

REINSPECTION REPORT

Plymouth LEA Reinspection

30 April 2004



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

PLYMOUTH LEA REINSPECTION

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.

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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Plymouth City Council is a large unitary authority created by local government reorganisation in 1998. The council's local education authority (LEA) is responsible for education provision throughout Plymouth and the surrounding areas through the adult and community learning service (the service). Since the previous inspection the service has been relocated within the department for lifelong learning, which is part of the LEA. The service provides mostly non-accredited adult and community learning. Adult and community learning is provided by nine learning units, which comprise five partner community colleges, two area teams and one specialist adult education centre. There is also one specialist family and parent learning team.
2. At the previous inspection the LEA employed two officers, one to manage the service overall and another to manage the family and parent learning service. Since then, two full-time senior posts have been created and two part-time curriculum managers have been recruited. The service is now managed by a senior education adviser within the city councils' education advisory service. Strategic direction is now provided through a strategic management group. Centre or team managers supervise tutors on a day-to-day basis. The team are supported by a range of administrative staff.
3. The LEA receives funding from the Devon and Cornwall Learning and Skills Council (LSC). This funding is for the provision of a range of non-accredited learning programmes in the local area. The LSC also funds two local colleges of further education to provide accredited adult and community learning programmes and one specialist city-wide team to provide learning provision for literacy, numeracy and language. As at the previous inspection, this accredited learning was not inspected. Additional funding for some of the family learning programmes is obtained through other streams such as the European Social Fund and the single regeneration budget. The LEA also contributes some funding for a prospectus advertising accredited and non-accredited learning throughout the city.
4. In 2001-02, there were 7,882 learners on recreational learning programmes and 1,272 on family and parent learning programmes. During 2002-03 there were 6,440 learners on recreational learning programmes, and 1,744 on family and parent learning programmes. At the time of the reinspection, 6,673 learners had enrolled during 2003-04. Concessions of 50 per cent are offered to those aged 60 or over, those in receipt of means-tested benefits and those who receive income support. A discount of 25 per cent is offered to those who receive housing benefit. Seventy-seven per cent of all those who enrol on recreational adult and community learning programmes are women.
5. The population of Plymouth in 2001 was 240,720. There are several areas of deprivation in the city. According to the 2001 census, Plymouth's minority ethnic communities represent 2.8 per cent of the population, compared with 9.1 per cent nationally.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

6. This area of learning has the second largest number of learners, with 24 per cent of all learners following courses in hospitality, sport and leisure. Courses take place in eight sites including community colleges and an adult education centre. Sixty courses are offered, ranging from yoga and tai chi to Chinese cookery and sugarcraft. Accredited and non-accredited courses are often offered at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. Courses typically last for 10 to 12 weeks and most learning sessions last for one or two hours every week. The courses are run mainly on weekdays and evenings. At the time of inspection 1,694 learners were enrolled on courses. Women represent 83 per cent of enrolments. The proportion of learners aged over 50 is 47 per cent. Less than 1 per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups and less than 1 per cent of learners in 2002-03 and 2003-04 are registered as having a disability. There are 55 part-time tutors.

Visual & performing arts & media

7. Visual and performing arts and media represent approximately 34 per cent of the total adult and community learning provision, and is the largest area. A wide range of non-accredited courses is available at different levels, including watercolour painting, drawing, stained glass, mosaics, needlework, card making, calligraphy, theatre scenery painting, interior design, dancing, and drumming. Courses are offered through eight centres and in various locations across the city, in rural communities and in local neighbourhood centres. Each centre has a centre head. Most sessions are for two hours and vary from six-week taster courses to 10, 20 or 36 weeks. They are available throughout the day, in the evening and some are available at weekends. So far this year 2,109 learners have enrolled on courses, and 81 per cent of these were women. Less than 1 per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups and just over a quarter of learners are aged 60 and over. There are 69 part-time tutors.

English, languages & communications

8. Courses are provided through four centres in seven modern foreign languages and creative writing. These courses do not lead to qualifications. At the time of reinspection there were no courses running in creative writing. Courses are available in French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Spanish and Russian at seven venues across the city. Currently there are 38 courses running. Since September 2003, 1,079 learners have enrolled in courses in this area of learning. Of these, 38 per cent are men, and just under 2 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. Courses are available at beginners level in all languages. Courses in French, German, Italian and Greek are available up to level 2. Classes take place during the day and 61 per cent of them take place in the evening. Courses run for 10, 20 or 28 weeks and sessions last for one and a half or two hours. There are currently 19 tutors who work on a part-time basis. A part-time curriculum manager was appointed in September 2003.

