

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **Luton LEA**

**12 May 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 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
- **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

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.

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Luton LEA

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Luton Borough Council became a unitary authority in 1997 and took responsibility for adult and community learning provision in its area. Adult and community learning takes place across the borough at four schools with community college status and with a small central local education authority (LEA) team. Each of the community colleges has a direct contract with Bedfordshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for accredited courses, and operates independently. The LSC funds the LEA directly for non-accredited adult and community learning provision. Each community college has a service level agreement with the LEA for this provision. The central LEA team provides borough-wide family learning, basic skills and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), and information and communications technology (ICT) outreach. A service level agreement exists with a local company for advice and guidance. Additional external funding supplements the family learning development activities. The colleges and central team offer accredited and non-accredited programmes for adult learners in science and mathematics, land-based programmes, business administration, ICT, retailing and customer service, hospitality, sport and leisure, hairdressing and beauty therapy, health and social care, visual and performing arts, humanities, English and modern foreign languages, foundation programmes and family learning. At the time of the inspection there were approximately 3,500 enrolments by learners on all of these programmes. Inspectors did not observe sessions in science and mathematics, land-based programmes, retailing and customer service, hairdressing and beauty therapy and humanities as very few sessions were taking place at the time of the inspection. Unemployment in Luton was 3.2 per cent in April 2003, compared with the national average of 2.6 per cent. The 2001 census figures show that 28.1 per cent of the population are from minority ethnic communities. The national average is 8.7 per cent.

2. A senior adviser from the LEA manages the central team and the strategic overview of Luton's adult and community learning provision for half of her post with the remainder of the time taken up with school improvement activities. She reports to the head of community education and development division for adult and community learning activities. The central team consists of a co-ordinator for family learning, a co-ordinator for ICT (a half-time post) and a co-ordinator for basic skills and ESOL. They report directly to the adviser. Each community college has a manager of adult and community learning who reports directly to the college principals. A new structure for adult and community learning provision is due to be established by August 2003. The LEA will lead and manage the programmes of both accredited and non-accredited learning for adult and community learning in a consortium approach with three of the community colleges. One community college will continue to have a direct contract with the local LSC.

## **SCOPE OF PROVISION**

### **Information & communications technology**

3. There are 660 learners on ICT programmes. Most are following accredited courses. These include short programmes in computer application and basic and advanced computer literacy qualifications. The non-accredited courses include a range of information technology (IT) tasters and level 1 courses. ICT learning is provided at the four main community college sites. Courses are also offered at local infant, primary and secondary schools. There is outreach and partnership provision. The sites include community centres, libraries, church halls and workplaces. Outreach provision and one community college offer a range of daytime courses. All community colleges offer an evening provision. An ICT co-ordinator manages the outreach provision and there are managers who oversee the provision in each community college. There are 60 tutors and trained volunteers who teach and support the ICT programme. A technician supports the use of laptops in the outreach provision.

### **Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**

4. There are approximately 800 learners enrolled on 71 sport and leisure courses. The courses cover subjects such as tai chi and yoga, swimming, golf, keep fit and cookery. There is one accredited teachers' rescue swimming certificate. Most courses run for 10 to 15 weeks at a time, and are held in the evenings. There is some daytime provision. Courses are held in a variety of schools and community centres across the borough and are co-ordinated by the four main community colleges. Some courses are targeted at older adults, parents and toddlers, women only, and minority ethnic groups.

### **Health, social care & public services**

5. There are currently 304 learners on health, social care and early years care and education learning programmes. Ninety per cent of learners are women. Numbers of learners have doubled in the past two years. Programmes are offered in two main community college sites and four linked outreach centres. Most learners are taking accredited courses in learning support, counselling, sign language, first aid and childminding. The national vocational qualification (NVQ) for learning support assistants is offered at levels 2 and 3, most of the other courses are at introductory levels. Approximately 200 learners are on the learning assistants course, most are employed in local schools and sponsored through the LEA. All courses are part time, most are two hours long and last for 10 weeks, some are repeated three times a year. Most are evening courses with a few during the day.

## **Visual & performing arts & media**

6. There are 605 learners on 55 courses in visual and performing arts and media. These are mostly non-vocational, covering a wide variety of arts, music, dance and crafts subject areas. Visual arts programmes include painting (watercolour and oils), drawing and painting, portrait drawing, creative crafts, photography, stained glass, dressmaking and tailoring, lacemaking, upholstery, soft furnishing, embroidery, curtain making, woodcarving and pottery, cake decorating, stick making and memory albums. Learners can gain qualifications in photography and art and design. The performing arts provision is smaller and includes community bands, guitar (acoustic and classical), jazz, salsa, American line dancing, Egyptian belly dancing, ballroom and Latin American. Courses vary between one to 30 weeks with most operating on a termly basis of 10 weeks. Most are two hour sessions. The courses mainly take place in the four main community colleges, in local schools and other community venues across Luton. Most sessions take place as evening provision with a smaller number operating in the daytime and weekends.

## **English, languages & communications**

7. There are 623 learners on 66 English and modern foreign language courses organised by the four community colleges in 10 venues across the borough. Inspectors observed and graded the modern foreign language provision. Modern foreign languages offered are Dutch, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Russian, Spanish and Swedish. These courses are taught by 38 tutors, including many native language speakers. Courses are run at all levels up to level 3, although Spanish is the only language offered at level 3. Learners in most classes are working towards a single level of achievement. In some classes, such as one Spanish and one Russian class, learners are working towards more than one level in the same class. Most classes run for one and a half or two hours each week and last between 10 and 15 weeks, although some 30-week courses are also offered. Enrolments are generally increasing. Lessons were inspected in all foreign languages except Dutch, Japanese, Russian and Swedish.

## **Foundation programmes**

8. There are 560 learners participating in basic skills activities, 154 in literacy and numeracy classes and 406 in ESOL provision. Participation in basic skills has increased from 859 enrolments in 2001-02 to 1,346 learners in 2002-03. Most learners study in local venues including nursery and primary schools, community colleges, libraries and community centres. Many of these learners are recruited through the recommendation of other learners or through information provided by the school. There are also classes in workplaces, and in a day centre for people with mental health problems. All learners attending this kind of class are referred by the organisation hosting the class. Classes take place during the day and evenings on weekdays. There is also one Saturday ESOL group. Courses are set at times to suit learners and normally run for two hours a week over 16 weeks. There are a few intensive, short courses which last for four weeks and learners are expected to attend for a total of 30 hours. There are 59 literacy, numeracy and ESOL tutors. Learners can work toward qualifications in language, numeracy or literacy, including the national tests at level 1 and 2.

## Family learning

9. There are 100 learners enrolled on mainly non-accredited family learning programmes. During 2001-02 there were 304 learners and in 2002-03, this increased to 600. Courses offered include family literacy and numeracy, keeping up with children, storybooks, understanding the school curriculum, practical parenting and taster sessions. There is a full-time family learning co-ordinator who also has responsibility for literacy and numeracy. There are also six part-time tutors on the team and 70 sessional tutors assisted by a crèche co-ordinator. There are close links with the teams of outreach workers and support workers based in the local schools. Courses operate throughout the year, mainly during the school term, although times vary during the day to meet learners' needs. Short introductory courses have been held in the evening and at weekends. Most courses in the programme last for two hours a week over 10 weeks but there are also short family literacy and numeracy workshops and some longer literacy and numeracy classes. The LEA prioritises the programmes into areas of highest deprivation and poverty. Courses take place in schools, community centres and other venues. Most learners are women.

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	11
Number of inspection days	54
Number of learner interviews	431
Number of staff interviews	132
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	54
Number of partner/external agency interviews	15

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

10. The quality of provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Family learning provision is good and the quality of provision in ICT, visual and performing arts and foundation programmes is satisfactory. The provision in health and social care, sport and leisure, and modern foreign languages is unsatisfactory. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory as are the arrangements for the quality assurance of the provision. The organisation's approach to equal opportunities is satisfactory.

## GRADES

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

<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	4



Areas of learning	Grade
Information & communications technology	3
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	4
Health, social care & public services	4
Visual & performing arts & media	3
English, languages & communications	4
Foundation programmes	3
Family learning	2

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievement and standards

11. **Achievement and progression are good on ICT programmes.** Seventy-five per cent of learners achieve short entry-level and level 1 programmes. Learners' attendance and progress are good. Retention is high at 94.7 per cent. Many learners progress to more advanced or similar level programmes. All learners gain in confidence and demonstrate improved personal and basic skills.

12. **Attendance is poor on most sport and leisure programmes.** Many sessions have attendance at less than 75 per cent, and some at 50 per cent and below. In the older adult classes, learners communicate well with each other and encourage each other to attend regularly. Those that attend regularly gain significant benefits to their physical and social well-being. In some sessions, learners demonstrated good skills, but in others, performance was poor.

