

REINSPECTION REPORT

West Berkshire LEA Reinspection

05 December 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. 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 learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- learning and job preparation programmes 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.

REINSPECTION REPORT

West Berkshire LEA Reinspection

Contents

Summary

Description of the provider	1
Scope of provision	1
About the reinspection	3
Overall judgement	3
Grades	3
Key findings	4

Detailed reinspection findings

Leadership and management	14
Equality of opportunity	16
Quality assurance	16
Information & communications technology	18
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	21
Visual & performing arts & media	24
English, languages & communications	27
Foundation programmes	30

REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. West Berkshire Council (the council) became a unitary authority in April 1998. The council does not provide a discrete adult education service but provides adult and community learning through two contracts and a number of partnership agreements. In addition, the council supports activities and events to promote adult learning, provides an information service as part of the West Berkshire information, advice and guidance network and fosters partnership working with charities and local organisations.

2. The council subcontracts its adult and community education provision to two main providers, a further education college and a community school. The council also has partnership agreements with schools, charities and other community and voluntary sector organisations. In 2002-03, there were 9,423 enrolments on the adult and community education provision. Of these, 74 per cent were by women and almost 6 per cent were by members of minority ethnic background communities. Seventy-five per cent of all enrolments were at the college and 10 per cent were at the community school. Another 10 per cent of enrolments were with the council's partners. In the autumn term of 2003, there were 2,720 enrolments on courses, 73 per cent of which were by women.

3. Learning programmes take place at the further education college, the community school, and at 50 community venues including schools, and village and church halls throughout West Berkshire. Although courses are offered in all areas of learning, 87 per cent of all enrolments in the autumn of 2003 were in visual and performing arts and media, English, languages and communication, hospitality, sports and leisure, and information and communications technology (ICT). Visual and performing arts account for almost 40 per cent of all enrolments. Few courses lead to a qualification.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Information & communications technology

4. The council offers a range of ICT courses that extend from three-week taster courses for those who have not previously used a computer to 20 week specialist courses in programming and the use of computers in photography. Courses take place in the college, local schools, and many community centres, residential homes and day centres throughout the authority. Most classes that take place in rural areas are held during the day while most evening courses are held at the college and schools. The council targets under-represented groups such as learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, elderly learners, learners with alcohol and drug related problems and learners in rural or deprived communities to attend ICT courses. Ten centres are part of the E-mpower network of community-based computers for disadvantaged learners. Most of these are residential homes and day centres; two centres are open to the general public. At the time of the inspection there were 132 learners enrolled on ICT courses.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

5. The council offers a wide range of hospitality, sport and leisure courses. These include exercise classes for older learners, yoga, pilates, tai chi, wine tasting, cookery and bridge. Courses are available in the mornings, afternoons and evenings. Most courses last between seven and 13 weeks. Courses are held at the local college and the community school and a wide range of community venues throughout West Berkshire. There were 433 enrolments in this area of learning at the time of inspection.

Visual & performing arts & media

6. The council offers a wide range of non-accredited visual and performing arts courses. These include Middle Eastern, tap, ballet, ballroom, Latin American and Salsa dance classes. Other classes include pottery, photography, painting and drawing including watercolour and oils, dressmaking, upholstery, jewellery making, and bookbinding. Most courses are provided by the local college and the others are provided by the community school. Of the 79 courses currently offered, 33 per cent take place during the day, and 67 per cent on weekday evenings. Most courses last for 10 weeks. Courses take place at 32 venues in West Berkshire. There are currently 1,284 part-time students enrolled on these courses.

English, languages & communications

7. The council offers a wide range of modern foreign language courses that include Russian and Greek for beginners, Japanese, French, Spanish, and Italian at beginner, improver and intermediate levels and German conversation classes. Of the 713 learners, almost 66 per cent attend beginner classes, 20 per cent attend improver classes and 8 per cent attend intermediate classes. There are also 75 learners attending conversation classes. Almost 92 per cent of learners attend courses provided by the college and the remainder attend the community school. Most courses last between 10 and 13 weeks. Out of the 49 courses offered in the autumn term, 11 take place during the day and the others are in the evening.

Foundation programmes

8. The council provides foundation programmes through its contract with the local college and its partnership agreements with the community school, local schools, and community and voluntary groups. Approximately 70 per cent of the provision is delivered by the college. This year there are 86 learners in this area of learning. The council targets foundation programmes at high-dependency learners and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Programmes are planned for the specific needs of learning groups and include literacy and numeracy, ICT, creative writing, photography, pottery, music experience and healthy lifestyle courses. In addition, the council, the college and West Berkshire education and social services jointly fund the Waterside Project. This is a long course designed to prepare learners with severe learning difficulties for employment. Courses are offered at seven other local centres including a secure psychiatric hospital and a hospice. Many of the college courses are held in a modern accommodation at the college. Courses usually last for a year.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	9
Number of inspection days	45
Number of learner interviews	293
Number of staff interviews	73
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	36
Number of partner/external agency interviews	6

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

9. The ALL's previous inspection found that the provision in visual and performing art and community learning was good. Training for the foundation programmes was satisfactory. Training for information and communications technology, sports and leisure and modern foreign languages was unsatisfactory. Leadership and management were unsatisfactory. More specifically, equality of opportunity was satisfactory and quality assurance was unsatisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, all aspects of the provision were found to be satisfactory or better.

