INSPECTION REPORT

Cambridgeshire LEA

24 February 2003

ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

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

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

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

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

Overall judgement

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

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

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

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

SUMMARY

The provider

Cambridgeshire Community Education Service is a division of the education, libraries and heritage directorate of Cambridgeshire County Council. Cambridgeshire adult and community learning programme is mostly delivered through 25 village and community colleges across the county. Provision for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities is organised directly by the local education authority. The Cambridgeshire adult provision is funded by the Cambridgeshire Learning and Skills Council, with a small amount of additional support from other funding bodies. In the academic year 2001-02, 8,232 learners enrolled on courses in fourteen areas of learning. There were 14,209 enrolments across the three terms.

Overall judgement

The quality of provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. The quality of provision for visual and performing arts, information and communication technology and sports and leisure is satisfactory. The quality of provision for modern foreign languages and for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is not satisfactory. Arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory, but quality assurance and leadership and management are unsatisfactory.

GRADES

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

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

KEY STRENGTHS

• good teaching on sports and leisure provision

KEY WEAKNESSES

- weak links between strategic and curriculum planning
- inadequate quality assurance arrangements
- weak management information
- inadequate arrangements for budget monitoring

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better promotion of equal opportunities in the curriculum

THE INSPECTION

1. A team of 15 inspectors spent a total of 75 days at Cambridgeshire local education authority (LEA) in February 2003. They interviewed 478 learners and 93 members of staff. They observed and graded 101 learning classes, made 78 visits to sites and saw 243 examples of learners' work. They examined a range of documents including policies and procedures, learners' records, promotional literature and learners' and staff packs and handbooks. They read the self-assessment report which was produced in November 2002. Inspectors gave the same grades as those shown in the self-assessment report for three areas and three areas of learning were given lower grades. The grade for equal opportunities was the same, but inspectors gave lower grades for quality assurance and leadership and management.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Information & communications technology	0	3	2	3	0	0	0	8
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	3	9	13	7	1	0	0	33
Visual & performing arts & media	0	9	5	9	0	1	0	24
English, languages & communications	1	4	5	7	3	0	0	20
Foundation programmes	1	2	3	8	1	1	0	16
Total	**5**	**27**	**28**	**34**	**5**	**2**	**0**	**101**
per cent		**59.41%**		**33.66%**		**6.93%**		

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

2. The LEA's adult and community learning service forms part of the directorate for education, libraries and heritage in Cambridgeshire County Council. The adult provision is managed by the community education division, which also manages the youth service. Until 2001, there was a combined budget for the adult learning service and the youth service. From April 2001, the adult budget was clearly defined as 25 per cent of the total community education budget.

3. Since 1996, the budget has been devolved to the 25 Cambridgeshire village and community colleges (community schools), who organise their own programmes. The community schools' geographical area is known as a 'patch' with funding allocated on the basis of population. Much of the region is rural. The community schools' head and governing body are accountable locally for the service. A recent development has been the local authority's wish to rationalise provision, with five community education area planning groups. Two areas have become 'integrated community education area planning groups,' with a manager covering all of the adult provision. The other three areas are at different stages of development. In most of the county, the accredited provision is delivered under a franchise arrangement with two of the three local colleges of further education in the region. There are a few accredited courses for information and communication technology (ICT) and for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which are funded by the LEA.

4. The LEA's adult service has an annual budget of £1,500,000. Of this, £518,000 is devolved to the community schools, £200,000 is allocated to provision for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which is centrally managed, £250,000 is allocated for central council services and £76,000 is spent on the central staff management of adult and community learning. The population of the county is 426,000 and enrolments per head of population in 2001-02 were 1.73. In that year, 75 per cent of learners were women, less than 1 per cent were disabled and 1.1 per cent were from minority ethnic groups. Cambridgeshire is relatively affluent, ranked 249 out of 354 on the national indices of deprivation. However, there are areas of deprivation, and some rural areas have poor transport links.

Adult and Community Learning

5. There are examples of good work by learners in most areas of learning, with skilled and knowledgeable tutors. In craft subjects, learners gain new skills and apply them well. In information and communication technology classes, adults who have never touched a computer before are able, in a short time, to use the Internet and email with ease. In lip-reading classes, learners are encouraged to challenge perceptions about disability. However, there are also some unsatisfactory standards of work in modern foreign languages and provision for adults with learning difficulties. Teaching and learning is very good in sports and leisure, with well-focused activities and many adults gaining additional benefits from the classes. Teaching which stimulates a high level of debate in the target language, is one of the notable characteristics of the best modern languages teaching. However, despite some examples of very good or outstanding teaching for modern foreign languages and for adults with learning difficulties, there is some unsatisfactory teaching. Resources are satisfactory overall, although too many tutors are using their own resources.

6. A significant weakness in the sports and leisure provision is the poor assessment practice. Insufficient attention is paid in sports and fitness classes to carrying out a formal initial risk assessment to determine what level or type of exercise is suitable for an individual learner. The initial assessment/guidance interview for adults with learning difficulties or disabilities is not formally recorded and tutors are not given essential information which they need to plan effectively. Recording of progress is not thorough in any area of learning. There is little planning of provision targets, although there have been some successful examples of partnership working to reach more learners. Too often planning of provision is based on historical success. Advice and guidance for learners vary. Not enough attention is paid to the identification and support needs of learners with sensory impairments.

