

INSPECTION REPORT

North Yorkshire 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

North Yorkshire LEA

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. North Yorkshire County Council (the council) provides learning opportunities on accredited and non-accredited programmes through the local education authority's (LEA's) continuing education unit. There are 29 community education districts in North Yorkshire and 258 adult and community learning locations, including primary and secondary schools, further education colleges, village halls, community centres, working men's clubs, women's refuges, libraries, and public houses. There is mobile information technology (IT) provision through the use of 'Discovery Buses'.
2. The main strategic objectives for the adult and community learning service are raising standards and the promotion of basic skills, widening the participation of learners from under-represented groups, family learning, citizenship and community capacity-building, IT skills at all levels, modern foreign languages as part of the national languages strategy, and social inclusion. A team of six senior managers, including the head of continuing education, manages the strategic development of the service. One education officer leads the development of adult and community learning, while the other four support the 29 district managers in both their adult and youth provision. The district managers are responsible for planning the curriculum, quality assurance, and budgetary management, and for ensuring that the programmes meet local needs. The majority of teaching staff are employed on hourly paid contracts, with most working six hours or less each week. The continuing education unit's role is more strategic than operational. Much of the existing provision has been built on strong partnerships with schools and colleges, which are in the best position to respond swiftly to identified local needs. Most provision is administered through 26 secondary schools and three further education colleges, in accordance with a formal memorandum of agreement.
3. The provider receives most of its funding from North Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Of the provider's annual budget of £5.2 million, approximately 70 per cent comes from the local LSC. The LSC funding includes allocations for family learning, literacy and numeracy, and standards funding. The LEA uses other sources of funding, such as the European Social Fund (ESF), UK online, and the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB), to support a number of community learning initiatives.
4. North Yorkshire is England's largest county and is mainly rural but includes the large towns of Harrogate and Scarborough, and a number of market towns. According to the 2001 census, the adult population is approximately 570,000 people, of whom just over 1 per cent are from a minority ethnic group. In 2001-02, there were 20,837 adult learners in North Yorkshire, of whom just below 1,000 were on basic skills courses, over 6,000 were aged 60 and over, and about 700 had learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Approximately 75 per cent of all learners are women.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Information & communications technology

5. In 2002-03, there are 3,195 enrolments on the 395 information and communications (ICT) courses throughout North Yorkshire. Accredited courses last from 10 to 30 weeks. These are mainly basic computer literacy and information technology courses, but there are some more advanced courses and Internet programmes. Non-accredited courses are shorter and cover basic computing and introduction to IT. Training sessions are run in colleges, schools and community centres, including rural village halls. In addition, the LEA offers taster sessions in a variety of alternative ways. Learners are of all ages, but most are women aged over 50.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

6. In 2002-03, there are 4,487 enrolments and 1,067 learners on 75 courses, 71 of which are sport, exercise, and recreation courses, such as yoga, keep fit, pilates, martial arts, badminton and swimming. The four courses in catering and hospitality are sugar craft, wine appreciation, and two cookery classes. Most of this programme is non-accredited provision, with only 3 per cent of learners enrolling on accredited courses. Most courses are open to all adults, but some are specifically for men, women, or older learners. There are some short taster sessions but most courses last 10 weeks and some of them are repeated three times in a year. Classes take place throughout the day and evening in locations across North Yorkshire. Three per cent of learners are registered disabled, 84 per cent are women, and 32 per cent are aged over 60.

Visual & performing arts & media

7. Visual and performing arts and media courses are one of the largest programmes of adult and community learning in the county. In 2002-03, there are 4,107 enrolments for 102 courses, such as painting and drawing, watercolours, life drawing, photography, pottery, sculpture, stained glass, upholstery, soft furnishings, dressmaking, needlecraft, instrumental tuition, singing, rock and roll, salsa, and Egyptian belly dancing. Some courses are available at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels, with 8 per cent leading to accredited qualifications. Courses take place in a variety of local learning centres, including village and parish halls, community centres and libraries, some of which are in rural and remote parts of the county. There are an equal number of courses available in the day and evening. Courses last from one day to 30 weeks and most sessions are two hours long. Seventy-five per cent of learners are women.

English, languages & communications

8. The council offers courses in French, Italian, Portuguese, Russian, German, Greek, Spanish, and British Sign Language in all districts in the county. In 2002-03, there are 1,953 enrolments and 1,523 learners. Courses last from 10 to 30 weeks and lessons usually take place for two hours each week. Courses are available for absolute beginners to more advanced learners and are generally aimed at a specific level of ability, apart from a few conversation classes. Classes are held at local schools, colleges and venues in the local community and most of them take place in the evening, with a few daytime classes. The programmes are taught by sessionally paid tutors.

Foundation programmes

9. In 2002-03, there are 1,596 enrolments and 1,098 learners on foundation programmes. There are 49 courses for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, including art, photography, Life Skills, ICT, learning about work, arts and crafts, personal development, music, dance, cookery and food preparation, and communication through sound. The average class size is nine learners, with an average attendance of eight. Some courses cover modules leading to an accredited award but most are non-accredited. Courses last from 10 to 30 weeks and take place during the day and in the evening at a wide variety of community venues, such as day centres, community education centres, schools, church halls, social centres and voluntary body premises.

10. There are 29 basic skills courses, which cover communication skills, numeracy and English language. Most courses last for two hours and, although they follow school and college terms, learners can enrol at any time during a term. Learners are aged from 18 to 60 and over. Learners can gain accreditation from the West and North Yorkshire Open College Network. Basic skills co-ordinators provide additional specialist teaching.

Community learning

11. In 2002-03, there are 860 enrolments and 847 learners on community learning programmes. There are 17 courses in 'Family Learning', 10 of which are externally accredited courses in music, theatre, drama, art, and dance for young people with physical disabilities or sensory impairment. These courses are taught by local primary school teachers. There are also six, six-week courses designed to enable parents to keep up with what their children learn in school, and one 'Family Literacy' course leading to an externally accredited literacy award. All courses are free of charge and take place on school premises or nearby community learning centres throughout the county. Learners attend for one session a week for between one and two hours. Most courses run during the day in term time, but three of them take place in the evenings. There are crèche facilities for all courses. A family learning development manager and 11 tutors run the courses, in partnership with local schools.

12. There is a wide variety of community learning programmes and many of these help learners to develop their IT skills. Part of the provision takes place on three IT 'Discovery Buses', which are mobile computer facilities that visit Ryedale, Eskdale and Richmondshire every day. There are 15 'Locals Online' programmes in public houses, which mainly offer non-accredited introductory programmes in IT. The 'Reclaim Life' project offers learning support to women in refuges, which the inspectors could not visit due to the sensitive nature of this work. The 'Real IT' project supports the development of IT skills for 26 small businesses in the Richmondshire District Council area. There are advice and guidance workers deployed across the county.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	19
Number of inspection days	107
Number of learner interviews	728
Number of staff interviews	214
Number of employer interviews	2
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	108
Number of partner/external agency interviews	1

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

13. The quality of provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Leadership and management, including equal opportunities and quality assurance, are satisfactory. The provision in visual and performing arts and media, and community learning, is good. The provision is satisfactory in ICT, hospitality, sport and leisure, English, languages and communications and foundation programmes.