GRADES

grade 1= outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak

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

	Inspection	Reinspection
Information & communications technology	4	2
Contributory grades:		
Adult and community learning		2

	Inspection	Reinspection
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	4	2
Contributory grades:		
Adult and community learning		2

WEST BERKSHIRE LEA REINSPECTION

	Inspection	Reinspection
Visual & performing arts & media	2	3
Contributory grades:		
Adult and community learning		3

	Inspection	Reinspection
English, languages & communications	4	2
Contributory grades:		
Adult and community learning		2

	Inspection	Reinspection
Foundation programmes	3	2
Contributory grades:		
Adult and community learning		2

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

10. **Learners on ICT courses produce good work and most learners achieve their individual learning goals.** Learners achieve good introductory skills in word processing, the use of e-mail, internet, and desktop publishing. Most learners begin to use their new skills, particularly use of the internet and e-mail, almost immediately, and value being able to do so.

11. **There is good achievement of individual learning goals on sport and leisure courses.** Learners gain considerable health benefits from attending yoga, pilates and fun fitness classes. Bridge learners demonstrate a good understanding and ability to apply the relevant knowledge and skills and those on the wine tasting course can identify a wine's grape, and country of origin by appearance, smell and taste.

12. **The work produced by visual and performing arts learners is good.** In tap dancing, painting and upholstery learners work to a professional standard. They demonstrate good knowledge and skills gained in previous lessons and achieve good outcomes.

13. **Most learners on foreign language courses use the target language confidently to talk to the teacher, and to each other.** Tasks and exercises are completed without reverting to English. Learners' confidence is greatest in lessons where the teacher uses the target language consistently for classroom communication.

14. **Learners on language courses achieve good foreign language skills.** They speak and

understand the language they are learning well and can talk easily in everyday situations abroad. Most learners become competent at an early stage of their learning and begin to use the new language with ease.

15. Learners on foundation programmes make good progress towards achieving their individual and group learning goals. Most learners, who have severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities, gain confidence working with others, participating in community activities or continuing with further learning.

Quality of education and training

Grades awarded to learning sessions at the original inspection

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Information & communications technology	1	1	1	4	3	1	0	11
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	1	0	1	3	3	0	0	8
Visual & performing arts & media	2	8	1	2	0	0	0	13
English, languages & communications	0	1	2	6	2	2	0	13
Foundation programmes	2	3	1	2	1	1	0	10
Community learning	1	5	2	0	0	0	0	8
Total	7	18	8	17	9	4	0	63

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Information & communications technology	1	2	4	3	0	1	0	11
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	2	5	3	0	0	0	10
Visual & performing arts & media	1	7	5	10	1	0	0	24
English, languages & communications	0	4	5	3	1	0	0	13
Foundation programmes	0	2	6	0	0	0	0	8
Total	2	17	25	19	2	1	0	66

16. There is good teaching and learning in ICT, hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, English languages and communication and foundation programmes. The proportion of good lessons has increased from 52 per cent to 67 per cent since the previous inspection.

17. In ICT the best teaching is in community courses. Teachers for the community courses plan their lessons well, have clear learning goals and provide good individual support to help learners improve. There is good teaching in which simple yet effective projects stimulate and encourage learners to use a computer for tasks such as shopping and buying rail tickets online.

18. There is good teaching and learning in most sport and leisure lessons. A good feature of yoga, pilates and fun fitness courses is the teaching of the principles of the safe development of posture. Learners work at their own pace to improve their balance,

flexibility and posture. The teaching of bridge is clear and logical.

19. **Almost 70 per cent of language classroom teaching is good or very good.** Teachers are enthusiastic and encourage learning using a variety of activities. Teachers use a range of interesting and relevant learning materials from books and materials from everyday life. Most learners use the target language confidently to talk to the teacher and to each other.

20. **There is imaginative teaching on foundation programmes.** Teachers use creative strategies to meet the needs of learners. Teachers are sensitive to the needs of learners, plan their lessons carefully and set challenging but achievable targets. They give learners clear instructions and use appropriate teaching materials to allow tasks to be completed successfully.

21. **In visual and performing arts, teachers provide learners with good support to help them develop their learning and skills.** Many teachers are practising artists, crafts people and performers who have their own studios and workshops. They inspire learners by showing them examples of their own work and demonstrating the skills of their trade. Some are qualified teachers.

22. **There is a good range of ICT equipment available for use by all learners.** There has been an improvement in the computing resources since the previous inspection. Many learning centres have new computers and some classes take place in new buildings. Laptop computers are used for teaching classes at remote venues and are used to improve existing facilities at other centres. All centres have specialist equipment for learners with disabilities.

23. **There are good resources for most sports and leisure lessons.** Most accommodation used for exercise classes is good, spacious and warm. A specialist dance studio equipped with very good teaching resources is used for pilates classes. A supermarket sponsors the wine-tasting which allows increased quality and range of wine available for learning. The printed and other teaching materials given to learners are good.

24. **There are good initiatives to widen participation in ICT courses.** There are numerous successful ICT projects specially designed to attract people from all communities and target groups to attend courses.

25. **There is a good range of foundation provision in community venues.** The college and council's other partners run courses in many community venues throughout West Berkshire. This enables learners, who because of their circumstances or disability would not otherwise be able to attend a course to participate in learning. For example, courses are offered at a local hospice and literacy and numeracy classes are provided at a secure psychiatric hospital.

26. **There is some inadequate assessment.** A minority of ICT learners are not sufficiently stretched. There is insufficient written feedback given to these learners.

27. **There is some poor lesson planning in ICT lessons.** In these lessons, teachers have not thought through their schemes of work and have poor lesson plans that do not show the activities and learning outcomes expected. Learners in these lessons are often unsure of what is coming next or what is expected of them.

28. **There is insufficient sharing of good ICT teaching practice.** Although there is a lot of good teaching and good teaching resources are used by many teachers, these are not identified or shared to improve all teaching.

