

INSPECTION REPORT

Worcestershire LEA

03 March 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

Worcestershire local education authority's adult and community learning provision is part of the policy and development division of the county council's education services directorate. It provides courses in information and communications technology, and family learning and foundation programmes through the adult education project. It also provides a range of community development activities.

Overall judgement

The quality of provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Worcestershire local education authority's foundation programmes and community development are good. Its information and communications technology and family learning provision are satisfactory, as are its leadership and management, equality of opportunity and quality assurance.

GRADES

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

| Areas of learning | Grade |
|---|-------|
| Information & communications technology | 3 |
| Foundation programmes | 2 |
| Family learning | 3 |
| Community learning | 2 |

KEY STRENGTHS

- strong and effective partnerships
- effective projects to widen participation
- much good teaching
- good achievement on most programmes
- clear strategies for community development

KEY WEAKNESSES

- insufficient guidance and advice to learners
- no staff training in recent equal opportunities legislation
- insufficient local progression opportunities for information and communications learners completing beginners courses
- insufficient sharing of good practice
- insufficient evaluation of programmes and community development activities

THE INSPECTION

1. A team of seven inspectors spent a total of 35 days at Worcestershire local education authority (the LEA) during March 2003. They met 149 learners, and 48 staff and members of collaborative partnerships, and conducted 42 interviews with LEA and other Worcestershire County Council staff. Meetings were held with the assistant cabinet member for Education and Lifelong Learning and with senior council officers.

2. Inspectors observed 31 learning sessions in four areas of learning. They examined documentary evidence including strategic plans, key local authority documents, the adult learning plan and the self-assessment report. They made 39 visits to venues throughout Worcestershire. They examined 91 learners' portfolios and 174 individual learning plans. Inspectors consulted learners when observing sessions, and through focus group discussions. They also consulted the parents and carers of some of the learners on the adult education project.

Grades awarded to learning sessions

| | Grade 1 | Grade 2 | Grade 3 | Grade 4 | Grade 5 | Grade 6 | Grade 7 | Total |
|---|---------------|-----------|---------------|----------|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Information & communications technology | 0 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Foundation programmes | 1 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| Family learning | 0 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 |
| Community learning | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| Total | 2 | 12 | 7 | 9 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 31 |
| per cent | 67.74% | | 29.03% | | 3.23% | | | |

THE PROVIDER AS A WHOLE

Context

3. Worcestershire County Council's adult and community learning provision came into existence in 1998 when the local authority was created. The provision has developed since 1999 when the council appointed a lifelong learning officer.

4. There are four main areas of provision: first step courses for information and communications technology (ICT), family learning, the Adult Education Project for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, and community development activities. Worcestershire LEA uses a range of accommodation including local schools, church halls, community centres, sheltered accommodation, hospitals and voluntary organisations. In rural parts of the county, ICT programmes are provided from a purpose-built mobile learning centre. The service has no directly owned accommodation, although a neighbourhood learning centre is due to open shortly. The LEA also aims to co-ordinate other learning opportunities in the local authority. It plays a key role in developing partnerships and learning opportunities throughout the county. It provides a small amount of funding for learning activities through grants to local organisations. There are 1,226 learners enrolled on programmes, including 220 users of the mobile museum service. Men are under-represented, with the service recruiting twice as many women learners as men.

5. The service has a budget of £398,529 which is 0.16 per cent of the overall education budget. The main source of funding is from Hereford and Worcestershire Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Worcestershire LEA spends less on its direct provision than many other councils. However, partnership working and joint funding applications significantly increase the amount spent on adult and community learning. All first step provision is free.

6. In 2001, the total population of Worcestershire was 542,107. The county's main centres of population are in Worcester, Bromsgrove, Droitwich, Evesham, Kidderminster, Malvern and Redditch. Much of the county is rural. There are patches of deprivation throughout the county. The main types of employment are manufacturing, distribution, public administration and tourism. Unemployment in Worcestershire was 2 per cent in May 2002, compared with the national average of 3 per cent. The 2001 census figures show that 2.5 per cent of the population are from minority ethnic communities. The national average is 8.7 per cent. The proportion of the population between 16 and 74 with no qualifications is 28.5 per cent, compared with the national average of 29.1 per cent. The proportion with qualifications at degree level or above is 19.2 per cent, compared with a national figure of 19.8 per cent.

Adult and Community Learning

7. There is a lot of good teaching. Of the 31 lessons observed, 68 per cent were judged by inspectors to be good or better. Outstanding teaching was observed in one community capacity-building session and on one foundation session. Learners achieve well on most programmes. Family learning programmes offer qualifications and there is a high success rate. Learners on other programmes achieve their individual learning goals and gain many additional benefits, such as increased confidence and greater involvement in community activities. However, there is insufficient advice and guidance to learners on most programmes. Some of the advice and guidance given is not offered at an appropriate point in learners' programmes. There are insufficient local progression activities for ICT learners who have completed the beginners courses.