13. **Achievement rates are good for learners on health, social care and early years care and education programmes.** Achievement and retention rates on most programmes are over 85 per cent. Learners are able to gain qualifications which they and their employers regard as valuable. In the sessions where teaching is good, lessons are well planned and effective use is made of handouts and group and pair work. However, learners were insufficiently involved in many classes.

14. **Retention is good on visual and performing arts programmes** with a 92.8 per cent retention rate for 2001-02. **Learners achieve well on all programmes.** They have a clear understanding of their learning goals and the skills they are developing. Learners develop good practical and technical skills across a wide range of subject areas.

15. **Modern foreign language learners who remain on courses achieve well.** Almost all these learners attain at least satisfactory levels of competence in the fundamental skills of language learning, speaking, listening, reading and writing. They gain in confidence with their success and use their new skills when they travel abroad. Retention is low. For

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example, on non-accredited courses in 2000-01, the retention rate was 76.9 per cent. The figure was 53.5 per cent in 2001-02.

**16. Retention on non-accredited basic skills and ESOL programmes is good and improving.** In 2001-02, 87 per cent of learners remained on their programme and in 2002-03, this increased to 91 per cent. Retention across all programmes is satisfactory and also shows an increasing trend from 74 per cent in 2001-02 to 76 per cent in 2002-03. Achievement is satisfactory. The standard of learners’ work is satisfactory. Work contained in learners’ files is generally appropriate to meet their needs, although in a small number of classes the work produced is at an inappropriate level.

**17. Retention on family learning programmes is good at 92 per cent in 2002-03. Learners make good progress in achieving group learning goals** and personal objectives and these are recorded in individual learning plans. **Parents become more involved in school activities** after joining the programmes and have greater confidence helping and understanding their children’s learning.

**Quality of education and training**

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Information & communications technology	0	6	2	3	1	0	0	12
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	4	1	1	2	2	1	11
Health, social care & public services	0	1	3	4	2	0	0	10
Visual & performing arts & media	1	2	10	2	1	0	0	16
English, languages & communications	0	0	3	5	1	0	0	9
Foundation programmes	0	3	3	4	2	1	0	13
Family learning	0	2	5	0	0	0	0	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>78</b>
<b>per cent</b>	<b>58.97%</b>		<b>24.36%</b>		<b>16.67%</b>			

**18. Sixty per cent of sessions observed by inspectors were good or better.** Seventeen per cent were unsatisfactory, poor or very poor. Family learning is the only area in which no unsatisfactory lessons were observed.

**19. Most of the teaching and learning on ICT programmes is good.** Sixty-seven per cent of sessions observed were good or better. Learners successfully carry out calculations, use formulas, create sophisticated databases, design posters and enhance digital photographs. Individual learning plans are used effectively and learners and tutors state which objectives have been achieved. A log records each step of the learners’ progress which the tutor regularly monitors.

**20. There is a wide range of very effective ICT provision.** Programmes are designed to

meet the needs of communities and individual learners. Most facilities and ICT resources are satisfactory or better. Some lessons use well-developed learning materials, written by the tutors at an appropriate level for the learners. There are crèche facilities on some sites which are well used. Tutors are appropriately qualified and opportunities for staff development are available where the need is identified.

21. ICT assessment procedures and practice are satisfactory. The standard of marking on accredited courses is generally satisfactory. Internal verification is effective on short accredited courses but second marking has not been introduced for other courses. Learners are given positive, constructive feedback on their work.

22. **Advice and guidance is inadequate for learners on ICT programmes.** Potential learners are not given clear information before enrolment. They are told about the range of courses and are given leaflets or prospectuses. Learners generally select their course themselves by its title. Learners' additional support needs are not identified adequately early in the session. For example, deafness is not always identified. Some learners are enrolled on an inappropriate level but transfers rarely occur.

23. **There is a good range of courses to meet community needs for sports and leisure learners.** The community colleges have worked with local organisations to identify need and introduce a range of new courses. These link with the borough's strategic plan for health in the community.

24. Resources are satisfactory in sports and leisure programmes. At most centres, the accommodation is adequate. Action has been taken to improve cleanliness at centres where cleaning arrangements were unsatisfactory. Some sessions, especially yoga, are disturbed by outside noise. Tutors are quickly and effectively supplied with the resources they need. There are some particularly good resources in water-based sessions such as water fitness.

25. **Some teaching and learning for sports and leisure programmes is unsatisfactory.** Of the sessions observed, 45.5 per cent were unsatisfactory, poor or very poor. Session planning is inadequate in many sessions and learners receive little instruction in some sessions with no structure. In the better sessions, tutors are aware of individual learners' abilities and pay particular attention to learners' performance. Alternatives are not always offered to account for different learners' abilities and needs.

26. **Sports learners' progress is not monitored and recorded effectively.** In some sessions there is little or no checking of individual performance. Learners rarely receive any feedback about how their performance or fitness has improved. Many tutors do not record the progress of individual learners. Few learners are asked why they want to attend sessions or about their individual goals. If learners' goals are identified, they are rarely recorded. Individual learning goals are not used to draw up schemes of work and session plans. When learning outcomes are identified, they refer to collective group goals.

27. **There is insufficient health screening for sports programmes.** Most learners do not

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complete a written health screening form to identify any medical contraindications to activity. The screening forms in use are inadequate. Most tutors carry out a verbal health screen with new learners but the outcomes of this check are not recorded.

28. In health, social care and early years care and education programmes teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most classes observed were satisfactory or better. Most staff are appropriately qualified, and are gaining additional qualifications as required for NVQ programmes. However, there are insufficient staff for some programmes.

29. There is some poor assessment practice on the learning assistants' course. There is insufficient assessment in the workplace and course files are not marked promptly or efficiently. Learners produce too much written evidence in portfolios.

30. **Individual support and initial assessments for health and social care learners are poor.** Learners do not routinely receive initial assessments of their literacy and numeracy skills or ESOL needs. There is little assessment of job-related skills to decide on the level of qualification or to accredit existing knowledge and experience. **There is no specialist literacy and numeracy support for learners.** There is insufficient target-setting and monitoring of learners' progress. Targets are set at tutorials but are often not specific and have no dates for completion. Many learners did not know what progress they had made, or whether they were working at the required level.

31. **Learning and teaching are good in visual and performing arts.** Many of the tutors are specialists or freelance artists in their own subject areas and have appropriate professional qualifications. Of the 16 teaching sessions observed, 13 were good or better and 2 were satisfactory and one session was unsatisfactory.

32. **Learners gain significant personal benefit from the arts programmes.** Learners develop a wide range of additional skills including gains in self-confidence, interpersonal skills, working with others, and practising, researching, and reading about the subject area outside of the sessions. Learners are well motivated and often arrive early. Learners can choose from a wide range of subjects. In the visual arts, there are numerous choices ranging from painting, pottery, photography and patchwork, and more unusual interests such as stump work and stick making. In the performing arts there is provision for interests in traditional and ethnic dance, social dancing, music playing, improvisation and instrument making and drama.

33. There are some inadequate resources for visual arts at a number of venues. One photographic darkroom is in an unfinished state, electrical equipment has not been safety tested and only one enlarger was available for eight learners. In another building, an art and calligraphy class takes place in the science laboratory where the height of the tables and the seating are inappropriate.

34. Individual or group learning goals are recorded in very few cases in arts programmes. There is no framework in place to record and monitor learners' progress. In a few sessions, the group's progress is incorporated into the schemes of work and lesson plans but few records are kept of individual learning needs.

35. In modern foreign language classes, most tutors provide a good balance of the language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Some teachers use too much English in lessons, but all ensure that learners are used to listening to the foreign language itself. There is some good accommodation for modern foreign languages. Many lessons take place in the modern languages classrooms of secondary schools. These often provide stimulating learning environments.

36. Language learners benefit from a satisfactory range of resources in lessons. Many tutors are native speakers of the language they teach. Tutors use suitable textbooks and other written or visual material. There is no use of ICT in teaching. Continuous assessment practices are satisfactory. Tutors assess and record learners' work and progress in different ways, although most adopt criteria related to accreditation goals when teaching accredited courses.

37. Publicity and guidance for language courses are inadequate. Course descriptions in prospectuses often do not give enough information about the content and demands of courses. They do not always make clear how one course differs from another, particularly at the more basic stages of learning. There is no routine initial assessment, although many tutors do establish individuals' learning goals at the beginning of the course.

38. There is a wide range of partnerships, which encourage learners on foundation programmes from a broad range of groups and communities to participate in learning. There are good links with a range of organisations including libraries, schools, companies and voluntary organisations.

39. Support for literacy and numeracy and ESOL learners is good. Nearly 68 per cent of daytime classes aimed at attracting parents into learning have a crèche. Tutors are very sensitive to the needs of individual learners. For example, care is taken in the preparation of materials, such as enlarging fonts on worksheets for learners who have difficulties reading regular size print. Co-ordinators respond well to the needs of learners, staff and external agencies. Managers respond quickly to tutors' questions and requests for help.

