REINSPECTION REPORT

Shropshire LEA Reinspection

28 May 2004

ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

Inspectors use a seven-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of learning sessions. The descriptors for the seven grades are:

- *grade 1 - excellent*
- *grade 2 - very good*
- *grade 3 - good*
- *grade 4 - satisfactory*
- *grade 5 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 6 - poor*
- *grade 7 - very poor.*

Inspectors use a five-point scale to summarise their judgements about the quality of provision in occupational/curriculum areas. The same scale is used to describe the quality of leadership and management, which includes quality assurance and equality of opportunity. The descriptors for the five grades are:

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - unsatisfactory*
- *grade 5 - very weak.*

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

SEVEN-POINT SCALE	FIVE-POINT SCALE
grade 1	grade 1
grade 2	
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	

Adult Learning Inspectorate

The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) was established under the provisions of the *Learning and Skills Act 2000* to bring the inspection of all aspects of adult learning and work-based learning within the remit of a single inspectorate. The ALI is responsible for inspecting a wide range of government-funded learning, including:

- work-based learning for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- the University for Industry's **learndirect** provision
- Adult and Community Learning
- learning and job preparation programmes funded by Jobcentre Plus
- education and training in prisons, at the invitation of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons.

Inspections are carried out in accordance with the *Common Inspection Framework* by teams of full-time inspectors and part-time associate inspectors who have knowledge of, and experience in, the work which they inspect. All providers are invited to nominate a senior member of their staff to participate in the inspection as a team member.

REINSPECTION REPORT

Shropshire LEA Reinspection

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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Shropshire LEA (the LEA) provides adult and community learning through its adult and community learning service (the service), part of the education directorate. It provides family learning and some of the other areas of learning at the Gateway Education and Arts Centre in Shrewsbury, servicing the county town and surrounding areas. It also subcontracts provision to collaborative partners in the community. In 2003-04, 10 community partners are subcontracted to deliver provision across the county. The subcontractors include three further education colleges and a sixth-form college, voluntary organisations, schools and the library service. All the provision is non-accredited.

2. Shropshire is the largest inland rural county in England. There are approximately 290,000 people living in the county council area, but the density of population is very low. The unemployment rate stands at 1.3 per cent, compared with 2.4 per cent nationally and 2.9 per cent in the West Midlands. People over the age of retirement make up approximately 31 per cent of the population. There is much farming-based activity, although Shropshire County Council is the largest employer in the area. The minority ethnic population is 1 per cent of the total, compared with 6.8 per cent in England as a whole. The percentage of young people achieving five general certificates of secondary education at grade C or above stands at 60 per cent, compared with 53 per cent nationally.

3. The service receives just over £392,000 from the local Learning and Skills Council (LSC). There is separate funding of around £245,000 for family learning including language, literacy and numeracy, neighbourhood learning in disadvantaged communities, and other projects. The total net budget for the service is £637,000. A quarter of the funds are allocated to the subcontracted partners, all of which are members of a community education federation. The aim of the federation is to form a wider adult learning group through Shropshire Learning Network, the county's lifelong learning partnership.

4. Funds allocated to subcontractors are linked to eight priority areas for the county council. These areas are information, advice and guidance; overcoming barriers to learning; improving delivery; developing quality assurance; improving availability; promoting progression; reaching out to under-represented groups; and new ways of learning.

5. The largest area of provision is visual and performing arts and media, with 37 per cent of all the learners. This is followed by family learning with 18 per cent, hospitality, sport and leisure with 16 per cent, languages with 14 per cent and information and communications technology (ICT) with 8 per cent.

6. The service is now managed by the adult and community learning manager who is

responsible to the assistant director of education for community services. He in turn reports to the corporate director of education services and the cabinet member for education. A cross-party committee scrutinises the service's work. Since the previous inspection, the county council has made several changes. In addition to creating the new post of adult and community learning manager to run the service, it enhanced the role of the family learning co-ordinator, appointed an adult education manager at the Gateway Education and Arts Centre and established the post of centre manager to run the Gateway Education and Arts Centre. A new learning services worker has been appointed to provide learning support. The service is delivered mainly by part-time tutors. Currently there are 110 tutors employed directly by the service. Eighty are based at the Gateway Education and Arts Centre and 30 are in family learning.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Information & communications technology

7. Shropshire LEA provides ICT courses from eight centres across the county including the Gateway Education and Arts Centre. It also subcontracts provision to seven providers such as voluntary organisations, schools, colleges and libraries. Some of the centres are in deprived wards. There is a range of non-accredited introductory courses, including computers for absolute beginners, introduction to e-mail and internet, and computing - go digital. Learners can progress to the other courses at the same level.

8. During 2003-04, 298 learners have enrolled on 34 ICT courses. Courses run in the daytime and evenings during the week. Most recruit mature learners, many of them over 60 years of age. New courses at the Gateway Education and Arts Centre recruit more men than women. They include web page design and computers for absolute beginners, and are offered in the evenings. The library project running in south Shropshire has recruited 176 learners since November 2004. The learners attend one- or two-hourly individual taster sessions in libraries near their home.

9. During the main inspection week, 11 courses were running and there were 73 learners, 20 of them in the subcontracted provision.

10. Nine tutors provide the ICT programme. The ICT team at the Gateway Education and Arts Centre consists of three tutors. One tutor supports the library project and there are five tutors in the subcontracted provision. The adult and community learning manager manages the provision across the county and works closely with the Gateway's adult education manager and with subcontracted partners.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

11. During the reinspection period, there were 266 learners and 320 enrolments on 23 sports and leisure courses at nine centres throughout Shropshire. The activities take place in community centres, village halls, a specialist adult education centre, schools, and further education colleges. The programme includes recreational learning activities such as astrology, sugarcraft, navigation for hill walkers, croquet and bridge at several levels. It also includes health and fitness classes such as yoga (at several levels and of different types), tai chi, and a range of keep fit classes. Most operate for 36 weeks in three-term blocks from September. Classes take place on weekdays, both during the day and in the evening. The courses vary in length from 36 weeks, to single session tasters and seven-session short courses. Sessions vary in length from one and a half to two hours. The programme is delivered by 17 part-time tutors.

12. Eighty-eight per cent of the learners are women. Nine per cent are recorded as having a disability, and one is from an unspecified minority ethnic group. Thirty-four per cent of the learners are over 60 and only three are under 19. There are 46 learners in recreational learning, and 274 on health and fitness activities. In the previous two terms there were 960 enrolments on 79 sports and leisure courses. No accurate data is available for the previous full year.

13. Most (83 per cent) of the sports and leisure provision is delivered directly by the service, mainly at or through the Gateway Education and Arts Centre. The adult education manager is in charge of operations at the Gateway Education and Arts Centre. The remainder is managed by centre managers and co-ordinators employed by the subcontractors. Shropshire LEA's adult and community learning manager has overall responsibility for the programme and for budget management. Subcontractors identify courses they believe there is a need for, and make bids to the LEA to fund them.

Visual & performing arts & media

14. Visual and performing arts and media courses comprise the largest part of the service's programme, with 37 per cent of the total enrolments. Learning is delivered both directly and through three subcontractors.