GRADES

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

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

Areas of learning	Grade
Information & communications technology	3
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	3
Visual & performing arts & media	2
English, languages & communications	3
Foundation programmes	3
Community learning	2

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

14. Most learners entering for accredited exams achieve high pass rates in ICT, hospitality, sport and leisure programmes, and languages. Many learners use their achievements to improve their employment prospects and some progress to higher education. **Almost all learners on non-accredited courses achieve their personal learning goals.** The standard of learners' practical work is generally good and in visual and performing arts and media courses, many learners improve their visual awareness. In all classes, learners' confidence and self-esteem improve, and their involvement in the courses has a positive and motivational effect upon their personal lives.

15. **Most learners on foundation programmes make good progress and improve their knowledge and understanding.** Learners are positive about the skills they gain and the progress they make towards their personal goals. Learners on language courses achieve a good standard of oral skills and understand tutors speaking or signing in the target language, with no adjustment for speed. Learners are able to use the language studied to book hotels, speak to foreign tourists, or sign to the deaf community. Learners on the 'Locals Online' and the 'Real IT' programmes achieve a good standard of ICT skills. Learners enjoy learning and meeting new friends. Retention and attendance rates in most areas are satisfactory, although they are low in languages.

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	9	4	1	0	0	20
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	2	14	2	0	0	0	18
Visual & performing arts & media	0	3	13	5	0	0	0	21
English, languages & communications	0	4	7	6	1	1	0	19
Foundation programmes	0	5	10	3	2	0	0	20
Community learning	0	3	6	7	0	0	0	16
Total	0	23	59	27	4	1	0	114
per cent	71.93%			23.68%	4.39%			

16. **There is a lot of good teaching and 72 per cent of lessons are good or better.** Very few lessons are unsatisfactory. Tutors are enthusiastic, knowledgeable, and employ a good range of teaching skills. Tutors effectively use good-quality handouts and questioning techniques. Most learners gain new skills, broaden their knowledge, and grow in confidence.

17. In ICT, the styles and pace of teaching are appropriate to the learners' needs. There is a sense of shared responsibility for learning. In sports classes, there are good learning outcomes, including the acquisition of knowledge, technical skills, and improved fitness.

18. Visual and performing arts learners work independently and value the sharing of work and ideas. Many painting classes conclude with effective and constructive group criticisms, and tutors arrange trips to galleries and exhibitions to broaden the learners' experience. In foundation programmes, teachers know individual learners' abilities and adapt materials to meet their different needs. Tutors encourage learners to find solutions for themselves.

19. In community learning, the 'Reclaim Life' and 'Real IT' projects encourage self-directed learning by using modular programmes supported by learning manuals. 'Family Learning' programmes make good use of clear and appropriate forms for self-assessment and target-setting.

20. Tutors carry out language lessons primarily in the target language, which leads to well-developed listening, speaking, and signing skills. In the weaker language lessons, some learners are set work beyond their ability and lose interest in the task. Sometimes, the tutors' overuse of English and translation makes it difficult for the learners to practise the target language.

21. The quality of the teaching rooms and the specialist resources are satisfactory in all areas of learning. Most venues are accessible for learners with restricted mobility. Signage indicating the location of classes is inadequate in some learning centres. Staff

are generally well qualified and maintain occupational qualifications through regular refresher courses. In ICT, some venues have good, up-to-date hardware and software, including data projectors, although a few locations have inappropriate furniture. In hospitality, sport and leisure, facilities and equipment are generally of an appropriate standard and meet health and safety requirements. The lighting and ambient noise levels are not always conducive to the relaxation aspect of yoga. In visual and performing arts and media, most learning centres provide essential equipment and access, but the lack of storage space restricts the scope and scale of what is achievable. Many of the tutors provide a large amount of the specialist learning materials and equipment themselves.

22. Accommodation for languages classes is well maintained. However, in schools, the specialist languages rooms are not used sufficiently and tutors are unable to borrow a sufficiently wide range of learning resources. There are not enough qualified tutors to cover staff absences in sign language. There are loop systems installed for deaf learners in some venues and enlarged computer screens for visually impaired learners. In foundation programmes, the access to teaching rooms and toilet facilities is appropriate for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

23. Accommodation for community learning is suitable and comfortable. Teachers use authentic learning resources and have good access to audio-visual and IT equipment at all venues. Learners use digital cameras to capture scenes of interactive achievement, which are otherwise difficult to record as evidence. Small computer suites with the latest technology have been set up in public houses and digital media learning facilities are available on the three 'Discovery Buses'.

24. The arrangements to assess the learners' needs before they join courses are ineffective in most areas of learning. There is insufficient formal assessment of learners' previous skills and knowledge to ensure that they are on the most appropriate courses. The information that is recorded on individual learning plans is frequently a list of topics, rather than specific targets that are related to the needs of individual learners.

25. In ICT there is no routine assessment of basic skills needs, although in a few learning centres basic skills tutors work alongside subject tutors.

26. In hospitality, sport and leisure, tutors have a good knowledge of learners' abilities and give them regular feedback. However, there is very little planned formal assessment and recording of individual learners' progress.

27. In visual and performing arts and media, most tutors give good verbal feedback on learners' work, but little is recorded and they do not use individual learning plans to adequately plan and record learners' progress.

28. In languages, there is no initial assessment to develop an appropriate individual learning plan. Most tutors informally identify learning targets for learners, but they do not monitor or record progress on non-accredited courses.

29. In foundation programmes, there is weak initial assessment of the existing skills and

competence of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. Reviews of learners' progress and achievements are ineffective. In community learning, there is ineffective recording of learners' progress and individual learning plans are not maintained.

30. The range of courses and subjects is satisfactory in all areas of learning, apart from hospitality, sport and leisure, where it is insufficient. Courses, including summer tasters, are available throughout the year during the day and evening in a wide variety of local venues, mainly during the school term. In some subjects, learners repeat classes annually and this blocks access for new learners. Recruitment to courses is generally effective and is mainly through open events, word of mouth, and a range of printed brochures and fliers. Some districts carry out formal market research to identify what learners would like. In community learning, there are effective strategies to widen the participation of non-traditional learners in hard-to-reach geographical locations.

31. There is a good range of subjects in visual and performing arts and media, although most classes are held in the evening. In sports, there are insufficient courses for men and younger adults. In visual and performing arts and media, and languages, there are good opportunities for progression from beginner through to advanced levels. The variety of courses for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities includes options for progression. Basic skills courses are responsive to the needs of individual learners and local demand.

