

INSPECTION REPORT

Calderdale LEA

27 June 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.

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Calderdale in Yorkshire is one of the smaller Metropolitan Boroughs. Adult learning is provided through Calderdale LEA (the LEA) and delivered through the adult and community learning (ACL) service. The LEA provides a broad programme, with foundation programmes and courses in mathematics, flower arranging, woodwork, motor cycle maintenance, management, information and communications technology (ICT), sport and recreation, visual and performing arts, humanities, English and modern foreign languages, family learning and community development. Most courses are not accredited. At the time of the inspection, there were too few learners in mathematics, flower arranging, woodwork, motor cycle maintenance, management, ICT and humanities for these areas to be inspected. Courses are available mainly through the LEA's five main adult learning centres, in Halifax, Hebden Bridge, Sowerby Bridge, Brighouse and Todmorden, and a small number of outreach centres. One course is subcontracted to another training provider. A number of partnerships have been established, particularly with schools and community organisations, to promote family learning and widening participation.

2. The Schools and Children's Services Directorate of Calderdale LEA consists of three service departments one of which, Students and Communities, includes the ACL service. A principal officer, assisted by two learning managers, is responsible for the management and delivery of all ACL programmes. Calderdale LEA employs around 300 tutors, either for a fixed term or to teach specific courses. There are two basic skills co-ordinators, one family learning co-ordinator and two community access co-ordinators. Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council's equal opportunities policy has been amended to meet the requirement of the 'Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000'. It covers all the council's services. The ACL service does not have a quality assurance policy. In March 2003, the ACL team produced its second self-assessment report in readiness for the inspection.

3. Calderdale LEA's ACL service is funded by West Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC). According to the 2001 census, the proportion of Calderdale's population from minority ethnic groups was 7 per cent, compared with 9 per cent for England as a whole. The unemployment rate for Calderdale in May 2003 was 2.8 per cent, compared with 2.6 per cent for England as a whole.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

4. Hospitality, sport and leisure programmes are the largest single area of the LEA's ACL provision and represent 29 per cent of all enrolments. In 2002-03, there were 1,851 learners, 3,402 enrolments and 166 courses. Half of the sports-related courses are in yoga. Other courses include badminton, keep fit, aerobics, bridge, golf, exercise to

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music, swimming, tai chi, stretch and tone, navigation and self-defence. None of the courses is accredited. Two courses offer progression from beginners to advanced levels. Courses are held in a range of venues, in rural and urban areas, and offered from Monday to Friday at daytime or evening sessions in term time. Most courses last for a total of 30 weeks, and are scheduled into blocks of six to 12 weeks. There are no taster sessions, or weekend or summer provision. Courses are staffed by 23 part-time tutors who work between one and six hours each week.

Visual & performing arts & media

5. Visual and performing arts is the second largest area of provision and covers a range of courses in painting and drawing, dressmaking, dance and music. In 2002-03, there were 1,349 learners, 2,698 enrolments and 136 courses. Programmes in art or sewing make up almost three-quarters of the provision in this area of learning, and have 71 per cent of the learners. Almost a third of the provision consists of watercolour painting classes. Most courses are at level 1 with some at level 2, and none are accredited. Classes are available on weekday mornings, afternoons and evenings during term time. Most courses are for two hours a week and last for one term. However, most learners re-enrol for three terms or more. There are 20 part-time tutors who teach for between two and 20 hours each week.

English, languages & communications

6. During 2002-03, there were 1,360 learners, 2,560 enrolments and 83 courses in this area of learning. French and Spanish classes dominate the provision, and there are also courses in classical Arabic, German, Italian and Portuguese. Four courses, in French, Italian and Spanish, lead to accreditation from the Open College Network. Most courses are non-accredited and described as 'conversation' in the language concerned. These courses are organised for beginners, improvers, intermediate and advanced learners, although not all levels are available in each subject. Courses have also been offered in other languages, such as Dutch, Greek or Urdu. Courses last for 10 weeks and are held in seven venues across the borough. Most consist of two-hourly sessions once a week on Mondays to Thursdays. Classical Arabic has two classes of one and a half hours each week. There are 14 part-time tutors, who teach for between two and 10 hours each week.

Foundation programmes

7. The LEA provides programmes for adults with learning difficulties and for learners with literacy and numeracy needs. There is some overlap between the two areas. Some learners attend both kinds of provision and some tutors work in both. In 2002-03, there were 488 learners and 869 enrolments in this area of learning. Many learners attend more than one course and most enrol separately for all three terms.

8. During 2002-03, there were 26 courses for people with learning difficulties, including aromatherapy, cookery, woodwork, art and craft, dance and singing. Most take place during the daytime at the five main centres. At the time of inspection, 15 courses were running, attended by 89 learners.

9. There were 24 literacy and numeracy courses in 2002-03, including courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). At the time of inspection, 107 learners were attending 12 courses. There is a mix of daytime and evening provision. Literacy and numeracy courses are available in all the main centres, except Todmorden. The staff all work part time. Two basic skills co-ordinators manage nine tutors. Two access co-ordinators organise the provision for adults with learning difficulties. They manage 16 tutors and eight learner support assistants. Tutors work for between two and six hours each week. Learning sessions generally last two hours and follow conventional academic terms.

Family learning

10. During 2002-03, there were 879 learners and 1,296 enrolments on 195 family learning programmes. Courses include swimming for parents and pre-school children, gymtots, music, art and craft, and story telling for parents and children. There are five play courses for parents and pre-school children. Some parents' groups progress to become community development courses. These include cards and calligraphy, aerobics tasters, healthy living, computing, classical Arabic, ESOL, and committee skills. Sessions are between one and two and a half hours long, and are held mainly during the day. Courses run for between five and 10 weeks, and include some short taster courses. They are held in four main centres and seven community venues. The family learning provision is managed by a family learning co-ordinator, and the community development provision by two community access co-ordinators. There are 20 part-time tutors who teach for between two and 10 hours each week. At the time of inspection, 37 courses were running.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	8
Number of inspection days	40
Number of learner interviews	419
Number of staff interviews	92
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	14
Number of partner/external agency interviews	8
Number of visits	40

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

11. The quality of provision is inadequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, Calderdale LEA's leadership and management are unsatisfactory as is its approach to equality of opportunity and its quality assurance arrangements. The quality of learning in sport and leisure, visual and performing arts, modern foreign languages and foundation programmes is unsatisfactory. However, in family learning it is satisfactory.