7. Management of the provision is weak. In all areas of learning there are weaknesses in leadership and management and in quality assurance. There are no named specialists who can provide advice and support for areas of learning. There is insufficient training and sharing of good practice among staff, too little teaching observation and too little attention given to establishing priorities in each area of learning. Some of the heads and community school managers do not respond to requests from the central team for key data about the provision. There is insufficient accurate data for the monitoring of budgets and planning of the provision. There has been a timely and appropriate response from the central team to the new legislative requirements for equality and diversity, and community schools promote equal opportunities well in their literature. However, insufficient use is made of monitoring information in relation to equal opportunities.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT   Grade   5

8. The community education service in Cambridgeshire is locally managed and delivered mainly through 25 community and village colleges. Each college has a 'patch' or geographical area, which is managed by an operational manager who reports to the head of the school or principal. The service is funded, supported and guided from community education headquarters, based in Shire Hall, Cambridge. The central team consists of a head of service, line managed by an assistant director, and two officers, who manage the adult and youth service which make up the Cambridgeshire community education service. There are two full-time co-ordinators, who manage the programmes for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities. The central team directly manages this programme area. The authority is encouraging community schools to work together to plan and deliver adult and community learning in the five areas bounded by the district councils. These partnerships are known as community education area planning groups, two of which are currently fully operational with separate management arrangements for the youth service. The other three are in different stages of development.

9. The authority produces an adult learning plan. This plan is discussed by the lifelong learning service development group, which consists of councillors from all political parties. It is approved by the cabinet and by full council. Each community school or community education area planning group has an annual plan and an action plan which is developed from the self-assessment report.

10. The budget is devolved historically, on the basis of population. Some rural community schools receive relatively small amounts each year for adult and community learning provision. Some community education area planning groups and community schools make successful bids for additional funding from other sources, in partnership with other groups and organisations. In addition to the LEA-funded provision, accredited programmes are taught under franchise arrangements with local colleges. Community schools decide their own fees and retain them to manage and deliver the service. This includes all salary costs, including a contribution to the head's salary and the hire of the school premises. When funding for community education was received from the LEA, community schools were able to manage their budgets as a whole. The youth service budget is now separate and the community schools are accountable for the separate expenditure of the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC's) budget.

 STRENGTHS

• timely response to equal opportunities legislative amendments

WEAKNESSES

- inadequate systems for budget monitoring
- ineffective communication across much of the provision
- weak management information
- weak links between strategic objectives and curriculum planning
- insufficient use of equal opportunities data
- inadequate quality assurance arrangements
- unsystematic approach to staff development

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better promotion of equal opportunities in the curriculum

11. The LEA's most recent adult learning plan identifies a number of key strategic objectives. The plan has been shared with community school managers who understand the strategic priorities. Individual community schools develop action plans which refer to the priorities. Community schools also have action plans which are part of their self-assessment report. In general these plans are not coherent and identify different action points from those in the adult learning plan. Although there is a small amount of provision, which reflects strategic objectives in community schools, much of the curriculum is the same from year to year. When there are changes and developments, they are often the result of suggestions from learners, or existing or potential tutors rather than a response to strategic objectives. Community education area planning groups and community schools are not given targets for enrolment, retention and achievement rates or numbers of new learners or learners from particular groups. There is no shared understanding among heads and community school managers of the value and use of performance indicators in curriculum planning and development. Some question their relevance to adult and community learning.

12. The current systems for the central monitoring of individual budgets are inadequate. There are currently no service level agreements with the community schools or community education area planning groups, although this is being discussed centrally. The community schools use a range of systems to manage their budgets and these systems produce reports at different intervals. Monitoring of budgets is difficult. Some community schools have overspent their budgets. One community education area planning group was significantly overspent in the previous financial year and as yet managers of the community education programme have not been advised of this by the central finance services. The adult and community learning budgets presented to the LSC showed a small underspend for that financial year. The community education area planning groups and community schools, which are overspent, are not aware of the consequences. In the past, community schools have managed budgets with a number of income streams, which they have been able to use flexibly to support a range of provision. Because of the current need to be separately accountable for the adult education budget, some heads and community school managers feel that they no

longer have this flexibility. Most regard this as a difficult management problem and one is preparing to significantly reduce adult provision as a consequence. The central computerised system for the collection and analysis of data is not currently effective. A new system which extracts data from the individual learner's record, is under development, but accurate data and useful reports cannot be produced as yet. Community schools collect a variety of data and most store and analyse them manually. Some community schools have no data on retention and most are unclear about how to record achievement in adult and community learning. Data collected over time are not available to community schools to support planning and development. Inspectors found data to be unreliable during the inspection.

13. Communication across much of the provision is ineffective. Heads and community school managers regard the LEA as supportive and responsive to their requests, but not proactive in communication. There are monthly meetings for managers, which are used to give information and some heads belong to groups which meet to review specific management issues. However, where managers and heads attend meetings as representatives, they do not always share the information with others. Most community school managers do not regard these meetings as useful. Some governors who are responsible for community education area planning groups feel inadequately informed about their structure and development. Some governors have not received or responded to key documents. Some heads and community school managers have not responded to key documents relating to national priorities for action and are not clear about their importance. The LEA's staff have little time to visit community schools individually to talk about adult and community learning. Staff at one community school express a strong sense of isolation. Communication with many teaching staff consists of information placed in their registers.