8. This provision, though small, is successful in widening participation. In 2001-02, 78 per cent of enrolments were of new learners. There are many effective partnerships, and the LEA co-ordinates provision between a number of local partners. Community development activities are good. They effectively involve local community members in learning and in the marketing and take-up of learning opportunities. However, there is insufficient evaluation of most of the programmes and community development activities. Data about learners are not analysed effectively or used to shape the provision. Good practice is not always shared. Staff have received no training on recent equal opportunities legislation.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

9. Worcestershire County Council's adult and community learning provision came into existence in 1998 when the local authority was created. There is a small core LEA team in the policy and development division of the education services directorate. It consists of the lifelong learning officer, two community education link workers, one primary inspector with responsibility for family learning for approximately 10 per cent of her post, the director of the Adult Education Project and a part-time lifelong learning project worker. This team, along with the local LSC adult and community learning representative and a representative from the information, advice and guidance network, form the adult and community learning management group. This group meets approximately every six weeks. In addition, there are three part-time co-ordinators of family learning, one co-ordinator and eight part-time tutors and learning assistants for the adult education project, and 11 part-time ICT tutors. There are termly meetings for all tutors and monthly meetings for ICT tutors. Tutors report directly to their managers who report to the lifelong learning officer. He, in turn, reports to the head of policy for the development division who reports to the director of educational services. There is a specific cabinet member for adult and community learning who assists the cabinet member for lifelong learning. He also has political responsibility for the youth service. The lifelong learning officer is responsible for developing and monitoring the adult learning plan, developing strategy, equal opportunities, and staff management. He shares responsibility for quality assurance with one of the community education link workers. He is also responsible for student support services, the learning partnership and general post-14 policy. The management structure is due to change in April 2003 when a new community education and lifelong learning division will be established in the education services directorate.

STRENGTHS

- strong and effective partnerships
- effective management of directly delivered provision
- clearly defined strategy to widen participation
- effective measures to improve the quality of the service

WEAKNESSES

- lack of co-ordination of performance measures
- insufficient guidance and advice to learners
- insufficient analysis of data on learners
- no staff training in recent equal opportunities legislation

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- more thorough consultation in the preparation of the self-assessment report
- increased recruitment of men
- better guidance to staff about the promotion of equal opportunities
- better dating and referencing of documents

10. The activities of Worcestershire LEA's adult and community learning service are closely matched to the strategic priorities of the county council. These emphasise working 'with key partners to improve educational achievement and encourage lifelong learning' and are clearly expressed in the adult learning plan. The service successfully promotes its aims by facilitating and co-ordinating the activities of other adult and community learning providers through its role as lead partner in the Worcestershire Learning Partnership. This gives it significant influence to add beyond its small size and scale. The partnership operates through six local lifelong learning networks across the county. In addition, there are themed groups working on basic skills and ICT, and on facilitating the work of voluntary sector organisations. The LEA plays an active and effective role in these groups, a number of which are chaired by the lifelong learning officer. The partnership is working to establish a neighbourhood learning centre and this is a particularly effective example of its work in meeting local needs and improving provision for adults. The partners see this as a model for the future. The service also provides a small amount of directly managed provision targeted at areas of identified need. This provision, though small, is successful in widening participation. In 2001-02, 78 per cent of enrolments were of new learners.

11. The directly delivered provision is well managed, though many of the systems and procedures are relatively new. Each area of the adult learning management group has its own operational plan. The LEA has introduced thorough and useful documents to guide tutors and to gather useful information. Many of these are designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning. They include individual learning plans, learning diaries, learners' evaluations and learners' progression information. Collectively they encourage learners to reflect not just on their current learning but on their longer-term learning goals. Documents for learners are written in clear and accessible language. Some significant variations exist in the ways in which tutors complete learners' records. Managers responsible for directly delivered provision meet regularly with the lifelong learning officer to review the activities of their area and to share good practice.

12. The LEA uses some clear performance measures and targets for its adult and community learning but these are not co-ordinated effectively. The local authority's corporate plan sets a target to increase participation of adults in lifelong learning using the best value performance indicators as a base. However, changes in counting methods and changes to provision mean that this indicator is not reliable. The target is not divided to give figures for different groups. The education services development plan lists priority activities for lifelong learning, but these do not include measurable

targets. There are estimated numbers of learners for each of the projects but there are no overview numbers of learners and participation targets for each area of provision. Targets exist for some externally funded projects but they are not centrally co-ordinated. They are not linked clearly to the corporate target or the priority areas in the adult learning plan. Each area of activity has an operational plan which contains activities and success measures. However, these are often expressed in general terms and do not include specific measurable targets. The LEA identified most of these weaknesses in its self-assessment report.

13. The arrangements for providing information, advice and guidance for learners are not sufficient to meet their needs. Some tutors offer informal guidance to learners. In addition, guidance staff from partner organisations visit some of the LEA's classes, but these arrangements are not systematic. There are no arrangements for learners to receive detailed individual guidance about their future learning.