GRADES

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

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

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

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

12. **Learners obtain good additional benefits, such as improved confidence and social skills, in all areas of learning.** In sport and leisure, the development of learners' knowledge and skills is good, and they understand the principles and practice of safe exercise. Many learners value the health benefits of regular exercise and are able to

participate in demanding activities as a result. In visual and performing arts, learners acquire good practical skills and quickly achieve good basic standards of work. Learners in modern foreign languages show good attainment on accredited courses. Their work is of a good standard and demonstrates good progress in the language studied. Foundation learners use their skills to enhance the quality of their everyday lives or to be more independent at home. They improve their oral communication skills and gain the confidence to speak in front of a group. Adults with learning difficulties show high levels of concentration and a determination to succeed. They make excellent progress in their ability to make choices, and converse and co-operate with others. Family learning learners are able to play a greater part in their community, and in their children's schools and learning. They acquire better understanding of how children learn and demonstrate effective skills of working with and supporting their children.

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
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	3	2	4	2	1	0	12
Visual & performing arts & media	0	0	8	3	1	0	0	12
English, languages & communications	0	2	1	3	2	1	0	9
Foundation programmes	0	1	3	4	3	0	0	11
Family learning	0	1	2	4	1	1	0	9
Total	0	7	16	18	9	3	0	53
per cent	43.40%		33.96%		22.64%			

13. **In sport and leisure, most teaching is satisfactory or better, but resources are inadequate** and are very poor at one centre. The swimming pool at this centre is of poor quality and is too small for effective use by adults to learn to swim. **There is insufficient monitoring and assessment of learners' progress** in most classes, and where assessment takes place, it is not used to contribute to future learning goals. **The range of courses is narrow.** Half of the programme consists of yoga classes, and there are insufficient progression opportunities from beginners to advanced levels. **Promotion of courses is poor** and the information offered within the course prospectus has insufficient detail.

14. **In visual and performing arts, there is good teaching and development of practical skills, and most lessons are well planned and well structured.** Learners value the specialist skills of tutors. However, there is too much emphasis on technique to the detriment of individual creativity. **Resources are poor, and the range of courses offered is narrow.** Assessment of learning is satisfactory. Tutors use learner records, or their own logs, to record individual learning goals and learners' progress towards them. **There is insufficient promotion of courses** and new learners find it difficult to find out about provision.

15. **Some tutors in modern foreign languages make good use of authentic cultural references** which enliven the classes and learning, but there is too much use of English in

some lessons which inhibits the development of conversational skills in the target language. Resources are satisfactory. **Assessment in accredited courses is satisfactory, but it is inadequate on unaccredited courses.** Although tutors assess work and make helpful comments about it, there are no standard procedures for gathering or evaluating assessment data to enable learners, tutors or managers to make judgements about progress. There is no evidence that assessment is used to plan programmes of work. **Course titles are inaccurate.** Most courses are described as conversational, but many lessons focus too much on written accuracy rather than oral fluency. Most learners enjoy their courses.

16. **On foundation courses, practical sessions are particularly stimulating, and learners are challenged by a wide range of activities.** There are some good examples of partnership working and the LEA is developing new approaches to the planning and teaching of programmes. **There is a narrow range of teaching methods in literacy and numeracy classes, which is restricted further by inadequate resources.** For example, there is limited use of ICT or specialist software, and too much reliance on worksheets. Tutors do not have sufficient time to carry out some vital tasks. **Assessment is inadequate,** particularly initial assessment, which is insufficiently detailed and does not include the diagnostic assessment needed to identify learning needs in detail. **There is insufficient focus on the needs of ESOL learners.** The literacy and numeracy screening test, and most of the materials currently available, are unsuitable for this group of learners.

17. In family learning the standard of teaching and learning is satisfactory. **Family learning tutors are enthusiastic and well prepared.** They bring a variety of relevant experience to their teaching. **There are effective community partnerships,** which help to widen participation and attract new resources into communities. **The curriculum responds to the needs and interests of communities and groups.** However, there is limited focus on individual learning needs. Individual learning plans are not used to identify the learning needs of some individuals in groups. **Accommodation for family learning at one centre is unsuitable.** Satisfactory guidance and support are provided through external adult guidance workers.

Leadership and management

18. **The LEA's strategic planning is good and sets a clear vision and direction for the service.** The plan is detailed, well researched and has full council approval. Its clear intention is to change the direction of ACL towards learning for economic and social renewal, in particular for first-time learners. **There are a number of good partnership arrangements,** and the council is a leading member of Calderdale Learning Partnership, through which the service plans to achieve its demanding targets. **The current range of programmes is poor, and does not meet the learning needs of a large proportion of adults.** Few courses lead to accreditation or qualifications. The LEA recognises this, and steps are already in place to remedy it. **Management of programme areas is poor,** and there is no curriculum leader in some areas of learning. **Resources are poor across most of the service. The management information system, and systems for quality assurance and the promotion of equal opportunities are inadequate.** Calderdale Borough Council is aware of these shortcomings and has begun to introduce changes to deal with them.

The management of staff appraisal and staff development is satisfactory.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good strategic planning
- good partnership arrangements

Weaknesses

- poor range of programmes to meet the learning needs of adults
- poor management of programme areas
- poor resources
- poor management information system
- poor promotion of equal opportunities
- inadequate systems for assuring the quality of provision
- inadequate promotion of courses to potential learners

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Strengths

- good development of knowledge and skills
- good health and social benefits for learners

Weaknesses

- very poor resources at one centre
- insufficient monitoring and assessment of learners
- narrow range of programmes
- inadequate curriculum management

Visual & performing arts & media

Strengths

- good additional benefits from learning
- good teaching and development of practical skills

Weaknesses

- insufficient development of individual creativity
- poor resources
- narrow range of courses
- poor curriculum management

English, languages & communications

Strengths

- good attainment on accredited courses
- good use of authentic cultural references

Weaknesses

- excessive use of English in modern foreign languages lessons
- inadequate assessment on unaccredited courses
- inaccurate course titles
- poor aspects of curriculum management

Foundation programmes

Strengths

- good development of social skills
- stimulating practical sessions
- good examples of partnership working

Weaknesses

- narrow range of teaching and learning methods
- inadequate resources
- inadequate assessment
- insufficient focus on the needs of ESOL learners
- poor curriculum management

Family learning

Strengths

- good development of learners' confidence and social skills
- effective community partnerships
- curriculum which responds to the needs and interests of communities and groups

Weaknesses

- limited focus on individual learning needs
- unsuitable accommodation for family learning at one centre
- incomplete quality assurance

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT CALDERDALE LEA:

- supportive, knowledgeable and patient tutors
- their growth in confidence from the learning and social opportunities
- wider benefits of participating in learning, such as health benefits
- having a place to learn which is close to where they live

WHAT LEARNERS THINK CALDERDALE LEA COULD IMPROVE:

- way that communication and consultation are carried out
- promotion and marketing of courses
- planning and continuity of classes
- resources for learning and some accommodation

KEY CHALLENGES FOR CALDERDALE LEA:

- effective communication of the vision of the ACL service
- the implementation of the strategic plan
- improvement of the management of areas of learning, and development of effective curriculum teams
- the continued improvement of teaching and learning strategies
- the improvement of resources
- the development of the management information system to assist decision-making and quality assurance improvements
- the establishment of an appropriate quality assurance framework and a culture of continuous improvement
- the continued improvement and promotion of equality of opportunity for the people of Calderdale

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 4

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good strategic planning
- good partnership arrangements

Weaknesses

- poor range of programmes to meet the learning needs of adults
- poor management of programme areas
- poor resources
- poor management information system
- poor promotion of equal opportunities
- inadequate systems for assuring the quality of provision
- inadequate promotion of courses to potential learners

19. Since 2002, Calderdale Metropolitan Borough Council has appointed new officers and managers in the Schools and Children's Services Directorate, and looked in detail at the learning and social needs of adults. Councillors were shocked to learn that, compared with the national average, a higher proportion of Calderdale's adult population were functionally innumerate and illiterate, and that in some wards the average reading age of the population is seven years. They were concerned that this might discourage companies from moving into the area. Local politicians, officers and ACL managers are now developing strategies to raise the educational attainment in the borough.

20. The LEA has a good strategic plan for adult learning that includes its vision and strategic objectives for 2004. The plan is detailed and well researched and has district council approval. Significant changes are planned for the beginning of 2003-04, and by the beginning of 2004-05, directors expect the service to have improved considerably. The focus of change is to redress the balance between learning for recreation and leisure, and learning for economic and social renewal. The LEA aims to provide accredited courses that will meet the needs of learners, provide learning opportunities for the socially disadvantaged, and provide basic skills learning in local community settings. The adult plan has eight clear strategic objectives and includes a business plan with timescales, key milestones and success criteria for each strategic objective. It contains challenging targets, especially for the number of adults with basic skills needs it will cater for by 2004. Council members and senior officers are knowledgeable about the plan and committed to the need for change.

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21. The LEA's ACL team has established good links and partnerships with the local community. ACL area managers, community access co-ordinators and curriculum co-ordinators work effectively to establish links with community groups and individuals and promote the work of the service. The co-ordinators work to increase the number of learners, particularly on literacy and numeracy, and family and community learning programmes. The LEA is a leading member of Calderdale Learning Partnership, a voluntary group that includes representatives of the council, schools, the local college of further education, the Workers' Educational Association and trades unions. The partnership encourages collaborative working between partners to improve the educational attainment of the people of Calderdale and promote regeneration. ACL managers are active members of several of the working groups and committees in the adult learners' group of the partnership. The partnership has obtained money from the European Social Fund specifically to widen participation in adult learning and promote and develop family learning. The LEA plans to use its close links with the partnership to achieve its demanding targets.

22. The range of adult and community education courses provided by the LEA is poor. Many courses have been offered for many years and do not meet the learning needs of a large proportion of adults. Many courses, such as swimming, keep fit, modern foreign languages and sewing, are mainly recreational and have become a weekly social event for the learners. Until recently, no course was accredited or led to an examination. There are no clear learning objectives for most non-accredited courses against which success can be measured. Learners are not encouraged to extend their knowledge and skills and progress to higher levels of understanding or competence. On some courses the same teacher has taught the same course to the same group of learners for several years.

23. Management of the curriculum is poor. In art and craft, sport and leisure, languages, and ICT there is no curriculum leader. The adult and community managers for east and west Calderdale share responsibility for managing these areas but they are not able to lead the development of the curriculum. They hold tutor team meetings usually once each term but these are not well attended. These meetings are the main means of communicating with teachers, and those who do not attend are less well informed about the changes planned for the service. Basic skills and family learning are led by part-time curriculum co-ordinators. Management of these areas is inadequate. The co-ordinators' role is to lead the curriculum and carry out community development work. Curriculum content and planning, and learners' achievement and progression are not managed well.

24. There are poor resources to support learning. Adult education is provided at five main centres in the borough. Four of the five centres provide poor accommodation. The centre at Sowerby Bridge is maintained to a high standard. Programmes are also run at numerous primary and secondary schools, community centres and church halls around Calderdale. At some centres, accommodation is not well managed to take account of the diverse needs of the groups using it. The standard of resources for many courses is poor. For example, the swimming pool at Hebden Bridge is old and not fit for the purpose for which it is being used. In many practical subjects teachers provide their own learning resources for learners.

25. The council operates a good personal appraisal, development and review system. All full-time staff are appraised each year, and their performance is reviewed every six months. There are two elements to appraisal: performance review and identification of training need. Targets are set for the following year and progress towards them is measured. Most permanent ACL staff have been in post for less than two years and have been through one appraisal cycle. The ACL curriculum and development co-ordinators are part-time staff employed on fixed-term contracts. As a result, they are not appraised. No tutors are appraised. Staff development agreed at appraisal must fit in with the LEA's strategic objectives and requires a senior manager's approval. All full-time staff, most co-ordinators and some tutors have taken part in staff development in the past 12 months. However, some part-time tutors are not aware that council support is available for staff development, or how to obtain it. There has been little staff development to improve the quality of curriculum management or deal with the needs of the rapidly changing service. In 2002, the Schools and Children's Services Directorate became the first directorate of the council to achieve the Investors in People award, a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people.

26. The LEA does not have a management information system that can readily provide data about the number of learners on its adult and community programmes. Data on learners are recorded and filed manually and it takes many hours to find the answer to a simple query. There is no agreement of what constitutes achievement, and few success criteria are recorded for learners who are not on accredited courses. Learning managers are working with the Open College Network to accredit courses. The LEA intends to increase the number of accredited courses over the next few years. A new computerised management information system has been installed, which is expected to provide managers with easily accessible data from September 2003.