15. There are 69 courses offered at a range of venues across the county including the Gateway Education and Arts Centre in Shrewsbury. Twenty-six of the courses are in performing arts, 41 in visual arts and two in lens media. They include drawing, watercolour painting, creative textiles, pottery, saxophone, piano, salsa dancing, guitar and camcorder. Short courses, weekend workshops and taster sessions take place throughout the year.

16. All the courses are non-accredited. Most have a mix of beginners and improvers. All venues are accessible for learners with restricted mobility. Classes are offered during the day, evening and at weekends. They are usually two hours long and run for between four and 12 weeks.

17. There were 485 active enrolments during the main inspection week and 2,208 over the whole year. There are 39 tutors at the Gateway Education and Arts Centre, and a further unspecified number of sessional tutors employed by subcontractors.

English, languages & communications

18. The service offers a range of non-accredited courses in Spanish, French, Italian, German, Russian, Japanese language and culture, Chinese language and culture, Latin and classical Greek. It also runs courses in creative writing, writing magazine articles, poetry writing and independent living skills.

19. Since September 2003, 302 learners have enrolled on these courses, and 157 are attending at present. Thirty-five per cent of learners are men, 2 per cent are from minority ethnic groups and 3 per cent have disclosed a disability. Thirty-one per cent of learners are over 60 and 10 per cent receive fee concessions.

20. Twenty courses were running during the inspection period. This constitutes 14 per cent of all the provision. Courses vary in length from two-hour tasters to 40 hours. Classes meet once a week for between one and a quarter and two and a quarter hours. Daytime and evening courses are offered at beginner and intermediate levels. Sixty-five per cent of courses are held in the daytime. Seventy per cent of courses are managed directly by the service. All but one are held at the Gateway Education and Arts Centre in Shrewsbury. The management of other courses is subcontracted to three local colleges. Only three courses are currently held outside Shrewsbury.

21. The adult and community learning manager manages the provision across the county and works closely with the Gateway's centre manager and with subcontracted partners. The service's provision is taught by eight sessional tutors, teaching between one and a half and nine hours a week. Partner providers each employ one sessional tutor. The local sixth-form college also uses one full-time tutor to deliver courses.

Family learning

22. The family learning provision comprises family literacy, language and numeracy (FLLN) and wider family learning courses. The longer FLLN courses involve parents working with their children in school. A similar model is used for Early Start courses, which target parents whose children are three and under. The Keeping up with the Children courses are for parents only, and are targeted at raising the level of parents' skills to enable them to assist their children's learning. The wider family learning tasters and workshops are short courses at which parents and children can share fun activities like arts and crafts and dancing. Courses are held across the county, in schools and nurseries. A few courses are delivered through partnership arrangements. During 2003-04, 117 learners enrolled on family literacy or numeracy, 55 learners on keeping up with the children, and 218 learners on wider family learning courses. There are currently 157 adults and approximately 127 children taking part in family literacy and numeracy and wider family learning courses. Five of the adults and seven children are in partnership provision. A few learners are men, and a small number of grandparents attend the courses. The provision is managed by a full-time family learning co-ordinator and taught by 30 part-time tutors. This area of learning comprises 18 per cent of the adult and community learning provision.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	11
Number of inspection days	58
Number of learner interviews	240
Number of staff interviews	55
Number of subcontractor interviews	10
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	32
Number of partner/external agency interviews	5
Number of visits	32

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

23. The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it.

24. At the previous inspection, provision in English, languages and communications was unsatisfactory as was the service's leadership and management. The arrangements for equal opportunities were satisfactory but those for quality assurance were unsatisfactory. The quality of learning was good in health, social care and public services and other adult and community learning, and satisfactory in ICT, family learning, hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, and visual and performing arts and media.

25. At the end of the reinspection the quality of learning in ICT, family learning and English, languages and communications is satisfactory, but in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, and visual and performing arts and media it is unsatisfactory. Health, social care

and public services and other adult and community learning were not inspected as they had too few learners. Leadership and management, including quality assurance, remain unsatisfactory. The arrangements for equality of opportunity remain satisfactory.

26. The service has been referred to the LSC for emergency action.

GRADES

Grades awarded at previous inspection

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	3
Quality assurance	4

Information & communications technology	3

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	3

Health, social care & public services	2

Visual & performing arts & media	3

English, languages & communications	4

Foundation programmes	None

Family learning	3

Other adult and community learning	2

Grades awarded at reinspection

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	3
Quality assurance	4

Information & communications technology	3
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

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

Visual & performing arts & media	4
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	4

English, languages & communications	3
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

Family learning	3
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

27. In family learning, ICT and visual and performing arts and media, learners achieve their personal objectives.

28. **In family learning, learners continue to gain good skills, and the knowledge and confidence to support their children at school.** Some of them are looking for employment in the care or teaching sectors. Learners gain a better understanding of the school curriculum, key stages, teaching methods and the terminology used in schools. Learners' children have increased confidence and do better in assessment tests.

29. **ICT learners gain good skills** in using computers and appropriate software to become more effective in their daily lives. They also gain very good levels of confidence in handling computers, sending letters and e-mails, and searching for information on the internet.

30. **Learners in visual and performing arts and media gain significant personal and social benefit from the classes.** Their confidence and self-worth grow considerably. They discover new creative skills and techniques. However, these gains are no more than what would be expected for this area of learning.

31. The achievement of personal objectives is satisfactory in English, languages and communications, and hospitality, sport, leisure and travel. The learners develop appropriate listening and speaking skills and use them on holiday or to help their children. Learners in sports and recreation improve their physical mobility as well as their mental and emotional well-being. All learners gain social benefits and develop friendships through classes.

32. The standard of learners' work is satisfactory in all areas of learning. They are performing and achieving skills at the level expected.

33. Learners' motivation is very high in all areas of learning, and attendance levels are satisfactory.

Quality of education and training

34. Sixty-three learning sessions were observed during the inspection. Eighty-nine per cent were satisfactory or better.

35. There is good teaching and learning in ICT, English, languages and communications, family learning and in yoga. The managers and staff have given considerable attention to the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection and the grade profile for learning sessions has improved. However, much teaching in visual and performing arts and media is unsatisfactory.

36. **Most learning sessions are well planned, with clear aims and objectives for learners at different levels and abilities.** Tutors respond effectively to learners' needs, and cover topics that learners often request. They employ a wide variety of effective, interactive teaching methods. Teaching in yoga and recreation classes is good. Most sessions include a good variety of teaching and learning methods including discussion, exploration, pair-work, question and answer, and independent practice.

37. **Learners are engaged, motivated and contribute well to sessions.** They often develop their thoughts and ideas through self-evaluation. Individual learners are challenged well in most sessions. Most sessions are very well organised and planned, but the paperwork that supports planning is weak.

38. **Much teaching in visual and performing arts and media is poorly planned** and unsatisfactory. Learners' starting points are rarely identified by tutors in order to plan their learning. This weakness was identified at the previous inspection. Some learning activities are not sufficiently challenging. This was also a weakness at the previous inspection.

39. **Resources are particularly good in ICT, visual and performing arts and media, and family learning.** They are satisfactory in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, but unsatisfactory in English, languages and communications.

40. **All the ICT centres have up-to-date, reliable, industry standard hardware and software backed up by good support from technicians.** The accommodation is good and welcoming. Handouts are well produced, in colour or larger print, clear and very useful for learners to use at home. Staff are well qualified and many have up-to-date industrial experience. Most tutors have teaching qualifications and there is a satisfactory range of staff development opportunities for new tutors. Good resources was a strength in ICT at the previous inspection.