14. There is a small, central staff development programme, which includes stage 1 teacher training for adults, and some activities for staff in particular subject areas. New tutors are encouraged rather than required to achieve the further education teaching qualification and not all community schools make use of this programme. Some community schools allocate a significant amount of their budget to staff development, but others allocate very little. There is no analysis of staff development needs or staff development plans in community schools. Very little staff development is offered in community schools and there are few opportunities to share good practice among tutors.

15. The LEA contributes to the local LSC's targets for literacy and numeracy through its programmes for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Under a local agreement, further education colleges deliver all other provision. There has been some successful literacy and numeracy provision at entry level in one community school, but consideration of the pre-entry curriculum has been slow. Although the county co-ordinators have attended training events, there has been little discussion with tutors across the county about its relevance for specific programmes, such as those which prepare learners for work.

Equality of opportunity   **Contributory grade   3**

16. The community education service has had policies relating to equality of opportunity for many years. The community schools have adapted these policies for use in adult provision. They routinely promote equality by publishing statements and policies in learners' and tutors' handbooks. Often the information is comprehensive and helpful for learners and members of staff. Generally this information is widely distributed, although there are a few examples of part-time tutors not receiving handbooks because they had been unable to attend the appropriate meeting. The community education service has made a timely response to the recent changes in legislation. In response to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act, 2001, the service has audited buildings for disability access and has applied successfully for funding to make adaptations to some of the buildings. In response to the Race Relations (Amendment) Act, 2000, the directorate has updated its policy and developed a community education standards action plan for implementation. Guidelines and procedures have been sent out for reporting racial incidents in educational establishments. Complaints procedures are in place and are used. There has been training for senior managers and the community education service has developed guidelines for all its services on the implementation of its equality and diversity policy. This has followed a process of discussion and negotiation through two groups of field staff, one focusing on disability, the other on multi-cultural and anti-racist work. The guidelines have been sent to all community schools, but as yet none of the heads or managers has revised their policy and there has been little recent staff training. Many governors have not seen the revised policies for community education.

17. In response to local needs, some community schools have recruited specific groups of learners who have been under-represented. These include travellers, refugees and people with mental health needs. The provision is often imaginative, sometimes with tangible benefits to learners, such as progression to main stream courses or the production of videos. Sometimes the provision is developed as the result of working with local charities, voluntary, or other statutory organisations. However, across the provision as a whole there is little active targeting of specific groups, and little promotion of diversity in the curriculum. Community schools and the LEA routinely collect monitoring data in relation to race, gender and disabilities. However, the LEA has not used these data to provide guidance to the community schools on recruitment or to set targets, and there are no regular reports sent to governors to demonstrate progress made.

Quality assurance   Contributory grade   4

18. Cambridgeshire LEA has produced two self-assessment reports over a period of 18 months. The second was produced over a very tight deadline, in line with the quality assurance cycle and external inspection requirements. The quality assurance framework was produced in October 2002 and provides a clear and concise overview of quality assurance arrangements for youth and community education. The quality of the reports and subsequent development plans varies greatly. Some community schools have had the task of producing three separate self-assessment reports concurrently for adult, youth and franchised provision. Much of the information is replicated and staff complain of an overly bureaucratic approach. Action plans produced as a result of self-assessment are not consistently monitored. Community schools are also required to produce community school action plans. There is little link between community school plans and the self-assessment report development plans. Governing bodies have not been sufficiently informed of the process and many have not endorsed their community school's self-assessment report. Due to the timescales involved in the production of the report, few community schools have received feedback from the LEA on their self-assessment and no moderation of grades has taken place.

19. There is an inconsistent approach to gaining feedback from learners and tutors across the county. Most community schools issue questionnaires to learners but the content, timing and use of the results are weak. In a few community schools, managers analyse responses and put actions in place for improvements. Other systems to ensure that learners are aware of support mechanisms are clear and all learners have an induction and a student charter. New staff are given an informative handbook, which provides details about the systems and procedures to be followed, and staff training opportunities. However, this good practice does not extend to all community schools. There are few targets which can be used to measure year-on-year improvements. Few community schools use formal mechanisms to gain tutor views. However, in one community school tutors meet once a term. Meetings are recorded and action points are clear. Some other community schools hold annual meetings, but many community schools rely on telephone contact with tutors only if there is a problem. There is an over reliance on an open-door policy to deal with problems as they arise, and little thought is given to the value of regular formal contact.

20. Heads and managers have difficulty monitoring performance, as few have systems in place. Many community schools have had difficulty providing information on learners' retention rates. Only three community schools use electronic systems to record information. In these community schools, managers have been able to provide fairly reliable data on retention and learner information. Most community schools use a paper-based system and the LEA acknowledges that some of this information is unreliable and the process is unmanageable. The LEA is currently in the process of purchasing a new management information system which all community schools can use. This weakness was acknowledged in the self-assessment report.

21. The LEA has adopted an internal inspection model to analyse the quality of its

provision. This process is co-ordinated by an external consultant. Community school staff who have been trained in the process also inspect provision. Findings are reported and graded under the seven questions of the 'Common Inspection Framework'. One inspection of adult provision in a community school has been carried out, but the report is very general and does not sufficiently focus on the strengths and weaknesses of individual curriculum areas. The heads and community school managers felt that the guidance given before the inspection was insufficient. Systems to provide support after inspection are in an early stage of development.