27. The promotion of courses in most programme areas is inadequate. In hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, and visual and performing arts and media, it is particularly poor. The LEA does not sufficiently target new learners, or effectively support widening participation. Promotional materials do not provide enough clear or detailed information to enable potential learners to make informed choices about the courses on offer. The adult learning prospectus is issued annually to most households. No further information is issued before the January and April enrolment sessions. Many prospective learners rely on word of mouth for information about the programmes offered. There are no taster sessions or open days. Course administrators are not trained to provide qualitative information on the content of courses. There are waiting lists for many popular classes, where existing learners frequently re-enrol. New learners who have tried to enrol in September often have to wait for a place until the summer term. In the summer term of 2003, 12.5 per cent of those enrolling on visual and performing arts and media programmes were new learners.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 4

28. There is inadequate promotion of equality of opportunity and social inclusion, although there is no evidence of any direct discrimination towards learners. The profile

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of learners and tutors does not reflect that of the population of Calderdale. In the areas of greatest social need, where many adults have poor basic skills, there is often little or no provision. The LEA now collects and analyses data about equality of opportunity, but does not yet use this to plan programmes. Eighty per cent of the learners are women, mostly from the more affluent areas of Calderdale, and almost half are over 60 years of age. Many attend courses that are mainly recreational. Some learners have been attending the same course for over 20 years. The ACL team is very aware of the narrowness of its provision and has a development plan to remedy it which will become operational in 2003-04. This has the full support of the borough council. A number of exciting initiatives are at an early stage of development. The ACL team is working with partner organisations in north Halifax and developing a Learning Gateway for women at Todmorden. Learning Gateways have been set up for groups with specific learning needs. Others are planned for 2003-04.

29. The council has an equal opportunities policy that has been updated in accordance with the requirements of the 'Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000'. Although the policy is primarily about the rights of council staff it is also used to cover all other activities. The Schools and Children's Services Directorate, of which the ACL service is a part, has an equality action plan. In the plan, adult learners are not specifically mentioned. Equality of opportunity is rarely promoted during induction or in lessons. Learners are not adequately informed about how to raise concerns about the provision or about their entitlement. The borough council's general complaints system is in operation but no learner has ever used it. At a local level, when concerns arise, they are noted on a form and most are dealt with appropriately. However, there is no systematic method to collect these concerns, analyse them and report the outcomes back to learners.

30. The prospectus for adult, community and family learning does not contain an explicit statement on equal opportunities. There are no images of learners from minority ethnic groups or of people with physical disabilities. The adult and community website is poorly designed and difficult to find on the borough council's web page. A new promotional publication is planned for summer 2003, designed to remedy many of these problems. Equality of opportunity is now a standard agenda item at every team meeting. However, most discussion to date has been about training administrative staff. Senior adult and community managers and tutors have not received any training and none is planned. On some courses, particular care has been taken to meet the needs of learners with different needs. For example, a hydrotherapy course is specifically designed for learners with profound mobility difficulties.

31. Equal opportunities data are collected at enrolment. The lack of a management information system means that the data are not analysed or used for reviews or planning. Most of the data available to plan new developments are from external sources. The accommodation and learning resources used for teaching, sometimes fail to meet the needs of individuals. There is insufficient support for learners with sensory impairments, and access for wheelchair users is difficult at the Brighouse, Hebden Bridge and Horton House training centres. Single regeneration budget funds have recently been secured to upgrade Horton House to meet the requirements of the 'Disability

Discrimination Act 1995'. Many tutors provide good support for learners and show understanding of their individual needs.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

32. The systems used to assure the quality of provision are inadequate, although there is a strong commitment to improvement. Before the present managers were appointed 18 months ago, there were no quality assurance procedures. Some progress has been made, but there is still no quality assurance policy or clear set of objectives that follow the learning process. A quality assurance manual has been produced which contains details of the teams and their purpose; guidelines for new course validation; guidance on individual learning plans; student perception surveys; the structure of course manuals and the process for observing learning. However, many quality assurance procedures have yet to be written and those that exist are not comprehensive. In many instances agreed instructions are not carried out. For example, most tutors ignore the requirement that each learner has a regularly reviewed individual learning plan. Course files either do not exist or are at a very early stage of development. There is very little monitoring of compliance with the procedures in the manual. Curriculum co-ordinators do not manage the quality assurance process effectively. Of the seven posts for curriculum team leaders, there are two vacancies. Although teams are expected to meet at least three times a year to review their activities, less than a third of tutors attend the meetings. The sharing of good practice is weak and there is much duplication of learning resource development.

33. A lesson observation scheme has recently been introduced and 14 per cent of tutors have now been observed. The observers received three hours of training. Comments are recorded on a standard form by following a checklist. Observers make judgements on the standards of teaching both inside and outside their own curriculum areas. Although the recorded comments are mostly satisfactory, the overall grade profile is generous. Some tutors receive little or no feedback after an observation. The process is designed to be developmental and confidential but there is no link between observation and staff training. Tutors who are performing poorly are not identified. At the present rate it will take five years to observe all the tutors once.

34. The monitoring of learners' retention and achievement rates is poor. The lack of a management information system has made it impossible for teams to analyse data meaningfully. There are no established course targets. On many courses, there has been little progress in defining learning objectives. The outcomes of courses that lead to qualifications are not carefully analysed. Student perception surveys are planned to take place at each centre three times a year. The first survey, in the autumn term 2002, was comprehensive and was carefully analysed, but the findings were not shared with learners or broken down by areas of learning. Each centre has produced a detailed action plan to deal with the issues raised. Few of the planned actions are specific enough. The questionnaires are satisfactorily designed, but are in an inappropriate format for learners with learning difficulties.

35. The self-assessment report produced for the inspection was the LEA's second. The

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sections on leadership and management were mostly accurate and appropriately self-critical. The curriculum sections omitted some strengths and failed to identify many key weaknesses. The approach used to gather information and write the report was not satisfactory. Learners, tutors and partner organisations had little involvement. There was little or no use of data to support the judgements. Managers based the report on observation and anecdotal evidence. Most tutors' understanding of their role in assuring the quality of provision is poor.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Grade 4

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good development of knowledge and skills
- good health and social benefits for learners

Weaknesses

- very poor resources at one centre
- insufficient monitoring and assessment of learners
- narrow range of programmes
- inadequate curriculum management

Achievement and standards

36. Learners on all sports-related courses develop good knowledge and skills in their activity. They understand the principles and philosophy of yoga, pilates and tai chi, and the components of fitness and skills in safe exercise. They develop technical skills in the performance of exercise activities, yoga positions and movement sequences, and stroke technique in swimming, golf and badminton. Many beginners reach good standards and make good progress. Learners in badminton and bridge develop sound awareness and knowledge of tactical skills. Learners are of mixed age and physical ability and include men and women. Some learners with profound physical disabilities have learned to swim and others have developed a greater range of movement. Many learners develop and improve their balance, co-ordination, timing, posture and suppleness. They learn to choreograph movement to music, and perform confidently and capably. Many older learners maintain effective fitness levels, reduce their rate of physical deterioration and prevent injury. In the better lessons, learners show high levels of proficiency in performing complex sequences of movements.