29. **There is ineffective monitoring of learners' progress on sports courses.** Some teachers are resistant to change and have not devised new course plans or lesson forms to include what is to be taught or learnt. A questionnaire to assess learners' readiness for physical activity has been introduced for sports and fitness programmes. This is a good means of identifying individual learning needs and provides additional information to that obtained at the initial assessment.

30. **There are insufficiently well developed course records to support the teaching of visual and performing arts courses.** The design and use of the questionnaires for learners is inappropriate for many older learners. The questions often alienate them rather than encourage them to complete it. Although most teachers are beginning to use new documents well and understand their purpose in recording learners' progress some use them only for compliance, while others do not use them at all.

31. **In some language lessons, learners are not taught how to continue learning without the assistance of the teacher.** In these lessons a narrow range of teaching methods and learning styles are used. Skills required to continue to learn independently of teachers are only partially developed.

32. **There is no specialist language training or pairing scheme to help teachers develop different language teaching techniques.** Teachers who are native speakers often come from different learning traditions with different learning expectations. There is no subject specific training to help them adjust until after they have been observed teaching.

33. **There is inconsistent recording of learners' progress on some foundation programmes.** Although learners' progress is recorded, using recently introduced quality assurance procedures, there is some inconsistency in the understanding and use of these.

Leadership and management

34. **There is good management of adult and community learning contracts.** A new and demanding legal agreement between the council and both the college and community school have been signed. Detailed quality assurance standards form the basis of both agreements. They also include thorough monitoring requirements and detail how and when the council is to be informed of learners' progress.

35. **The council's self-assessment and action-planning processes are detailed and thorough.** The process includes gathering feedback from partners, teachers and learners,

WEST BERKSHIRE LEA REINSPECTION

as well as council staff and managers. An established self-assessment cycle requires partner providers to complete their own self-assessment reports. These are then used to produce the council's self-assessment report.

36. **There are imaginative initiatives to widen participation in learning.** The council funds much valued flower arranging and photography courses for patients in a local hospice. A local school hosts a well equipped internet café where children and their parents and grandparents learn to use computers in a lively environment. Learners at a local secure psychiatric hospital attend basic literacy and numeracy courses.

37. **The application of new quality assurance systems is inconsistent.** The smaller providers have introduced the new systems faster than the two main providers. Many of the quality assurance requirements are new and there is some reluctance by teachers and learners to adapt to aspects of the new regime. Managers have identified this reluctance as a problem which needs to be remedied. This is a priority problem and the council has plans to deal with it through staff development.

38. **Equality of opportunity is insufficiently monitored in lessons.** Events to develop the knowledge of partners' staff about equality of opportunity and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 have been provided. There has however been insufficient monitoring of classroom practice.

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good management of partners and subcontractors
- imaginative initiatives to widen participation in learning
- thorough self-assessment and action-planning

Weaknesses

- incomplete monitoring of equality of opportunity in the classroom
- no use of quality assurance systems by some teachers

Information & communications technology

Strengths

- good achievement of personal learning goals
- good teaching in community education
- good initiatives to widen participation in learning
- very good resources

Weaknesses

- some inadequate assessment and recording of learners' progress
- some inadequate lesson planning
- insufficient sharing of good practice

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Strengths

- good achievement of personal learning goals
- good teaching and learning
- good resources

Weaknesses

- ineffective monitoring of learners' progress on sports courses

Visual & performing arts & media

Strengths

- some good teaching and learning
- good achievement of personal learning goals
- good resources

Weaknesses

- insufficiently developed course records

English, languages & communications

Strengths

- good achievement of individual learning goals
- good teaching and learning
- confident use of target language in the classroom

Weaknesses

- limited language teacher training
- inadequate development of independent learning skills

Foundation programmes

Strengths

- good learning and achievement of individual and group tasks
- imaginative teaching methods
- good range of community provision

Weaknesses

- inconsistent recording of learners' progress

Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

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.

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- good management of partners and subcontractors
- imaginative initiatives to widen participation in learning
- thorough self-assessment and action-planning

Weaknesses

- incomplete monitoring of equality of opportunity in the classroom
- no use of quality assurance systems by some teachers

39. The council's adult and community learning team has seven officers, three of whom are employed full-time. The team is effectively managed by a service development manager who reports to the head of education service. The council is not a direct provider of adult education but manages adult education contracts and a number of community projects that are part of local partnership agreements. Community projects have been developed over the past three years and account for approximately 12 per cent of course enrolments. The adult and community learning team is responsible for equality of opportunity, quality assurance, the management of resources and the production of the adult learning plan.

40. Strategic planning is clear and effective. The council has a clear strategy for the delivery of adult education that focuses on local and national priorities. The council's adult learning plan is written by officers after reviewing the success of the provision offered in the previous year, the performance of learners on courses, analysis of course data, discussion with partners and other interested groups including the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and takes account of the local and national priorities. The adult learning plan includes numerous measurable targets including the number of learners for the year, the proportion of new learners and the proportion of learners from target areas.

41. Management of the adult and community learning contracts with the college and community school is now good. New and demanding legal agreements between the council and the college and the council and the community school have been signed. Detailed quality assurance standards, including thorough monitoring requirements and how and when the council is informed of learners' progress, form the basis of both agreements. The annexes to these agreements include targets for the number of enrolments and the proportion of learners who attend their learning programme, the proportion of learners retained on their learning programme and the proportion of

learners who achieve all the targets on their individual learning plan. The college and the community school have also been set targets for the recruitment of learners over the age of 60, from minority ethnic groups and from target areas. Although it is too early to judge the effectiveness of the new contract, there has been a significant improvement in the teaching in the past year.