32. Tutors provide learners with levels of support that range from satisfactory to good. Despite ineffective initial assessment systems, tutors generally know their learners well and make good efforts to support their individual needs. In some areas of learning, the course descriptions, and their level and entry requirements, are insufficiently detailed or informative.

33. Attendance is monitored satisfactorily and reasons for non-attendance are often known. Good tutorial support is offered to learners in ICT and community learning. Family and community learning tutors are sensitive to the specific needs of learners, many of whom are first-time adult learners. There is good crèche support for learners on family learning programmes.

34. Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities receive adequate levels of personal support during teaching sessions. Literacy and numeracy support is not well developed outside of the specialist provision that is offered. In community and family learning there is insufficient information for learners about progression opportunities.

Leadership and management

35. **The LEA has a strong management team with good links to other agencies.** There is a clearly expressed strategy for the development of the service, supported by priorities which include extending the provision for hard-to-reach priority groups. Regular meetings within the local learning partnership effectively identify community needs, and help to establish community projects. Staff development is effective.

36. Management information is satisfactory, although there are some gaps. There is weak management of the programme in some areas. Some tutors have insufficient understanding of the management structure and of their responsibilities to follow procedures. There are too few tutors' meetings and insufficient sharing of practice. Some staff do not have sufficient information about programmes. Insufficient use of initial assessment and individual learning plans results in missed opportunities to identify additional learning needs. Enrolment forms are not adequate to identify additional learning needs at the start of the programme.

37. Measures to widen participation are effective and given priority. District managers make good use of flexible fee policies, class sizes, and the hardship fund, to meet the needs of local learners. Service action plans reflect national and local priorities. There are extensive networks, involving more than 57 external agencies, to identify and target under-represented groups. Managers and tutors demonstrate a high level of commitment to the education and welfare of individuals and groups.

38. The resources available at most learning centres are satisfactory. Data on equality of opportunity are collected but there is scope for more detailed analysis. Most learners do not receive sufficient information on equal opportunities. Most learners' handbooks and information packs do not explain their rights and responsibilities, complaints and grievance procedures, or the additional support available. Not all tutors are sufficiently aware of equality of opportunity, and training is insufficient. The quality of course information is not always good and in some areas learners receive insufficient advice on progression opportunities. There is little monitoring of the suitability of promotional materials.

39. **Measures to improve the quality of teaching and learning are good.** A successful approach using an independent observer to observe teaching and learning practice in one district is being extended across the county. In one area of learning, district managers and basic skills development co-ordinators meet tutors regularly to discuss outcomes of self-assessment, programmes, learners' progress, and staff training needs.

40. The inspectors' findings matched many of the judgements in the organisation's self-assessment report. Development plans to meet the needs of each district are compiled. The quality of provision is insufficiently monitored. There is inconsistent use and completion of relevant documents across areas and districts, and within districts, including individual learning plans, reviews of learners' progress, lesson plans, and schemes of work. Local districts often use their own documents. Feedback is gathered from learners in a variety of ways and urgent problems are usually resolved locally. There is little in-depth analysis of the findings.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- strong strategic direction

NORTH YORKSHIRE LEA

- good staff development
- effective initiatives for widening participation
- good measures to improve teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- weak programme management in some areas
- insufficient promotion of equal opportunities to learners
- inadequate arrangements for monitoring the quality of provision

Information & communications technology

Strengths

- good achievement of personal learning goals
- good teaching and learning
- good additional support for learners

Weaknesses

- inadequate initial assessment of IT skills
- insufficient monitoring and recording of learners' progress
- ineffective curriculum co-ordination and sharing of good practice

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Strengths

- very good achievement on accredited courses
- good skills and personal development displayed by learners
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient range of courses
- weak strategy to recruit new learners

Visual & performing arts & media

Strengths

- good standard of learners' practical work
- good teaching and learning
- significant personal enrichment for learners
- extensive range of provision across a wide rural area

Weaknesses

- poor initial assessment and recording of learners' progress
- inadequate quality assurance

English, languages & communications

Strengths

- good achievement rates for learners on accredited programmes
- good standard of learners' work
- good development of personal and independent learning skills
- lively and stimulating teaching methods

Weaknesses

- some poor retention and attendance rates
- insufficient formal recording of assessments
- insufficiently detailed course information
- insufficient co-ordination of the languages curriculum

Foundation programmes

Strengths

- good levels of personal achievement
- good teaching and learning
- effective measures to widen participation in basic skills

Weaknesses

- weak initial assessment for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities
- ineffective short-term target-setting for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities
- ineffective reviews of learners' progress and achievement

Community learning

Strengths

- good standard of learners' work
- effective use of learner-centred teaching
- good learning resources
- innovative methods of widening participation

Weaknesses

- ineffective monitoring and recording of individual progress in some community programmes
- insufficient information for learners on progression opportunities
- insufficient monitoring of the quality of the provision

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT NORTH YORKSHIRE LEA:

- supportive tutors who encourage them to grow in confidence and succeed
- the courses are available at times and in venues that suit their individual needs
- opportunities to meet socially in a friendly environment
- relevant learning that can be applied at home and at work
- the range of accessible venues close to home
- enthusiastic and knowledgeable tutors

WHAT LEARNERS THINK NORTH YORKSHIRE LEA COULD IMPROVE:

- the quality and availability of information on courses and progression opportunities
- the availability of courses outside of school terms and at different times of the year
- the range of courses at more advanced levels and those targeted at men
- external lighting and signage in some community learning centres
- closer parking facilities for learners who need to carry heavy equipment
- the length of sessions for practical activities - these are often too short to allow learners to set up and clear away

KEY CHALLENGES FOR NORTH YORKSHIRE LEA:

- identify and assess learners' needs at the start of their course and ensure that these needs are met for all learners
- improve the monitoring and recording of learners' progress and achievement so that they are fully aware of how well they are doing
- share good teaching practice and learning materials within areas of learning and throughout the county
- strengthen measures to assure the quality of learning
- make better use of data to plan improvements to the provision
- strengthen co-ordination of the curriculum across districts

Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

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

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

Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

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

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

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- strong strategic direction
- good staff development
- effective initiatives for widening participation
- good measures to improve teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- weak programme management in some areas
- insufficient promotion of equal opportunities to learners
- inadequate arrangements for monitoring the quality of provision

41. The council's strategic direction and priorities are expressed clearly and well understood by staff and stakeholders. Regular meetings enable managers to assess how effectively they are meeting the LEA's aims and objectives and to plan for improvements. The outcomes of these meetings are well documented and shared with district managers. District committees and governing bodies are effective in identifying and supporting local needs, and district development plans are subject to approval from these groups. Action plans to deal with concerns are effective and the responsibilities for ensuring implementation of these plans are stated clearly. Area managers work closely with district managers to ensure that information is disseminated across the county and this is generally effective.