37. Learners identify their own gains and personal progress and use this knowledge to set personal goals within their own capabilities. They recognise and appreciate the health and social benefits gained through regular activity, and report a wide range of benefits such as stress and pain relief, recovery from neck and back injuries, and improvements in arthritis, rheumatism and sciatica. Increased self-confidence, and improved physical condition enable learners to take up other physically demanding activities that they would not otherwise have attempted. For many learners, including some with profound disability, the swimming and hydrotherapy classes are their only form of regular physical exercise and have a great effect on the quality of their lives.

38. In just under a third of classes offered in 2002-03, retention rates were below 85 per cent. For two out of the last three years, this area of learning has been the worst

performing area of provision for retention. During the inspection, the average attendance rate was 70 per cent.

Quality of education and training

39. Most teaching is satisfactory or better. In the best classes, schemes of work and lesson plans respond to learners' needs and interests. Tutors are aware of individual learners' health needs and reflect these in the choice of activities. Teaching methods include demonstrations, explanation, reflective analysis and questioning. Practical demonstrations are good and learners receive individual attention to correct and refine movement and postures. Some tutors prepare good supplementary handout materials. Little use is made of the more experienced learners to demonstrate skills and support the less experienced members of mixed ability classes. In yoga, tai chi, pilates and keep-fit classes, tutors make good use of lighting, music and tone of voice to create an environment conducive to learning.

40. Resources are inadequate. At one centre they are very poor. A survey by the LEA has identified that the centre does not conform to the minimum requirements of the 'Disability Discrimination Act 1995'. Access is poor for learners with mobility difficulties. Showers and changing facilities are inadequate, and the swimming pool is too small to promote effective swimming development for adults. The metal steps into the pool present a health and safety risk. In a quarter of classes tutors provide their own resources such as ropes and hand weights. Some rooms are too small to accommodate all the learners on the register. Other rooms are cluttered and have inadequate lighting, ventilation and heating in winter.

41. There is insufficient monitoring and assessment of learners' progress. There is no initial assessment to contribute to individual learning plans and objectives. In 83 per cent of classes there are no formative assessments of learners' progress, and where they do take place, they are not used to plan future learning goals. There is too much reliance on informal assessments, and these are not uniformly applied to all learners. Some learners receive no feedback on their progress. In one of the better classes a flip chart was used to identify learners' progress. Learners participated effectively in the assessment process to identify individual improvements.

42. The range of programmes offered is narrow. Half of all the classes are in yoga. Three-quarters of all learners are women over 50 years of age. There are insufficient progression opportunities from beginners through to advanced levels. Approximately 90 per cent of learners re-enrol each term. Many learners have been attending the same level of course for several years. Beginners' classes in yoga and pilates have waiting lists. There is no weekend provision and there is poor continuity of provision throughout the year. There is some targeted provision for men, women and members of minority ethnic groups. Just under 11 per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups.

Leadership and management

43. There is no dedicated curriculum manager for this area of learning and the curriculum management is inadequate. The same courses have been offered for a number of years. Quality assurance is poor. The tutor observation system is not yet fully established and only five staff from this area of learning have been observed using the new procedures. The feedback provided from observations does not include improvement objectives or target dates. There is ineffective monitoring of the teaching skills and qualifications of the staff. Only one-third of staff qualification profiles are held centrally. There is no formal system for the sharing and dissemination of good practice among tutors teaching the same subject or working in the same programme area. There is no schedule of staff development activities organised by the service for tutors in this area of learning. Half the staff interviewed organise their own staff development at their own expense.

Visual & performing arts & media

Grade 4

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good additional benefits from learning
- good teaching and development of practical skills

Weaknesses

- insufficient development of individual creativity
- poor resources
- narrow range of courses
- poor curriculum management

Achievement and standards

44. Learners achieve a wide range of additional benefits from participating in visual and performing arts courses. In some cases the courses are introducing learners to new career opportunities. Most learners recognise the wider benefits of learning and how their skills can be applied in the home or workplace. Several learners have used the courses to help them recover from serious illness, make new friends, or establish new leisure pursuits. One learner in a painting class was using the class to begin retraining for primary school teaching. In a creative craft class a young mother used the techniques learned to make hand-crafted cards, and has developed a market for her work in local craft shops.

45. The standards of work achieved by learners are at least satisfactory. Work produced at the beginning and end of courses shows that learners, particularly those following programmes for the first time, make good progress. Some learners have gained sufficient skills and confidence to arrange and participate in public exhibitions. Learners' records show that most learners are making progress towards their individual learning goals.

Quality of education and training

46. The teaching and development of practical skills are good. Lessons are well structured and planned. Clear, informative task sheets, effective demonstrations and technical samples support learning. A workshop approach means that activities can be differentiated and learners can select subjects according to their interests and abilities. Learners value the specialist skills of tutors and the constructive advice they provide. Many learners with no prior experience of art quickly master a range of basic techniques and skills.

47. The assessment of learners' progress is satisfactory, although initial assessment is not carried out in a systematic way. Most tutors have begun to use learners' records to

establish individual learning goals and monitor progress towards their achievement. Where records are not in use, tutors use their own logs to monitor learners' progress with the tasks set. In some cases this includes a simple grading system showing the level of skill displayed.

48. The strong focus on the development of techniques inhibits the development of individual creativity in most of the art and craft courses. This is particularly the case where groups have become well established over a number of years. Many teaching methods have become formulaic and fail to encourage learners to use their technical skills in a creative manner. Where learners have attended repeat courses and mastered good levels of skill, these are rarely applied in innovative ways. Some learning activities are insufficiently challenging for more advanced learners. There is too much focus on the end product, and little individual experimentation with imagery or media. The use of ready-made images in painting and drawing classes is common, and visual research skills are weak.

49. There is insufficient specialist equipment and some inappropriate accommodation for painting, drawing and sewing courses. Learners have to buy their own specialist equipment and consumables to complete the learning activities. No support is available for learners experiencing financial hardship. There is too much reliance on tutors to provide specialist equipment. In sewing classes learners do not have access to cutting tables and worktables at an appropriate height. The upholstery room is in a poor state of repair and cleaning is inadequate.

50. The range of courses offered is narrow. The main focus is on drawing, painting and sewing. This limited range fails to reflect the cultural diversity of the region or engage learners from minority ethnic groups. The rich source of visual reference provided by local minority ethnic groups is not evident in visual stimulus materials or in the artefacts produced. The approach to the subjects offered is traditional, with limited development of individual styles and ideas. Art and craft courses are not accredited and there are no clear progression routes.

Leadership and management

51. Curriculum management is poor. There is no curriculum co-ordinator for the area of learning, and curriculum meetings have not taken place until very recently. Communication between managers, tutors and learners is inadequate. Learners have insufficient opportunity to contribute their views about the curriculum. Questionnaires are used to elicit formal feedback on learners' satisfaction with specific programmes, but this has yet to influence management decision-making. The LEA has not told learners, or in some cases tutors, about planned changes to the provision for the next academic year. Learners are unsure about whether particular courses will continue to run, where they will be held, or who will teach them.