14. Worcestershire LEA's staff are subject to the staff development and appraisal procedures of the county council. There are secure arrangements to ensure that training needs are identified at development reviews. There is additional staff training in response to national priorities such as basic skills and teaching qualifications. Much training takes place at the regular tutor meetings, but the effect of this is undermined by non-attendance.

15. Considerable variations exist in Worcestershire LEA's approach to supporting learners with literacy, numeracy and language needs. Worcestershire Lifelong Learning Partnership has an effective basic skills strategy group which meets to share good practice and plan the development of the partners' basic skills provision. It focuses particularly on improving the standards of teaching and learning, for example, through staff training and effective bidding for additional resources. However, in the LEA's directly managed provision, arrangements for supporting learners with basic skills needs are not yet well established. Where teachers have relevant skills, or at specialist centres, support can be effective. The service has begun to introduce basic skills training for its tutors but standards of practice and awareness are still very uneven.

16. The service currently recruits twice as many women as men. One family learning course, 'Dads and Lads', is designed to recruit men, but there is still too little emphasis generally on the recruitment of men.

Equality of opportunity**Contributory grade 3**

17. The education directorate has a series of policy documents on equal opportunities. The LEA's adult and community learning service has a detailed equal opportunities operational plan covering 2002-04. This includes specific actions for access, marketing and publicity, and for work with adults with learning difficulties, older people and people from minority ethnic groups. For each activity there is a criterion of success in the plan, but few of these include specific measurable targets. The plan was produced six months ago and has not yet been reviewed or audited. It will be monitored through the adult and community learning management group. There is a complaints procedure, but this has only been used on a few occasions.

18. The LEA effectively concentrates its limited adult and community learning funding on widening participation in learning. The ICT provision across the county is shared with partners. The LEA focuses its activities on the areas of least provision in the county and the areas of highest deprivation. A computer bus enables the LEA to take training into rural areas. Through the lifelong learning partnership the LEA has worked with the local race equality council to bid for funding. This has been used to provide ICT classes at faith centres and community centres used mainly by people from minority ethnic groups. These are underused. Initial learning opportunities provided through the LEA are free of charge. On family learning programmes there is good support for learners for whom English is an additional language. The Adult Education Project works effectively with learners with severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those with mental health problems. Many of these learners would be unable to attend other training.

19. There is satisfactory childcare available for individual learners on ICT programmes. In family learning sessions the childcare provision is good. The LEA makes some small grants available to provide childcare for a number of community learning providers.

20. The LEA does not analyse data on equal opportunities effectively. It collects information on learners' ethnicity, gender and disabilities in line with its contractual requirements. However, there is little analysis of these data, and it is not used to measure achievement or to shape and target programmes. There are no specific targets for achievement by under-represented groups but there are projects to increase participation. There has been some project work to increase the participation of fathers and male carers in family learning activities, and an ICT project has taken the computer bus to trading estates to try and attract men into learning.

21. The adult and community learning provision observes the local authority's equal opportunities policies and requirements. The authority has submitted a draft race equality action plan and held a conference on the recent changes in legislation. There are effective publicity and promotional materials which are displayed widely at local authority premises. However, adult and community learning managers and tutors have not yet received training on this legislation. There are no effective mechanisms to ensure that all council staff are complying with the current legal requirements. Staff training has not yet taken place on the new requirements under recent post-16 education disability

discrimination legislation. Training in these areas is planned in the future.

22. The new lesson observation system covers equal opportunities in the classroom. Equal opportunities is included in the learning agreement but does not appear on the induction checklist. There is no guidance given to teaching staff on how to teach equal opportunities.

23. Most of the LEA's adult and community learning takes place at other providers' premises. The computer bus and mobile museum are fully accessible to learners with limited mobility. The new neighbourhood learning centre will meet all the requirements of the latest legislation. Funding has been gained to alter the entrances of two schools where the LEA provides courses for adults. All proposed venues for ICT classes are audited for health and safety, and they are generally not used unless they have appropriate access or facilities. However, some venues for family learning programmes have inappropriate furniture for adult learners. There is good use of materials reflecting a variety of faiths in the family learning programmes. ICT learners have access to specialist equipment, such as, large monitors and touch keyboards. Tutors also effectively adapt existing equipment to meet the needs of individual learners, for example, by enlarging icons on computer screens.

Quality assurance**Contributory grade 3**

24. Worcestershire LEA places considerable emphasis on reviewing the quality of its work to improve its performance and rectify identified weaknesses. Managers recognise the need to use resources effectively. The LEA commissioned a local learning needs analysis to help identify its priorities, and an external consultant has reviewed the directly delivered provision against the 'Common Inspection Framework'. This work was used in self-assessment and resulted in a number of measures to improve performance, particularly in teaching and learning. All teachers have their teaching observed annually and receive feedback and a grade based on the 'Common Inspection Framework'. Further, the service is subject to the county council's quality assurance procedures. The recent best value review provided useful information about the role and effectiveness of the service.