41. **The Gateway Education and Arts Centre provides an inspirational learning environment,** particularly for learners on visual and performing arts and media courses.

42. **There is a good range of innovative teaching and learning resources in family learning.**

43. **The teaching resources in languages are inadequate.** Although most tutors provide their own effective teaching materials, there is insufficient use of visual aids, videos and computer-based materials. There is limited access to computers in the classroom.

44. Resources are satisfactory for hospitality, sport, leisure and travel. Equipment for classes such as yoga and movement and fitness has improved. Learners are often given comprehensive learning materials to allow them to practise their activity at home.

45. **There is a good range of courses in English, languages and communications, and a very good library project to reach disadvantaged learners.** The 'Click, learn and connect' project is well planned, has good facilities, and is implemented and monitored effectively. It has successfully targeted learners living in areas of rural deprivation in south Shropshire. The service offers a good range of language courses to meet the needs of learners. There are basic courses and taster sessions in seven European languages including Welsh, two Asian languages and two ancient languages.

46. **Assessment is weak across the whole provision.** This includes initial as well as continuous assessment. Learners in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel do not complete a pre-activity readiness questionnaire before participating in exercise. The assessment and monitoring of learners' progress is weak. Tutors do not give clear guidance on what the learners need to do to improve. **Learners' literacy and numeracy needs are not effectively identified.**

47. Pastoral and learning support are good in family learning and satisfactory in all other areas of learning.

Leadership and management

48. The service has well-established partnership arrangements that offer an effective opportunity to share experience, resources and development work in literacy, numeracy and language provision across the county. It has worked closely to create opportunities for wider partnerships, staff development and enhanced learning opportunities in the community. The LEA is also working effectively with Shropshire County Council's IT group and other partnerships to develop its e-learning strategies. Good collaborative work with partners was a strength at the previous inspection.

49. The service continues to meet the needs of many disadvantaged learners. It provides effective support for new initiatives to widen participation, particularly at the Gateway Education and Arts Centre, promoting access for learners with disabilities and mental health difficulties. There has been a 200 per cent increase in the number of schools in disadvantaged areas in which the service provides family learning.

50. There is good use of feedback from learners and tutors to improve the quality of learning.

51. **Curriculum management is inadequate in all areas of learning except family learning.** There is ineffective curriculum leadership and support for subject tutors. Although work has begun to establish curriculum-family groups in the direct provision, this is at an early stage of development and has not yet been extended to the subcontracted provision. Where managers have put significant amounts of work into dealing with the weaknesses, grades for areas of learning have improved, for example in English, languages and communications. However, the grades for two of the most significant areas of learning, visual and performing arts and media, and hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, with over half of the total enrolments, have fallen since the previous inspection. The collection and use of data to plan provision was a weakness at the previous inspection and still is. Performance management is informal and ineffective.

52. **The service has been slow to remedy the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection in November 2002.** Development work only effectively started in January 2004 and has yet to have significant impact. Key weaknesses in assessment and the monitoring of learners' progress were identified at the previous inspection and have yet to be resolved. Two areas of learning have experienced declining standards. Some learners are making good progress and achieving satisfactory standards despite the deficiencies in management and teaching in parts of the provision.

53. **The service has not yet developed a strategy for additional learning support.** There

is insufficient awareness of learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs among tutors, and no clear guidance on how they should identify and meet such needs.

54. **There is insufficient planning and monitoring of equal opportunities arrangements.** The service has no action plan for the implementation of its equal opportunities policy in adult and community learning. There is still insufficient information and guidance for learners on their rights and responsibilities. The service does not systematically monitor learners' understanding of equal opportunities, or how tutors are promoting equality through their curriculum and assessment practices.

55. The quality assurance system is incomplete. There is no shared understanding of the quality assurance framework among the staff and managers. The service has made good progress towards introducing systems to improve the quality of learning. The grade profile for teaching in family learning, ICT and English, languages and communications has improved.

56. There is insufficient rigour in the observation of teaching and learning. There are too few observations, and some sessions provided by the subcontractors have been observed but not graded. Some of the observations in areas such as sports, and visual and performing arts and media have been conducted by non-specialists. Some of the health and safety concerns identified by inspectors were not picked up during observations. The focus of observations is more on teaching than on learning and attainment. Tutors do not take responsibility for the process of quality improvement in the classroom.

57. The self-assessment report is inaccurate. It is not analytical and does not identify specific weaknesses in each area of learning. Two areas of learning that were graded satisfactory at the previous inspection are now unsatisfactory. Visual and performing arts and media is graded good in the self-assessment report but inspectors judged it to be unsatisfactory. Judgements in the self-assessment report are not accompanied by supporting evidence.

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

Leadership and management

Strengths
- good collaborative work with partners
- effective support for new initiatives to widen participation
- good use of learners' and tutors' feedback

Weaknesses
- insufficient coherent planning of adult and community learning

- slow management action to deal with weaknesses identified at the previous inspection
- insufficient planning and monitoring of equal opportunities arrangements
- insufficiently established quality assurance framework
- insufficient rigour in the observation of teaching and learning
- inaccurate self-assessment

Information & communications technology

Strengths

- good development of learners' confidence and skills
- good teaching and learning
- particularly good resources
- very good library project to engage disadvantaged learners

Weaknesses

- inadequate assessment for some learners
- ineffective identification of learning needs and progression routes
- insufficiently rigorous quality assurance

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Strengths

- good teaching in yoga and recreation classes

Weaknesses

- insufficient suitably qualified staff
- weak initial assessment
- ineffective curriculum management to meet learners' needs
- inadequate quality assurance

Visual & performing arts & media

Strengths

- good personal and social gains for learners
- inspirational learning environment at the Gateway Education and Arts Centre

Weaknesses

- much unsatisfactory teaching
- weak assessment
- inadequate curriculum management

English, languages & communications

Strengths

- good teaching and learning
- good range of language courses
- good use of feedback from learners and tutors

Weaknesses

- inadequate range of teaching resources
- inadequate recording of assessment and individual target-setting
- insufficient professional support for tutors

Family learning

Strengths

- good gains in skills and confidence to support children's learning
- good teaching and learning
- particularly good teaching and learning resources
- effective personal and learning support

Weaknesses

- weak assessment
- insufficient clear progression routes
- incomplete quality assurance system

Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

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

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

Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

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

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

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT   Grade 4

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

Strengths

- good collaborative work with partners
- effective support for new initiatives to widen participation
- good use of learners' and tutors' feedback

Weaknesses

- insufficient coherent planning of adult and community learning
- slow management action to deal with weaknesses identified at the previous inspection
- insufficient planning and monitoring of equal opportunities arrangements
- insufficiently established quality assurance framework
- insufficient rigour in the observation of teaching and learning
- inaccurate self-assessment

58. The service continues to have good, well-established partnership arrangements which provide valuable community learning resources, a common prospectus for ease of reference and information, and a wide range of provision. It is an active member of the Shropshire Lifelong Learning Partnership, through which it supports the development of literacy, numeracy and language provision across the county. Subcontracted partners continue to meet regularly with the service as part of a community education federation. This partnership group continues to be valued by its members as an effective opportunity to share experience and resources. The federation produces a common prospectus for the Shrewsbury area, which is widely distributed and accessible online. The service works effectively with a local college, university and arts association in the running of the Gateway Education and Arts Centre. This centre is valued by the local community and is a good resource for learners. Information technology (IT) resources have been improved in the centre. The post of centre manager has recently been created to provide dedicated operational management of the centre. The service has well-established links with local voluntary groups. It has worked successfully with these groups to create opportunities for wider partnerships, staff development and enhanced learning opportunities in the community. The service is also working effectively with Shropshire County Council's IT group and with other partners to develop its e-learning strategies. For example, it is currently engaged in a project to identify community venues and partnerships that will support the development of ICT for isolated rural communities.