52. The absence of management information has hampered the development of programmes. The information used to judge performance is mainly anecdotal. Individual learning outcomes have only recently been introduced. No attempt has been

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made to analyse the performance of groups of learners to make judgements about their achievement. The collation of case studies on learners has begun but is not yet complete. There is no mechanism for the dissemination of good practice among tutors. The area has been ineffective in attracting learners from minority ethnic groups. The self-assessment report identifies many of the same strengths and weaknesses as the inspectors, but it is overgenerous in its grading of teaching and learning and fails to acknowledge the limited curriculum on offer. The strategic plan identifies, and responds to, many of the improvements needed to strengthen management of the area.

English, languages & communications**Grade 4**

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good attainment on accredited courses
- good use of authentic cultural references

Weaknesses

- excessive use of English in modern foreign languages lessons
- inadequate assessment on unaccredited courses
- inaccurate course titles
- poor aspects of curriculum management

Achievement and standards

53. Learners achieve well on accredited modern foreign languages courses. Their work is well structured and of a good standard. Portfolios contain an extensive range of work, demonstrating good progress in the language studied. Accredited courses have only been offered for one year. Twenty-eight learners out of the 34 enrolled have opted to pursue accreditation, the results of which were awaited at the time of the inspection.

54. Attainment on unaccredited courses is satisfactory. In the best unaccredited lessons, approximately one-third of the provision inspected, learners achieve very good levels of fluency. They are able to understand and use a wide range of vocabulary in a variety of situations. Learners are able to express their own ideas with some accuracy and with good pronunciation and intonation. They use the foreign language with commendable authenticity. They are able to conduct short conversations in the foreign language. Learners in a Portuguese lesson, for instance, naturally addressed each other in that language during a game of bingo. However, in another third of the unaccredited provision, levels of fluency are poor. Learners speak with English accents and intonation. They find it relatively difficult to speak the foreign language and they rely on tutors' prompting or their own notes. For example, in a lesson concerned with illnesses, there was more emphasis on vocabulary and grammar than on speaking. When learners were asked to speak, their responses demonstrated low levels of fluency. Levels of grammatical accuracy in these classes are somewhat below those of the best but nevertheless fall within acceptable boundaries.

Quality of education and training

55. Teaching was satisfactory or better in approximately two-thirds of the lessons observed. In the best lessons, tutors made very good use of foreign cultural references. For example, in a French lesson, a French song provided listening practice, stimulated work on vocabulary development and engendered discussion. Another French group

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has visited Boulogne. In Spanish and Portuguese lessons, quizzes in the languages develop learners' knowledge of Spain and Portugal. In an Italian lesson, learners enthusiastically recorded an Italian song. Such experiences provide learners with authentic cultural contexts for their studies, add enjoyment to lessons and help promote and sustain good levels of motivation.

56. Resources are satisfactory, although some rooms are unsuited to foreign language teaching and there are no opportunities for learners to use ICT. Teachers do their best to provide a variety of learning resources in lessons, including video and audio tapes. All tutors are fluent in the languages they teach. Most hold a teaching qualification.

57. Learning is hampered by tutors' excessive use of English in some lessons. In one lesson, for instance, the entire observation period was devoted to an explanation in English of detailed points of grammar which the learners did not need in order to develop conversation skills. Sometimes even tutors who use the foreign language well lapse into English unnecessarily, for example when giving encouragement or a simple instruction. This denies learners the opportunity to practise the skill of listening. In the classes where tutors speak very little English, learners tend instinctively to speak to one another or the tutor in the foreign language.

58. Assessment practices on unaccredited courses are inadequate. Most tutors assess learners' written work and make helpful comments about it. There are, however, no standard procedures for gathering or evaluating assessment data to enable learners, tutors or managers to make informed judgements about progress. In particular, little thought has been given to the assessment of the different skills of language learning, listening, speaking, reading and writing. There is no evidence that assessment is used to help plan appropriate programmes of work.

59. Course titles do not adequately reflect what takes place in lessons. Most courses are described in the prospectus as conversational. Only one true conversation lesson was seen, although three others came close. In too many lessons, the activities are more appropriate to written accuracy than oral fluency. This reduces learners' opportunities to practise, and make progress with, their conversation skills. In a significant minority of lessons, learners carry out written or oral translations. They do not gain experience of authentic self-expression. Most learners enjoy their courses, but in the absence of formal assessment, they often make slower progress than they think.

60. The LEA is unable to provide evidence of advice, guidance and support for learners in this area of learning. However, learners do value the support they receive from tutors.

Leadership and management

61. Recently, strategic direction of the curriculum area has improved. The LEA is developing a new foreign languages programme, based on progression and offering more opportunities for accreditation. Communication of the proposed changes has not been handled well. Tutors and learners are unsure of the future and some are unconvinced by what they have heard.

62. Some aspects of curriculum management are poor. The LEA identifies the retention rate as poor, but the lack of an effective management information system makes it difficult to accurately quantify and evaluate. The attendance rate is low, averaging 63.2 per cent in observed lessons. The LEA does not routinely collect these data in order to plan for improvement. Minutes of tutors' meetings, schemes of work and tutors' curriculum vitae are not collected centrally. There are no systematic quality assurance procedures. The new lesson observation procedures have yet to have much impact. Comments on lesson observation reports are generally appropriate for the area of learning, but grades awarded are too high and follow-up activity remains ill-defined. Learners on apparently similar courses experience different teaching styles and are taught different content. There are few opportunities for learners to progress within the present programme. The programme is very narrow. The LEA's self-assessment report shows awareness of a number of these issues, but crucially fails to identify unsatisfactory teaching.

Foundation programmes

Grade 4

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good development of social skills
- stimulating practical sessions
- good examples of partnership working

Weaknesses

- narrow range of teaching and learning methods
- inadequate resources
- inadequate assessment
- insufficient focus on the needs of ESOL learners
- poor curriculum management

Achievement and standards

63. There is good development of learners' social skills, especially in classes for adults with learning difficulties. Learners make excellent progress in their ability to make choices, make conversation and co-operate with others. Attainment by adults with learning difficulties is particularly good in art and cookery. All learners show high levels of concentration and a determination to succeed. Learners in literacy and numeracy classes develop good social interaction skills. Many learners improve their oral communication and gain the confidence to speak in front of the group. Learners' written work is generally satisfactory.