42. The management of the curriculum is satisfactory. An effective strategy to improve the curriculum is being introduced but the many developments introduced since the previous inspection are having varying degrees of success. The appointment of four centre heads to manage the curriculum throughout West Berkshire is a good development. Team meetings for teachers, at which the curriculum is discussed and good practice is shared, take place in some curriculum areas but do not yet take place at all providers. Standard forms for recording schemes of work, lesson plans and records of learners' progress have been introduced but their use is uneven. While many teachers find that using these recording forms are of benefit, others are more resistant to using them. Questionnaires developed to seek learners' views are inappropriate for some groups and these learners are not enthusiastic about completing them. A common approach to the observation of teaching, staff training and professional development has been established.

43. The council has made good progress in developing quality assurance procedures since the previous inspection. Two groups, the quality assurance and the curriculum working groups, were formed to deal with weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report. These two groups have since merged and continue to do good work. The membership of the group includes senior staff from the council, college, community school, the LSC and staff from other neighbouring colleges. Meetings are held at regular intervals. This group has been instrumental in agreeing new quality assurance standards. The council also has an internal quality assurance group to monitor quality developments. There have been improvements in the teaching.

44. The council's adult and community learning management information has improved since the previous inspection. A new computerised information system has recently been commissioned. The first term's data have recently been entered into the system and reports to use as a basis for planning have already been produced.

45. The LEA's information and referral service, which was identified as a strength at the previous inspection has been improved. In September 2003, the council's adult and community learning team achieved the matrix quality standard for information, advice and guidance. The council has increased the emphasis on information, advice and guidance during initial staff induction and there has been a programme of staff and partner training on this.

46. The council does not receive funds to provide training in literacy, numeracy and language. Although the college receives funds for this, adult and community learning teachers are encouraged to identify learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs and encourage them to use information and communications technology (ICT) or attend a college course to improve them. The council has links with a West Berkshire lifelong

learning partnership project that identifies and trains literacy, numeracy and language mentors. Mentors provide individual support, often in community venues, to learners who do not have the courage to enrol for an adult and community learning course.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

47. There are imaginative initiatives to widen participation in learning. The council funds flower arranging and photography courses for patients at a local hospice. These learners value the courses provided. A local school hosts a well-equipped internet café where children, and their parents and grandparents learn to use computers in a lively environment. Basic literacy and numeracy classes are offered at a secure psychiatric hospital.

48. A clear statement about entitlements in relation to equality of opportunity has been shared with providers and learners. The learning centres issue learners with the council's learner entitlement card, however, not all learners remember receiving one. Most accommodation provides good access for learners with restricted mobility. The council provides a good range of specialist equipment that is available to all centres.

49. The management of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The council has introduced an action plan to remedy weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. Good policies and procedures have been introduced but their impact on learners has been limited. A good equality and diversity audit document has been given to partners to help them respond to equality problems. Assessments of partners are accurate and record improvements in the support which learners have received over the past year.

50. Clear targets for the participation of under-represented groups such as men, members of ethnic minorities, and the over 60s are set for each provider and these are monitored each term. In the autumn term of 2003, the proportion of men participating in learning had increased by 1 per cent which was ahead of target. However, there were fewer learners from minority ethnic communities or who were over 60 than the previous year.

51. Equality of opportunity is insufficiently monitored in lessons. Events to develop the knowledge of partners' staff about equality of opportunity and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 have been provided. There has however been insufficient monitoring of classroom practice. The lesson observation records do not yet identify criteria for the effective monitoring of equality of opportunity.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

52. The council's self-assessment and action-planning processes are detailed and thorough. The process includes gathering feedback from partners, teachers and learners, as well as council staff and managers. Partner providers are required to complete their own self-assessment, which are used to produce the council's self-assessment report. The council has provided self-assessment training for partners' staff and has worked with them to synchronise their planning cycles. The council has a good self-assessment development plan that includes action plans for health and safety, race relations, and

compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. All action plans are reviewed and updated every two weeks. Targets from the action plans are included in the council's individual staff interviews and appraisals, which take place every six weeks.

53. The application of new quality assurance systems is inconsistent. The smaller providers have introduced the new systems faster than the two main providers. Many of the quality assurance requirements are new and there is some reluctance by teachers and learners to adapt to aspects of the new regime. Some feedback from learners has commented on there being too much, or inappropriate, form filling. A minority of teachers are not yet complying with the new requirements. Managers have identified this reluctance as a problem which needs to be remedied. This is a priority problem and the council has plans to deal with it through staff development. The council has developed a toolkit for its partners containing guidance for community project managers in schools, charities and volunteer organisations. This is used effectively by the council's partners.

54. All partners have introduced staff appraisal but are at different stages of the process. An optional appraisal system is also being introduced. A programme of lesson observations has been introduced at the college and at the time of reinspection, 67 per cent of teachers had been observed teaching. Thirty-three per cent of the adult and community learning teachers at the community school have also been observed teaching.

55. Staff development for those involved in adult and community provision is satisfactory. Teachers have good staff development opportunities closely linked to their responsibilities and the projects they are working on. A member of the council's team is responsible for introducing the health and safety action plan and has attended specialist training. The whole team has attended equal opportunities training. Council staff work with their partners to provide training for teaching staff. The response to the development needs of teachers is more variable. Although teachers have had some training in the new quality assurance arrangements, not all staff fully understand what quality assurance covers.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information & communications technology

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	132	2

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- good achievement of personal learning goals
- good teaching in community education
- good initiatives to widen participation in learning
- very good resources

Weaknesses

- some inadequate assessment and recording of learners' progress
- some inadequate lesson planning
- insufficient sharing of good practice

Achievement and standards

56. Learners produce good work and most learners achieve their individual learning goals. Learners achieve good introductory skills in word processing, the use of e-mail, internet and desk-top publishing. Most learners begin to use their new skills, particularly use of the internet and e-mail almost immediately and value being able to do so. Other learners attend courses that extend their knowledge and understanding of computer applications such as web page design and software programming. Some are able to use this knowledge to improve their effectiveness at work.