42. The LEA works productively with the local learning partnerships and a range of other statutory and voluntary agencies. It discusses concerns and actions needed to meet local needs thoroughly and responds to requests promptly. The LEA makes good use of its resources to reach out to the wider community, particularly in isolated rural areas. With the funds that they are delegated, district managers are able to allocate additional funding to where it is needed and closely monitor their resources.

43. All staff are well informed about training opportunities and this has had a positive impact on staff development. Staff development is good and well planned, and staff attendance at training events is good. The training is relevant and enables staff to develop appropriate personal, managerial and teaching skills. The LEA formally records staff attendance and achievement, and retains this information on a central database, which it uses effectively to monitor the number of staff who start training and to identify further training needs. The effectiveness of enrolment procedures for in-service training was identified as a weakness in the organisation's most recent self-assessment report, which was produced in March 2003 and related to 2001-02.

44. The quality of the management information held centrally is satisfactory. It satisfactorily meets the needs of funding bodies and other external requirements, but the LEA recognises that it does not update this information fast enough.

45. Programme management is weak in some areas. Although all tutors have a tutors' handbook, some express difficulty in understanding the overall management structure of the LEA, and some do not have enough information about how the programmes are managed. The LEA does not include part-time tutors in the appraisal system, although using tutors' observations as a basis for appraisal is proving to be satisfactory. There are too few tutors' meetings, which limits the opportunities for tutors to share good practice. The LEA makes insufficient use of initial assessments and individual learning plans to identify additional learning needs. Enrolment forms are not adequate to identify additional learning needs at the start of the learning programmes.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

46. Measures to widen the participation of learners from under-represented groups are successful. District managers have their own budgets and are able to make decisions on course fees, fee remission, the size of classes, and the use of the hardship fund, in response to local needs. For example, in isolated rural areas, some classes remain open with small numbers of learners and the LEA provides some taster courses free of charge to attract learners from under-represented groups. District managers can also bid for additional funding for local projects.

47. The community education service's action plans are developed from national and county priorities. Projects, managed at county level, cover specific priority areas, such as the highly successful 'Reclaim Life' project for women in refuges, and the IT 'Discovery Bus'. At county and district level, the LEA has established an extensive network of over 57 external agencies, in order to identify and target learners from under-represented groups. There are also informal links with representatives of minority groups, such as travellers and the Chinese community.

48. The adult and community provision has a strong culture of equality of opportunity. The comprehensive equal opportunities policy is updated regularly. Managers and tutors demonstrate a high level of effective commitment to the education and welfare of individuals and groups, and they provide this support with respect and sensitivity.

49. Most learning venues are appropriate and accessible, although the signage is insufficient or confusing in some. The accommodation is adequate for the subjects taught and there are appropriate resources, such as hearing loops and wide computer screens, for learners with specific additional learning needs.

50. Most learners do not receive sufficient information on equality of opportunity. There are no guidelines for including information on equal opportunities at learners' inductions. Where the LEA does provide learners with handbooks or information packs, many of these do not explain their rights and responsibilities, complaints and grievance

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procedures, or the additional support available. Some tutors are unfamiliar with the standard policies and procedures to support learners and the LEA provides tutors with insufficient training relating to equality of opportunity.

51. The LEA provides learners with insufficient course information, which is often of poor quality. Learners often join courses at the wrong level and retention in these subjects is poor. Some learners are not aware of the level or stage they are working to and some courses do not provide them with basic course information. Learners are not always given information on progression opportunities.

52. There is little monitoring of the suitability of promotional materials. In some cases, course lists use small print, educational jargon, and information which is difficult to understand. However, some leaflets promoting specific programmes use language which is clear and appropriate to the target group. The LEA distributes the leaflets in innovative ways, for example, by targeting specific postcodes.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

53. There are good measures to improve teaching and learning. The LEA has strengthened its observation process in the past two years. One local district contracted an independent observer to observe the teaching staff's teaching and learning practices. There is a pack of detailed guidance notes for the observation process, together with a section on planning arrangements of the observation process with the staff member. The independent observer continues to monitor newly trained staff. The council has provided funding for this development of staff training and plans to continue the process across the county. The LEA formally records staff attendance at the training sessions on a central database of training and development needs.

54. In one area of learning, district managers and basic skills development co-ordinators meet tutors regularly to discuss outcomes of self-assessment, learning programmes, learners' progress and staff training needs. Training for the development of skills and additional qualifications is available for those staff without the appropriate qualifications. In another area of learning, tutors feel reasonably well informed and have opportunities to provide their district managers with feedback on their areas of concern.

55. The LEA's most recent self-assessment report was produced in March 2003. A product of the cycle of continuous improvement is the further development of the teaching and learning observations of staff. The self-assessment process was completed for both accredited and non-accredited learning and involved senior managers throughout the organisation. Development plans for each district were compiled and the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report have been incorporated into these. Tutors and learners were not sufficiently involved in producing the self-assessment report.

56. The arrangements for monitoring the quality of the provision are inadequate. The internal audit to monitor the application of policies and the use of procedures across the county is not formally planned. Key features of quality assurance are omitted from the

recently introduced adult education staff guide, such as risk assessment procedures and the arrangements for the internal verification of accredited programmes. Risk assessments have taken place informally in districts using their own documents. There are no agreed standards for tutors to follow for internal verification.

57. There is inconsistent use and completion of relevant documents across areas and districts, and within districts, including individual learning plans, reviews of learners' progress, lesson plans, and schemes of work. Local districts use their own documents and these vary widely for collecting learners' feedback, which makes it difficult to make comparisons between the returns.

58. There are no formal opportunities for tutors to share good practice. In one area of learning, there is no facility for tutors to meet regularly with district managers to discuss a range of activities to suit the needs of learners with learning difficulties.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information & communications technology

Grade 3

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good achievement of personal learning goals
- good teaching and learning
- good additional support for learners

Weaknesses

- inadequate initial assessment of IT skills
- insufficient monitoring and recording of learners' progress
- ineffective curriculum co-ordination and sharing of good practice

Achievement and standards

59. In 2002-03, the pass rate for learners taking accredited qualifications is 97 per cent. Most learners start with a non-accredited course and progress to one that results in a qualification. Achievement on non-accredited courses is high, with almost all of the learners achieving their personal goals. Over 70 per cent of new entrants to the learning programmes have little or no previous IT knowledge or computer skills. After gaining basic computing skills, many learners take additional courses at the same level in the use of databases and spreadsheets or progress to a more advanced accredited course. Many learners improve their employment prospects or gain promotion at work, while others progress to higher education. Learners are well motivated to learn and to improve their understanding of computers and the Internet, in order to send emails or support a partner's business. Many of the learners who have attended courses for more than six months have acquired good skills. The overall retention rate is high at 89 per cent and attendance rates are satisfactory.