64. Calderdale LEA is introducing opportunities for learners to achieve qualifications. Recently, 12 learners submitted portfolios in literacy and numeracy for accreditation through the Open College Network, and a few learners have taken the new national tests in literacy and numeracy at a local college. There are plans to make the tests more widely available. Retention and attendance rates are generally high, although in a few classes almost half the learners have left during the term, including some who have moved on quickly to other classes. Tutors monitor attendance and generally know what is happening in learners' lives that may prevent them attending.

Quality of education and training

65. Just over a third of observed learning sessions were good or better, but almost a third were unsatisfactory. In the good sessions, learners benefit from stimulating practical activities which challenge and inspire them. Some of the most successful sessions involve making things that have a real purpose, such as baking cakes to be sold in the coffee bar. The activity takes on a relevance and importance that stretches learners and encourages them to produce their best. Other sessions use a multi-sensory approach

which greatly enhances learning. In the best sessions, learning in literacy and numeracy is interwoven with learning practical skills. However, the tutors often lack formal training in literacy and numeracy teaching. Most of the practical sessions in the foundation area are provided for learners with learning difficulties. Learners in literacy and numeracy classes have few opportunities to combine literacy and numeracy learning with a practical activity.

66. There are good examples of partnership working which are moving foundation provision forward and bringing significant benefits for learners. Calderdale LEA is piloting new ways of working with adults with learning difficulties, through collaboration with the social services department. The LEA has set up two Learning Gateway projects, one of which is working particularly well. Social services and LEA staff work together with the learners. This has increased staff-to-learner ratios, enabled staff to learn from each other, and given learners more control and more choice. Staff and learners are enthusiastic about the new approach. Another project, in conjunction with a parents' centre, is successfully working with young mothers to improve their mathematics and English and combat social exclusion. This work has great potential and learners are enthusiastic about it.

67. Learners take many different routes into learning. Some are introduced by a carer, others are referred by a jobcentre or find out about classes through word of mouth. Few learners respond to public advertisements for courses, and few receive any detailed guidance when selecting a course. Once on a course, learners may be supported by a trained support worker from the LEA or another agency, a trained volunteer or an untrained helper. The LEA's workers provide effective learning support to learners with learning difficulties. Other learners do not always receive adequate support. Tutors help learners with personal and welfare matters and often have good links with other agencies.

68. Some literacy and numeracy sessions use narrow methods of teaching and learning. There is often too much reliance on worksheets and too few real-life tasks. Some tutors tend to exercise too much control over what the learners do, leaving little space for experimentation and independent work. Creative writing is relatively rare, although in one session learners enjoyed writing on bananas. When computers are used, their full potential is not exploited. For instance, learners sometimes fill in a worksheet by hand and then copy the whole text onto the computer. In a few of the sessions for adults with learning difficulties, there is too much emphasis on following instructions exactly, leaving too little space for self-expression. Occasionally, staff make inappropriate use of repeated questioning, as they endeavour to get a particular answer from a learner. However, tutors generally have a good rapport with their learners and they work exceptionally hard to provide positive learning experiences.

69. Across the whole area of learning, the work of LEA staff is hampered by inadequate resources. Tutors have insufficient time to carry out vital tasks such as liaising with partner agencies and planning and reviewing learning with individual learners. Most teaching sessions only last for two hours. This is frequently too short. Learners are sometimes put under pressure to finish tasks while tutors rush from one learner to another, trying to ensure everyone has enough attention. In some literacy and numeracy

sessions there are too few staff. In one observed session there was one tutor with 10 learners. The situation is made more difficult by the diversity of learners in each group. Literacy and numeracy classes frequently have a mixture of learners with learning difficulties, learners with disabilities, learners without disabilities and even ESOL learners. There is often a wide range of levels, from pre-entry to pre-general certificate of secondary education (GCSE). This places a great strain on the tutors. Staff-to-learner ratios are satisfactory or good in sessions for learners with learning difficulties, as support staff are present to assist the tutor. Most groups also suffer from insufficient teaching and learning materials. In particular, there is insufficient real-life material for literacy and numeracy classes. This limits how tutors can respond to individual needs and contextualise literacy skills. For example, learners do not have access to the driving theory test CD-ROM. There are insufficient materials for independent study. Some groups meet in rooms that are far too small. Some learners have no opportunities to use a computer, or have to go to another part of the building to use one. The computers have no specialist software and equipment, although many learners would benefit from larger keys, keys labelled in lower-case letters and pointing devices that are easier to use than the standard mouse. Many staff do not have sufficient computer skills themselves to make best use of computers as a learning tool. Tutors are concerned about insufficient resources and frequently bring in materials and equipment from home.

70. Assessment is inadequate. Initial assessment of learners' needs is particularly poor. Learners joining literacy and numeracy classes are given a short screening test. However, this does not identify their learning needs in detail. Diagnostic assessment is not available for dyslexia. Each learner has a brief initial interview. Tutors do not have enough time, or a confidential setting, to carry out detailed interviews. Tutors working with adults with learning difficulties do not have the resources to provide adequate initial assessment. Some tutors create their own assessment tools. For instance, one tutor gives new learners a set of Russian dolls and observes how they interact with them. All tutors observe their learners and seek to identify their needs, but this is done informally and is not systematic or thorough. The weaknesses in initial assessment are reflected in poor individual learning plans. Reviews of learning rarely lead to the setting of clear targets. Tutors are conscientious about marking learners' work, but they rarely link assessment decisions to assessment criteria. Written feedback is seldom sufficiently evaluative.

71. There is insufficient focus on the needs of ESOL learners. The literacy and numeracy screening test that is used is totally unsuitable for this group of learners. Most of the learning materials currently available are not suitable. Most staff do not have the relevant skills and experience to support ESOL learners appropriately.

Leadership and management

72. The foundation curriculum is poorly managed. Roles and responsibilities are not effectively structured. Tutors are left with sole responsibility for managing learners' progress. Managers have no effective methods for managing progress and achievement. Co-ordinators have only 20 hours a week to perform demanding roles. They do not take part in key quality assurance processes, such as the observation of

teaching and learning. Teamwork is difficult to establish and team meetings are not working effectively in the literacy and numeracy provision. Staff who work with adults with learning difficulties have had some success in establishing teamwork and have begun to make significant improvements. Although senior staff have a clear vision, there is insufficient understanding at other levels about how the strategies for providing literacy and numeracy learning might be introduced. Fundamental issues, such as the disadvantage to learners of the 10-week break over the summer, have still to be tackled. There are many isolated examples of good practice, but few mechanisms for sharing them.

73. The self-assessment process did not adequately involve co-ordinators, tutors, learners and partner organisations. The self-assessment report is not sufficiently evaluative and few strengths and weaknesses are fully and accurately identified. Major weaknesses in fundamental processes, such as initial assessment, were not identified.