57. Many learners gain confidence from attending and succeeding on computing courses. Learners with drug and alcohol misuse problems have gained in confidence and their self-esteem has improved while attending an introductory course. These learners have benefited from learning while receiving treatment and have progressed to a more advanced course at the local college. An 89 year-old learner who is recovering from a stroke has designed a golden wedding invitation using a specialist software application and was very pleased with his achievement. The residents of a day centre for people who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are proud to have produced their first newsletter with the help of teachers. The retention of learners is good, and the rate is above 90 per cent on all courses.

Quality of education and training

58. There is good teaching in the community-based provision. Teachers plan their lessons well, have clear learning goals and provide good individual support which helps learners to improve. There is good teaching in which simple yet effective projects stimulate and encourage learners to use a computer for tasks such as for shopping or buying rail tickets online. In an ICT workshop for families which is hosted at a primary school at the end of the school day, children and their parents and grandparents learn and share ideas. There is good individual support for all learners. Good handouts and exercises are given to all learners which allow children to achieve in front of their parents and for the adults to take pride in the children.

59. There are good initiatives to widen participation in learning and there are numerous successful ICT projects specially designed to attract people from all communities and target groups to attend courses. One of these projects, E-mpower, runs at 10 centres in West Berkshire. This project was established in 2000, with government funding to provide internet and e-mail training to people from disadvantaged groups. Despite the range of course information available some learners are not given sufficient information about the content and level of a course before they enrol.

60. Most teachers use well-designed questionnaires and initial assessment methods to assess learners' prior knowledge and understanding of ICT. These assessments also assess learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills in order to identify any additional learning needs. There is some good assessment practice and many teachers keep good records about learners. Learners are able to make their own comments on these records about how well they are achieving and what help they need to progress. Learning objectives are regularly reviewed. There is, however, some inadequate initial assessment and a few learners are not sufficiently stretched. There is insufficient written feedback given to learners. Teachers are provided with progression forms but these are rarely completed and some teachers are resistant to using them.

61. There has been an improvement in the computing resources since the previous inspection and there is now a good range of equipment available for use by all learners. Several centres have specialist music equipment and associated software available for use with computers. This equipment is usually only available for learners to use during the timetabled two-hour learning session. All centres have specialist equipment for learners with disabilities but there are no accessible toilet facilities at one centre. Many centres have new computers and some classes take place in new buildings. Laptop computers are used in classes in remote areas and are used to improve existing facilities elsewhere. The E-mpower centres have new computers with large flat screens, scanners and a range of keyboards to suit the needs of learners with physical disabilities. There is a good number of qualified and experienced teachers for most courses. Teachers are offered good staff development opportunities and are paid to attend courses. An appraisal system for teaching staff has been introduced and has already been effective in identifying teachers' training needs. Two volunteers on community projects have achieved a teaching qualification.

62. There was some poor lesson-planning. In these classes, teachers had not thought through their schemes of work and had poor lesson plans that did not show the activities and learning outcomes expected. In these lessons, learners are often unsure of what is coming next or what is expected of them. One workshop observed included several learners who had not done the pre-requisite course although they had some prior knowledge of the topic. The teacher failed to adjust the teaching programme to meet their learning needs. In the unsatisfactory lessons, teachers do not allow learners time to master skills, they use poor or inadequate handouts and they have poor time management skills.

63. There is insufficient sharing of good teaching practice. Although there is much good teaching and the use of good teaching resources by many teachers, these are not identified and shared to improve all teaching. Some teachers are not aware that all libraries in West Berkshire have computers available for learners to use. Some sharing of good practice among teaching staff on community projects takes place.

Leadership and management

64. The management of the ICT provision is satisfactory. There has been improvement in curriculum-planning and teaching and there is now a clear leadership structure. Teachers who work on community projects have regular team meetings and there is joint training and the sharing of good practice. The quality assurance processes have been improved but there is some resistance among teachers to introduce new procedures. There is a programme of lesson observations and most teachers are observed teaching regularly. Some teachers have attended equal opportunities training.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	433	2

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- good achievement of personal learning goals
- good teaching and learning
- good resources

Weaknesses

- ineffective monitoring of learners' progress on sports courses

Achievement and standards

65. There is good achievement of individual learning goals. Learners gain considerable health benefits from the skills and understanding of yoga by attending classes. The practice of postures and breathing techniques lead to learners having a better posture and balance and improves their ability to relax. Learners achieve improved flexibility of movement, suppleness and vitality from attending the classes. Bridge learners demonstrate a good understanding and ability to apply the knowledge and skills they learn. In pilates classes, learners gain physical and mental benefits, improved posture and balance. Older learners taking part in fun fitness gain greater suppleness and stamina, improved co-ordination, mental alertness and have more energy for life. There is also good achievement of learning goals in wine tasting. Learners demonstrate the skills of identifying a wine's grape, and country of origin by appearance, smell and taste.

Quality of education and training

66. There is good teaching in most lessons. A feature of yoga lessons is the teaching of the principles of safe development of posture. The use of a well-designed questionnaire to assess learners' readiness for physical activity provides teachers with good information about learners and helps them to tailor their support to each learner. One teacher who works with a more experienced group of learners arranged for them to work in pairs so that they were able to practice the development of different postures. Good teaching of pilates enables learners to work at their own pace to improve their flexibility and posture. The teaching of bridge is clear and logical. Learners receive good coaching individually and in small groups. They are developing good individual skills. In one lesson the teacher gave learners pre-dealt hands of cards so that a variety of playing techniques could be taught and practiced in one lesson. In a good fun fitness lesson the

WEST BERKSHIRE LEA REINSPECTION

teacher effectively balanced the need to intervene and support learners against allowing individuals to deal with the challenge of a new activity sequence unaided.