Quality of education and training

60. There is a lot of good teaching, with 75 per cent of lessons rated good or better and 20 per cent rated as satisfactory. Tutors are enthusiastic and knowledgeable, and use a good range of teaching skills, including whole-class teaching using a data projector and smart board for demonstrations. There is effective individual guided practice, with good-quality handouts and manuals. Tutors check learning through a range of well-prepared task-orientated exercises and good informal question and answer sessions in large and small groups. Tutors vary their teaching methods according to the type of learners in the group. The tutors and learners have an excellent working relationship and share the

responsibility for learning. Lessons are well structured and make good use of the available resources. Tutors set comprehensive homework assignments to consolidate learning and the learners gain new skills, broaden their knowledge, and become more confident using computers.

61. The tutors provide the learners with good personal support. Learners value the tutors' patience to repeat instructions and verbal encouragement and feedback throughout the sessions. Some tutors provide effective additional revision sessions in their own time for the learners on advanced programmes. In the past five years, there have not been any failures on one diploma course and two of the learners have achieved national awards. Learners frequently email the tutors to seek detailed advice and guidance and communicate with the whole class to arrange social activities. Tutors frequently give their mobile telephone numbers to support learners outside office hours.

62. The teaching rooms and the resources available are satisfactory across the provision. Some of the venues have good, up-to-date hardware and software, including data projectors, but at a few locations the chairs are not adjustable. The range of courses meets the needs of the local communities and during the past few years, the LEA has made a significant effort to provide courses within rural communities throughout North Yorkshire.

63. The arrangements to assess the learners' needs before they join courses are ineffective. There is little formal assessment of learners' previous skills and knowledge to ensure that they register for the most appropriate courses. Most tutors ask new learners about their previous experiences in the first lesson. Some learners who claim to have adequate skills for entry to courses have insufficient skills and knowledge and slow down the course. Others on basic computing courses have good text-processing and typing skills and make rapid progress, only to waste time waiting for the beginners to catch up. Tutors are aware of the need for accurate initial assessment and some of them are devising their own methods, but these are not tested thoroughly. There is no routine assessment of learners' basic skills needs. At one centre, the ICT teacher is also a basic skills tutor, at another, a basic skills tutor is engaged on the first evening along with the ICT teacher. Such practices are the exception.

64. Some learners on non-accredited courses do not have targets for achievement. Where there is target-setting, it is expressed in terms of what the whole group will aim to accomplish by the end of the course. Not all learners have an individual learning plan and some just have the long-term target entered. The quality of design of the learning plans and the information recorded vary widely. The learning plans are not reviewed and not all learners have a copy. On the non-accredited courses there is little recording of individual short-term targets or progress. There is no systematic monitoring in order to identify progress or areas for improvement. On most of the accredited courses, the tutor only records examination performance on an individually designed monitoring sheet. One of the districts is introducing a more comprehensive system for one of its programmes, but there is no evidence that this is shared with other centres that offer the same qualification.

Leadership and management

65. The co-ordination of the curriculum area is ineffective across the districts. This was identified as a weakness in the organisation's most recent self-assessment report. The arrangements for ensuring the quality of provision are inadequate. Many tutors have never been observed but the council has recently introduced a system of tutor observations. Learners' feedback is collected in most areas, but there are wide variations in the process for gathering this information and in the quality of the analysis. Lesson planning and the development of the schemes of work vary widely, from very good to non-existent. There are no agreed standards for tutors to follow, although recording procedures have recently been introduced. There are few opportunities for tutors to meet those involved in similar areas of delivery across districts and share good practice. There are ICT resources for learners with disabilities at area and district levels, but not all tutors are aware of this.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**Grade 3**

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- very good achievement on accredited courses
- good skills and personal development displayed by learners
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient range of courses
- weak strategy to recruit new learners

Achievement and standards

66. For learners on sport, catering, and hospitality programmes, there is very good achievement on accredited courses. In 2001-02, the achievement of the community sports leadership award and swimming teachers' certificate was 100 per cent. In the same period, there was 100 per cent achievement in cake decoration and 97 per cent achievement of the food hygiene certificate.

67. The standard of practical work achieved by many learners is good. Most learners who have attended courses for some time are now showing significant progress in developing skills and improved levels of knowledge and understanding. In sport and recreational classes the learners demonstrate good and improving levels of fitness, mobility, and physical co-ordination. In catering and hospitality, learners show good levels of competence and are developing their technical skills. In all classes, learners showed improvements in confidence and self-esteem, and their involvement in the courses is a positive and motivating factor in their personal lives.

Quality of education and training

68. Teaching is well planned, with most classes following schemes of work and lesson plans. The styles and pace of teaching are suitable for the learners and the subjects. A large number of the classes in this area of learning involve physical activity and the teachers have a good understanding of the learners' physical abilities. The age range of learners is broad, with some learners over 80 years old participating in yoga and keep-fit classes. The tutors and learners enjoy a good working relationship and there are good learning outcomes from the programmes, including the acquisition of knowledge, the development of technical skills, and improved fitness. There are opportunities to progress to higher levels within some subject areas. Many learners attend classes to gain specific skills or knowledge but also to relax or maintain personal health and fitness, or

work around physical difficulties, previous injuries, or medical conditions.

69. Most resources are satisfactory. Facilities and equipment are accessible to learners and are of an appropriate standard. Attention is given to ensure health and safety procedures are followed, including the wearing of appropriate footwear. In some instances, the lighting and ambient noise levels are not conducive to the relaxation aspect of the yoga classes. Staff are well qualified and maintain occupational qualifications through regular refresher courses.

70. Assessment practice and the monitoring of learners' progress are satisfactory. In most of the classes involving physical activity, the tutors give ongoing feedback to the learners. While they are aware of individual learners' capabilities, standards, and progression, there is limited planned formal assessment and recording of their progress. Some tutors ensure that learners complete a simple health questionnaire before starting physical activity classes, in order to identify potential risks or concerns. There is no formal initial fitness test or physical assessment for most courses, although learners are given some guidance on the suitability of activities.

71. Learners receive a satisfactory level of personal and learning support and guidance from staff, who show a genuine concern for their welfare and attempt to deal effectively with their individual concerns.

72. Recruitment for courses is generally effective and is mainly by word of mouth. In order to stimulate interest, some venues hold open days and evening events, which in some instances involve learners giving demonstrations. Also, a range of summer taster courses is offered in some areas of the provision. Appropriate information is given to learners about relevant courses that other providers offer.

73. There is an insufficient range of subjects and courses, most of which attract women and a significant number of older learners. There is insufficient provision for first-time adult learners and absolute beginners. In some instances, classes comprise learners who re-enrol each term and have been attending for several years. Some potential new learners have not been able to join courses due to places being taken by continuing learners.

74. There have been no successful initiatives to attract more men or younger learners into the programme. Most of the courses are yoga and keep-fit classes, which are almost entirely attended by women. The provider has not tackled this imbalance effectively.