59. Communications are adequate. Since the previous inspection, the service has worked effectively to improve its communications with managers of subcontracted

provision. The subcontractors value this. The management team meets regularly, although minutes of meetings are not always sufficiently detailed. A new quality assurance team has been set up for the direct provision, and there are plans for the team to be extended. There have been improvements in team-working and communication with some tutors. However, other tutors receive too little professional support and do not benefit from existing communication structures. The resources are satisfactory.

60. The adult learning plan has clear links with Shropshire County Council's strategic plan, corporate priorities and lifelong learning and community strategies. However, the strategic planning priorities are not understood by all staff. The service does not sufficiently reinforce these priorities to set a clear direction for future provision. It does not effectively collate and analyse identified needs to develop coherent provision across the county and measure the return on its current investments. The service has recently carried out research to identify the gaps in its provision. It has not yet linked the results of this research to other indirect provision in order to plan future needs. There is insufficient curriculum planning for specific areas of learning. As at the time of the previous inspection, some provision depends too heavily on tutor availability.

61. The service has been slow to remedy the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection in November 2002. Development work has taken place following the management restructure in January 2004. However, this has yet to have a significant impact. At the previous inspection, key weaknesses were identified in initial assessment, assessment practice and the monitoring of learners' progress, but these have yet to be resolved. The service has not yet developed a strategy for additional learning support, although a half-time learning services worker has been appointed to work in the direct provision. There is insufficient curriculum leadership and support for subject tutors. Work has begun to establish curriculum family groups in the direct provision, but this is at an early stage of development and has not yet been extended to the subcontracted provision. One of the areas of learning has improved, but two have been graded lower than at the previous inspection. A new individual learner record management information system has been put in place since the previous inspection. The production of appropriate data on individual learners is now a pre-condition of receiving funding for subcontractors. However, the service has not yet effectively analysed its data to promote target-setting. There are targets for enrolment, but not for retention, achievement or progression rates. There is too much reliance on informal methods of performance management. Although access to staff training and development opportunities is satisfactory, the new appraisal system is not being effectively linked with the outcomes of lesson observations, or used to set targets for individual members of staff.

Equality of opportunity   Contributory grade 3

62. The service continues to provide effective support for new initiatives to widen participation. The Gateway Education and Arts Centre has developed good links with local organisations to promote access for learners with disabilities and mental health difficulties. There has been a 200 per cent increase in the number of schools in disadvantaged areas in which the service provides family learning. There is good

celebration of achievement and diversity on the family learning programmes. The service has recently put forward a proposal for the development of two neighbourhood learning centres in highly disadvantaged areas of northeast Shrewsbury. This is part of its continuing support for a project that has successfully increased participation and learner progression in the north of the town. The project has been very successful in attracting learners from disadvantaged areas and developing their skills in a supportive environment.

63. Since the previous inspection, the service has implemented a more consistent fees policy for its subcontractors. The complaints procedure and actions to resolve complaints are now satisfactory. The service is satisfactorily managing the accessibility of its accommodation and is continuing to improve its resources for learners with restricted mobility and sensory impairment.

64. There is insufficient planning and monitoring of equal opportunities arrangements. The service has no action plan to support the implementation of its equal opportunities policy in adult and community learning. Since the previous inspection, most staff have attended training on the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, but not the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. There are no formal plans for further staff training in equal opportunities. There is still little guidance for tutors on support for learners, or the identification of additional support needs. The service has not provided guidance for subcontractors on their responsibilities for implementing equality of opportunity practices under the new service level statement. There are no arrangements for monitoring equality of opportunity practices. Although the service has now changed its enrolment form to capture additional support needs, learners' access to additional support is not always monitored. The service has redeveloped its learners' and tutors' handbooks to include more information on equality of opportunity. However, there is still insufficient information and guidance for learners on their rights and responsibilities. The service does not systematically monitor learners' understanding of equal opportunities, or how tutors are promoting equality through their curriculum and assessment practices. Disability issues are discussed regularly at meetings but insufficient attention is paid to the broader equality issues affecting learners' experiences. For example, some learners do not have sufficient access to childcare facilities and specialist resources. The service has started to collate data by gender and ethnicity. However, as at the previous inspection, it does not have any equality and diversity targets, and it does not analyse equality data effectively in order to target under-represented groups and monitor their retention and achievement rates.

Quality assurance   Contributory grade 4

65. The service makes good use of learners' and tutors' feedback to improve the quality of learning. Learners' views are sought at the end of every course and acted upon to improve the infrastructure as well as the resources for the classes. The questions asked are open and simple to understand. Many learners make very carefully considered responses. Tutors diligently collate and analyse these views and make an accurate report of the findings. This is fed back to the managers for prompt action. The tutors also take note of the things that are not working effectively in the classrooms and make

appropriate changes to meet the learners' needs. For example, yoga mats have been purchased. Timetables are now more appropriate for learners in family learning and languages. There is a good handbook for learners. Learners' views are sought informally and formally, but mainly at or near the end of the course.

66. There is an effective complaints, comments and compliments system in place which is widely used, and a satisfactory monitoring procedure for complaints. All complaints are investigated thoroughly and acted upon to the satisfaction of the learners.

67. There are externally accredited courses in family learning. The arrangements for internal or external verification are satisfactory.

68. Although good-quality learning is the stated aim of the service, quality has not been defined. There is no shared understanding of the quality assurance framework among the staff and managers. The service has made good progress towards introducing systems to improve the quality of learning. Managers have invested significant time and resources into dealing with the weaknesses. Since the previous inspection, the profile of teaching grades in family learning, ICT, and English, languages and communications has improved, but in two of the most significant areas of learning it has deteriorated. The use of quality assurance is not fully established. Course reviews in family learning are inconsistent, as is the use of lesson plans and schemes of work. There are no audits of initial assessment, individual learning plans, schemes of work and lesson plans. The managers do not ensure that their decisions are fully implemented by the staff. Tutors can decide whether to use the recommended documents, and many do not. The guidance to subcontractors on initial assessment and information, advice and guidance is ineffective. There is insufficient sharing of good practice in teaching. There is little analysis of recruitment to taster courses to plan future provision. The monitoring of sports staff's continuous professional updating is inadequate. There is very little attention to attendance and punctuality in visual and performing arts and media.