67. Learners make good progress learning and developing new yoga postures and increasing their movement and subtlety. Their improved range of movement is recognised and praised by the teachers. More experienced learners perform the postures and movements confidently and to a good standard. There is good and safe development of newly linked postures and sequences and particularly good achievement in pair work exercises performed by more experienced learners. Beginners respond well to the new challenges of linked sequences of movements. In pilates classes, learners perform previously learnt movements and postures competently and with confidence. In bridge classes, learners demonstrate a good understanding with the questions they ask and through their effective card play.

68. Teachers are appropriately qualified for the courses they teach. An appraisal process and a lesson observation system for teaching staff have been introduced. Teachers are invited to attend staff meetings. The council is developing a professional development programme. There are good resources for most lessons although learners have bought non-slip yoga mats for their own safety and comfort while exercising. Teachers have also provided their own supportive blocks and resistance bands to support progressive individual development of posture and movements. Most of the accommodation used for exercise classes is good, spacious and warm. At one venue a hearing loop was provided for learners. A specialist dance studio equipped with very good teaching resources is used for pilates classes. The quality of printed and other teaching materials is good. In the wine tasting class a supermarket sponsors the wine which greatly increases the quality and range available for learning.

69. There are now clear routes of progression for learners. The range of courses offered has been reviewed and restructured to achieve this. One of the council's priorities is to maintain the introductory provision in rural communities and another is to build strong and sustainable links with community partners to expand the sports and leisure provision for those learners in greatest need. Current learners value the range and choice of courses, the progression routes available and the opportunity for them to attend a course in their own community. Course descriptions clearly indicate the difference between activities and the progression routes from them.

70. There is a wide range of information for learners about the sport and leisure courses offered by the council. Improved course information is part of the council's strategy to give potential learners a clearer understanding of courses offered and progression routes that are available. An entitlement card produced by the council is issued to all learners. This provides them with information about the adult and community learning provision. Links with family learning and the community projects are intended to target those people who are in greatest need of the adult and community learning provision.

71. There is ineffective monitoring of learners' progress on sports courses. Some teachers are resistant to change and have not devised new course plans or lesson forms to include what is to be taught or learnt. A questionnaire to assess learners' readiness for

physical activity has been introduced for sports and fitness programmes. This is a good development that identifies individual learning needs and provides additional information to that obtained at the initial assessment.

Leadership and management

72. The leadership and management of sports and leisure courses have improved since the previous inspection and they are now satisfactory. Imaginative leadership has also led to marketing approaches to attract new learners. Curriculum priorities have been agreed and teaching observation, training of part-time staff, professional development and curriculum planning and development have all been established although are not yet working effectively across the whole area of learning. Good attention is being given to establishing safe working practices for the sports and recreation courses. A weekly health check is now required for all learners on sports courses. Risk assessments now meet with the requirements of the national body guidelines.

Visual & performing arts & media**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	1284	3

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- some good teaching and learning
- good achievement of personal learning goals
- good resources

Weaknesses

- insufficiently developed course records

Achievement and standards

73. Learners' work is good. In tap dancing, painting, and upholstery learners work to a professional standard. They demonstrate a synthesis of knowledge and skills gained in earlier lessons to achieve good outcomes. Most learners are on appropriate courses and are able to respond to the challenges they are set. A few learners change courses soon after starting in their programmes and choose a course that is less demanding and in many cases more traditional. On these courses, learners are given the opportunity to copy other artists' work or photographs or use simple building techniques in clay. Informal initial assessment usually takes place during the first few weeks of each course.

74. Learners are provided with good support to help them to develop their knowledge and skills. There are good enrichment activities for learners in pottery classes, where they visit potteries to observe professionals at work. Learners in some dance classes are encouraged to compete for medals and participate in national competitions. One learner recently achieved fourth place in a national dance competition. Learners are introduced to contextual studies and encouraged to exhibit their work. In upholstery, learners have progressed to certificated courses with the intention of improving their skills to find related work. They also gain confidence through selling their work at craft fairs. In an upholstery class, one learner reupholstered a chair to a good standard and kept a detailed written record of each stage of the process for her own reference and so that it could be used as a reference by other learners.

Quality of education and training

75. There is some good teaching. Ninety-six per cent of learning sessions observed were graded as satisfactory or better. Teachers set challenging projects for their learners. For example, in one class, learners were challenged to produce work from a picture or object they had chosen to bring and to paint it in the style of artists who inspire them most. Class content is varied, with a good balance between theory and practical work that encourages learners' independence. For example in Latin American dancing classes, learners are encouraged to change partners at frequent intervals to develop individual and group confidence.

76. Many teachers are practicing artists, crafts people and performers who have their own studios and workshops. They inspire learners by showing them examples of their own work and demonstrating the skills of their trade. Some are qualified teachers. Accommodation is satisfactory. Much of it is conveniently located in the community with adjacent parking and easy access. Although some of the village halls are old they are well maintained, warm and clean. Learners value the community-based teaching accommodation, judging it to be appropriate for their chosen activity and more readily accessible than the college. There is often insufficient specialist equipment, materials and storage. There is much reliance on teachers and learners to provide their own equipment and materials. Teachers and learners also have to bring equipment such as sewing machines and armchairs to the class each week.

77. Learners receive good support from their teachers. However, there is insufficient initial guidance or support. In a number of classes, learners' abilities vary widely, and include some learners with additional learning needs or disabilities. The needs of these learners have not been made known to the teachers. While teachers are able to work with these learners with sensitivity, they do so with no support from the centre and often in isolation in outreach centres.