25. Some of the LEA's quality assurance measures are working well, others are not yet fully implemented. As the LEA has recognised, the lack of a computerised management information system restricts the analysis of data on learners. Data are collected but not yet sufficiently analysed. The LEA's new quality assurance framework identifies a number of performance indicators. It is intended to establish a consistent standard of good practice. However, it focuses too much on recording and documenting practice and not enough on reviewing and evaluating in order to plan and implement improvements.

26. The LEA prepared its first self-assessment report in November 2002. Most of its judgements were similar to those made by inspectors. However, although members of the adult and community learning management team commented on early drafts of the report, there was no consultation with partners, tutors or learners, and there was no process for moderating the grades.

27. Most documents used by the LEA lack dates or version numbers. This makes it difficult to identify the correct and most up-to-date version.

Good Practice

When learners enrol for courses they receive an information pack with relevant course information. A clear, well-phrased and friendly letter of welcome from the head of service introduces the pack. The letter very clearly illustrates the service's understanding of the learning needs of adults, and its commitment to providing them with a good service.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information & communications technology

Grade 3

28. ICT courses are provided directly by the LEA through the laptop programme which takes learning out to community venues including village halls and schools, and the computer bus, a fully equipped mobile teaching facility. The bus is taken to venues where ICT resources are not readily accessible to the local community. There are also a few ICT courses at a local community school. Worcestershire County Council provides premises for five learndirect centres and one UK online centre. Most courses are not accredited and are aimed at beginners. All introductory courses are provided free to all learners and run for two hours a week over 10 to 12 weeks. There are also a few taster courses lasting six to eight hours, and one accredited basic computer literacy programme run over three terms. Classes are held on weekday mornings, afternoons and evenings. The laptop programme started in Autumn 1999 with four outreach ICT courses. By Autumn 2001 this had grown to 15 classes and 150 learners. At the time of the inspection there were 39 classes and 350 learners. Seventy four per cent of learners are women and less than 1 per cent are from a minority ethnic group. Most tutors are hourly paid. A full-time community education link worker co-ordinates all ICT outreach work and is responsible for quality assurance, budgetary management and line management of tutors.

STRENGTHS

- good achievement rate on beginners courses
- much good teaching
- good specialist ICT facilities on the computer bus
- effective use of mobile computer training facility to attract new learners

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient use of initial assessment
- insufficient assessment and recording of learners' progress
- poor maintenance arrangements for laptop computers
- insufficient local progression opportunities for learners completing beginners courses

29. Learners achieve well on beginners courses. They successfully increase their confidence in using a computer for tasks such as writing letters, producing posters, using a spreadsheet, scanning in photographs and finding information from the Internet. They demonstrate an appropriate level of competence and are well motivated. Many gain sufficient skills to use computers independently at home. Learners are pleased with

the progress they are making and thrilled with some of the accomplishments recorded in their portfolios. The achievement rate on introductory courses, measured by the percentage of learners attending 70 per cent or more of classes, was 80 per cent or over in 2001-02. Most learners make good progress towards achieving their personal learning goals.

30. Much of the teaching is good. Seventy per cent of lessons observed by inspectors were graded good or better. The best lessons are well structured with clear objectives, and tutors inspire learners to succeed. Illustrative examples and tasks are carefully chosen to interest each group of learners. Tutors give clear explanations of computer jargon, often using humour effectively, and provide good individual support for learners where required. Tutors often make adaptations to meet learners' individual needs and preferences, such as adjusting the sensitivity of the computer mouse, using enlarged screen icons or showing learners alternative keyboard shortcuts. Some tutors use careful questioning and group activities to effectively involve learners. In some lessons, learners follow the tutor's instructions but are not given the chance to apply what they have been taught before moving on to the next activity.

31. There are good specialist facilities on the computer bus including a generator and a satellite link for Internet access. It forms a self-contained mobile learning centre which learners find non-threatening. Learners also find community and school venues welcoming. They are often familiar with them through leisure, work or their children. However, at one school venue the children's furniture is unsuitable for adult learners. Hardware and software are suitably up to date for the range of courses.

32. The service has been successful in attracting new learners through its mobile provision and this is helping to widen participation. By taking laptops to local venues and using the bus in rural locations and areas of social deprivation, the LEA brings learning to people who do not have ready access to ICT. Managers work actively with other providers to ensure there is no duplication of provision.

33. Course management is satisfactory. Tutors are actively encouraged and supported to engage in professional development. The recently introduced observations of teaching and learning, together with staff reviews, are starting to identify further training needs. There are various mechanisms for sharing good practice. A recent tutors' away-day decided a common introductory course content and looked at ways to share learning resources. However, not all the ideas have yet been fully implemented and it is too early to see the impact on teaching and learning practice.

34. There is little initial assessment of learners. Individual learning plans do not always define measurable goals for learners. Not all learners have clear enough aims to help them identify progress. Several tutors have devised simple checklists to identify the extent and scope of learners' experience of ICT but these are not regularly used with all learners. Learners' other support needs are not formally assessed.

35. Tutors do not assess and record learners' progress sufficiently. Most feedback is

given verbally and is helpful. There is some self-evaluation during mid-course reviews and this is recorded on learning plans. However, the range of methods used to monitor progress is limited. Tasks are not always marked as completed, and there is too little observation of performance. Some tutors do not keep detailed records of learners' progress.