Leadership and management

75. The management of the programme is satisfactory. Some progress has been made with partner organisations in improving the co-ordination and planning of the council's activities. The communication between the district managers and tutors is satisfactory. Tutors feel they are reasonably well informed and that they have the opportunity to give feedback on issues of concern. Tutors have insufficient opportunities to share ideas and good practice.

76. Courses take place in an environment that is welcoming and inclusive, and learners are treated with respect and dignity. The courses take place across the county and in locations convenient and accessible to the learners. Facilities are accessible for people with mobility difficulties. However, the gender and age profiles of the learners on the programme are not representative of the wider population. The council has limited strategies to develop new areas of the curriculum to remedy this situation.

77. The self-assessment process that is carried out across the county is not specific to occupational areas. However, the general issues highlighted in the self-assessment report were consistent with those identified by the inspectors. There is some monitoring of the quality of teaching, although not all tutors have been observed. Surveys of learners' opinions are carried out through the use of questionnaires, which indicate high levels of satisfaction with the quality of teaching. There is limited use made of responses from learners that may generate further improvements to the quality of provision. Internal verification procedures and practice for accredited courses meet the standards required by the external awarding bodies.

Visual & performing arts & media

Grade 2

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good standard of learners' practical work
- good teaching and learning
- significant personal enrichment for learners
- extensive range of provision across a wide rural area

Weaknesses

- poor initial assessment and recording of learners' progress
- inadequate quality assurance

Achievement and standards

78. The standard of learners' practical work is good. In several watercolour classes, learners exhibit their work annually in local galleries, libraries, and village halls. Professional mounting and framing often enhance learners' paintings and sense of achievement. Singers in a community choir sing unaccompanied, with confidence and good musicality. In individual and group discussions, learners express satisfaction in gaining more confidence in themselves and in their use of materials and techniques. Learners comment on the sense of fulfilment and achievement that the acquisition of new skills has brought them, through decorating their homes with their own project work in painting, drawing, soft furnishing, and upholstery. Several learners mentioned their increased sense of visual perception and awareness. Achievement rates on accredited programmes for those entering examinations are very high at 100 per cent.

Quality of education and training

79. Most teaching is good. Staff recognise the differing abilities of learners and plan lessons accordingly. In one painting class, the tutor organised different tasks appropriate to each learner's level of proficiency. The more able learners work on observational drawings in nearby locations, while beginners work on acquiring basic techniques. There is strong emphasis on the acquisition of basic principles in all courses. The pace of learning is appropriate to the learners' needs and tutors continuously encourage them to make further improvements.

80. All learners can work independently and there are many instances of informal collaborative learning. Many painting classes conclude with effective and constructive group criticisms. Tutors provide reference materials to support learning and sometimes arrange trips to galleries and exhibitions. Egyptian belly-dancing learners arrange many

extra-curricular activities, including educational holidays to Egypt and Turkey. Generally, tutors motivate and engage the learners but a minority of staff do not use schemes of work or plan lessons constructively. For example, one tutor insisted that learners made watercolour copies of the tutor's own work.

81. Courses are available throughout the year during the day and evening in a variety of local venues across a wide rural area. There is a wide range of subjects available throughout the county, including music, drama, dance, and two- and three-dimensional arts and crafts. Learners express high levels of satisfaction with the timings, location and breadth of provision, which meet their identified needs. In many subjects, there are opportunities to progress from beginner to advanced levels. In some subjects, learners repeat classes annually and block access for new learners.

82. Most accommodation is satisfactory. Facilities are better where classes are held at local schools and colleges, but most venues provide essential equipment and access. In most cases, there is access for learners with restricted mobility. Tutors are mainly well qualified and have subject or teaching qualifications, and several staff are current practitioners. At some venues, the lack of storage space restricts the scope and scale of what is achievable. In some centres, there are insufficient signs indicating the location of classes. Some tutors pay for life models themselves and often provide a large amount of the specialist materials and equipment.

83. Initial and on-course assessment is poor. Staff gather little information relating to learners' previous experiences and current ability. Individual learners' support needs are not identified consistently and individual learning plans are not used adequately to plan and record learners' progress. While most tutors provide learners with good verbal feedback, little is recorded and learners have no supporting evidence of their progress. On accredited programmes, tutors are not using the council's procedures for recording and monitoring learners' progress and achievement.

84. The quality of course information varies between the learning centres. Where the provider is a further education college, the standard of pre-course information is high. One art tutor provides the local office with copies of pre-course information, which enables the staff to provide potential learners with valuable information about the materials needed for their first class. In upholstery classes, pre-course material did not inform learners of the cost of purchasing the essential specialist tools needed if the learners wanted to continue to work on projects at home.

Leadership and management

85. There are insufficient opportunities for teachers to discuss planning of the curriculum. Learning centre managers do not monitor sufficiently the very low numbers in classes at certain times of the year. Well-attended classes in the autumn and winter are often allowed to continue with very small numbers in the late spring. While the advent of email has improved communication for some tutors, the normal means of communication being through notes left in registers. Some tutors in more isolated locations rarely see managers.

86. There are no formal opportunities for tutors to share good practice and quality assurance arrangements are inadequate. Not all tutors have been observed. One tutor was observed as part of a further education college's quality assurance system and received exemplary written feedback. However, many other tutors commented that no-one had observed them teach in 20 years and their only perceived measure of performance was through satisfactory enrolments. Recently introduced policies and measures to improve the quality of provision have yet to be implemented. Tutor packs, developed to help tutors improve, have not yet been received by all tutors. There is little evidence to support the existence of internal verification procedures.

English, languages & communications**Grade 3**

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good achievement rates for learners on accredited programmes
- good standard of learners' work
- good development of personal and independent learning skills
- lively and stimulating teaching methods

Weaknesses

- some poor retention and attendance rates
- insufficient formal recording of assessments
- insufficiently detailed course information
- insufficient co-ordination of the languages curriculum

Achievement and standards

87. Those learners on accredited programmes who enter for the examination achieve high pass rates. Of the 827 learners enrolled on accredited programmes in 2001-02, 378 took the examination and 368 learners, or 97 per cent, passed successfully. These figures also include learners enrolled on English courses.

88. The standard of work achieved by learners is good. Learners understand tutors speaking or signing in the target language, with no adjustment for speed. Learners report being able to use the target language to book hotels, speak to foreign tourists, and sign to the deaf community. Learners participate readily in classes and respond to the tutors' guidance on pronunciation, structure, and the development of communication through signing and finger-spelling. The learners' standard of accuracy and fluency is high, and they are able to initiate and sustain communication between themselves successfully, with minimal intervention from the tutors.