69. There is insufficient rigour in teaching and learning observations. Since the previous inspection the provider has implemented a good lesson observation system. Great care has been taken to ensure that staff are fully prepared for the planned observation. Tutors are given detailed guidance on observations. So far there have only been 20 lesson observations. Some of the lessons provided by subcontractors have been observed but not graded. Some of the observations in areas such as visual and performing arts and media have been conducted by non-specialists. Some of the key health and safety problems identified by inspectors had not been noted at observations. An appraisal system was introduced in February 2004, but the results of lesson observations are not always used in appraisals. The provider has set a target to observe 25 per cent of the total provision each year. The reason for this figure is not clear. It is not based on any detailed analysis of the issues. Some ICT tutors have been observed more than once. There is insufficient risk assessment in teaching and learning. Tutors new to teaching and to the service are not prioritised for observations. There is no policy for how to deal with unsatisfactory teaching, and no plan for the continuous improvement of teaching and learning. There is insufficient focus on continuous improvement. A good checklist is used in lesson observations, but it is descriptive and does not always require judgements

on each component. The strengths and weaknesses identified in the summary document do not accurately reflect the findings of the lessons. The action plan does not respond to the strengths and weaknesses. There are variations in the analysis of strengths and weaknesses, and insufficient thought is given to how the weaknesses affect the learners. The focus of observations is more on teaching than on learning and attainment. The grades awarded are too generous. For example, the observers did not find any unsatisfactory teaching, but the inspectors found 23 per cent of teaching unsatisfactory in visual and performing arts and media. The weaknesses and action plans are expressed in terms of processes rather than improving learners' experience. Comments, when made, consists of a summary judgement and do not reflect on how teaching can be improved. For example, some of the tutors do not think that they can improve their teaching despite having their weaknesses identified. Most do not evaluate their own teaching even when they are required to do so. Feedback from the tutor on how the observation went has not been disclosed to the observer. The profile of lesson grades has improved where the tutors have taken the responsibility for quality improvement, such as in English, languages and communications and family learning. These tutors have clearly identified the aims and objectives of the courses in comprehensive course information leaflets and through discussions with colleagues and support from managers. There is now a good guidance pack for tutors on improving teaching and learning.

70. The self-assessment report is inaccurate. Although the provider has made good attempts to include its staff in the self-assessment process, the report is not sufficiently analytical and does not identify specific weaknesses in each area of learning. Two areas of learning that were graded satisfactory at the previous inspection are now unsatisfactory. One of them was considered to be good by the provider. Judgements have not been backed up by evidence.

71. The development plan has failed to improve the quality of teaching and learning and deal with the weaknesses sufficiently.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information & communications technology   Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	73	3

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

Strengths

- good development of learners' confidence and skills
- good teaching and learning
- particularly good resources
- very good library project to engage disadvantaged learners

Weaknesses

- inadequate assessment for some learners
- ineffective identification of learning needs and progression routes
- insufficiently rigorous quality assurance

Achievement and standards

72. Learners develop good skills and confidence in the use of ICT. All learners, most of whom are over 60 years of age, are developing computer confidence and overcoming their fears. Many joined courses as absolute beginners and some are fearful of technology. Many learners have no knowledge of computer-related language, and little or no mouse control or keyboard skills. After one or more sessions, these learners are able to use a mouse effectively, log on to networks, open and close files, word process and print without support. Many learners are inspired to practise their new skills and extend their learning at home. Learners produce a satisfactory standard of work. They use the comprehensive handouts and books provided, and achieve their own aims and goals by developing the skills they want to learn. For example, learners can search the internet, send an e-mail, create leaflets for charities, write letters and develop websites for voluntary organisations and schools. One learner is developing web design skills to advance his career prospects. Another uses her new skills to word process letters to her visually impaired mother. She is delighted that she can enlarge and embolden print. A learner with good academic qualifications but no ICT skills developed sufficient skills to complete a national vocational qualification. Learners enjoy their courses and are keen to attend. Attendance and punctuality are excellent.

Quality of education and training

73. Teaching and learning is good. Sixty-two per cent of observed learning sessions were good, a considerable improvement since the previous inspection. In the good sessions, schemes of work and lesson plans include clear learning objectives and a good range of activities to respond to the mixed abilities and interests of learners. The teaching supports older learners well by providing detailed, systematic instruction which is regularly repeated and reinforced. Learners are enthusiastic and well motivated. There is very effective interaction between the learners and tutors. Teachers are clear in their instructions and communicate well with the learners. A good range of appropriate teaching techniques and learning activities are used to support learners' individual needs. For example, there is good use of individual coaching and help. Tutors use interactive websites to help nervous learners develop mouse control. Many tutors demonstrate keystrokes and activities by using data projectors, and learners are often encouraged to support each other. Learning is also good. In one class, learners have developed very sophisticated websites. In another, learners can produce very professional posters and leaflets, downloading graphical images and using a range of computer techniques such as tabs, word art and font styles.

74. There are good resources in the ICT centres, including up-to-date, industry standard and reliable hardware and software. The equipment includes colour inkjet printers, laser printers, scanners, large flat-screen monitors, data projectors and laptop computers. Good technical support is available. The accommodation is good and is welcoming. The workbenches and chairs are of good quality. The rooms are light and airy, with well-designed work stations. However, at the main centre, the ICT room is cramped and the air conditioning too difficult to regulate effectively. The centres are easily accessible, and many have lifts. One of the subcontracted centres has a crèche available for parents. There is adaptive technology available at the Gateway Education and Arts Centre for learners with poor or restricted hand control. Handouts are well produced, clear and very useful to learners, supporting them to continue learning at home. Some handouts are in colour or larger print. Good resources was a strength at the previous inspection.

75. Staff are well qualified and many have up-to-date industrial experience. Most tutors have teaching qualifications and there is a satisfactory range of staff development opportunities for new tutors. In most lessons, there was clear emphasis on health and safety. Tutors check learners' posture, chair height, need for foot and wrist rests, and the room temperature regularly, and reinforce good health and safety working practices.

76. A very good library project has engaged disadvantaged learners. The project, 'Click, learn and connect' has been thought out, implemented and monitored well. The LEA has funded the project and its tutor for 2003-04. The provision is closely monitored by the LEA and the library service. It has successfully targeted learners living in areas of rural deprivation in south Shropshire using leaflet drops, advertisements in local papers and talks to social and voluntary groups. The project has met its targets, and since November 2003 it has successfully recruited 40 per cent of its 178 learners from the targeted postcodes. The facilities are good. The project provides free individual ICT tasters.

Some group sessions are now being provided to teach e-mail. The sessions are well organised and supportive.

77. Although satisfactory for most learners, assessment is inadequate for some. There are inconsistencies in conducting and recording assessments. Some learners have no initial assessment. The tutors do not effectively measure and record their starting point. For example, one learner left two ICT classes because the level was too high and the teaching was not meeting her individual needs. Tutors do not routinely assess learners' ability to control a mouse. Knowledge of the keyboard is not always checked. There is insufficient recording of learners' initial assessment and progress in the new individual learning record. The new system for self-assessment of skills is seldom used. In some classes, there is insufficient formative assessment. Tutors do not fully inform the learners about the progress they have made and the next steps they need to take to progress faster and further. The tutors do not always share learning objectives with the learners and do not assess their progress.

78. There is satisfactory support for all learners. Learners on taster courses are given good advice on which is most appropriate for them. The training is at a basic level and includes how to switch on a computer, word process documents, send an e-mail or search the internet. There is good initial assessment, including numeracy and literacy needs. Tutors have a satisfactory awareness of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills, and in classes they deal with the learners' needs in the classes effectively. There are good session plans, records of learners' progress and signposting to other courses. There is a follow-up telephone call to measure the impact of the tasters.