36. Maintenance arrangements for the four sets of laptop computers are poor. Laptops used by one tutor are still awaiting repairs several months after problems were identified. As a result learners have to move from one machine to another to save their work, and have not been able to use the e-mail facilities. Another set of equipment has limited printing capability so learners have to queue to load and print their work on a single machine connected to the printer.

37. There has been a large increase in the number of learners completing introductory programmes, but the development of suitable follow-on courses has not kept pace. This has raised learners' expectations for progression which cannot be fully met. Feedback from learners on the laptop programme shows that many of them wish to continue with their learning in local venues rather than being referred to other providers.

38. Arrangements for identifying learners' literacy or numeracy needs are inadequate. Four tutors have received some basic skills training and there are plans to extend this to all tutors. On a few occasions, specialist help has been bought in to support a specific need. In the observed classes, tutors supported learners who experienced language or spelling difficulties, but did not provide specific tuition in these areas.

39. Learners value being able to learn at times and in locations that are convenient to them. They attend classes for a range of reasons including improving their confidence, becoming more familiar with their own computer, understanding what their children or grandchildren have done on computers, and using e-mail to keep in touch with relatives. Learners recognise the limitations of some of the community venues but prefer to learn there rather than to travel.

Foundation programmes**Grade 2**

40. The main provision in this area of learning is through Worcestershire LEA's Adult Education Project. This is designed to support and/or fund education opportunities for adults whose needs are not fully met by mainstream provision. The project supports activities throughout Worcestershire in places such as secure units, hospitals, further education colleges and community locations. The support includes some direct training, funding for other providers, offering financial support to, and/or purchasing equipment for, individuals or groups, and setting up projects through start-up grants. Potential learners are referred by organisations including social services day centres, colleges, employment agencies and mental health agencies. The project also provides funding to support learning programmes leading to recognised national qualifications for individuals who are excluded or marginalised. Learners on the programmes have severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties or mental health conditions. There is a range of programmes on offer including a young men's group for learners who are socially withdrawn, and various programmes for learners with moderate, severe and profound learning difficulties including art and craft and communication through music. Numeracy and literacy support is offered at appropriate levels as an integral part of all programmes. The project's support for individual learners includes part-funding courses as diverse as law, electrical installation, interior design and computing. The Adult Education Project has a director, a co-ordinator and six support staff, all of whom are employed part time.

41. Other foundation provision includes a pottery class for the local association for the blind, and supporting the work of a mobile heritage museum which concentrates on the themes of conservation, recycling and reminiscence activities for older people.

42. There are 124 learners on the Adult Education Project, of whom 84 are men. There are a further eight learners on the pottery programme, and 220 people have used the mobile museum.

STRENGTHS

- good individual achievement and progression
- some very good teaching
- good support for learners, related closely to individual needs
- productive partnerships to extend provision

WEAKNESSES

- some unsuitable accommodation
- insufficient sharing of good practice

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better planning and recording of learners' progress
- better identification of project outcomes

43. Learners achieve well. Learners' achievement and progression is celebrated through in-house certification, recorded individual discussion and group recognition. In the case of a group of young men who are recovering from mental breakdown, peer encouragement has led to participation in outdoor activities and some learners have gained recognised qualifications in canoeing and sailing. These learners are effectively being involved in mainstream learning. Some learners, such as those in long-term care, stay on programmes for a number of years. For others, short-term participation over a matter of weeks is part of their care plan. The benefits learners gain from participating in the various projects is confirmed by letters, review meetings and anecdotally from relevant support agencies. In some cases, the regular attendance at training sessions serves to maintain learners' skills. This allows them to progress to more challenging targets such as increasing levels of concentration and greater participation in teamwork.

44. Teaching is good and on occasions outstanding. As a result, learners' existing skills are maintained and new skills learned. Although some lesson plans lack detail, the best clearly specify what learners are expected to do and achieve in each session. Individuals' progress is discussed and documented at the end of each session. Tutors are clearly aware of their role in developing learners' social skills. They develop and maintain learners' interest throughout the session, and offer them a chance to reflect on what they are achieving. In one observed lesson, progress was recorded in pictures using specialist software. This gave learners with no reading skills a comprehensible record of their achievement. Photographic evidence of learners at work and learners' finished products is widely used. In a highly participative music session, the teacher sang questions to learners to gauge their enjoyment.

45. There are effective arrangements to provide support for learners. Applications are considered on the basis of need and assistance is given to learners who would be excluded from learning without it. One learner is benefiting from the provision of a second-hand laptop computer to enable him to study at home. Another with severe physical and mental health problems is receiving help with the cost of a university course. More typically, a group of learners with severe learning difficulties is developing communication skills through music. Support for some projects arises from local needs. An Internet café which closed through lack of funding was reopened to provide a drop-in centre for people with mental illness, using money from the Adult Education Project. This project is run in association with the local further education college. Learners are supported at several levels. During sessions, tutors are aware of individual needs and of the best ways to motivate and communicate with learners. All sessions for learners with learning difficulties have classroom support assistants, and many learners have individual

enablers to help them in classroom sessions. In the case of learners recovering from mental health conditions, a qualified psychiatric nurse and nursing assistant lead the sessions. Progress reviews are completed by the relevant agency manager with input from the tutor. Where relevant, copies of reviews are sent to parents and carers.