22. Lesson observations have recently been implemented across the county. Standard documents are used to record findings, but there are inconsistencies in how the process is applied across the community schools. Some community schools have only just implemented the system. Some tutors are told the grade given to their lesson observation, while others are not. Written feedback varies. In a minority of cases, tutors complete an action plan and negotiate targets for improvement with their manager. Some managers plan to observe tutors annually, while others are planning a two-year cycle. Many managers who observe classes are not qualified in the curriculum area.

23. There is little sharing of good practice across the county. Tutors who share the same discipline rarely meet. However, one community school has a planned timetable for ICT tutors to meet each other and one meeting has taken place. Tutors in modern foreign languages and visual and performing arts are also planning to meet in the near future.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information & communications technology   Grade 3

24. In November 2002, there were 245 enrolments on courses in ICT. In February 2003, there were 60 learners in ICT. Courses include introduction to computing, word processing, spreadsheets, databases, network games, photo imaging and Internet use. Most courses provide learners with basic skills in computing and are targeted at specific groups, such as a computer club in a residential home for the elderly. Classes are held in local primary and secondary schools, and the community projects are held in community venues. Classes are held on weekday mornings, afternoons and evenings during term time. Courses vary in length from one-, two- or three-hour taster classes to programmes lasting five to 10 weeks. In 2001-02, 63 per cent of learners were women and 21 per cent of learners were over 60 years of age. There has been a reduction in the number of courses in the last year, from 26 to 10 and many of the courses only have small numbers of learners. Attendance during the inspection was 83 per cent. This area is managed at a local level with community schools determining appropriate provision for their locality. Six part-time tutors teach the courses.

STRENGTHS
- good teaching and learning on community projects
- effective skills development

WEAKNESSES
- insufficient professional support for many tutors
- inadequate identification of learner support needs
- unsuitable accommodation or resources in many classes

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED
- better initial guidance for learners

25. Learners develop good computing skills. Many learners make good progress towards achieving their learning goals. On courses for older learners, the curriculum is carefully planned and learners develop skills to enable them to learn independently and to continue to study at home. On the more advanced courses, learners follow a programme of challenging tasks and activities which increase their skills and knowledge.

26. All the classes observed were satisfactory, and 63 per cent were good or better.

The best classes were those held in community venues. In these classes activities were planned for the range of abilities in the group. Learners received good levels of verbal encouragement and feedback and progress was monitored throughout the sessions. A good range of teaching skills was used including lecturing, demonstration, and individual guidance, with handouts specifically designed for the needs of the older members of the group. Learning was checked through a range of exercises as well as by good informal question and answer sessions. In the less effective classes, teaching was not varied and depended too much on the tutor's direction. Planning, recording of learners' progress and assessment by tutors is satisfactory. Individual assessment tasks are signed off at appropriate times.

27. The quality of the teaching facilities and resources varies. Some venues have good, up-to-date hardware and software, and the accommodation is spacious and offers easy access to guidance material. In two community schools, the equipment includes data projectors and specialist software. In many of the smaller community venues learners do not have access to adjustable height seating, and lighting and ventilation are poor. One community school is very cramped, noisy and the environment is bare and uninspiring. Some learners are not able to print out their work for several weeks due to faulty printers. All learners are given a pack of good support materials.

28. The adult and community learning provision is small and has reduced considerably over the past year. However, there are many other local providers, and many community schools offer accredited courses under a franchise arrangement with local colleges. The few courses that have recruited learners are welcomed, particularly when they are located in local communities, and targeted at learners with no previous experience of computers. After gaining basic computing skills, many learners take additional courses at the same level, in databases and spreadsheets, or progress to a more advanced course. Many learners gain sufficient skills to use computers independently at home. However, the overall provision has not been planned and there has not been a county response to the changing nature of ICT provision. Initial guidance is variable, with little information about other local courses. Learners are rarely involved in planning the programmes.

29. Tutors do not carry out initial assessments or interviews with the learners. Insufficient attention is given to individual learner's aptitude or previous experience, and additional support needs are not always identified. For example, five weeks into the programme a learner who is partially sighted was trying to work on a laptop without any magnification. Another student who had a physical disability had to take breaks every fifteen minutes because the facilities were not adapted appropriately.

30. Tutors are not given sufficient support. The tutor observation programme is not fully developed, and few tutors have had any observations in the past year. They are not aware of any planned programme of observations which includes them. They are not involved in the self-assessment process and do not have communication with other tutors. Tutors do not use the individual learning plan pro-forma which was supplied a month before inspection, since they are unclear how to use it. Some of the information

days are on a Saturday and many are not able to attend due to other commitments. Two members of staff have gained a teaching qualification in their own time and the community school met the course costs. There is no central co-ordination of ICT across the county. Although specific groups have been targeted, this is not part of a planned programme to widen participation or to meet equality targets.