Leadership and management

79. There is ineffective identification of learning needs and progression routes. There has been very little formal curriculum planning with the LEA's partners to identify gaps in provision and progression routes. Some learners' needs are identified but not met. For example, a successful 'go digital' course has raised learners' expectations, but there is no provision in Shropshire for beginners' training in the use of digital imaging software. At present there are 25 learners waiting for such a course. The LEA plans to train tutors in the skills required and provide funding for additional software. Some courses are under-subscribed or are cancelled. Many of the courses are not developed using market information. Tutors often design courses reflecting their particular skills and knowledge. A learners' survey at the Gateway Education and Arts Centre asked for feedback on proposed or new courses, but it did not include IT courses.

80. Quality assurance is insufficiently rigorous. Some good, new quality assurance processes have been introduced at the Gateway Education and Arts Centre. They are not yet well understood or implemented in ICT. The initial assessment process and individual learning record are not used effectively in all sessions. Schemes of work and lesson plans vary in quality and detail. They are not routinely monitored. There is inadequate use of management data. The new system records enrolments but the data has not yet been analysed to identify retention rates or patterns in enrolment to assess

why some courses are cancelled. There are no targets for retention rates or any assessment of how many learners achieve their learning goals. The lesson observation system is relatively new and ineffective. Some tutors are being observed too frequently in order to meet the 25 per cent target. At one of the subcontractors, observation is not carried out by teaching specialists. The judgements are not evaluative and the lessons have not been graded. There is little support for subcontractors on quality assurance and some have had to devise their own systems.

81. There are regular and effective risk assessments of the providers' premises.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel   Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	323	4

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

Strengths

- good teaching in yoga and recreation classes

Weaknesses

- insufficient suitably qualified staff
- weak initial assessment
- ineffective curriculum management to meet learners' needs
- inadequate quality assurance

Achievement and standards

82. Attendance rates on fitness and leisure programmes are satisfactory, averaging 66 per cent during the inspection. Many learners are older adults and were on holiday at the time of the inspection. Attainment and achievement are satisfactory. Most learners demonstrate appropriate practical skills and have some technical knowledge. Learners make positive physical and psychological gains in classes such as yoga and mindful movement. Some learners have made significant positive improvements to their sense of well-being and physical comfort after just one session. Many value the social benefits and the friendships they develop through classes. Some, who had severely restricted movement after injury to joints, have now made good improvements to their physical mobility.

Quality of education and training

83. There is good teaching in yoga and recreation classes, but the quality of teaching in sports and leisure has declined. Yoga represents 71 per cent of the provision in this area of learning. Most sessions include a good variety of teaching and learning methods including discussion, exploration, pair work, question and answer, and independent practise. Tutors use visually descriptive teaching points to explain and reinforce correct technique in practical sessions. In most sessions, tutors carefully observe physical activity and correct poor performance. In the weaker sessions, they do not correct exercise techniques. Tutors usually offer specific, detailed praise and constructive criticism to individuals to instil confidence and improve performance. Learners are engaged, motivated and contribute well to sessions. They often develop their thoughts and ideas through self-evaluation. Individual learners are challenged well in most sessions. In a few

sessions, learners are not given sufficient alternatives to allow them to work at the level that suits them best. Sessions are usually very well organised and planned carefully, but the supporting paperwork is weak. In one session, learners were taught exercises that carry a high risk of injury and are ineffective.

84. Resources are satisfactory. The rooms used provide suitable environments with appropriate temperatures and ventilation for yoga and fitness classes. In most classes there is sufficient space for activities. In others, space is limited but this does not significantly affect the activities taking place. Equipment for classes such as yoga and movement and fitness has improved. During the previous inspection, mats, blocks and music systems were not available for learners and tutors to use. Comprehensive learning materials are often given to learners to allow them to practise their activity at home. In one movement and fitness class the learners particularly enjoyed the music provided by a pianist.

85. The support for learners is satisfactory. The provision of information, advice and guidance is generally satisfactory. There have been positive developments in the presentation of course leaflets so that they describe more clearly what people will learn. However, many old leaflets are still being used that do not do this. The arrangements in place to provide literacy and numeracy support to sports and leisure learners are satisfactory.

86. There are too few suitably qualified staff. There are insufficient staff to cover extended periods of sickness. Sessions are cancelled when tutors are ill or unavailable. Several examples were identified of classes being cancelled because tutors left and could not be replaced. There is no contingency planning to manage this situation.

87. Initial assessment is weak. This was also the case at the previous inspection. Learners do not complete a pre-activity readiness questionnaire before participating in exercise. The arrangements to ascertain the health of learners through self-certification are not satisfactory. Most learners are questioned about their health by the tutor before they begin an exercise class, and are asked if they have any physical conditions on the form that they complete on enrolment. This is unsatisfactory. Many learners do not contribute to setting their individual learning goals at the start of a programme. In a few sessions, tutors discuss individual aims with each learner. In one session, learners keep journals to reflect on their performance and learning and the impact of these on their everyday lives. Initial fitness is not assessed to ascertain flexibility, cardio-respiratory fitness, balance and stress levels.

88. The curriculum is not planned effectively to meet learners' needs. This was identified at the previous inspection, and there has been little progress since. There are no clear priorities or criteria to guide the planning of the sports and leisure programme. There are no strategic objectives for the development of provision linked to health and well-being, and yet this constitutes 84 per cent of the whole programme. The guidance that exists states that provision should focus on level 1 provision for new learners and beginners. Yoga, however, is offered at several levels. Many learners attend more than one recreational and fitness class and have attended them for several years. There is

little analysis of whether the service has succeeding in recruiting new learners and beginners to sports and leisure courses. There is no provision specifically targeted at men. Only 12 per cent of the learners are men.

89. There is little evidence of discussions between the LEA and its partners about priorities and gaps in the sports and leisure programme, and how these will be met. There has been little market research to identify the needs of potential learners, and no clear and documented overview of sports and leisure learning needs across the LEA. Much provision is planned as a result of informal conversations between centre managers and small numbers of learners, rather than extended collection and analysis of data. There is little consideration of what other organisations, such as those in the private fitness sector, provide. Provision in some centres depends on the availability of tutors. Taster courses are run to test demand, but they are not evaluated.

Leadership and management

90. There are inadequate quality assurance arrangements. Observation of teaching and learning has been established since the previous inspection but it has a number of deficiencies. The criteria used do not take into account the health and safety issues inherent in sports and leisure learning, and the consequent need to ensure that new staff deliver their teaching in a safe and effective manner. Observations of teaching and learning are not carried out by subject specialists, and health and safety issues such as the inadequate health screening have not been identified through the observation of the teaching and learning. There is inadequate risk assessment of the provision. For example, staff who are teaching without suitable qualifications or experience have not been identified through quality assurance monitoring and audits. Similarly, quality assurance audits have not identified that learners' progress is not being recorded effectively, or at all in many classes; or that many tutors do not understand what personal learning objectives are and how they should be incorporated into progress recording; or that schemes of work and lesson plans are of poor quality or completely absent.

91. There is no guidance for tutors or subcontractors on the activities that should be included in sports and fitness programmes, such as initial assessments to ensure learners' health and safety, and sessional risk assessments of multi-use rooms.

92. There is no monitoring of tutors' continuous professional development to ensure they are maintaining their professional qualifications. The information held on tutors' qualifications and experience is often very limited.