46. There are productive partnerships to extend learning. Most of the provision falls under the Adult Education Project. The project has its own director and is run as a separate unit within the LEA, but its aims align with the LEA's corporate plan and commitment to inclusivity. The project director makes it clear to all partners how the decisions to support projects are made. In some cases, initial support is given to get a project off the ground. Further development is taken up by one of the partner organisations. This ensures that the LEA's funds are focused on the areas in most need. Provision for learners with profound and multiple learning difficulties is currently funded by the Adult Education Project but a decision has been made that it will be funded directly by the local LSC thus freeing project funds for other initiatives. Similarly, the social services department has taken responsibility for the outdoor activities element of the young men's programme.

47. Initial assessment is satisfactory. Assessment methods match individual needs. Initial assessment is usually carried out by the agency with direct responsibility for planning the training. Learning may be planned by a day centre manager or be the result of a care plan. In the case of partially sighted learners in a recreational pottery group, the training plan is a product of discussion with each learner. The format of individual learning plans depends on the learner group. In some cases, the learning plan will specify a primary learning goal and some secondary learning goals. These are reviewed by the tutor and the learner at each session. The learners' overall progress is reviewed by the appropriate referring manager. In other cases, the learning goals are agreed with the learner and discussions on progress occur during the lesson. For learners with severe learning difficulties, learning plans are beginning to be linked with the national pre-entry curriculum. There are no written learning plans for the learners on the young men's project. Their participation in activities is agreed with the nursing staff who are the main tutors on the project.

48. Foundation programmes are managed effectively and energetically by the lifelong learning officer in co-operation with the Adult Education Project director. All staff, whether directly employed or working through partners, demonstrate support for inclusivity and equality of opportunity.

49. Learning resources are generally adequate but some of the accommodation is unsuitable. Accommodation for pottery lessons in one location is too cramped. In another location health and safety considerations preclude the use of a kiln. Where requirements for patients' safety prevent the use of sharp instruments during craft sessions, the tutor has ensured that learners' interest is engaged by using safe materials which do not need cutting. Staff are deployed effectively. Some have life experiences which help them to empathise with learners. A number of staff are pursuing specialist teaching qualifications and some have attended courses on the pre-entry curriculum.

Staff work on developing learners' skills in communication and in basic word and sound recognition. Where information technology (IT) facilities are available, they are used effectively in reviewing and recording learners' process.

50. Good practice is not routinely shared. There are examples of very good teaching techniques leading to effective, participative learning sessions. However, there is no planned means by which one tutor's imaginative methods are adopted by others. The methods of planning for, and recording of, learners' progress are not always appropriate. Some planning is not specific enough. Progress reviews are not always recorded effectively. The expected learning outcomes are unclear for some projects. Many of the outcomes relating to learners' longer-term progression are not identified effectively. The self-assessment report acknowledged this as an area that needs further development.

51. Staff help learners develop their literacy and numeracy where appropriate. For learners without speech, communication skills are identified on individual learning plans through the use of pictures. Learning plans refer to the pre-entry curriculum.

52. Learners and their carers are extremely positive about the benefits the programme has brought them. In some cases, individual learners had waited years for help with education or training. As a result of the project, they have gained in confidence, in skill levels, in social skills and, in some cases, made progress towards recognised qualifications and employment.

Family learning**Grade 3**

53. Worcestershire LEA offers a wide range of family learning programmes intended to increase parents' awareness of ways to support their child's development as well as developing their own skills. Since August 2002, 399 parents have enrolled on family learning courses in 70 schools. Ninety-three per cent are women and 2 per cent are members of minority ethnic communities. Most courses take place during the day.

54. A variety of courses are offered. There are weekly learning sessions in which half the time is spent improving adults' skills and the rest of the time helping adults to help their children. Another programme is intended to help adults understand what their child is learning at key stages 1 and 2. The family literacy and numeracy courses run for 15 or 24 weeks and the workshops for two to three hours. Tutors from five local colleges provide the teaching. The LEA funds the resources, childcare and support to release school staff for the programmes. Better reading courses are also offered at some schools, teaching parents techniques to help their children read. A programme has just started which provides 30 computers for families to use in their own homes, and a twilight course is being set up in partnership with the libraries service. One member of staff has responsibility for managing the family learning programme for approximately 10 per cent of her time. She reports directly to the lifelong learning manager for these programmes. She is supported by three school staff members who have been seconded part time.

