range of technical samples to illustrate visual effects. There is a reliance on tutors to provide specialist equipment and materials for many of these courses.

35. Learners produce work of a consistently good standard on all courses. Many learners with no prior or recent experience of art, acquire a wide range of techniques and skills. Thorough experimentation in various media in drawing and painting classes enables learners to quickly develop their artistic skills. Most learners make significant progress in developing skills, visual awareness and confidence. Learners understand the progress they have made and what they need to do to further improve their skills. Many learners continue to develop their skills and ideas in their own time. In some cases, this involves learners meeting outside scheduled classes to continue with their work or complete visual research. Learners acknowledge the additional benefits of attending classes and in particular enjoy the social aspect of studying. For example, in a drawing and painting class a recently bereaved learner joined the course for social contact and to occupy his time. Before joining the course, he had not experienced formal art teaching since attending school. The skills he acquired enabled him to work with local primary school pupils on the design and construction of a stage set.

36. There are good specialist facilities at the main college learning centres, including well-equipped sound studios and an excellent facility for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities which has a work area, computers and an open-plan kitchen area. This enables learners to combine specialist craft work with the development of independent living skills. The accommodation available in community venues is convenient and accessible. However, some community-based courses take place in poorly heated facilities. As these are multi-purpose facilities, there are few opportunities to create a visually stimulating environment suited to visual arts courses.

37. There is insufficient initial assessment of learners. There is inadequate recording of prior achievement, knowledge and skills to support tutors and learners in setting realistic learning goals. Some learners do not have sufficiently defined aims to help them to identify their development needs or measure their progress. Few tutors keep records of individual's learning goals or their progress. The monitoring and evaluation of learners' progress is weak. Achievement and progress is not always measured against clearly defined learning goals. Assessment is usually very informal.

38. The guidance provided to learners before enrolment is unsatisfactory. This is sometimes because of the use of postal enrolment or the enrolment being completed during the first class. Tutors are however very supportive of learners once they have joined a course. Tutors are informed of any specific disability that a learner may have. Specialist equipment is available for specific disabilities. For example, hearing loops are provided once a need has been identified.

39. Those learners interviewed are very positive about their courses, in most cases their expectations have been exceeded. Learners value the opportunity to develop skills and confidence in a craft over a number of years. Learners also value the support provided by tutors and the tutors' professional experience in their subject areas. Learners also acknowledge the additional benefits which they gain in relation to their personal and social lives. The location of courses within community venues is viewed by learners as a strength of the provision.

Family learning

Grade 2

40. In 2001-02, 726 learners took part in family learning programmes. Family learning covers a range of courses in which parents and carers develop their own knowledge and skills, as well as increase their awareness of the ways in which they can support their children's development. They also provide the first step into learning for parents returning to learning. Since August 2002, 309 learners have enrolled on family learning programmes. All courses are part time and range in length from one-hour taster sessions to courses lasting a total of 72 hours. All training programmes are aimed at families from disadvantaged groups. Courses take place mainly during the day and are offered in venues in the local communities, including schools and community centres. All courses offer childcare facilities. The SHARE courses target parents who wish to increase their understanding of their children's school work. The courses are taught by schoolteachers who have completed the SHARE training course. The SHARE programme is currently being offered in nine local schools. Family literacy and numeracy courses aim to develop adult literacy and numeracy skills, alongside parenting skills. They include separate sessions for the adults and the children, as well as providing opportunities for children and parents to learn together. Seven family literacy courses and one family numeracy course have been operating since August 2002. Parents and children can also learn together in art, drama, dance, crafts and cookery sessions, in other taster sessions and family learning courses offered by Telford and Wrekin LEA. A family learning co-ordinator has responsibility for the management and development of family learning across the borough. She is supported by a part-time family literacy co-ordinator and a team of 26 part-time tutors.

STRENGTHS

- good retention rates
- significant development of parenting skills on family learning programmes
- very skilled tutors
- good range of learning programmes

WEAKNESSES

- no structured development of basic skills on family literacy and numeracy programmes
- weak monitoring and evaluation of overall programme

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better accommodation to meet learners' and tutors' needs

41. There are good retention rates on all family learning programmes. Since September 2002, there have been 24 family learning short-taster courses, ranging between one and five hours in length. Twenty-one of these sessions were held during a family learning week. There were 118 enrolments on these courses. The retention rate was 100 per cent. Since August 2002, 13 longer programmes have been offered, lasting between 7.5 and 26 hours. The retention rate during 2001-02 for these courses was 85 per cent. During 2001-02, retention rates on the SHARE programme and on family literacy and numeracy courses have been 98 and 79 per cent, respectively.