40. **Initial assessment and target-setting are very effective for most foundation learners.** Staff assess all learners either before or at the beginning of the course to identify the starting point for learning. All learners attempt a nationally standardised literacy and numeracy test. In addition, ESOL learners are assessed for their abilities in speaking and listening through a series of appropriate activities developed by staff. However, some initial assessments are carried out by staff who are not appropriately qualified.

41. Teaching and learning resources on foundation programmes are satisfactory. Most rooms are suitable for adults to work in, although some are cramped. Most handouts are satisfactory or better. However, there are some which are inappropriate as they are designed to be used with children. There is some inappropriate use of English as a Foreign Language materials to teach English.

42. Teaching and learning for foundation learners are satisfactory. Most teachers have appropriate qualifications and many use a range of teaching styles and varied resources to stimulate learners and consolidate learning. Some teaching is good or very good. However, in some classes, teachers ask learners to complete tasks which are too difficult for them to achieve, they rely on handouts to teach and check learning, and do not treat learners as adults.

43. **Teaching and learning on family learning programmes are good.** Of the seven observed sessions, all were graded as good or very good. Lessons are well planned and have clear objectives matching the needs of learners. Family learning tutors and schoolteachers ensure the learning needs of parents and children are identified and met. The family learning team has established productive partnerships with schools and a range of external organisations that are effective in recruiting under-represented learners. Local schools and community groups provide useful feedback to the team and this is used in planning future courses.

44. **Learners on family learning programmes are clear about the aims of their learning programme and are well supported by family learning workers and tutors** to achieve their goals. There are good crèches at all of the centres. Support workers are available and learners have access to specialist advice and guidance. **Additional literacy and numeracy support is good.** Effective initial assessment identifies those learners who require support and this is included in their learning programme.

45. Some of the accommodation for family learning programmes is restricted. Some family learning rooms are small and shared with the crèche. In some cases the noise from the crèche distracted from the learning process. Family learning courses are very popular and some centres have waiting lists.

### **Leadership and management**

46. **The leadership and management of family learning are good.** There is a clearly developed strategy to link school improvement activity with family learning. This is well supported through funding from a variety of sources including regeneration funding and other external funds. There are strong links with community development. Family learning is well managed at curriculum level, with coherent strategies for the provision and its improvement.

47. **The ICT outreach provision is well managed.** The ICT co-ordinator provides good leadership, management and quality assurance support to the outreach tutors. Teaching and learning are well monitored and staff development opportunities are identified and implemented.

48. **Adult and community education responds well to the needs of other organisations, community and voluntary groups.** It works effectively with a range of learners responding to requests from, for example, employers, the library service, health and

sports services and minority ethnic organisations. A strategic decision has recently been taken to bring together area-based teams which serve a variety of community needs. In health, social care and early years care and education there are effective partnerships with schools and the early years partnership meeting local employer needs. Effective partnership working with the LEA has led to more employees from local schools taking courses in a range of programmes including sign language and learning support.

49. The development of literacy, numeracy and ESOL is satisfactory in family learning, foundation and ICT provision. However, in health and social care programmes the basic literacy and numeracy needs of learners are not adequately identified or met.

50. Communication is satisfactory. There are minuted meetings at various levels with a clear indication of action to be taken. Managers and curriculum co-ordinators give good support to the tutors. However, there are some significant gaps which the proposed new structure is designed to overcome.

51. Staff development is satisfactory. All staff are asked to gain a teaching qualification if they do not have one, and are offered other training in response to the needs they express in staff meetings and in appraisal and review. Staff are paid for attending staff development.

52. **There is no curriculum co-ordination in the areas of visual and performing arts, sport, languages and health and social care.** In these areas there is little staff development in specific learning and teaching strategies. The areas contribute very little to the overall strategy and planning for adult and community education. Planning of new courses to meet the needs of the community is not cohesive. Managers do not work together on plans to respond to area needs. Although there are examples of good practice in the areas of learning, there is no system to ensure that good practice is shared. In health and social care provision, class sizes are not managed effectively.

53. **Very little work has been done to develop an overall ICT strategy for adult and community learning.** The lifelong learning and library strategic plan clearly identified widening participation as a priority. The consortium of community colleges has looked at this strategic issue but has not yet developed a coherent action plan.

54. **Quality assurance systems are inadequate.** Some lesson plans and schemes of work are poor and inadequately detailed. The systems for monitoring learners' progression and achievement are inadequate. There is insufficient formal measurement of learners' progress, compared with their starting point. Quality monitoring documents are not standard across the centres. In ICT, where individual learning plans are used, they are not used in the same way for all courses. In health and social care programmes, managers do not have an overview of the quality of the courses offered. On the family learning programme progress reviews, course evaluations and monitoring of programmes are effective.

55. In most areas staff are insufficiently involved with the self-assessment process and quality improvement measures. Inspectors found the self-assessment report to be

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accurate in its judgements in most areas.

56. Teaching observation is carried out. However, feedback is mainly on teaching rather than learning, and monitoring for improvement is inconsistent. In some areas, there is no consistent approach to the planning of the observations. Inspectors found that a sixth of observed teaching sessions were unsatisfactory. In some areas, teaching observations are carried out by non-specialist staff.

57. **Learners did not understand the complaints procedure**, although they did know who to talk to if they had a complaint. Most complaints are dealt with informally. There is insufficient central monitoring of number and types of complaints.

58. **Management information is not used effectively in target-setting.** Planning and development are based on unreliable and insufficient data. There is little analysis of data, except in terms of disability which accounts for only 1 per cent of the provision. Retention, achievement and progression data are not analysed in terms of age, gender or ethnicity. The numbers of learners who are completely new to learning are not measured. Plans are in place to deal with this.

59. Luton Borough Council has a comprehensive set of equal opportunities policies and procedures to which the adult education service works. There is an effective ethos of cultural awareness in the LEA, although **equality of opportunity issues are not communicated formally to staff and learners.** No learners interviewed expressed any concerns about any aspects of equality of opportunity and all were very satisfied with their courses. Adult and community learning has recently introduced a separate race equality policy. The policy and staff training in this area has not yet been monitored, but this is planned shortly.

60. **There are many instances of excellent progression opportunities.** For example, some of the volunteers for the ICT outreach provision have progressed from attending courses themselves to becoming tutors. Inspectors interviewed 14 of these volunteers.

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

### **Leadership and management**

#### **Strengths**

- good leadership and management of family learning
- effective and responsive partnerships to widen participation

#### **Weaknesses**

- inadequate quality assurance arrangements
- insufficient curriculum management
- inadequate use of management information for target-setting and quality assurance



- insufficient communication of equal opportunities to staff and learners

## **Information & communications technology**

### **Strengths**

- good achievement and progression
- very good teaching and learning
- very effective and responsive provision
- good management of outreach

### **Weaknesses**

- some inconsistent application of quality assurance procedures
- inadequate advice and guidance
- no coherent ICT strategy for adults

## **Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**

### **Strengths**

- good range of courses to meet community needs
- good recent improvements in response to identified weaknesses

### **Weaknesses**

- some poor attendance
- unsatisfactory teaching and learning
- insufficient monitoring and recording of learners' progress
- insufficient identification of learners' goals
- insufficient health screening
- no curriculum co-ordination

## **Health, social care & public services**

### **Strengths**

- good retention and achievement rates

### **Weaknesses**

- poor initial assessment and support
- weak assessment practices
- insufficient target-setting and monitoring of learners' progress
- weak management of the programme area
- little use of formal quality assurance and improvement strategies

## **Visual & performing arts & media**

### **Strengths**

- good retention and achievement
- good teaching and learning
- significant personal gains to learners
- wide range of programmes

### **Weaknesses**

- some inadequate resources
- insufficient recording of learners' progress
- inadequate planning
- weak quality assurance

## **English, languages & communications**

### **Strengths**

- good personal and social gains for retained learners
- good development of practical language skills
- some good accommodation for foreign language lessons

### **Weaknesses**

- inadequate publicity and guidance
- low retention rates
- inadequate curriculum management

## **Foundation programmes**

### **Strengths**

- good retention on non-accredited programmes
- good partnerships to widen participation
- good additional support for learners
- very effective initial assessment and target-setting for most learners
- highly responsive co-ordinators

### **Weaknesses**

- weak quality assurance
- weak strategic planning

## **Family learning**

### **Strengths**

- good teaching and learning
- effective partnerships to attract new learners
- good support and guidance
- good achievement of personal goals
- very effective local management

### **Weaknesses**

- some restricted accommodation

### **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT LUTON LEA:**

- very patient, friendly and knowledgeable tutors
- local classes at the right times
- 'I really enjoy the challenge of learning new things'
- 'it's good exercise, fun and helps with the memory'
- the crèche provision
- the social aspects of the courses
- the chance to move on to do other things
- 'understanding what my children are doing at school'
- fun courses and excellent tasters
- 'the informal style of lessons'
- feeling more confident