31. Learners speak highly of the support from their tutors. At some community schools learners commented on the quality of support materials and appreciated having good, detailed handouts to take home to practise on their own computers. They welcome the opportunity to learn new skills in local community schools close to their home. Learners are highly motivated to learn how to use the Internet and send e-mails in order to have more frequent communication with family living abroad. Several grandparents join the courses to gain skills so that they can keep up with their grandchildren. Learners in groups of very mixed abilities would prefer much smaller groups to allow more individual time with the tutors. Learners report that some classes are too short to make the progress that they want, while others want more than one session a week.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel   Grade 3

32. Figures for the 2001-02 academic year indicate that this area of learning accounts for 47 per cent of all courses, and 57 per cent of the learners who are engaged in adult and community learning provision. Nineteen per cent of learners are men, 42 per cent are between 30 and 50 years of age, while a further 33 per cent are over 50. There are 206 different classes in this area of learning with a total of 2,806 learners enrolled. Yoga and pilates account for 42 per cent of all courses, with various other forms of general exercise and fitness work accounting for a further 28 per cent. Other courses include swimming, trampolining, badminton, tai chi and bridge and a very small number of cookery classes. Two-thirds of courses run in the evening and one-third in the morning or afternoon. Most classes are between one and a half and two hours long and run for 30 weeks of the year. Most exercise and sports courses take place in specialist physical education facilities in community schools. Part-time tutors who work fewer than six hours a week teach most of the courses. A small number of courses are taught by specialist teaching staff from local schools.

STRENGTHS
· wide range of exercise courses for different sections of the community
· a lot of good teaching and learning
· extensive additional health and social benefits for learners

WEAKNESSES
· inadequate curriculum co-ordination and management
· inadequate monitoring of individual progress
· insufficient systematic initial risk assessment

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED
· greater range of weekend and summer courses

33. Learners gain new skills, broaden their knowledge, and maintain or enhance their general levels of fitness. Equally important for many of them is the social aspect of the classes, especially in some rural areas. Learners in yoga and aquamobility classes are able to use the techniques that they learn during the rest of the week to help them overcome or alleviate medical problems such as back pain. Attendance is recorded accurately. The attendance rate in the classes observed during the inspection was 70 per cent. However, non-attendance is not routinely followed up. Retention rates are satisfactory or better.

34. There is a lot of good teaching. Seventy-six per cent of classes observed were good or better and 10 per cent were outstanding. Tutors are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. Their demonstrations are good, especially in yoga, pilates and t'ai chi. Teaching methods are adjusted according to the learners in the group. Alternative activities are provided for more mature learners and those with restricted mobility. Classes are characterised by high levels of well-focused activity. Relationships between tutors and learners are excellent and there is a sense of shared responsibility for learning. Learners understand the aims and objectives of the courses that they attend. Classes are well structured and make good use of the resources available. Proper attention is given to warm-up and cooling-down activities in exercise classes. Mixed-ability classes are managed sensitively. Learners develop knowledge of the principles of exercise and its effects on their bodies. Most of the learners pick up sequences of movement easily and adopt good body positions. In a small number of cases tutors did not provide sufficient individual feedback to group members to enable them to improve their performance. Examples of insufficient feedback include body shape in trampolining and the execution of some stretches. Sometimes tutors are unable to see exactly what each learner is doing from their position in the room.

35. Most of the facilities are good. Many classes take place in specialist accommodation in secondary schools where in most cases equipment levels are satisfactory or better. Tutors are well qualified in their own specialist areas and many have attended specific courses in order to develop the necessary skills. Care is taken to recruit tutors with the appropriate qualifications.

36. When target-setting takes place, it is expressed in terms of what the group will aim to accomplish by the end of the course. There is very little monitoring or recording of individual targets or progress. However, most tutors give informal feedback during classes. Very few tutors record individual achievement even when the activity involved readily lends itself to this. There is very little useful information which can be passed on to a new tutor. Notable exceptions to this are a keep-fit class where there are records of individual performance against standard benchmarks dating back several years, and some bridge classes.

37. There is a very wide range of exercise sessions available in Cambridgeshire. Most courses are open to everyone, but some target particular groups. Examples include keep-fit classes for specific age groups, men- and women-only classes, classes for adults with learning and physical difficulties, and swimming courses for parents and young children. Some community schools run courses with small numbers in order to try to stimulate demand from sections of the community that are under-represented in current provision. Yoga and pilates are especially prominent in response to demand from learners. There is a shortage of qualified tutors for these disciplines in some parts of the county. There are good progression routes between different levels of yoga and pilates classes in some areas and there are courses at different levels in bridge, swimming, t'ai chi, and badminton. However, the current pattern of provision does not reflect any particular set of strategic priorities. Most provision has evolved locally over a long

period of time. Until recently, there has been little attention to planning provision across different geographical areas in the context of changing patterns of participation. Very few courses run at weekends or during the summer-holiday period.

38. Too few tutors carry out initial individual risk assessments of learners before they begin an exercise programme. Some tutors do this informally through discussion at the beginning of a course, but few record the results. There are no common criteria set out for doing this type of assessment. Most tutors refer to health and fitness considerations at the beginning of each session and advise learners accordingly.

39. There is little co-ordination across the county and this was identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report. The overall arrangements for ensuring the quality of provision are inadequate. County and local self-assessment reports have insufficient detail and accurate analysis relating to this area of learning. A common system for tutor observation has been introduced in some areas, but implementation of the system varies and many tutors have never been observed. Non-specialist staff carry out the observations. Feedback from learners is collected in most areas, but the arrangements for doing this vary widely, and some of the questionnaires are not suitable for non-accredited provision. Much of the analysis only reports the majority view. Approaches to lesson planning and the development of schemes of work vary widely. Some are excellent, but others are totally absent. There are no agreed criteria or minimum standards to govern this work. There is insufficient accurate data on which to base curriculum development and planning and course-level analysis of participation or retention. There are no specific targets for increasing the number of enrolments or the number of learners from particular groups or to meet equality targets. There are few opportunities for tutors to meet those involved in similar areas of work to share good practice. A small programme of in-service training has been available for physical education tutors for each of the last three years but there are no effective mechanisms to identify tutors' training needs.