93. The self-assessment report on this area of learning was largely inaccurate. The areas identified as strengths were no more than normal practice. The weaknesses identified were not particularly significant, and none of the weaknesses identified by inspectors were in the report. The area of learning was judged satisfactory at the previous inspection. It is now unsatisfactory.

Visual & performing arts & media   Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	485	4

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

Strengths

- good personal and social gains for learners
- inspirational learning environment at the Gateway Education and Arts Centre

Weaknesses

- much unsatisfactory teaching
- weak assessment
- inadequate curriculum management

Achievement and standards

94. Learners gain significant personal and social benefit from the classes they attend. They enjoy their classes and comment positively on their increased confidence and growing sense of self-worth. Many return to education following illness, retirement or bereavement and value the contact with other learners greatly. In one class, five learners recovering from strokes were able to improve their manual dexterity considerably, and in two cases learn to use their left hand for drawing effectively. Learners discover new creative skills and techniques. It was not possible to judge attendance because of poorly kept registers in many classes. There is no reliable data for retention and achievement rates.

Quality of education and training

95. The Gateway Education and Arts Centre provides an inspirational environment for creative learning. The reception area and café are inviting and stimulating, with art and craft displays and appropriate course information. Workspaces and studios are light and airy and have good displays of learners' work. There are exhibitions of the work of renowned artists in the gallery. The accommodation used for dance and drama is pleasant and encourages learning. However, there are not enough pianos for the designated classes, and other classes, such as saxophone, guitar and camcorder, depend on learners owning or hiring their own equipment. The accommodation and facilities in rural centres are usually satisfactory, although a venue for one taster course was poorly lit, damp and inappropriate.

96. The range of provision is satisfactory, although it is traditional, largely historical and

often reliant on the availability of tutors. There is no accredited provision. There is little consultation with rural communities, and no coherent planning is apparent in the provision of courses in some rural centres. There is little evidence of strategic curriculum planning across the region. Courses are often offered to meet the needs of existing learners, although new learners are also recruited to most courses. There are some music and dance classes, but little provision for drama. There is a good range of drawing and painting courses that focus on specific techniques and skills. Opportunities for progression are limited except in some instrumental classes. Many learners repeat classes annually over several years.

97. Most course information is satisfactory, although some is misleading or insufficiently detailed. Learners do not get clear guidance on some of the significant costs of materials and tools, for example in visual arts. The LEA has recognised the need for additional support, and a learning support worker has been appointed. The post holder has not yet taken up the appointment. There are no childcare facilities at any of the venues.

98. Much teaching is unsatisfactory. It is poorly planned. Many staff do not use session plans and do not regard planning teaching and learning as important. Where session plans exist, they focus not on learning but on lists of topics or the making of artefacts. There is no clear purpose for many learners. The sessions' aims and objectives are unclear. There is insufficient reiteration of previous learning. Learners' starting points are rarely identified or recognised by tutors in order to plan their learning. Some learning activities are not sufficiently challenging. This was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. For example, there is too much drawing from second-hand sources, and simplistic patterns are provided for copying in some craft classes. In others, technical terminology is not explained and learners fail to understand many aspects of the session. In some drawing, dance and instrumental classes there is little awareness of the differing abilities of learners, and mistakes and misunderstandings are often uncorrected. However, in a few classes learning is stimulating and rewarding with tutors using a good range of learning activities and exciting learning materials. Grandparents and parents were able to explore dramatic and movement simulations with their pre-school children and grandchildren without inhibition and with much enjoyment. Learners in life drawing and circle dancing were wholly focused and involved in their learning with a determination to work towards personal improvement.

99. The assessment and monitoring of learners' progress is weak. Learners' individual needs or learning outcomes are not formally identified or recorded. Initial assessment is ineffective, informal and not always carried out. This weakness was identified at the previous inspection. Not all learners receive verbal feedback on their progress. There is insufficient critical comment from some tutors. Learners do not always know what they need to do to improve. When learners' progress and attainment are recorded there is often insufficient detail, too much description and not enough evaluation. Learners are not provided with written evidence of the progress they have made. A new individual learning record is being trialled by some tutors, but this was only used purposefully in one observed session. Several staff do not use official course information leaflets or individual learner records to clarify aims and objectives and record learners' progress.

Leadership and management

100. Curriculum management is inadequate. Although a new management strategy is in place and some appointments have been made there has been little impact on learners so far. Insufficient market research and needs analysis has been use in curriculum planning. Taster courses usually rely on the availability and expertise of tutors rather than on identified community needs. Data is not used in curriculum planning or to monitor retention, attendance and progression rates. Quality assurance systems are not managed effectively. The observation of teaching and learning is not improving the quality of learners' experience. It is carried out by non-subject specialists, and tutors do not always know its purpose. The course review system is not rigorous. Learners' evaluation of their courses is not analysed sufficiently to improve quality. Improved individual learning records are currently being tested but some tutors do not understand how to use these effectively. The use of course planning documents is optional, and there is little monitoring of schemes of work or lesson plans. Communication with subcontractors is poor, as is the support for some tutors. Equality of opportunity has not been sufficiently considered for some classes. The self-assessment process is insufficiently thorough. The self-assessment report claims strengths that are not supported by evidence. Some of the strengths identified, for instance well-qualified tutors, are the norm for this area of learning. Inspectors found similar weaknesses to those identified in the self-assessment report.

English, languages & communications   Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	157	3

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

Strengths

- good teaching and learning
- good range of language courses
- good use of feedback from learners and tutors

Weaknesses

- inadequate range of teaching resources
- inadequate recording of assessment and individual target-setting
- insufficient professional support for tutors

Achievement and standards

101. Learners are reaching a satisfactory level of attainment. Most demonstrate skills at an acceptable level. In a few modern language classes, standards of oral work are exceptionally high, but in others progress is very slow. The learners are able to communicate well in their chosen language. However, in many cases, it is difficult to judge skills development, as the results of initial assessment and target-setting are not recorded. The rates of retention and attendance are satisfactory.

Quality of education and training

102. Standards of teaching and learning are good and improving. Seventy-eight per cent of sessions observed were good or better, compared with 55 per cent at the previous inspection. Tutors employ a wide variety of effective interactive teaching methods. Modern language learners have ample opportunity to practise their language skills in class at an appropriate level. All tutors plan sessions in detail and include provision for learners at different levels and abilities. They also plan for regular informal assessment of learners' progress, but the outcomes of this assessment are rarely shared with learners.

103. The service offers a good range of language courses to meet the needs of the learners. There are basic courses and taster sessions in seven European languages including Welsh, two Asian languages and two ancient languages. Some learners travel considerable distances to access courses in less usual languages, such as Japanese or Russian. Courses using computers have been offered in three European languages. Spanish is taught at three levels to meet demand in the region for non-accredited courses

at a higher level.

104. The support for learners is satisfactory. Learners receive accurate information about course content before enrolment. There is satisfactory advice and guidance for learners in choosing the most suitable course to meet their needs.

105. Tutors are suitably qualified and have sufficient knowledge of their subject areas. Over 75 per cent of tutors hold appropriate teaching qualifications. Fifty per cent of modern languages tutors are native speakers of the languages they teach.