### **WHAT LEARNERS THINK LUTON LEA COULD IMPROVE:**

- more individual attention
- longer courses, as fitness gains are lost in holiday periods
- longer sessions for fitness and ICT
- dirty toilets and untidy rooms
- more and longer taster sessions
- better parking at some locations
- 'the lights going out for evening classes, they are on a time-switch and it's a distraction'
- more classes to progress to
- bigger groups in language classes

## **KEY CHALLENGES FOR LUTON LEA:**

- effective management of the current period of change
- establish and maintain effective quality assurance systems
- establish cohesive curriculum management
- improve the management information system
- ensure that targets are set to drive quality improvements
- improve the sharing of good practice

## Language of the Adult and Community Learning

Terminology varies across the range of education and training settings covered by the *Common Inspection Framework*. The table below indicates the terms appropriate to Adult and Community Learning

Single term used in the framework	Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning	
<b>Provider</b>	<b>Provider</b>	Any organisation providing opportunities for adults to meet personal or collective goals through the experience of learning. Providers include local authorities, specialist designated institutions, voluntary and community sector organisations, regeneration partnerships and further education colleges
<b>Learner</b>	<b>Learner</b>	Includes those learning by participating in community projects, as well as those on courses. Learning, however, will be planned, with intended outcomes.
<b>Teacher / trainer</b>	<b>Tutor</b>	Person teaching adult learners or guiding or facilitating their learning.
	<b>Mentor</b>	Person providing individual, additional support, guidance and advice to learners to help them achieve their learning goals.
<b>Learning goals</b>	<b>Main learning goals</b>	Intended gains in skills, knowledge or understanding. Gains may be reflected in the achievement of nationally recognised qualifications. Or they may be reflected in the ability of learners to apply learning in contexts outside the learning situation, e.g. in the family, community, or workplace. Learners' main goal/s should be recorded on an individual or, in some cases, group learning plan. Plans should be revised as progress is made and new goals emerge.
	<b>Secondary learning goals</b>	These may include planned-for gains in self-confidence, and inter-personal skills. These should also be included in learning plans where appropriate.
<b>Personal and learning skills</b>	<b>Personal and learning skills</b>	These include being able to study independently, willingness to collaborate with others, and readiness to take up another opportunity for education or training.

## Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

	Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning
<b>Unanticipated, or unintended learning outcome</b>	Adults often experience unanticipated gains as a result of being involved in learning. These include improved self-esteem, greater self-confidence and a growing sense of belonging to a community. Gains of this kind should be acknowledged and recorded in any record of achievement.
<b>Subject-based programme</b>	A programme organised around a body of knowledge, e.g. the structure and usage of the French language or ceramic glazing techniques. Students could be expected to progress from one aspect of the subject to another, to grasp increasingly complex concepts or analyses or to develop greater levels of skill or to apply skills to a new area of work.
<b>Issue-based programme</b>	A programme that is based on the concerns, interests and aspirations of particular groups, for example members of a Sikh Gurdwara wanting to address inter-faith relations in their town, or parents worried about the incidence of drug abuse in their locality. Issue-based learning tends to be associated with geographically defined communities, but the increasing use of electronic means of communication means that this need no longer be the case. Progress is defined in terms of the group's increasing ability to analyse its situation, to access new information and skills which will help it resolve its difficulties and generate solutions and its growing confidence in dealing with others to implement those solutions.
<b>Outreach provision</b>	Provision established in a community setting in addition to provision made at an organisation's main site(s). Outreach programmes may be similar to courses at the main site(s) or be designed to meet the specific requirements of that community.
<b>Neighbourhood-based work</b>	The provider's staff have a long-term presence in a local community with a specific remit to understand the concerns of the local residents and develop learning activities to meet local needs and interests.
<b>Community regeneration</b>	The process of improving the quality of life in communities by investing in their infrastructure and facilities, creating opportunities for training and employment and tackling poor health and educational under-achievement. Community regeneration requires the active participation of local residents in decision-making. Changes and improvements are often achieved either directly or indirectly as a result of the adult learning activities which arise from this.

<b>Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning</b>	
<b>Community capacity building</b>	The process of enabling local people to develop the knowledge, skills and confidence to take advantage of opportunities for employment, training and further education and to become selfmanaging, sustainable communities.
<b>Active citizenship</b>	The process whereby people recognise the power they have to improve the quality of life for others and make a conscious effort to do so: the process whereby people recognise the power of organisations and institutions to act in the interests of the common good and exercise their influence to ensure that they do so. Adult learning contributes to active citizenship.



## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 4

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

#### Strengths

- good leadership and management of family learning
- effective and responsive partnerships to widen participation

#### Weaknesses

- inadequate quality assurance arrangements
- insufficient curriculum management
- inadequate use of management information for target-setting and quality assurance
- insufficient communication of equal opportunities to staff and learners

61. The leadership and management of family learning are good. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. There is a clearly developed strategy to link school improvement activity with family learning. This is well supported through funding from a variety of sources including regeneration funding and other external funding streams. This is used to ensure that families from both minority and majority ethnic groups and those who are educationally disadvantaged for a number of reasons, including culture, poverty and language, are supported and encouraged to return to learning. The initiative has led to a significant increase in adult learning, including new learners. There are strong links with community development. Most provision is targeted at family members who are available during school time. However, outreach centres run Saturday morning classes for parents who are employed during the week, which ensures access for all members of the family. Family learning is well managed at curriculum level, with coherent strategies for delivery and improvement.

62. The borough's adult education service responds well to the needs of other organisations, communities and voluntary groups. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. It provides good ICT tuition in libraries throughout the borough and this is valued by the library service and by learners. It has been effective in teaching basic skills in the workplace, and this has led to further requests for skills development. The service works well with primary schools. When community groups identified needs for sports and leisure services for specific minority ethnic or gender groups, the adult education service responded successfully. There has been a recent strategic decision to bring together area-based teams which serve a variety of community needs. This has enabled effective ideas and projects to be shared between community development, youth service and the adult education service. The LEA makes good use of a service level agreement with an adult advice and guidance partnership to provide expert guidance to learners attending adult learning provision. In health, social care and early years care and education there are effective partnerships with schools and the early

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years partnership to meet the needs of local employers. This has led to more employees from local schools taking courses in a range of programmes including sign language and learning support.

63. The development of literacy, numeracy and ESOL is satisfactory in family learning, foundation and ICT provision. However in health and social care the basic literacy, numeracy and ESOL needs of learners are not adequately identified or met.

64. Communication is satisfactory. There are minuted meetings at a variety of levels with a clear indication of action to be taken. Managers and curriculum co-ordinators are supportive of tutors. However, there are some significant gaps. The learning partnership was only recently made aware of the proposed restructure of the adult education service, and the principals of the community colleges do not meet to ensure a coherent approach to their adult education provision.

65. Staff development is satisfactory. All staff are asked to gain a teaching qualification if they do not have one, and are offered other training in response to needs expressed in staff meetings and in appraisals and reviews. Staff are paid for attending staff development.

66. There is no curriculum co-ordination in the areas of visual and performing arts, sport, languages and health and social care. This is recognised in the self-assessment report and an action plan has been devised but has not yet been put in place. In these areas there is little staff development in specific learning and teaching strategies. The individual learning areas make little contribution to the overall strategy and planning for adult and community education. Planning of new courses to meet the needs of the community is not cohesive and some courses and resources are duplicated. In some areas there is insufficient planning of the whole learning experience from initial advice and guidance, through individual learning plans to progression routes. There are examples of good practice in the areas of learning, although these are not shared. In health and social care provision, class sizes are not managed effectively.

67. There has been little development of an overall ICT strategy in adult and community learning. The lifelong learning and library strategic plan clearly identified widening participation as a priority. The consortium has looked at this strategic issue but has not yet developed a coherent action plan.

68. There is poor use of management information as a basis for target-setting. Planning and development are based on unreliable and insufficient data. This is partly recognised in the self-assessment report. There has been no thorough analysis of local needs, except in terms of family learning. Numbers are collected for LSC target compliance, but there is little analysis of these data, except in terms of disability which accounts for only 1 per cent of the provision. Retention, achievement and progression data are not analysed in terms of age, gender or ethnicity. Targets cannot be set for improvement in any of these areas based on a secure understanding of the current situation. Other management information such as numbers of learners who are completely new to learning is not

measured. Local managers do not regularly review data to use as part of their self-assessment. Attendance figures are not regularly monitored. This means that there are insufficient data to ascertain reasons for low attendance. The LEA has made plans to improve the management information system.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

69. Luton Borough Council has a comprehensive set of equal opportunities policies and procedures to which the adult education service works. There is a designated officer responsible for equality of opportunity in the borough. All adult education service staff receive an induction to work which includes equality of opportunity, although they are not issued with a copy of the borough's policies and procedures. Each community college has a staff handbook, which briefly mentions the centrally held core documents. Tutors who operate in outreach locations are unable to access these easily. The learner's charter effectively covers information on equality of opportunity and the complaints procedure and this is displayed on community college noticeboards. Many learners have little knowledge of the charter. The LEA is aware of this issue and has recently produced a learner handbook in which equality of opportunity is outlined and this will be given to all new learners at the beginning of next term. Most learners do not receive an induction. There is an awareness of cultural diversity in the LEA, but there is little formal focus on the communication of equality of opportunity. No learners interviewed expressed any concerns about any aspects of equality of opportunity and all were very satisfied with their courses.