Visual & performing arts & media   Grade 3

40. Visual and performing arts is the second largest area of provision. There are 206 non-accredited courses offered as daytime or evening classes. In addition, there are some weekend courses and summer schools. The range of subjects include drawing and painting, pottery, sculpture, photography, jewellery, dressmaking, upholstery, needlecraft and embroidery, patchwork quilting, jazz and ballroom dancing, guitar, violin and some singing classes. Most of the provision is offered in the evenings. There are 2,365 learners enrolled across all adult ages, of whom 75 per cent are women. Most of the classes are offered over three terms. Each community school has a community education office with appropriate management and support staff. Most of the staff are part time.

STRENGTHS
•   good acquisition and application of skills
•   good teaching and learning in craft areas
•   significant personal enrichment

WEAKNESSES
•   weak assessment practices
•   inadequate curriculum management and quality assurance

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED
•   broader range of provision
•   ensure appropriateness of all accommodation and equipment
•   further development of initial advice and guidance

41. Learners demonstrate good skill acquisition and application. In pottery, jewellery, embroidery and some music classes the standard of the learners' work is good and new techniques are applied with understanding and confidence. In many cases, the chosen areas of study have enriched learners' lives significantly. In one art class, learners have formed an art society where their work is regularly exhibited, and where the proceeds of subsequent sales are donated to charity. Data for this area are not reliable and inspectors were not able to make judgements about retention and achievement. Attendance at inspection was 74 per cent. Learners do not have clear learning goals, and do not always understand what they need to do to improve.

42. All of the teaching is satisfactory or good, particularly in craft subjects. The tutors'

knowledge, skills and expertise are appropriate to adult learner groups and in all cases the relationships between staff and learners are good. In the best classes, demonstrations and explanations are clear and a lot of collaborative learning takes place. Learners are well prepared and are able to work diligently on their individual projects. Tutors recognise the different abilities in their classes and some plan for this accordingly. Learners are also encouraged to experiment with different methods. In nearly all cases, learners benefit from the individual tuition. In one painting class, a learner demonstrated considerable perception comparing the use of watercolours with oil paints in their appropriateness to landscape painting in different countries. Despite this, there is little promotion of social or cultural diversity in the topics chosen by tutors.

43. Most accommodation and equipment is fit-for-purpose and good in some cases, especially where facilities are shared with schools. Venues are clearly sign-posted and access for learners who have a disability is generally good. Many tutors have professional expertise which adds value to the learning experience. Occasionally the accommodation impacts adversely on learners. For example, in a quilt-making class, learners have to provide their own sewing machines. In another class, the cutting tables for dressmaking are insufficient. Tutors regularly have to order and pay for materials themselves and then sell them to the learners.

44. Learners value the social benefits gained from attending classes and the skills and confidence they have gained. In many classes the social interaction is as important to the learner as is the subject being taught. They appreciate the guidance and support from tutors and are often inspired by their knowledge and professional expertise. Learners speak highly of the range of accessible venues. They confirm that in many cases the chosen areas of study have enriched their lives significantly and that learning impacts on their personal lives.

45. The monitoring and assessment of learners' progress is weak. Individual needs or learning outcomes are not formally identified or recorded and initial assessment is informal. Learners are given good informal feedback on their progress, but it is not recorded and is not used as a basis for curriculum planning and delivery. There are no formal assessments or records of progress to indicate what has been learned. There is little evaluation of learners' own progress and development.

46. The range of provision is fairly traditional and most courses have been operating for some time. Community groups are consulted, and courses are provided according to local demand. However, there is little evidence of strategic curriculum development across the region. Weekend taster courses and summer schools are offered in some subjects and, if popular, subsequent courses are arranged. The overall range of curriculum is not balanced. There are limited numbers of music and dance classes and no drama provision. There are some limited opportunities for learners to progress from beginners to advanced (A) level classes. Most learners are content to continue in the class of their choice, despite the length of time they have been attending. However, opportunities for progression to accredited courses are available through the local colleges.

47. Course information varies. Some tutors give detailed handouts about their courses, but such practice is not shared across all community schools. With some courses there are often considerable financial implications regarding the purchase of materials and tools, but this information is not always clearly stated in pre-enrolment publications. Childcare facilities are not offered.

48. Curriculum planning and quality assurance procedures are inadequate. There are a few examples of good practice in staff development, but it is not shared across the county. Community school heads and managers have had training in tutor observation, but few tutors have been observed. Some new staff are encouraged to update their teaching qualifications, but this is not thoroughly monitored. Self-assessment reports are compiled often without reference to the teaching staff. Learners' questionnaires are collected, but their findings are not systematically implemented. During the week of inspection, data were not reliable in respect of enrolments and rates of retention.

Good Practice
A small number of community schools are participating in the 'health for life' initiative where learners are encouraged by their doctors to enrol in community education classes to help deal with problems such as depression and loneliness. All learners complete a questionnaire on enrolment and then again three months later and the data are analysed by the psychology department at a local hospital. Results indicate that in most cases learners have gained a greater sense of well being, and this conclusion is supported through discussions inspectors had with these particular learners.