78. There is satisfactory assessment. Teachers provide good verbal feedback about learners' progress during individual teaching sessions. This helps learners to improve both their understanding of the subject and their skills and techniques. However, there is no formal feedback and learners' progress is not fully recorded or monitored.

79. The range of provision is satisfactory. The programme is generally based on the courses offered previously and changes when enrolment dictates or if there are too few applicants. The subcontracted providers have been given targets and are considering the range of provision, its location, and its success or failure in relation to these targets. They are also dealing with concerns such as the imbalance between male and female learners. For example, in 2002-03, 3,381 learners enrolled on courses but only 750 of these were men. The council is also developing work in the community to widen participation in learning. The young families art project is an example of this work. This project provides 30 workshops during the year for learners in rural areas, young parents and learners from minority ethnic groups. The aim of this project is to help parents gain a better understanding of their children and become better parents.

Leadership and management

80. Management of the visual and performing arts is satisfactory. Appropriate staff have been employed to manage the curriculum in the different geographical areas. There is now a better meeting structure, in which teachers are more involved. There is effective communication and a constructive relationship between the council and its partners. Course records are not yet sufficiently developed to support teaching. The design and use of questionnaires for learners is inappropriate for many older learners. The questions often alienate them rather than encourage them to finish their course. Good documents are used to record schemes of work and lesson plans. Some teachers only use these documents for compliance purposes and some do not use them at all. However, some teachers are beginning to use the documents well and understand their purpose in recording learners' progress.

English, languages & communications**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	713	2

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- good achievement of individual learning goals
- good teaching and learning
- confident use of target language in the classroom

Weaknesses

- limited language teacher training
- inadequate development of independent learning skills

Achievement and standards

81. Learners speak and understand the language they are learning well and can talk easily in everyday situations abroad. In most lessons, learners are competent in the target language. Learners manipulate grammatical structures and vocabulary appropriate to their experience of the language. Their confidence significantly improves. Many learners have gained skills that they use outside of the classroom. For example, one learner gave a speech for the twinning association in Italy; others have written letters to builders working on their foreign homes; many have made reservations and sorted out problems by telephone; and others support their children's language studies. Learners who spend extended periods of time abroad, find their language skills to be a great integrating factor. Learners value the social aspect of the classes and look forward to working in a group.

Quality of education and training

82. Almost 70 per cent of the teaching observed in language classes is good or very good. Teachers are enthusiastic and encourage learners to participate in the class by using varied interactive activities and a range of different groupings. For example, in one lesson observed learners started to work in pairs, then joined a circle and finally did some individual written work. Teachers make good use of the time available. Teachers use a range of interesting and relevant learning materials from both books and materials from everyday life. Learners appreciate the relevance of authentic materials and often bring their own examples. In those lessons judged to be good or very good, the language is broken down into smaller parts to highlight the important features and then learners practise using the language. For example in one class for beginners, the teacher

WEST BERKSHIRE LEA REINSPECTION

introduced a structure, practised it in isolation, helped learners with their pronunciation and then set a communication task after ensuring everyone had understood the important vocabulary. In some classes teachers adapt work to suit students with different abilities.

83. Most learners use the target language confidently to talk to the teacher and each other. Tasks and exercises are completed without reverting to English. Confidence is greatest in lessons where the teacher uses the target language consistently for classroom communication. In those classes judged to be good or very good, this is encouraged by the teaching of relevant vocabulary. For example, in one class the teacher gave a list of words and phrases for the learners to use as a reference. In classes where the teacher has built a trusting atmosphere learners work effectively to construct sentences. Students quickly gain confidence in using new words when they have been able to practise their pronunciation.

84. There is a good range of promotional literature available to potential learners about language courses and their content. A course outline sheet which is given to learners gives good information about course objectives and content. There has been good progress towards standardising the content of similar language courses. Common descriptions are now used in the promotional literature. Good connections are made between some language and craft classes such as Japanese and Japanese crafts and Spanish and Spanish tapas. Despite the good literature, some learners were enrolled onto courses that are too advanced. There are no classes designed to meet the specific needs of learners working or studying in vocational areas such as tourism or international business.

85. Resources for language teaching and learning are satisfactory. A central bank of language learning resources is being developed. Teachers are advised of new materials available for their use in a new curriculum newsletter. There is a good supply of new cassette players for use in lessons. Approximately 50 per cent of all language teaching takes place at the college. All classrooms have good teaching aids including video players and computer interactive marker boards. Other classes are held in church and village halls throughout the county. These provide satisfactory accommodation. Teachers have access to cassette players but it is more difficult to arrange for the use of videos or DVD players in these venues.

86. Teachers are well qualified for the courses they teach. A lesson observation system has been introduced but not all teachers have yet been observed. Staff development opportunities are available to teachers but few have attended language teaching events. Many language teachers are native speakers and most are employed part-time. There is no specialist language training or pairing scheme in place to help these teachers with language teaching techniques. Teachers who are native speakers often come from different learning traditions with different learning expectations and there is no subject specialist training in place to help them adjust.

87. Teachers regularly check learners' progress by setting and marking homework, classroom tasks and review tests. In one class for beginners, there are tests every four

weeks to measure learners' progress in relation to their individual learning targets. Learners are also asked to assess how well they are doing using a 5 point scale. Learners' progress is recorded on the newly introduced learners' record which includes the outcome of initial assessment, and learners' progress against their objectives and reviews for each term.