70. There are many instances of excellent progression opportunities. For example, some of the volunteers for the ICT outreach provision have progressed from attending courses themselves to becoming tutors. In many areas of learning, courses start at a very basic level, with taster courses of a couple of hours, to advanced level courses. However in other areas, opportunities for more advanced studies and different courses are limited. There is no system for providing information for learners. The LEA has been using an outside organisation to provide advice and guidance to learners for some time. This has not been particularly effective and the LEA has recently recontracted with them with better defined requirements. The adult education team is receptive to learners' ideas for new courses but the areas of learning and colleges are not always effective in identifying new areas for courses. The LEA is particularly effective in developing programmes to attract new learners from under-represented groups.

71. The borough council produced an action plan in 2000 in response to the requirements of the 'Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000' but it makes no reference to adult and community learning. A corporate racial incident policy was also produced which also makes no reference to adult and community learning. The adult education team subsequently produced a race equality policy in March 2003. There has not yet been any monitoring under the requirements of the act, although the adult education team has identified the need to do so. Training on race relations has also been planned but is yet to take place.

## Quality assurance

## Contributory grade 4

72. The self-assessment report clearly identifies strengths and weaknesses which were found by inspectors in most areas of learning. Self assessment has led to a detailed action plan and steps are already being taken to deal with weaknesses and build on strengths. At the time of inspection it was too early to make judgements about the effectiveness of the plan. In sports and leisure programmes there have been good recent improvements in response to identified weaknesses. Action has been planned, and some improvements have already been made. Staff are insufficiently involved in the self-assessment process and with quality improvement measures.

73. Arrangements for assessment and verification in some accredited courses are not always effective. In centrally co-ordinated areas, including ICT, family learning and foundation programmes they are satisfactory. In other areas, however, there are poor practices.

74. Systems for quality assurance are inadequate. This is recognised in the self-assessment report, and an action plan has been written to tackle the issue. Lesson plans and schemes of work are inconsistent and lack adequate planning detail. There are inadequate systems for monitoring learners' progression and achievement. This is linked to weak initial assessment in most areas. There is insufficient formal measurement of how much progress learners have made compared with their starting point. Quality assurance monitoring documents are not standard across the centres. This is not a problem in itself, but there is no monitoring to ensure consistent evaluation across the provision. In ICT, where individual learning plans are used, they are not used in the same way for all courses. In health and social care programmes, managers do not have an overview of the quality of the courses offered. There is no routine analysis or monitoring of key performance indicators, such as attendance, retention or achievement. Data are unreliable and are not produced efficiently in a format which managers can use. In this area, internal verification is not formally planned. However, on family learning programmes, reviews, course evaluations and monitoring of programmes are effective.

75. Teaching observation is carried out, but feedback is mainly on teaching rather than learning, and monitoring for improvement is not always effective. For example, a very poor scheme of work remained unchanged after an observation. In one class, advice given on classroom environment had not been acted on when inspectors observed. Inspectors found that some teaching was unsatisfactory. In some areas, teaching observations are carried out by non-specialist staff and in a small number of cases by staff who were unused to teaching adults.

76. Learners do not understand the complaints procedure, although they do know who to talk to if they have a complaint. Most complaints are dealt with informally and orally. There is insufficient central monitoring of the number and types of complaints.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Information & communications technology

### Grade 3

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

#### Strengths

- good achievement and progression
- very good teaching and learning
- very effective and responsive provision
- good management of outreach

#### Weaknesses

- some inconsistent application of quality assurance procedures
- inadequate advice and guidance
- no coherent ICT strategy for adults

### Achievement and standards

77. There is good achievement and progression. On accredited entry and level 1 short courses, 75 per cent of learners achieve their qualification. The achievement rate is showing an improving trend. Some learners on a basic computer literacy programme do not wish to take the qualification at the end of the course but the number of these learners is decreasing. Many of the learners are from under-represented and widening participation groups, and many have not received any formal education since school. Learners' attendance and progress are good. Generally these are well monitored and learners demonstrated good ICT skills. Retention is high at 94.7 per cent. Many learners progress to a more advanced level or similar level programme. The learners make good progress, are interested in what they were doing and are acquiring good skills. All learners gain in confidence and demonstrate improved personal and basic skills. Many learners develop skills for employment, some progress to become tutors on adult and community learning courses and many older learners maintain knowledge and develop new interests.

### Quality of education and training

78. Most of the teaching and learning are good. Of the 12 sessions observed 8 were good or better, three were satisfactory and one session was unsatisfactory. Most learners work at their own pace. The learners are well motivated and keen to make progress. They successfully carry out calculations, use formulas, create sophisticated databases, design posters and enhance digital photographs. In most sessions, learners work together and support each other. They enjoy the social interaction and many see it

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as a social event as well as an opportunity to learn new IT skills for employment and self-development. Learners value the support they receive from their tutors, volunteer support staff and other learners. Feedback from learners is consistently good. Most learners receive good individual coaching. There is some good use of individual learning plans where both learners and tutors state which objectives they have achieved. The tutor monitors and records each step of the learners' progress. Level 3 learners are well supported by tutors through the e-mail system, they e-mail questions, and share issues and experiences.

79. There is a wide range of very effective provision. There are many outreach venues which include residential homes, day centres, nurseries, and infant, junior and secondary schools. The Luton central library and local libraries host courses taught by outreach tutors. Some courses are designed specifically for minority ethnic groups and are taught in community centres. The courses range from short taster courses to accredited Level 3 courses. These are available during the day, evenings and on Saturdays. Daytime and evening classes are offered at times to suit mothers, older learners and those at work. The 'silver surfers' course for older learners is very popular and learners enjoy learning with their peer groups. Outreach responds well to the learners' individual needs and has developed a programme to support a sight-impaired learner complete a word processing qualification using Braille and specialist software.

80. Most of the ICT facilities and resources are satisfactory or better. At one community college, there are well-designed and equipped rooms with up-to-date hardware and software. The libraries also offer a good, up-to-date, accessible learning environment. In some outreach and community college sites the facilities are not so good but the venues are accessible. Most outreach courses make good use of laptops. Most handouts are satisfactory and some are well presented and easy to follow. Some lessons use well-developed learning materials which have been written by the tutors at a level appropriate for the learners. Other handouts do not give sufficient step-by-step instruction or use graphics to support the learning. There are crèche facilities on some sites which are well used. Outreach provides appropriate software and hardware equipment available for one sight impaired learner. There is no drop-in facility to enable learners to extend their learning beyond the timetabled classes. Tutors are appropriately qualified and opportunities for staff development are available where the need is identified. Most tutors have achieved a stage one teaching qualification and many staff have further teaching qualifications. All volunteers follow a training programme and are observed. Inspectors interviewed 14 of these volunteers.

81. Assessment procedures and practice are appropriate. In level 3 classes, learners are given clear guidance on how to tackle exams. The standard of marking on accredited courses is generally satisfactory. Internal verification is effective on short accredited courses but second marking has not been introduced for other courses. In most taster and entry courses attention is given to basic skills. All learners' errors are identified and spelling and grammar corrected. Learners are given positive, constructive feedback on their work. On a taster and a basic computer literacy course the tutor has additional basic skills experience and qualifications. Most of the support offered is for literacy.

82. Advice and guidance is inadequate. Potential learners are not given clear information before enrolment. They are told about the range of courses and are given leaflets or community centre prospectuses. Learners generally select their courses themselves by their title. In school outreach provision, aimed at parents, the process is more defined. Parents who show an interest in taster courses are invited to a coffee morning where their language skills and abilities are assessed before enrolment. For most courses they are given additional information at the first session. Only in outreach do they receive information on policies, procedures, facilities, and the support available. Learners' additional support needs are not identified adequately early in the session. For example, deafness is not always identified. Some learners are enrolled on an inappropriate level but transfers rarely occur.

### **Leadership and management**

83. The outreach provision is well managed. The ICT co-ordinator provides good leadership, management and quality assurance support to the outreach tutors. Teaching and learning are well monitored and staff development opportunities are identified and implemented. In all outreach centres individual learning plans are used effectively and kept up to date. There are effective quality assurance procedures which are monitored regularly. Communication between outreach tutors and the ICT co-ordinator and other tutors is good. The tutors value their support, and opportunities to share resources and good teaching and learning practice.