English, languages & communications   Grade 4

49. Seventy-five foreign language courses take place in 17 community venues throughout the county. Courses range from beginners to advanced level in French, German, Spanish, Italian, Japanese and Chinese as well as a number of conversation classes where the level is not specified. In addition, there are beginners' courses in Swahili, Hungarian, Turkish, Russian and Greek. There is a complementary range of accredited languages in some of the same community schools under a franchise arrangement with a local college. There was a significant increase in the amount of people enrolled in 2001-02 over the previous year. Daytime enrolments increased from 121 to 258 and evening classes increased from 550 to 693. However, this growth has not been maintained for 2002-03. There are now 115 in the daytime and 526 in the evening, with an average group size of 9.8 overall. Over 40 hourly paid staff teach this wide-ranging programme. Courses take place once a week for two hours, and vary in length from 10 to 30 weeks.

STRENGTHS
*   imaginative cultural enrichment activities
*   fluent discussion of challenging subjects in classes
*   wide range of provision at different levels

WEAKNESSES
*   inconsistent quality assurance arrangements
*   no systematic assessment procedures
*   insufficient training of staff in teaching languages
*   no specialist subject co-ordination

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED
*   better access to resources for tutors
*   more systematic follow-up of withdrawals and poor attendance

50. In foreign language classes, learners' achievements are variable. In the best classes, achievements are particularly good in more advanced conversation classes where linguistic skills are developed and maintained. Learners of all ages engage in topics which are stimulating. In an advanced Chinese lesson there was a wide range of discussions, all in fluent Mandarin. In a Spanish lesson, learners discussed immigration with confidence and fluency. However, in English classes, learners use the language hesitantly and with poor pronunciation. In most classes observed, attendance was

substantially below the numbers on the register and unexplained absences have not been followed up. In some classes there has been a significant number of withdrawals, due to the class being pitched at the wrong level. County wide, retention rates are 61 per cent for languages classes for 2002-03.

51. The quality of teaching is variable. In the best classes, there is evidence of very good use of the language with a lot of cultural content, carefully paced to include progression. Some tutors have organised stimulating extra activities, including a Spanish evening in a local tapas bar, cooking crepes, salsa dancing and visits abroad. Generally, there is little planning for differentiation, although many tutors respond well to individual needs as they arise in the class. Fifty per cent of classes are good or better, 35 per cent are satisfactory and 15 per cent are unsatisfactory. In the unsatisfactory classes, too much new material is introduced at once with insufficient oral practise and too much emphasis on grammar.

52. The main resource is a large team of fluent linguists with a high proportion of native speakers. However, some are not trained in the specific skills of language teaching. In some classes, resources are limited and are provided by the tutor. Whiteboards are generally used effectively, with very good use of an interactive whiteboard in the specialist language college, and good use of videos and a multimedia suite. The rooms range from small but comfortable, to school classrooms. In some community schools, older learners sit on primary school chairs.

53. Although there is some informal monitoring of learners' progress in classes, monitoring of progress is not systematic. There is some assessment at the end of topics and courses, but there is no systematic assessment across the authority.

54. Some courses are provided in response to demand from the local community. Others are simply because of tutor availability and for historic reasons. A continuation class is often provided in response to the needs of existing learners. Learners travel considerable distances for courses in some languages, but popular languages courses are widely available. Classes are available at times to suit the learners.

55. There is inconsistency in initial course publicity across the county. In one community school, all but the beginners in a language are routinely referred to specialist tutors for guidance and advice. However, in other community schools learners select the course they wish to study and enrol with no advice. In three community schools, there is good evidence of initial consultation and discussion with the tutor. Tutors have a good relationship with their learners and respond well to their needs and interests.

56. Leadership and management arrangements do not generally lead to curriculum improvement. There is no overall planning and co-ordination of the modern languages provision and this was identified in the self-assessment report. There is little peer observation of good practitioners, no evidence of the sharing of good practice and no subject leadership in some community schools. Information about staff development opportunities is not being communicated effectively across the county, and tutors often

do not know where to go for help with methodology and resources. There is often a similar deficiency at local level. However, in one community school which is co-ordinated by a manager with experience of language teaching, all of the classes are satisfactory. Records of lesson observations carried out by community school staff are appropriate and comments are developmental. Community school plans do not systematically identify targets for modern languages. There is no specific target for modern languages in the plans of the two community schools, where retention is judged to be unsatisfactory by internal quality assurance procedures. The head of one of these areas was not aware that retention was unsatisfactory. There is no systematic requirement for tutors to check on absence, or for identifying why learners have stopped attending.

57. Learners are very appreciative of the support and encouragement they are given by their tutors. Several commented on the extent of the tutors' preparation for classes. Most appreciate the opportunity to maintain or acquire foreign language skills in a supportive, relaxed atmosphere, and some have been attending the same class for several years. Several of the learners do not want any form of accreditation, and some regret the recent substantial increase in fees.

Poor Practice
Two courses in less-commonly taught languages have been offered this year as a speaker of that language offered their services to a community school. There was no corresponding analysis of need. Lack of teaching qualifications was not seen as an impediment to offering these courses. One is now running with five learners, the other was cancelled as only four learners enrolled.