89. At 53 per cent, the attendance rate for classes observed during the inspection was low. The attendance rates for accredited courses was even lower at 41 per cent. A high proportion of learners leave accredited courses before the end of their learning programme. In 2001-02, 227 of the 827 learners on these courses left before completing their programme of study, resulting in a retention rate of 72 per cent.

Quality of education and training

90. Learners develop good independent learning skills. Many learners report increased self-confidence, which has encouraged them to use their skills outside the classroom, for example in the workplace, on holiday, and in local deaf clubs. They are also being equipped to develop their skills independently. In some classes, tutors design tasks to encourage the learners to find patterns in language which they can apply to their own communication. Many tutors recommend, guide, and instruct learners on how to use reference materials, such as dictionaries, verb tables, and sign language tapes. Tutors identify relevant cultural events and encourage learners to attend.

91. Most of the teaching is lively and stimulating. Of the 19 lessons observed, 58 per cent were good or very good. In these lessons, lively teaching stimulated learners to take part in a wide variety of language learning activities. For example, in one lesson, the tutor negotiates a programme of study from which the learners select materials, which form the basis of the teaching and learning resources. This has resulted in high levels of motivation and participation, where the learners use the language to communicate effectively. Tutors carry out lessons primarily in the target language, which leads to well-developed listening skills. Tutors make good use of role play, pair and group work, and develop the learners' listening, speaking and signing skills. Tutors and learners have good working relationships, which create a relaxed and supportive learning environment. Tutors adapt the activities to suit the different learning styles of individual learners. For example, in one lesson the tutor skilfully used visual aids to encourage practice in the spoken language. Some tutors become facilitators and enable the learners to work collaboratively with each other, ensuring they are totally involved in the learning process and enabling them to take responsibility for their own learning. Tutors correct the learners' errors sensitively. In a sign language lesson, the tutor was assessing the learners' progress through signed stories. In the weaker lessons, some learners were set work beyond their ability and lost interest in the task, and sometimes the tutors' overuse of English and translation made it difficult for the learners to practise the target language. There were not enough opportunities for group discussions and unclear instructions confused the learners. In some lessons, the layout of the classroom did not promote positive interaction between the learners and the tutor.

92. Most accommodation and learning resources are satisfactory. Accommodation at venues where language classes are held is well maintained and provides appropriate access to learners. However, when classes take place in schools with specialist rooms, these are not used sufficiently. Tutors are provided with the basic course textbooks and audio-visual resources to use in the classroom, but in most cases they do not have access to a sufficiently wide range of resources to borrow. There is little or no use made of IT. Staffing for sign language classes is insufficient and is affecting the learning process for some learners. There are loop systems installed for deaf learners in some of the venues and enlarged computer screens for visually impaired learners. The venues visited by the inspectors all had access for learners with restricted mobility.

93. Classes are mainly offered in the evening. In some districts, market research is carried out to identify the type of provision the learners would like. Little or no provision

is offered to target specific groups, such as employees in the tourist industry, although this is planned for 2003-04. Some learners are unaware of the work needed to achieve an award.

94. There is insufficient formal recording of learners' assessments. Learners are not always assessed at the start of a course and when they are assessed it is often not recorded. There is no initial assessment to develop an appropriate individual learning plan. The information that is gathered for individual learning plans is not used effectively to plan programmes to meet individual learners' needs. The information recorded on individual learning plans is frequently a list of topics, rather than specific targets that are related to the needs of individual learners. Most tutors informally identify learning and personal targets for learners. Learners' progress is not monitored or recorded on non-accredited courses.

95. The descriptions, the level and the entry requirements of the learning programmes are insufficiently detailed or informative. The way in which courses are described varies within and between districts and, in some cases, the information on course content is inadequate and misleading. In some instances, learners enrol on an inappropriate programme, which leads to their withdrawal. Information on progression opportunities is difficult for learners to identify.

Leadership and management

96. There is insufficient management and co-ordination of the languages curriculum across the county. Although tutors receive good support from their district managers, there are no structures for curriculum support and co-ordination. Tutors have opportunities to attend external courses, but the council does not organise any staff development activities specifically for language tutors. Language tutors do not have the opportunity to share good practice or discuss language teaching methodology. The range and quality of language provision across the county are not evaluated sufficiently. In some districts, course reviews are not carried out formally and, where they do take place, they are not always analysed effectively. Lesson observations are not carried out in a sufficiently systematic manner and are not used effectively to improve the quality of the language provision.

Foundation programmes

Grade 3

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good levels of personal achievement
- good teaching and learning
- effective measures to widen participation in basic skills

Weaknesses

- weak initial assessment for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities
- ineffective short-term target-setting for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities
- ineffective reviews of learners' progress and achievement

Achievement and standards

97. Learners attain good levels of personal achievement. This is recognised in the organisation's most recent self-assessment report. They are positive about the skills they gain and the progress they make towards their personal goals. There are good opportunities for lateral progression for learners with learning disabilities, who are able to transfer skills gained in art and craft, cookery, and ICT sessions, to music and dance sessions, through the medium of public performances. Basic skills learners work on targets which are recorded on their individual learning plans. Their achievement of targets is recognised and recorded. Portfolios of evidence show clear, measurable progress from learners' initial assessment. Learners take ownership of their work and are proud of their achievements. Learners refer to their growing confidence and self-esteem as well as the enjoyment of learning and meeting new friends. They value the social networks established as a consequence of their learning activities. Learners attend regularly and retention rates are high. Learners achieve the targets set and are motivated to continue by recognition of their achievements and progress. However, targets are not always sufficiently challenging.

Quality of education and training

98. There is good teaching and learning. This is not recognised in the organisation's most recent self-assessment report. Tutors are enthusiastic and the learners value them. Teaching materials and resources are prepared in advance and are appropriate to the levels of ability within the groups. For example, in a session about weights and measures, the tutor used three different scales with a different display on each. This allowed for diversity among the learners and took account of personal preferences. Tutors vary activity effectively to maintain the learners' interest using a combination of whole class, small group, and individual activities. Tutors demonstrate good knowledge

of their individual learners' needs and abilities. Learners receive high levels of individual support and good personal feedback on their progress from tutors. Lesson planning is satisfactory. Tutors follow clearly defined schemes of work and design lesson plans to show how individual goals will be achieved. Plans for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities show appropriate individual targets.

99. There are effective measures to widen participation in basic skills. The organisation is developing the basic skills provision in order to improve access, meet identified needs within the communities, and to work towards meeting national targets. Staffing is increasing, new venues are being used in more communities than before, and training is provided to enable staff to develop their qualifications and skills. Needs are identified and methods of dealing with those needs are established. Quality circles and self-assessment methods are part of a range of activities used to review progress and suggest further changes. Learners' numbers are increasing. In 2000-01, there were 544 learners and 837 in 2001-02, which is a 54 per cent increase. Basic skills courses are responsive to the needs of individual learners and local demand. The range of courses provided is satisfactory. There is a variety of courses for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities and some possibilities of lateral progression.