106. The range of teaching resources is inadequate. Although most tutors provide their own effective teaching materials, there is insufficient use of visual aids, videos and computer-based materials. There is limited access to IT in the classroom, and recent IT training for tutors has not yet affected the learners' experience. There are insufficient audio materials used in Asian language classes. Almost all current course accommodation is fit for purpose. A room at the main venue has been designated as a specialist languages room and there are immediate plans to purchase equipment and a range of teaching materials which will be stored there.

107. The recording of assessment and target-setting for learners at all stages of learning is inadequate. Although tutors employ various informal initial and formative assessment methods, these are not applied consistently. Few individual targets are recorded on individual learning plans. Group targets are rarely linked to initial or diagnostic assessment, as this is hardly ever recorded. Many learners are unaware of their achievements or rate of progress and have no benchmarks against which to measure them.

Leadership and management

108. There is good use of feedback from learners and tutors to improve health and safety, access and the quality of teaching. Complaints and suggestions are responded to very rapidly and changes are often made in order to meet learners' needs more effectively. Risk assessments carried out by tutors have resulted in room changes and the modification of stairs.

109. The grade profile for observed teaching sessions has improved considerably. This area of learning was unsatisfactory at the previous inspection and has been the subject of a great deal of attention from managers.

110. There is adequate informal curriculum planning and priority setting in this area of learning. Managers and tutors are aware of priorities and targets in terms of course type, geographical area and targeted learners.

111. There is satisfactory involvement in learning by under-represented groups. Thirty-five per cent of learners are men and 10 per cent live in wards targeted for widening participation. The proportion of learners receiving fee concessions because of their low

income is higher, at 10 per cent, than the proportion of the local population receiving state benefits. Similarly, the proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups and learners with learning difficulties or disabilities is higher than that in the local population.

112. Tutors receive insufficient professional support. They set up courses and select and produce teaching materials without consultation or guidance. There is no system of moderation across courses to standardise the level or pace of study. There is also very little subject-specific feedback on their performance in the classroom. The language tutors are now members of an international language teaching group, and a national adult and community education organisation and attend training events organised by them.

Family learning

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	157	3

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

Strengths

- good gains in skills and confidence to support children's learning
- good teaching and learning
- particularly good teaching and learning resources
- effective personal and learning support

Weaknesses

- weak assessment
- insufficient clear progression routes
- incomplete quality assurance system

Achievement and standards

113. Learners gain good skills, knowledge and confidence, enabling them to support their children at school. Many learners also gain self-awareness and identify their own literacy and numeracy gaps. Many of the parents have come to these courses so that they can support their children who are not doing well at school. Some of them have raised their aspirations and are looking for employment in the care or teaching field. The recently introduced national literacy and numeracy tests have enabled parents to work towards qualifications. Learners have a better understanding of the school curriculum, key stages, teaching methods and terminology used in the school, enabling them to communicate more effectively with school teachers about their children's progress. A few learners have gained sufficient confidence to become school governors and participate more effectively in school life. For example, one family who were initially challenging of school policies became more supportive after attending the family learning course. School staff report increased confidence in the children involved, and improved scores in their standard assessment tests.

Quality of education and training

114. There is good teaching and learning. Most sessions are well planned with clear aims and objectives that are shared with the learners. Tutors respond effectively to learners' needs and cover topics that they request. In better sessions, there is a variety of activities such as pair work, group work and discussions, leading to better understanding of how children learn and how best to support them. For example, in one very good

session, parents showed creativity and ingenuity by demonstrating shared books they had written and illustrated with their children. Learners develop the skills, knowledge and confidence to take a keen and active interest in their children's learning. In one numeracy session, the work on 'time' was followed up by a joint session of adults and children enjoying fun activities like timing how many times they could jump in one minute. In another numeracy session, children made drinks for the group, estimating the capacity of a bottle to find out the number of glasses of drink it can hold. The practical activities were used to help concept development. In a few sessions, there is too much reliance on worksheets and not enough checking of learning. A few learners' numeracy needs were not met by the end of the six-week course.

115. There is a good range of innovative teaching and learning resources. Handouts are clear and laid out well. Tutors also produce good artefacts like a puppet theatre, using everyday objects to demonstrate story telling using puppets. Resources like disposable cameras are available for parents to take home and use with their children. In some instances, tutors recommend basic literacy and numeracy textbooks to learners to help them progress further and become more competent and confident in helping their children. The teaching accommodation is good. Many rooms have interesting displays of learners' work. Staff are appropriately qualified, skilled and experienced to teach adults in family learning contexts. The recently introduced appraisal system is satisfactory. It enables staff to identify their own training needs and gain skills and knowledge in their chosen areas.

116. There is good personal and learning support for adults and children. Children with special needs receive good additional support from classroom assistants. Tutors work effectively with the assistants and with school staff. In better sessions, they plan and evaluate sessions together. Tutors understand the pressures on parents and provide informal, empathetic support to help them cope with everyday life.

117. The current range of long and short courses is satisfactory. Six-week courses have recently been introduced. There are a number of taster courses and workshops like art and craft, cookery and clowning. These are used to encourage parents into further learning. However, there are insufficient literacy and numeracy courses to help learners who have identified their own needs in these areas. Many learners have expressed an interest in developing ICT skills but there is little use of ICT in family learning courses. There is effective targeting of provision in disadvantaged areas to widen participation. The number of learners in the current year has more than doubled. However, there is insufficient advice and guidance to enable learners to progress further. There are too few progression opportunities within family learning courses. Progression routes are not clear to the tutors or the learners.

118. Assessment overall is weak. It is not used to identify learners' needs effectively, and does not give them the tools to continuously improve their work. There is no clear policy on assessment. Initial assessment is inadequate. Tutors do not all conduct and record initial assessment. They do not use the findings of initial assessment in session planning. Learners' literacy and numeracy needs are not identified effectively. Learners are not told the purpose of initial assessment. Some are working at inappropriate levels

as tutors do not know their starting points. There is little formal assessment of learners' work. Most feedback to learners is verbal. It is all positive and not constructive enough. It does not show learners how to improve their work. Work is not always marked. There are no assessment criteria for most courses. The system of individual learning plans is new and not consistently used. There is no distinction between assessment and course evaluation. Learners are encouraged to self-assess but there is little objective assessment by the tutors. For example, one learner listed weak spelling as a development area, but this was not recognised and pursued by the tutor.

Leadership and management

119. There is satisfactory appraisal of staff performance. The level of staff development is sufficient to keep tutors' skills up to date. There has been much recent effective action to support tutors. Communication within the service and with schools is satisfactory. There is effective targeting of provision in disadvantaged areas to widen participation. On good courses, diversity is celebrated well. For example, in one literacy workshop, the tutor brought a range of books which included pictures of children from diverse ethnic backgrounds and children with disabilities. In another session the parents were planning menus with food from diverse countries and regions. The activity generated interesting discussion on what their children liked and disliked.

120. The marketing, publicity and recruitment for family learning courses are satisfactory, and each school has the freedom to promote them in the most appropriate ways.

121. The quality assurance system is incomplete. Course reviews are not thorough enough and are not systematically used to improve provision. The observation of teaching and learning is informal and not fully established. The self-assessment process is not inclusive. Many of the tutors have not contributed to it. There is insufficient understanding of and commitment to the developing quality assurance system by some tutors. There are no audits of initial assessment or individual learning plans. The use of data is poor. It is not used for curriculum planning. There is no analysis of why some courses experience low levels of recruitment.