STRENGTHS

- good achievement
- good teaching
- wide range of family learning opportunities
- effective partnership working through the family learning steering group

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient collection and analysis of data about learners' progress into training and employment
- insufficient attention to the needs of adult learners

OTHER IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

- better sharing of good practice in the assessment and monitoring of the progress of adults

55. Parents on family learning programmes achieve well. Many parents on the longer

courses and the reading courses gain a literacy, numeracy or a short family learning qualification. One family literacy course had a 100 per cent achievement rate for an introductory basic skills qualification. Many learners have gained in confidence while attending the courses. Some learners have progressed to computer or teaching assistant courses. The programmes have enabled some parents to become more involved in local community activities. Some parents who have attended reading courses now help with reading at their child's school. In the observed sessions, the attendance rate was good.

56. Teaching in the family learning programmes is good, with 63 per cent of the sessions observed being good or better. There is evidence of thorough course planning with detailed lesson plans and schemes of work. School teachers and college tutors work together to plan the adult and child curriculum. Teaching sessions use a variety of appropriate teaching methods. Good use is made of group and pair work, where group members learn from each other. In one family literacy group, Moslem parents shared information about mendhi patterns and Asian recipes with the rest of the group. The LEA arranges outside visits and visiting speakers to make sessions interesting and relevant to the needs of parents and their children. Tutors from one family literacy group arranged a visit from a trading standards officer who spoke about and demonstrated how to identify counterfeit materials. The presentation focused on the needs of adults and helped parents understand the issues from a child's perspective. The group then went on to look at how to write a letter of complaint.

57. There is a wide range of family learning courses available at a range of times and venues. Most courses take place at schools during the daytime. A successful family learning weekend was held in Malvern in the summer of 2002. The family learning provision targets areas of deprivation and hard-to-reach learners. Good support is given to parents for whom English is an additional language. On one family numeracy course, three learners are effectively supported by a bilingual teaching assistant. There are crèches at all family learning sessions.

58. There is effective partnership working through the Family Learning Steering Group which links colleges, the Workers Educational Association and schools. The group discusses initiatives and issues, and sets up training days. There is good representation of management and practitioners at the steering group.

59. Resources for family learning programmes are generally satisfactory. The learning environment and displays are excellent in some schools. Furniture in some schools is unsuitable for adults. Children on the projects are given activity packs that enable parents to continue creative activities with them at home. Family learning co-ordinators are well qualified and have recently attended training on current family learning and basic skills initiatives.

60. Initial assessment is carried out effectively in the longer family literacy and numeracy courses. There is no initial assessment on short courses, as their primary focus is to attract parents in to learning. Tutors have begun to meet to discuss initial

assessment, but there is little sharing of good practice in assessment and monitoring of adult learners' progress. There is good record-keeping on the longer family literacy and numeracy courses. Learners have individual learning plans and keep records of their work. On some courses, learners know little about their own learning plans, seeing them as something done by and belonging to the college.

61. Information and guidance for learners is generally satisfactory. Some learners progress to other family learning courses. Tutors arrange for a visit to a college or for a visitor from the college to speak to the group, usually at the end of the course. However, this advice and guidance is sometimes too late to enable learners to plan their next learning activity.

62. There is no management system to ensure the systematic collection and analysis of data about learners' progress into further education and training. There is no comparison of schools, projects or regions, and there is no way of identifying and sharing best practice or using the information to plan and develop new programmes.

63. There is insufficient attention to the needs of adult learners. A significant proportion of the family learning courses are intended to help parents support their children. There is little or no reference to adult learners' own needs. On starter courses, adult learners' needs are not effectively identified or adequately met either on programme or by referral to other programmes. Family learning provision has recently moved to the adult and community learning service. There is no overall co-ordination of the quality assurance systems used for the adult provision and there are few effective links between the quality assurance systems used for children's activities and those used for adults. There is inadequate management focus on adult learners' achievements.

64. Many learners commented on the confidence they had gained from family learning, and the benefit of receiving support both from the teachers and from other members of the group. Several learners felt that the course had enabled them to progress to a college course. One learner wrote that she had been able to change her career and become a teaching assistant as a result of attending the family literacy course. Learners were enthusiastic about the new skills they had gained and the pleasure of gaining qualifications.

Community learning

Grade 2

65. Worcestershire LEA's community development activities have been inspected under this area of learning. The LEA is the lead partner in the Worcestershire learning partnership. Its aim is to work with key partners to improve educational achievement and encourage lifelong learning. The learning partnership consists of a strategic group and lifelong learning networks in Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch, Worcester, Wychavon and Wyre Forest. There are also four themed groups, the skills for life strategy group, the basic skills practitioners group, the ICT community strategy group and the voluntary sector learning network.

66. Worcestershire County Council funds very little provision directly. Through the lifelong learning networks, it works in partnership with a wide range of organisations. It makes small sums of money available to support the work of other training providers in community education and development. The number, range and length of courses established are determined by the providers, but they target areas of deprivation, where learning opportunities are limited. Provision is based in schools, nurseries, church halls, community centres and other local venues.

67. The lifelong learning officer manages the learning partnership through the lifelong learning project worker, who supports the local learning networks and theme groups. Further support for community development activity is provided by the community education link workers for Worcester and Redditch.