84. There are some inconsistent quality assurance procedures. Some courses do not use individual learning plans. Some teaching and learning observations are carried out by non-specialist staff and there is inconsistency in the standards employed. Handouts are not always good and there is a range of lesson plans, scheme of work paperwork and standards. Some quality assurance paperwork is insufficiently detailed and does not set the learning objective. The lack of a common learner and course database limits target-setting and monitoring of retention and achievement at centre, course and class level.

85. There is no overall ICT strategy in adult and community learning. The lifelong learning and library strategic plan clearly identified widening participation as a priority. The consortium has looked at this strategic issue but has not yet developed a coherent plan. There are inconsistencies in their objectives and courses are sometimes duplicated. There is little use of data as a basis for curriculum management and planning. Information is not combined adequately to support judgements, or to project or plan for the future.

## Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Grade 4

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

### Strengths

- good range of courses to meet community needs
- good recent improvements in response to identified weaknesses

### Weaknesses

- some poor attendance
- unsatisfactory teaching and learning
- insufficient monitoring and recording of learners' progress
- insufficient identification of learners' goals
- insufficient health screening
- no curriculum co-ordination

### Achievement and standards

86. Attendance is poor for some sessions. Many sessions have attendance at less than 75 per cent, with some at 50 per cent and below. In the better sessions, attendance is good. Some tutors make good efforts to communicate with learners who have been absent. In the older adult classes, learners communicate well with each other and encourage each other to attend regularly. Those that attend regularly gain significant benefits to their physical and social well-being. The social gains are particularly important to the older adult groups. In some sessions, learners demonstrated good skills, but in others, performance was poor.

### Quality of education and training

87. There is a good range of courses to meet community needs. The community colleges have links with several local organisations that have identified particular needs for a variety of sports and fitness programmes. The community colleges have responded to these needs by introducing a range of new courses. They have paid particular interest to the borough's strategic plan for health in the community and set up a number of open days and talks for learners who are interested in improving their health. The sessions have been well supported by Luton LEA. For example, a crèche was set up at a talk about health, nutrition and exercise for women, allowing mothers to attend with their children.

88. Resources are satisfactory. At most centres, the accommodation is adequate. There have been complaints about cleanliness, especially at swimming sessions, but action has been taken to improve cleanliness. Adequate space is provided at activity sessions such



as aerobics, keep fit and yoga. Some sessions, especially yoga are disturbed by outside noise. Tutors are quickly supplied with the resources they request. There are some particularly good resources in water-based sessions such as water fitness.

89. Some teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Of the sessions observed, 45.5 per cent were unsatisfactory, poor or very poor. Session planning is inadequate in many sessions, and learners receive little instruction. Individual learners' performance is not observed in the poorer sessions. Some tutors do not give individual attention to learners or correct poor performance. In the better sessions, tutors are aware of individual learners' abilities, and pay particular attention to learners' performance. Suitable alternatives are not always offered for different learners' abilities and needs. In the better sessions, alternatives are offered to allow each learner to work at an appropriate pace and ensure sufficient challenge. In the poorer activity sessions, some tutors are not fully aware of the correct technique for certain exercises and demonstrate them inaccurately.

90. There is insufficient monitoring and recording of learners' progress. In some sessions there is little or no checking of individual performance. Learners rarely receive any feedback about how their performance or fitness has improved. Many tutors do not record the progress of individual learners. In some courses, learners are asked to record the date their goals are achieved, but the forms used are rarely fully completed. These forms do not include any input from tutors to validate that progress has been made. In one keep-fit session, the tutor keeps a written record of each learner's performance at the beginning of the course and their progress made. During the observed sessions, the tutor offered specific feedback to the group about how and why they had improved.

91. There is insufficient identification of learners' goals. Many learners are not asked about their individual goals or why they want to attend sessions. When learners' goals are identified, they are rarely recorded and are not used as the basis for schemes of work and session planning. When learning outcomes are identified, they refer to collective group goals. Most session plans do not identify learning outcomes. In the better sessions there is evidence of thorough session planning.

92. Few learners complete a written health screening form to identify any medical contraindications to activity. There are screening forms in use, but these are inadequate and insufficiently detailed. Most tutors carry out a verbal health screen with new learners, but the outcomes of this check are not recorded. Some tutors carry out a verbal check at the beginning of each session, but others do not. In the better sessions, learners with specific injuries receive individual attention to work towards rehabilitation and are given alternatives to ensure they are not compromised.

### **Leadership and management**

93. There have been some good improvements recently in response to identified weaknesses. The self-assessment report accurately identified the weaknesses in this area of learning. Action has been planned and some improvements have already been made. Managers work closely with tutors to identify weaknesses and are keen to deal with any issues and improve provision. Learners' evaluations are used effectively in

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planning improvements.

94. There is no curriculum co-ordination. This area of learning does not employ an occupationally competent co-ordinator. Luton LEA has identified this as a weakness in its self-assessment report and has planned action to deal with this. Observations of teaching and learning have not been carried out by subject specialists and some weaknesses were not identified. Staff development includes training sessions for lesson planning, and teaching and learning strategies, but they are not specific to the area of learning. Some tutors are not aware of how teaching and learning relates to the sessions they teach. Good practice is not shared between subject tutors.

**Health, social care & public services****Grade 4**

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good retention and achievement rates

**Weaknesses**

- poor initial assessment and support
- weak assessment practices
- insufficient target-setting and monitoring of learners' progress
- weak management of the programme area
- little use of formal quality assurance and improvement strategies

**Achievement and standards**

95. Achievement and retention rates are good at above 90 per cent in both accredited and non-accredited courses. In the learning assistants' course the retention rate increased from 87 per cent to 92 per cent between 2000-01 and 2001-02, and the achievement rate decreased from 98 per cent to 92 per cent over the same period (approximate figures only). Most learners' written work is of an appropriate standard, although some learners have poor literacy and numeracy skills and others have ESOL needs. Portfolio and course work is at the appropriate level for the stage in the courses followed. Sign language courses and learning assistants' courses offer training that is valued by learners for career progression and recognised by their employers as valuable professional development. Most learners attend courses as a requirement of their job role.

**Quality of education and training**

96. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most classes observed were satisfactory or better; 40 per cent were good or better, 40 per cent were satisfactory and 20 per cent were unsatisfactory. In the sessions where teaching is good, lessons are well planned, and effective use is made of handouts and group and pair work. In these classes, background knowledge and practice were closely related, particularly in the accredited courses. In many classes, there is poor use of questioning to make use of the expertise and experience of learners. Learners were insufficiently involved in many classes. Tutors in many observed sessions did not check learners' understanding during the session. In the poorer sessions there is an over-reliance on teacher-centred delivery which is uninspiring, dull, and repetitive. Many mixed-ability classes do not build effectively on the extensive experience of the learners.

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97. Most staff are appropriately qualified, and are gaining additional qualifications as required for NVQ programmes. However, there are insufficient staff for some programmes. In one very large course, there are not enough staff with appropriate qualifications and experience. There are two assessors and one internal verifier to assess and verify 200 learners.

98. There is some poor assessment practice on the learning assistants' course. There is insufficient assessment in the workplace and course files not marked in a timely and systematic way. Learners produce too much repetitive written evidence in portfolios and files contain too much photocopied material which is not appropriate as evidence. The one, short workplace assessment is recorded using a 'tick list' of tasks with comments. The comments on some are very brief. This is insufficient to enable internal verification to take place and restricts the opportunities for the cross-referencing of evidence. Oral questioning is used to ascertain knowledge but cannot be used as evidence as these are not recorded.

99. Individual support and initial assessments for learners are poor. Learners do not routinely receive initial assessment of their literacy and numeracy skills or ESOL needs. There is little assessment of job-related skills to decide the level of qualification or to accredit existing knowledge and experience. Some learners have been working in a professional role for some time. Learners do not have individual learning plans. Personal goals are set at the beginning of the course but are not regularly reviewed.

100. There is no specialist literacy and numeracy support for learners. Tutors offer tutorial support if it is requested but there is no policy of giving all learners group or individual tutorials. Most learners have taken up this offer and have records of their tutorials. When induction sessions take place, they concentrate on giving learners course content information.

101. There is insufficient target-setting and monitoring of learners' progress. Targets are set at tutorials but are often not specific and have no dates for completion. Many learners reported that they did not know what progress they had made, or whether they were working at the required level. The more able learners develop their personal and learning skills through individual assignments and group work. Portfolios are marked in a timely and systematic way.

### **Leadership and management**

102. There are effective partnerships with schools and the early years partnership to meet local employers' needs. Effective partnership working with the LEA has led to an increase in employees from local schools taking courses in a range of programmes, including a sign language course and learning assistants' course. Work with the early years partnership has increased the number of learners who work with young children and the development of joint courses. Most courses support the development of adult learning for employability and for developing the skills of existing employees.