42. There is significant development of parenting skills on all family learning programmes. Parents feel more confident and skilled in being able to help their children at home and at school. They develop and learn a variety of techniques about how to work with their children more effectively in ways that promote enjoyable learning. Most parents also report that they feel better equipped to take part in school activities following these courses. Some have used these skills and progressed to further training or employment as, for example, crèche workers and classroom assistants.

43. The team of part-time tutors who provide family learning are very skilled and appropriately qualified. All have a teaching qualification and relevant experience of working with children and adults. Tutors are extremely skilled in working with parents who have a wide range of abilities and needs. In addition, they work effectively with children and parents together in shared sessions. Learners use a wide variety of good resources and tutors are very skilled at enabling learners to use them successfully. Tutors use an appropriate variety of teaching methods to retain learners' interest and keep both parents and children focused on learning, while also making learning enjoyable. All staff show sensitivity to learners' social and practical needs and are able to respond appropriately to individual learner's needs. For example, one tutor successfully used pair work to encourage new learners to talk to each other about children's books, before asking them to contribute to discussions in a large group.

44. There is a diverse range of learning programmes that effectively meet learners' needs. Many programmes offer learners and their children opportunities to work together in drama, art and cooking, family literacy and family numeracy. Others are aimed at parents' own personal development. Learning sessions are offered during the day, after school, and in the early evening to take account of childcare responsibilities. Many take place during school holidays. Learners can negotiate what they do on many of the learning programmes. Childcare provision is available on all family learning courses. All family learning courses are free.

45. Most learners are motivated to join family learning programmes in order to be able to support their own children more effectively. Courses are usually promoted through leaflets and letters from local primary schools. In some cases, community learning workers identify a need and courses are set up as a response. Some tutors provide informal advice and guidance on further learning opportunities towards the end of a course. Most head teachers and staff who have been involved in the family learning programmes encourage learners to become more involved with the school either in a

voluntary or paid capacity.

46. All family learning programmes take place in venues in the local community, for example in primary schools or youth centres. The premises have primarily been designed for other uses and the decoration and furniture are not always of a good standard. In schools, some of the furniture is not suitable for use by adults, especially when they are expected to complete writing tasks. Most venues have whiteboards and flip charts. However, in some venues these are too small to contain all the information that needs to be displayed.

47. Most learners on family literacy and numeracy programmes have an informal initial assessment of their basic skills during the first weeks of the course. In most cases, the results of the assessment are recorded against the adult core curriculum for literacy or numeracy. Insufficient use is made of this information. The adult learning sessions focus mainly on ways in which parents can help their child, but do not specifically deal with individual parent's literacy or numeracy needs. Learners do not have a learning plan. Although basic skills development is a stated course aim, learners are not aware of this before they join the course, nor are they made aware of it as the course progresses.

48. The monitoring and evaluation of the family learning programme is weak. Monitoring and evaluation systems are in the early stages of development. There is no routine approach for monitoring the quality of teaching. Monitoring visits to classes are recorded in course files, but these do not include structured observations of teaching. Tutors are required to complete and return learning session plans to the family learning co-ordinator. Some are completed appropriately, but others fail to include all the information required. For example, many of the family learning session plans do not identify learning goals for adults. In some instances, evaluative comments and descriptions of learning activities have been recorded as learning outcomes. Attendance data is recorded in registers, but is not formally analysed to evaluate the effectiveness of programmes or to support improvement.

49. Those parents and carers interviewed who attend family learning courses say that they enjoy the activities. During the course they develop their self-confidence and learn how to deal with their children's behaviour. Many feel more confident and better equipped to support their children's learning at home. Most of them particularly enjoy working alongside their children in local settings, particularly at school. Many feel that because of other family pressures and costs, they would not always have the time or the resources to provide the range of activities available through the courses. Having childcare available on site is essential, although some learners are concerned about the quality of the provision. They are particularly unhappy with the frequent changes in crèche staff.

Good Practice

Paid learning support assistants provide valuable additional support on family learning courses where either the group is particularly large, or the activities are more complex and involve the use of specialist equipment, such as in some cooking and craft courses.

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.