88. Learners' progress is recorded on the newly introduced learner record cards. Learners' reasons for enrolling, the outcome of initial assessment, and their progress against objectives and reviews are recorded on this card. Both teachers and learners complete this document. When they were introduced, some teachers felt burdened by extra paperwork but after using them saw their value when planning for individual learners. Learners' reactions are mixed. Some learners refer to them when discussing their progress, but others find them to be irrelevant and resent being monitored. These record cards are still at the pilot stage and have not been through a review or evaluation cycle.

89. In some lessons, learners are not taught how to continue to learn the language outside the classroom, without the assistance of the teacher. In these lessons a narrow range of methods and learning styles are used. Skills required to continue to learn the language independently of teachers are only partially developed. In some lessons questions are not set to develop effective reading and listening skills. Learners are advised to have their own dictionary and most use them in lessons but some teachers do not set exercises or tasks to help learners make best use of them.

Leadership and management

90. The management of language teaching has undergone significant change in the past year and is now satisfactory. A curriculum manager has now been appointed and a programme of language team meetings has been introduced. A curriculum focus group newsletter keeps all language teachers aware of meetings, new resources, and staff development opportunities available to them. A programme of lesson observations has started after which verbal and written feedback are provided and action points are given to the teacher. There is no specialist language training or courses for teachers to deal with problems identified during lesson observations. The new quality assurance systems are being introduced in this area of learning and learners' progress is recorded on the recently introduced learner record cards.

Foundation programmes**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	86	2

During the reinspection process, the inspectors identified the following strengths and weaknesses:

Strengths

- good learning and achievement of individual and group tasks
- imaginative teaching methods
- good range of community provision

Weaknesses

- inconsistent recording of learners' progress

Achievement and standards

91. There is good learning and achievement on foundation programmes. Learners achieve well when working towards their individual and group learning goals. Most learners who have severe learning difficulties and/or disabilities gain confidence working with others, participating in community activities or continuing with further learning. Expectations of learners are high and they are set challenging but achievable targets. Learners are positive about the difference the courses make to their lives in helping them engage in the wider community. For example, one learner with severe epilepsy and who was housebound spoke of the improvement to her quality of life that an ICT course had made when she learnt how to shop on the internet.

92. Achievement of individual and group tasks is good. In a music experience class learners with severe learning difficulties produced a CD of alternative Christmas carols to be sold for charity at local community venues. Achievements of foundation learners are celebrated imaginatively on all courses and good displays of their work are a feature in many classrooms. In a creative writing session, learners with severe physical and sensory impairment produced a story about an aeroplane flight, which is to be included in a collection of their writing, and produced in a booklet. Learners on the Waterside Project, a course which enables learners with severe learning difficulties to progress into employment, have had their art and craft work displayed at the local art gallery. These learners are also engaged on work experience in Newbury. Many courses have detailed booklets and photograph albums, often produced by the learners themselves that detail their achievements and progress.

Quality of education and training

93. There is imaginative teaching on foundation programmes. Teachers use creative strategies to meet learners' needs and to challenge them. Teachers are sensitive to learners' needs, plan their lessons carefully and set challenging but achievable targets. They give learners clear instructions and use appropriate teaching materials to enable tasks to be completed successfully. In one lesson, learners with mental and physical disabilities produce good craftwork that is sold at charity stalls to raise money for a national mental health charity. The teacher on this course teaches literacy, numeracy and enterprise skills as part of the craftwork course. In the music experience course, the teacher uses music and music technology to motivate and increase learners' confidence in their musical ability and their personal, speaking and listening skills. Learners, including stroke victims and learners with mental and physical disabilities, are also using a variety of literacy, numeracy and motor skills to prepare a CD of their work. There is good curriculum-planning by teachers who use real life tasks to stimulate and motivate learners.

94. There is a good range of community provision. The council's objective is to target foundation provision at high-dependency adult learners. The college and the council's other partners run courses in appropriate community venues throughout West Berkshire. This enables the council to make provision for learners, who because of their circumstances or disability would not otherwise be able to access courses. For example, photography and flower arranging classes run at a local hospice and literacy and numeracy classes are held at a local secure psychiatric hospital. Other courses are offered at community centres, homes for the elderly and nursery schools. The council is exploring ways of expanding its provision to target both geographical communities and communities of interest.

95. Resources for foundation programmes are good. Many courses take place in a purpose-built centre for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities near the college. The centre has good ICT equipment and has adapted facilities for learners. Teachers use the ICT and other media resources well for planning and for teaching. In one lesson for older learners, the teacher used a new electronic board to retrieve work learners had done earlier in the course to reinforce current learning. In lessons that take place at community venues, learners are provided with laptop computers and other learning resources to use as part of the programme. There is good use of additional learning support staff in most sessions. All learning support staff have attended disability awareness training.

96. There is good initial assessment and the results of are used by teachers to carefully plan a learning programme and set targets for each learner. There is, however, inconsistent recording of learners' progress on some foundation programmes. Although learners' progress is recorded, using recently introduced quality assurance procedures, there is some inconsistency in the understanding and use of these. In some lessons teachers are still using their own means of recording learners progress or are using these and the new procedures. One learner's progress has not been adequately recorded as there was no record of the small steps in learning that had taken place.

Leadership and management

97. The management of the foundation programme is satisfactory. Since the previous inspection, all aspects of the provision have been reviewed and there has been good progress towards meeting the individual needs of learners. A curriculum steering group has reviewed the courses available and there is now a more effective analysis of the courses required and more effective curriculum-planning. Specialist resources are now satisfactory and there has been a programme of staff development for support workers. There is now a coherent management structure with clear lines of responsibility. There are team meetings for teachers and partners who provide similar courses where curriculum problems, future planning and the sharing of good practice are discussed. Quality assurance procedures are satisfactory but there are still some inconsistencies in the use of course documents. Equality of opportunity is covered during induction, but there is insufficient evidence that it is established in the curriculum area.