Family learning

Grade 3

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good development of learners' confidence and social skills
- effective community partnerships
- curriculum which responds to the needs and interests of communities and groups

Weaknesses

- limited focus on individual learning needs
- unsuitable accommodation for family learning at one centre
- incomplete quality assurance

Achievement and standards

74. There is good development of learners' confidence and social skills on family learning and community development courses. Learners on family learning courses acquire a greater understanding of how children learn. They demonstrate effective skills of working with and supporting their children on a variety of arts and craft-based courses, and are able to transfer this learning to their home activities with the children. Learners form new relationships, value the social networks and appreciate the benefits of working in a supportive group. Some learners progress to other community activity. For example, parents in a local primary school started their learning by helping children to produce a wall hanging, and then progressed on to a computing course. They expressed an interest in becoming more involved in the life of the school, and identified a need to develop committee skills. They now make a significant contribution to the life of the school.

75. Standards of learners' work are generally satisfactory. Learners attain standards consistent with their previous levels of experience. For example, a group of older learners in a community flat, with no previous experience of making greetings cards, have achieved reasonable standards of work in a short space of time and are pleased with their progress. Learners on family learning arts courses, with good prior knowledge and experience of working with children, gain new ideas and skills that they are able to use in their existing employment.

Quality of education and training

76. Community partnerships are being used effectively to widen participation and target specific groups of disengaged, non-traditional learners. There are 113 new learners starting on the courses offered for the summer term in 2003. The area recruits the highest proportion of people from minority ethnic groups, comprising 13 per cent of the LEA's provision. As well as attracting new learners, there are positive outcomes for

members of the local community. The service works with a wide range of local schools, voluntary organisations and tenants' associations, as well as regional and national agencies. Work with three tenants' associations has resulted in attracting new learners to the provision. These links are used successfully to bid jointly for funds to develop resources for community-based learning. For example, a local school has acquired external funding to support the building of a new ACL centre.

77. Consultation with community groups results in a clear link between group needs and curriculum development. The curriculum responds to the needs and interests of the community. Of the 37 courses offered during the week of inspection, 13 are new. Community access co-ordinators have worked with a tenants' group that wanted to pilot courses in Spanish and first aid, and to identify community needs on their estate. The courses have successfully engaged local residents and developed their ability to contribute to the life of the community. Partnerships with a local voluntary organisation have resulted in the development of new computing courses. These have supported the skills development of volunteers, who now provide computing activities for parents and pre-school children. As a result of community consultation, community access and family learning co-ordinators provide a range of taster sessions. These encourage progression to other learning opportunities. Taster sessions in art and craft are used to enable members of a local tenants' association to develop skills that might be used to set up a small enterprise project.

78. The standard of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Tutors are enthusiastic and well prepared. Most teaching has been carefully planned. Most family learning sessions focus clearly on developing adults' ability to work with their children. Tutors present a variety of stimulating and challenging art and craft and play activities. These are used to improve adults' abilities to support their children's development. Tutors ensure that learners work in a supportive group, and they are able to respond to the needs of both adults and children. The high levels of tutor support are valued by learners. A tutor in a family learning art and craft class effectively promotes equality and diversity through the use of methods and materials that present positive images of minority ethnic groups. In less effective classes, tutors are unsure about the purpose of the course or the target group. Course aims are not always clear and some sessions do not link objectives to individual learning plans. Some sessions focus on activities, without clear links to learning objectives. On some family learning courses, tutors focus exclusively on the learning of the children.

79. Most courses are staffed by tutors with suitable qualifications for teaching adults. Some tutors also have higher-level subject qualifications. They have a variety of relevant experience which they bring to their teaching. This is used effectively to guide and support learners. Tutors demonstrate understanding of, and sensitivity to, the barriers faced by learners. On family learning courses, some tutors have experience of working with children.

80. Learners receive supportive informal feedback on their progress. During observed sessions most tutors gave positive feedback to learners on their achievement, and constructive suggestions for improvement. However, learning is not formally assessed.

Reviews of progress do not take place until the end of the course.

81. There is satisfactory guidance and support for learners. Informal advice is available through the family learning co-ordinators. More formal guidance is available at one local community centre from external adult guidance workers employed by another agency. Learners receive information about how to contact the appropriate guidance worker. There is no evidence of the take-up and impact of this service. There is very little evidence that tutors plan, or give advice and guidance to learners on, progression routes.

82. The accommodation for family learning at one centre is unsuitable. Swimming classes for parents and children, representing 25 per cent of the provision during the week of inspection, take place on one of the main ACL sites. The accommodation is outdated and dilapidated, and is not fit for purpose. There is no wheelchair access. The swimming pool area has changing rooms which have little regard for privacy. There are cramped passageways around the pool itself, some slippery surfaces and rusting metal steps for access to the pool. These represent a considerable health and safety risk. A family learning art and craft course takes place in the same building. The room used is cluttered with items belonging to other activity groups. Accommodation in a local community flat is cramped. The use of an iron and ironing board poses a health and safety risk in a confined space to a group of older learners with some physical disabilities.

83. There is insufficient focus on individual learning needs. There is no formal initial assessment of learning needs on family learning courses. Learners are given an individual learning plan that prescribes group learning goals, and is used as a basis for negotiating course content rather than identifying individual needs. On some family learning music courses, for example, planning does not respond to the identified needs of the group. The tutors' use of individual learning plans does not allow learners to identify literacy, language and numeracy needs. Not all tutors are aware that they can refer learners to the basic skills co-ordinators. Individual learning plans are too prescriptive and are not used consistently across the range of provision. Some learners do not take responsibility for these plans because they do not understand their purpose.

Leadership and management

84. There is a clear vision for the future development of family learning and community development courses. The LEA's strategy is to work closely with communities to ensure that learning promotes social inclusion. This influences curriculum planning and development. There is a strong focus on community capacity building. At a local school, the community development team is working in partnership with the head teacher to develop the school as a resource for local learning. It is too early to evaluate the impact of these strategies on learners.

85. Quality assurance is incomplete. Individual or group learning plans are not used consistently. There is an emerging system for recording and analysing data on outcomes and destinations. However, this has not been in use long enough to contribute to planning and improve teaching and learning. There is no systematic internal moderation of accredited courses. New tutors are observed but there is no evidence of observation

of existing tutors. Observation reports do not identify action points. Staff training and development opportunities are available, although not all tutors have received information about them. Family learning and community access co-ordinators are not involved in target-setting. Managers are not fully involved in the self-assessment process and tutors are not involved at all. The self-assessment report was insufficiently detailed. It identified some strengths and weaknesses in full, some in part and others not at all.