100. Most programmes are staffed by suitably qualified tutors. Opportunities for further training and development are available to all staff. Teaching accommodation is satisfactory and courses take place in a variety of venues, such as schools, colleges, day centres and community locations. Learning environments vary from adequate to good and are generally satisfactory. Learners with learning difficulties, disabilities, or restricted mobility have appropriate access and toilet facilities. Some basic skills venues are difficult to find. In one location within a library, the doors are locked when the library closes even though the class is still in progress. This prohibits any new learners from gaining access to enrol or participate at that time. In an evening class within a school, the reception office and the main building was not staffed but open. A sign at the entrance indicated that a basic skills class was in progress but did not provide directions.

101. There is satisfactory support for learners. Information about courses, programmes, and career guidance is given according to individual learners' needs. Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities receive adequate levels of personal support during teaching sessions.

102. There is weak initial assessment of the existing skills and competence of learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. Tutors do not make use of the standard documents that the council provides and approaches to initial assessment are unplanned. Some tutors carry out satisfactory evaluations of learners' previous skills and abilities, but in most cases the process is rudimentary or non-existent.

103. Short-term target-setting for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities is ineffective. Learners' individual learning plans are non-specific and expressed only in terms of long-term goals. They do not contain achievable short-term learning targets to assist learners in progressing towards their longer-term goals. In most instances, tutors do not make use of the documents that have been developed by the provider for this

purpose.

104. Reviews of learners' progress and achievement are ineffective. A small minority of reviews are comprehensive but in other instances reviews are brief, with no indication of learners' progress or further learning required. Reviews are infrequent. Some learners with learning difficulties and disabilities do not have a review until the end of their 30-week programme. In other instances, only one review is carried out midway through the year. Reviews for basic skills learners are scheduled only once each term and in many instances they do not take place.

Leadership and management

105. There is effective leadership and management of the basic skills provision. District managers within each area manage the provision effectively and a basic skills co-ordinator in each area provides specialist support. The district managers and basic skills co-ordinators meet regularly with the tutors to discuss the programme, learners' progression, staff training needs, the outcomes of self-assessment activities, and forthcoming events. The co-ordination and management of the provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is less effective.

Community learning**Grade 2**

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good standard of learners' work
- effective use of learner-centred teaching
- good learning resources
- innovative methods of widening participation

Weaknesses

- ineffective monitoring and recording of individual progress in some community programmes
- insufficient information for learners on progression opportunities
- insufficient monitoring of the quality of the provision

Achievement and standards

106. The standard of work produced by learners is consistently high across the provision. Although most learners have no qualifications on entry to the programmes, most of their portfolios of evidence contain personalised work above the expected standard. Learners demonstrate a similar level of achievement in the classroom. Some learners with no previous success in education produce stories and poems that are of a publishable standard. IT skills development is an integral part of almost all of the courses and those on 'Locals Online' and 'Real IT' programmes achieve a good standard of skills. Courses are frequently designed to allow learners to work towards small achievable outcomes in their first two sessions in order to experience early and sustainable success. This is highly motivational. Learners express pride in their high levels of achievement. Registers indicate satisfactory attendance and retention of learners. Attendance for 2002-03, at nearly 70 per cent, compares adequately with community and family learning programmes elsewhere. There are good retention rates on 'Real IT' and 'Reclaim Life' projects, where the programmes are modular and learners work at their own pace.

Quality of education and training

107. Teaching is effective and learner-centred. The learning materials, and the teaching styles and strategies, focus strongly on the learners' needs. For example, in one family learning lesson the tutor had a detailed lesson plan on musical sound recognition, linked to the national literacy curriculum, in which learners' efforts were celebrated. The course content is adapted to accommodate individual needs and interests. Learners are encouraged to find solutions for themselves. For example, the 'Reclaim Life' and 'Real IT' projects are modular programmes, which encourage self-directed learning supported by

learning manuals. 'Family Learning' programmes make good use of clear and appropriate forms for self-assessment and target-setting.

108. There are good learning resources. Tutors use authentic learning resources, such as musical instruments and visits to local amenities, to provide motivating real-life challenges for non-traditional learners. 'Family Learning' takes place in suitable and comfortable accommodation and tutors can access audio-visual and IT equipment at all venues, including laptops. IT skills are well integrated into 'Family Learning' programmes. For example, the learners use digital cameras to capture scenes of interactive achievement. On the 'Real IT' project, learners borrow a laptop, with which they develop their skills using specifically designed distance learning materials, supported by monthly monitoring visits. Small computer suites with the latest technology have been set up in public houses in remote rural areas and laptops provide mobile IT provision in rural locations. IT and digital media learning facilities are also periodically available in remote areas on three 'Discovery Buses', one of which has a satellite link. There is good access and support for learners with additional learning needs. For example, the 'Discovery Buses' have specialised programmes and equipment for disabled users, including specialist software for blind IT users. Specific targeting of under-represented groups is supported by the appropriate allocation of resources.

109. The provider has successfully widened the participation of learners from under-represented groups through a number of innovative initiatives. For example, the 'Locals Online', 'Reclaim Life', and 'Real IT' projects and the 'Discovery Bus' have been set up as socially inclusive programmes, which specifically target non-traditional learners in hard-to-reach geographical locations.

110. There is ineffective monitoring and recording of individual learners' progress in some community programmes. Not all learners are assessed and individual learning plans are not maintained. On some courses, learners and tutors are unaware of any initial assessment or individual learning plans. A few classes had no register at the time of inspection.

111. There is insufficient information for learners on progression routes. The provision of information, advice, and guidance is not systematic, recorded or verifiable. There is no analysis of trends or emerging patterns and no action-planning for successor provision. In the 'Reclaim Life' and 'Real IT' projects there is progression onto additional, internally written modules, but no external progression routes are identified. 'Locals Online' programmes do not identify progression routes beyond the provision. If learners wish to return, tutors adapt courses so that they can be accommodated. Other support for learners is satisfactory. Tutors are sensitive to the specific needs of disadvantaged learners and provide a reasonable level of support. Basic skills work is embedded in community occupational training, such as first aid for parents, where a need has been identified. Access to the 'Family Learning' programme is appropriately supported by crèche provision.

Leadership and management

112. The quality of family and community learning provision is monitored inadequately. There is considerable variation in quality assurance practices. For example, some classes lack basic course documents and some tutors do not receive an induction and are unfamiliar with standard policies and procedures which support learners, such as the recording of advice and guidance and the dissemination of the complaints procedures and equal opportunities information. The observation of teaching and learning is not carried out systematically, although some members of staff have now been invited to train as observers. Although recruitment and retention data are collected, there is little analysis of emerging patterns.

113. Tutors of family and community learning programmes receive appropriate staff development, such as support in achieving an externally accredited award in teaching basic skills. Regular programme-specific training in family learning is well attended.