103. Community colleges are responsible for different programmes. There is poor

planning and co-ordination of the curriculum. Managers do not plan the curriculum collaboratively to respond to area-wide information or community needs. Many courses offered are in response to the employer needs of the local authority, some are part of a historical offer. Managers do not plan as part of a strategy for adult learning. There are very few daytime classes. Where there are course teams, meetings are held regularly. Some tutors work in isolation.

104. Class sizes are not managed effectively and this affects the learning experience of some learners. A number of observed sessions had a very large or very small number of learners. This prevented effective learning for some participants. The amalgamation of groups that have covered different aspects of the curriculum confuses some learners. There are insufficient staff to meet the assessment requirements of the programme.

105. There are no systematic quality assurance systems or processes. Managers do not have an overview of the quality of the courses offered. There is no routine analysis or monitoring of key performance indicators, such as attendance, retention or achievement. Data are unreliable and managers rely on informal contact with learners and tutors to make judgements about the quality of programme delivery. Course performance is not monitored or evaluated and there is no mechanism to establish what quality improvement measures are needed. Observations of some tutors have taken place. However, these are not routine and some tutors have not been observed. The lesson observation scheme uses a number of different methods of recording. Not all lessons are graded, but all offer detailed written feedback. Lesson plans and schemes of work vary considerably in quality. There is no internal monitoring of these plans. Internal verification is not routinely planned. Managers do not review an agreed body of evidence before completing the annual self-assessment report. The self-assessment report for 2001-02 was not substantiated by inspection findings. Inspectors matched very few of the strengths and weaknesses in the report.

## Visual & performing arts & media

## Grade 3

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

### Strengths

- good retention and achievement
- good teaching and learning
- significant personal gains to learners
- wide range of programmes

### Weaknesses

- some inadequate resources
- insufficient recording of learners' progress
- inadequate planning
- weak quality assurance

### Achievement and standards

106. Retention is good on visual and performing arts programmes with a 92.8 per cent retention for 2001-02. This is a significant increase on the previous year. Learners achieve well on all programmes. They have a clear understanding of their learning goals and the skills they are developing. Learners develop good practical and technical skills across a wide range of subject areas. Classes are of mixed ability and learners all achieve at their personal levels. Learners use their new skills confidently and many continue to develop and extend their skills and interests as independent learners. In one watercolour painting class, several members of the group have joined a local art society and are successfully exhibiting and selling their work. Ballroom and line dancing learners practise their skills at weekend social activities. Egyptian belly dancing students perform at dance platforms organised by a local dance network.

### Quality of education and training

107. Teaching and learning are good in visual and performing arts. Many of the tutors are specialists or freelance artists in their subject areas and have appropriate professional qualifications. Of the 16 teaching sessions observed, 13 were good or better, 2 were satisfactory and one session was unsatisfactory. Tutors use a wide range of teaching styles appropriate to the level of learning. Tutors set tasks that are appropriate and challenging to develop learners' skills. They are enthusiastic about their subject areas and make learning enjoyable. Learners in most sessions are focused, engaged, and ask questions to clarify knowledge and technical points. Background knowledge and practice is integrated in many sessions. In some practical dance sessions, learners recall, recap and present previously learned material. They are also asked to observe, question,

and appraise the progress of their work. Learners feel supported by their individual tutor but access to information and advice mainly operates on a personal and informal level.

108. Learners gain significant personal benefit from the programmes. Learners value the courses and develop a wide range of additional skills including gains in self-confidence, interpersonal skills, working with others, and practising, researching, and reading about the subject area outside of the sessions. Many learners return on a regular basis and have been attending classes for many years. Learners are well motivated and often arrive early and take their homework seriously. Some are passionate about their learning and are setting personal development goals outside of the course sessions.

109. There is a wide range of subjects on offer. In the visual arts, there are numerous choices ranging from painting, pottery, photography and patchwork, and more unusual interests such as stump work and stick making. In the performing arts there is provision for interests in traditional and ethnic dance, social dancing, music playing, improvisation, instrument making and drama. Some popular courses, such as watercolour painting have waiting lists. Additional courses are provided in response to demand and to satisfy local interests.

110. There are some inadequate resources at a number of venues and this has been identified in the self-assessment report. For example, one photographic darkroom is in an unfinished state, electrical equipment has not been safety tested and only one enlarger was available for eight learners. In another building, an art and calligraphy class takes place in the science laboratory where the height of the tables and the seating is inappropriate. A woodwork workshop has a poor standard of equipment and this impacts on learners' work. There is no mirror for the dance sessions and some studios are untidy.

111. Learners' progress is not recorded effectively. Individual or group learning goals are recorded in very few cases and there is no consistent framework in place to record and monitor learners' progress. In a few sessions, the group's progress is incorporated into the schemes of work and lesson plans but there is little record of individual learning needs. There are many examples of no records being kept at all.

## **Leadership and management**

112. Course direction and planning is inadequate. Learners do not all have a good induction. Some have very little knowledge of wider provision or their individual rights. There is little formal planning of learning to meet the different learning needs of mixed-ability groups. However, some individual tutors are thorough in their course preparation and do plan effectively. Staff had little or no experience of meeting together to monitor and develop the programme area or share best practice.

113. The quality assurance systems are weak. There is a programme of lesson observations but to date only half of the tutors have been observed. Feedback to staff is not detailed or clear. Some lesson plans and schemes of work are poor and many are insufficiently detailed and structured. They are often merely a summary list of the weekly

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activities. There is no system for ensuring learning goals are set and progress towards them is monitored. There is no established method of meeting tutors' training needs. Many tutors, although professionally qualified, do not have an appropriate teaching qualification. Locally, managers offer a good personal level of contact and informal support for their tutors, but there is a lack of co-ordination across the borough.



**English, languages & communications****Grade 4**

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good personal and social gains for retained learners
- good development of practical language skills
- some good accommodation for foreign language lessons

**Weaknesses**

- inadequate publicity and guidance
- low retention rates
- inadequate curriculum management

**Achievement and standards**

114. Modern foreign language learners who remain on courses achieve well. Almost all of these learners attain at least satisfactory levels of competence in the fundamental skills of language learning, speaking, listening, reading and writing. They also make more personal gains. They gain in confidence with their success, use their new skills when they travel abroad and enjoy attending the lessons. For example, a learner on a Spanish course has already noticed that he is now better able to make himself understood when he visits Spain. Learners in an Italian class at level 2 make full use of independent study skills to develop their competence between lessons. Many learners join courses as complete beginners and gain more than they expected from the courses.

115. Retention is low. For example, on non-accredited courses in 2000-01, the provider calculates that the retention rate was 76.9 per cent. The figure was 53.5 per cent in 2001-02. One French course with a business studies element has retained four of its 15 enrolled learners. The course's published description makes no mention of the business element.

**Quality of education and training**

116. Most tutors provide a good balance of the language skills of speaking, listening, reading and writing. Some teachers use too much English in lessons, but all ensure that learners are used to listening to the foreign language itself. They provide good opportunities for learners to use it authentically and in role-play. Revision sessions for assessment activities are appropriately paced and demanding. Learners who are able to deal with more advanced grammatical constructions and questions are given them, always in the context of skills development. Listening and reading comprehension are well taught, often using authentic materials.

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117. There is some good accommodation for modern foreign languages. Many lessons take place in the modern languages classrooms of secondary schools. These often provide stimulating learning environments with good acoustics. One room commonly used for foreign language teaching in an adult education centre is of excellent quality and design.

118. Learners have access to a satisfactory range of resources in lessons. Many tutors are native speakers of the language they teach. Tutors for whom the taught language is foreign speak it to native or near-native standards. Tutors use suitable textbooks and other written or visual material. Some make good use of overhead projectors, audio cassettes and CDs, flash cards or commercially produced games such as the Greek version of 'Scrabble' observed in one lesson. There is no use of ICT or video technology in teaching.

119. Continuous assessment practices are satisfactory. Tutors assess and record learners' work and progress in different ways, although most adopt criteria related to accreditation goals when teaching accredited courses. Some also record marks gained for work. Written work is helpfully marked and assessed and learners are made aware of what they can do to improve the standard of their work. Tutors comment constructively on learners' achievements and progress during lessons. There are no arrangements for managers to routinely monitor learners' progress or teachers' assessments.

120. Publicity and guidance are inadequate. Course descriptions in prospectuses often do not give enough information about the content and demands of courses. They do not always make clear how one course differs from another, particularly at the more basic stages of learning. Nor do they always explain similarities between courses in the same language or those designed to meet similar learning objectives in different languages. Course descriptions issued to learners on enrolment often share the same deficiencies. There is little pre-course guidance for potential learners, although language teachers are sometimes available. There is no systematic initial assessment, although many tutors do establish individuals' learning goals at the beginning of the course.