Foundation programmes   **Grade 4**

58. Courses are provided for adults with physical, sensory or learning disabilities, people recovering from mental illness, people with autistic spectrum disorder, the frail elderly and carers. Currently, there are 76 classes running. Classes include lip reading, visual arts, drama, creative crafts, creative writing, media studies, computer studies, cookery, work preparation and skills for work. Short taster classes for elderly learners with mental health needs are also provided in a day care community school. Classes last from two to 12 hours a week over a period of 30 to 42 weeks a year. There are 450 learners enrolled on these classes, of whom 135 are new learners. The provision is directly managed across the county by two full-time co-ordinators. There are over 40 part-time tutors and one administrative assistant.

STRENGTHS
*   good work in arts-based activities
*   good response to the needs of learners who have mental health needs
*   effective community partnerships

WEAKNESSES
*   poor implementation of the quality assurance system
*   deficiencies in curriculum design
*   inadequate initial assessment
*   inappropriate activities for learners with learning difficulties
*   insufficient recording of individual achievements

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED
*   greater take up of professional development
*   clearer system for purchasing teaching resources

59. The standard of work in arts-based classes for learners with mental health needs is good. The lip-reading course also has high standards of work. Learners gain in confidence, develop new aims and have a sense of achievement about their work. Learners' work is displayed in public places. In better classes, learners are encouraged to set personal goals which are recorded and progress is also monitored and recorded. A few learners progress to other courses or gain employment. However, progression is not routinely monitored. Attendance is good and the retention rate is good across the provision.

60. Partnerships with the local community are good. The co-ordinators have been successful in attracting 135 new learners to the provision. Where courses have been developed with a national mental health charity, they meet the learning and social needs of learners well. However, there are significant weaknesses in the curriculum in many other courses, which do not always meet the needs of learners. There is insufficient consideration given to the national pre-entry curriculum for literacy and numeracy, and there are no work placements for learners on the work-preparation programme. In the work developed with community schools, teaching is not linked to learners' care plans and many tutors are not aware of the care plans.

61. The co-ordinators have developed quality assurance systems, but the implementation is poor. There is little understanding about the quality assurance system among the tutors. Many see it as additional paperwork and do not appreciate its importance in improving provision. Self-assessment is not sufficiently self-critical to bring about a change in culture of historical practices in this area. Diversity is not planned in the curriculum. Continuous development is planned, but take up is not good. However, a 'prepare to share' free training day for arts and craft tutors was well attended, and tutors spoke highly of the value of sharing ideas.

62. In weaker classes, mainly those for learners with learning difficulties, there is insufficient planning to effectively engage and challenge learners. Class activities are not sufficiently linked to real-life situations. In a work-preparation session, learners were not helped to develop their skills sufficiently to enable them to prepare a curriculum vitae. In another lesson about safe handling of scissors in the workplace, learners filled in worksheets on using scissors safely, but they did not handle the scissors. Many learners had difficulty completing the worksheets. Tutors are not sufficiently critical in questioning the value of some activities for the learners. Some very articulate learners are not sufficiently challenged to progress beyond their existing skills level.

63. The initial assessment and identification of individual learner's needs is weak. Often the assessment is informal and is only used for allocation to the class, rather than an assessment of learning needs. Initial assessment results are not used to develop individual learning plans, and tutors are not aware of the results. There is little acknowledgement of learners' previous skills and achievements. The literacy and numeracy levels and needs of learners on work-preparation programmes are not identified systematically. Many learners are articulate orally, but need help with reading or writing skills. However, these needs are not recorded during initial assessment. Recording and monitoring of progress is variable. In some classes oral feedback is given, but only in a minority of classes is there adequate recording of progress.

64. There is insufficient recording of achievement for learners with learning difficulties. On non-accredited courses, monitoring of learners' progress varies across the provision and does not give a clear picture of learners' progress. The system to record individual achievements is relatively new and is not used by all tutors. Some of the learners who are aiming for employment are unclear about their achievements on the programme and how they will help them to gain employment.

65. Fifty per cent of classes observed were satisfactory, 37 per cent were good or better and 13 per cent were unsatisfactory. The better classes, mainly those for adults with mental health needs, are well planned and learners are engaged in a variety of activities, mainly practical. Adults negotiate their learning targets and carry out practical tasks to achieve them. Tutors are aware of the individual behavioural and social needs of learners; they encourage learners who are anxious to develop coping strategies. In a lip-reading class, learners gain understanding and acceptance of their needs, and are encouraged to challenge other people's stereotypical views on disability.

66. There are some good teaching resources. In well-planned classes, tutors have well-presented handouts with stimulating pictures. In other classes, photocopied handouts are poor and difficult to see. There is insufficient use made of specialist resources for learners with visual impairment. In some community schools, there is not enough equipment to carry out the practical activities. For example, in one community school, only one oven is available to cook a group meal and prepare individual dishes. Tutors are not clear about how to obtain resources. Members of staff are qualified in their subject areas and some have specialist qualifications to teach learners with difficulties and disabilities. Accommodation in all community schools is satisfactory and is accessible for wheelchair users.

67. In many classes, learners are well supported by the tutors and the learning support assistants. However, there are weaknesses in the arrangements for additional support, particularly for learners with sensory disabilities. In some cases, the tutor is unaware of the disability and there is inadequate support for individual learners. The county co-ordinators have given helpful guidance to all the LEA's tutors about working with learners with disabilities, but this advice is not always implemented.

68. Learners feel well supported by tutors and form strong social bonds with them. They value the opportunity to meet socially and learn new skills. Learners gain in confidence through social interactions with a variety of people. One learner commented that her family felt that her mental state had improved since joining the mixed-crafts course.

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.