STRENGTHS

- successful development of learning and employment skills in local communities
- innovative recruitment and training of local learning ambassadors
- clear strategies for community development
- strong leadership through the learning partnership
- good practical support for local initiatives

WEAKNESSES

- insufficient evaluation of the provision
- inadequate involvement of partners in self-assessment

68. Worcestershire LEA contributes to the successful development of learning and employment skills in local communities. There is extensive evidence of hard-to-reach learners benefiting from a range of capacity building projects. In one horticultural project, 41 learners with mental health problems described how they have gained

additional social and life skills, enabling them to work alongside other learners. One is now a technician on the project. In an observed session for trainers of disaffected learners and those with additional learning needs, the trainers were gaining skills in pottery while excellent teaching skills were being modelled and discussed. Many learners who are involved in taster courses have gained the confidence to progress to further learning. Learners on a youth project have broadcast on a local radio station. The project has enabled them to make informed career choices.

69. There is innovative recruitment and training of local learning ambassadors. Their role is to persuade the local community that learning is enjoyable and accessible. They are learners who have taken part in projects and, after training such as first aid and food hygiene, been identified as suitable advocates or ambassadors. They identify and help to attract new learners. Projects in Redditch and Bromsgrove have doubled the number of learners attending. The ambassadors relate to their communities and work effectively within them. They are role models showing how learning can transform lives, and their transition into paid employment is an excellent example of community capacity building.

70. The LEA and its partners set clear strategies for community development. A clear direction is set through the adult learning plan, which is understood by all the partners. There is a high level of commitment to local people from all providers and staff. The interests and needs of new and existing learners are identified at community level by the learning ambassadors and other community-based workers. All providers are committed to discussing and meeting the needs of the diverse communities they serve. This is accomplished through regular, well-attended network meetings.

71. There is strong leadership of the learning partnership. The lifelong learning officer gives good personal leadership which is highly valued by partner organisations. There is positive collaboration by providers and other partners in the community learning networks as a result of this leadership. There are clear lines of communication and effective use is made of e-mail and newsletters to keep all partners well informed. There are successful joint bidding arrangements, including bid writing away days which are useful to partner organisations.

72. There is good practical support for local initiatives, which supports effective community development. Learners receive initial advice and guidance verbally, although this is less readily available at outreach venues. Where learners have specific needs, these are met by targeted support. For example, at one community centre an older learner who had limited dexterity was assisted by a support worker. Good levels of personal support are given to all learners, particularly in helping them overcome barriers to accessing learning. The LEA provides small grants to some community organisations to support learning. In some cases, these grants are used for childcare, in others they are used to pay for translating materials into community languages.

73. Teaching and learning are good. One session observed was outstanding. Although inspectors only observed a few formal teaching sessions, these had a friendly and relaxed atmosphere which was conducive to learning. Much peer learning takes place

and is encouraged by tutors. Basic skills needs are identified informally and learning support is integrated with taught sessions. Language support is made available for learners for whom English is not their first language. Individual support assistants are available for learners with additional learning needs.

74. Resources are satisfactory. The LEA has provides financial support to enhance partners' facilities. Partners' outreach provision is well supported by mobile crèche facilities. Two of the partners' community centres provide welcoming environments which are light and airy. Particular care is paid to attractive wall displays and posters, and plants are used to provide a pleasant environment. There is a good multi-cultural resource base at one voluntary organisation in Redditch. Financial support is also provided to the radio project, which benefits from a wide range of broadcasting and media equipment. The assessment and monitoring of learners' progress is satisfactory. Much of the assessment and monitoring are done informally, through verbal feedback.

75. There is insufficient evaluation of the projects. Few written records are kept and baseline data about learners' starting points are not recorded. Although learner satisfaction questionnaires are completed in some instances, there is very little evidence of any formal analysis of the data gained from them. There is no overall analysis of community development and capacity-building projects. The LEA relies on informal, anecdotal monitoring of the impact of learning on communities. This information cannot be used effectively to shape future provision.

76. There is inadequate involvement of partners in the self-assessment process. This has been recognised by the LEA and will be remedied in the next self-assessment report.

77. Learners clearly identify the improvement that the learning has made to their life style, and the confidence they have gained. This has enabled them to progress to further learning or to employment. They enjoy the support they receive both with their learning needs and on a personal level. Two learners on one of the projects have been able to make career choices as a result of their learning experience.

Good Practice

There is an excellent example of capacity building along with skill building taking place in a pottery class. The content was interesting and the atmosphere vibrant. Learners and tutor concentrated on working together to clear objectives, which were fulfilled. Their enthusiasm and acquisition of knowledge was obvious. The tutor demonstrated how mistakes could be turned to positive use. The trainers in the group appreciated this as they could use it with their disaffected groups. The tutor demonstrated many skills which the learners could emulate.

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 Mentor | Person teaching adult learners or guiding or facilitating their learning. Person providing individual, additional support, guidance and advice to learners to help them achieve their learning goals. |
| Learning goals | Main learning goals Secondary 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. 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. |