### **Leadership and management**

121. Curriculum management is inadequate. Satisfactory rates of retention have not been achieved. Potentially useful management information data, such as those concerning achievement, are unreliable. Other management information, such as lists of tutors' qualifications, is sometimes incomplete and difficult to interpret. Quality assurance is ineffective and inconsistently applied. For example, reports from managers' observations of lessons do not always concentrate enough on the specific needs of foreign language teaching and learning. Tutors are required to produce schemes of work, but the quality of what they produce is not routinely monitored. Some tutors produce useful and detailed documents. Others do not, for there is no shared understanding of the purposes or desired content of schemes of work. There have been no professional development activities specific to modern foreign languages since November 2002. Fractional posts have been created to provide some specialist subject

management expertise, but these have yet to have much impact on the quality of learning despite the enthusiasm of those appointed.

## Foundation programmes

## Grade 3

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

### Strengths

- good retention on non-accredited programmes
- good partnerships to widen participation
- good additional support for learners
- very effective initial assessment and target-setting for most learners
- highly responsive co-ordinators

### Weaknesses

- weak quality assurance
- weak strategic planning

## Achievement and standards

122. Retention on non-accredited basic skills and ESOL programmes is good and improving. In 2001-02, 87 per cent of learners remained on their programme and in 2002-03 this increased to 91 per cent. Non-accredited provision accounts for just under a third of the basic skills and ESOL provision. Retention across all programmes is satisfactory and also shows an increasing trend from 74 per cent in 2001-02 to 76 per cent in 2002-03.

123. Achievement is satisfactory. Learners are told about certificates they may wish to gain but there is no pressure for learners to gain qualifications. Achievement on non-accredited learning is based on the successful completion of the learning goals recorded on an individual's learning plan. Data for the number of learners achieving accreditation are unreliable. There is evidence from staff to indicate that the number of learners achieving accreditation has increased during 2003-04, with more learners taking the national tests in literacy and numeracy at level 1 and 2.

124. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory. Work contained in learners' files is generally appropriate to meet their needs, although in a small number of classes, the work produced is at an inappropriate level. The standard of portfolios of accredited work is good.

## Quality of education and training

125. There is a wide range of partnerships which encourage learners from a broad range of groups and communities to participate in learning. There are good links with a range of organisations including libraries, schools, companies and voluntary organisations.

Different groups of learners are attracted to different locations and types of provision. For example, courses are set up in the workplace for employees, and individuals with mental health issues can attend courses in centres where they feel comfortable and confident. Partners find co-ordinators helpful, constructive and very willing to support them, including providing help with setting up courses, advice on curriculum and providing resources.

126. Support for learners is good. Nearly 68 per cent of daytime classes aimed at attracting parents into learning have a crèche. Most parents would not be able to attend if childcare was not available. Tutors are very sensitive to the needs of individual learners. For example, care is taken in the preparation of materials, such as enlarging fonts on worksheets for learners who have difficulties reading regular size print. Tutors adopt a particularly sensitive approach when working with learners with mental health issues. Volunteers and classroom assistants help learners to fully participate alongside other learners in many classes.

127. Initial assessment and target-setting are very effective for most learners. Staff sensitively assess all learners either before or at the beginning of the course to identify the starting point for learning. All learners attempt a nationally standardised literacy and numeracy test. In addition, ESOL learners are assessed for their abilities in speaking and listening through a series of appropriate activities developed by staff. However, some staff, who are not appropriately qualified, carry out some initial assessments. Most staff are very sensitive to learners' confidence at this stage and adapt their approach to take this into account. The information gathered from the tests is used effectively to develop a plan of learning for each learner. Individual learning plans clearly identify the targets to be achieved. All targets are linked to the appropriate adult core curriculum and are reviewed with each learner, normally towards the end of every term for school and community college-based courses.

128. Co-ordinators respond well to the needs of learners, staff and external agencies. Managers are helpful and respond quickly to tutors' questions and requests for help. There are many staff development opportunities. Communication between staff is good. External agencies like working with the central co-ordinator team and find the team members helpful, constructive and ready to listen to new ideas.

129. Teaching and learning resources are satisfactory. Most rooms are suitable for adults to work, although some are cramped and some portable whiteboards are too small. In one classroom, learners are disrupted by noise from a group in the next room. Equipment such as laptop computers and tape recorders are of a good standard. Most handouts are satisfactory or better. However, there are some which are designed to be used with children and are inappropriate for use with adults. There is some inappropriate use of English as a Foreign Language materials to teach English. A small number of tutors find it difficult to get to the resource base and others are not always sufficiently aware of how to obtain appropriate teaching and learning equipment and material.

130. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Most teachers have appropriate

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qualifications and many use a range of teaching styles and varied resources to stimulate learners and consolidate learning. Some teaching is good or very good. However, in some classes, teachers present tasks which are too difficult for learners to achieve, they rely on handouts to teach and check learning, and do not treat learners as adults.

### **Leadership and management**

131. The arrangements for quality assurance are weak. Learners have no recollection of induction and are not aware of their rights and responsibilities. Observations of teaching take place. However, there is no system to identify who should be observed and when. Some observations are completed by staff without specific expertise in the subject area or by staff who have no expertise in the teaching of adults. There is no moderation system in place to assure the quality of non-accredited learning.

132. There is very little accessible and accurate information to help plan and target provision. Co-ordinators frequently have to compile data manually to obtain information about the provision as a whole, such as on learners who have successfully achieved certificates. Co-ordinators are quick to respond to identified needs, but the information they have is not clearly linked to strategic priorities.

## Family learning

## Grade 2

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

### Strengths

- good teaching and learning
- effective partnerships to attract new learners
- good support and guidance
- good achievement of personal goals
- very effective local management

### Weaknesses

- some restricted accommodation

## Achievement and standards

133. Retention on family learning programmes is good at 92 per cent for the year 2002-03. Learners make good progress in achieving group learning goals and personal objectives and these are recorded in individual learning plans. Learners gain self-confidence and effectively use their new skills in their daily lives. For example, using everyday activities to develop children's literacy skills. Learners have established their own parenting and support networks after leaving the course. Programmes enable learners to gain positive experiences of education. For some learners this is their first experience of learning since leaving formal education. The courses also effectively enable learners to identify further learning and encourage progression. For example, one learner progressed to an ICT course and now supervises an open learning session at a local learning centre. Parents who join the programmes become more involved in school activities and have greater confidence helping and understanding their children's learning.

## Quality of education and training

134. Teaching and learning are good. Of the seven observed sessions, all were graded as good or very good. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives linked to their individual learning plan and matching the needs of learners. Family learning tutors and schoolteachers ensure the learning needs of parents and children are recognised. Tutors continually check learning and adjust teaching methods to meet and challenge learners' needs effectively. Learners are continually assessed and are encouraged to reflect on their own and their child's learning. Individual learning plans are carefully planned with clear aims to meet the diverse range of learners. On all courses, individual learning plans are clear and achievable and learners are set realistic goals. Family learning workers and tutors are sensitive to the learning needs of under-represented groups in their

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communities and feedback from learners is used in planning the curriculum.

135. There are good partnerships that assist in widening participation. The family learning team has established productive partnerships with schools and a range of external organisations that are effective in recruiting under-represented learners. Good communication between partners enables the family learning team to communicate effectively with specific groups of isolated or otherwise socially excluded learners. Local schools and community groups provide useful feedback to the team and this is used in planning future courses. The partners jointly monitor provision across the LEA and identify gaps in the existing provision.

136. There is good guidance and support. Learners are clear about the aims of their learning programme and are well supported by family learning workers and tutors to achieve their goals. There are good crèches at all of the centres and these enable learners to access courses. Learners are given appropriate advice and guidance on the wide range of support available to help them attend their courses. Support offered by tutors is sensitive to the individual needs of learners and additional individual support is provided if necessary. Support workers are available and learners have access to specialist advice and guidance. For instance, on most courses a specialist careers adviser is available to give advice on progression to learners who have nearly completed the course. Additional literacy and numeracy support is good. Effective initial assessment identifies those learners who require support and this is included in their learning programme. Learners gain wider benefits from this support which has, for example, given one learner the confidence to read with her child for the first time.

137. There is some restricted accommodation. Some family learning rooms are small and shared with the crèche facilities. In some observed cases, the noise from the crèche distracted from the learning process. Family learning courses are very popular and some centres have waiting lists. For some courses, the restrictions on accommodation inhibit further expansion to meet demand.

### **Leadership and management**

138. The local management of family learning is very effective. Managers are quick to identify and respond to the learning needs of the community and to develop learning programmes and progression programmes. Managers have a clear strategy for the future of family learning and this contributes to curriculum planning. There are effective staff development opportunities and there is good support for tutors. Communications with staff are good. There are regular meetings and a formal system of staff appraisal for staff employed for more than half the week. Staff are qualified and new tutors are required to gain the necessary teaching qualification for their area of learning. Managers visit and monitor tutors regularly. At the local level, quality assurance systems are good. Course files are regularly monitored and updated. Tutors and learners contribute to the end of course reviews and the results of these are shared with the rest of the team.