Family learning

9. The family and parent learning service provides family learning courses including family literacy and numeracy programmes. The service offers 22 family learning programmes at 42 locations. Programmes include welcome to nursery, learning with games, 'Wizart' a programme where families can explore and develop creative ideas, family literacy, family numeracy, healthy eating and carry on parenting. Most programmes are non-accredited. In 2002-03 there were 1,236 learners on courses in this area. Currently, there are 715 learners on family and parent learning programmes, of whom 43 per cent are new learners who have not engaged in learning for the previous three years. Ninety-two per cent of learners are women, 5 per cent are from a minority ethnic group and 9 per cent have a disability. Since the previous inspection opportunities have been offered to learners on family learning programmes to take the national literacy and numeracy qualifications. A principal officer who has knowledge and experience of family learning programmes, manages the service. A team of managers and support workers teach on the programmes. There are currently 42 staff, of whom 14 are tutors and 10 are crèche assistants. Eight staff are full time and 34 part time. All staff except the principal officer and one administration assistant are employed on fixed-term contracts. There are also six volunteer assistants who are supported by a volunteer co-ordinator.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	8
Number of inspection days	53
Number of learner interviews	234
Number of staff interviews	96
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	40
Number of partner/external agency interviews	85

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

10. At the previous inspection, the provision of family learning was good. That of visual and performing arts and media, and English, languages and communications was satisfactory. The provision within hospitality, sport, leisure and travel was unsatisfactory. Leadership and management, equal opportunities and quality assurance were also unsatisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, all aspects of the provision were found to be satisfactory or better.

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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	
Quality assurance	

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	4

Visual & performing arts & media	3

English, languages & communications	3

Family 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	3
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	3

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	3
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

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

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

Family learning	2
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	2

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

11. On sports and leisure programmes learners achieve their personal goals well.

They develop their knowledge and understanding of motor skills very well. Some learners who have little previous knowledge apply their learning to lead healthier lifestyles and improve their co-ordination and balance. Overall, retention rates are good.

12. Learners in visual and performing arts achieve a high standard of work, with good attention to detail.

Learners apply and extend their skills well and some achieve professional standards. Many learners exceed their own expectations and increase their confidence. Retention rates in this area are satisfactory.

13. Learners on English and languages programmes achieve their learning goals.

Most learners are able to use their newly learned skills well, and some are particularly confident in expressing their ideas. Learners participate well in lessons and are not afraid to make mistakes. Overall, retention rates are satisfactory.

14. In family learning, learners develop good personal and learning skills. They become confident enough to help their children with literacy homework and gain a greater understanding of how their children learn numeracy skills. Some learners have continued on to complete national tests in literacy and numeracy. Retention rates on family learning programmes are satisfactory.

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	1	6	11	8	3	1	0	30
Visual & performing arts & media	1	2	11	4	0	0	0	18
English, languages & communications	0	5	3	3	0	0	0	11
Family learning	1	2	5	4	0	0	0	12
Total	3	15	30	19	3	1	0	71

15. Overall, teaching and learning are good in all areas. On sports and leisure programmes there is good teaching and learning of movement skills. Different levels of learners work well together. In a few sessions, tutors give too many instructions and do

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not correct learners enough.

16. **In visual and performing arts there are good practical learning activities.** Teachers illustrate their teaching with good examples of finished pieces and samples to inspire and encourage learners to achieve. They use innovative ways to explain techniques and movements. Good enrichment activities help learners to extend their learning experiences. However, some teachers do not share their objectives for the sessions sufficiently with the learners.

17. **In languages teachers make good use of the target language to develop the learners' skills.** Varied strategies are used and resources such as games are used imaginatively. In a small number of classes too much time is spent on activities of limited value.

18. **In family learning, activities are well planned and well prepared,** sessions are well managed and take account of likely distractions which may occur when young children are present. Sessions include a wide range of activities and good explanations are given on the value of achieving national qualifications in literacy or numeracy.

19. Resources are satisfactory in all areas. Appropriate accommodation is provided for courses, and adequate equipment is available. Most of the learning resources are satisfactory. Staff are suitably qualified or experienced and in some areas staff are particularly well qualified to teach.

20. The arrangements for initial assessment are adequate in family learning, with appropriate informal methods. Individual learning plans are used across the service and in languages these are beginning to impact on learners' achievements. In sports and leisure, and visual and performing arts there are inconsistencies, such as insufficient formal recording and insufficient use of information gained during the preparation of individual learning plans.

21. **There is a wide range of courses in visual and performing arts where learners are able to progress.** In family learning good use is made of a wide variety of attractive programmes to engage new learners and those who have previously been reluctant to return to learning. In the sports and leisure and languages areas the range of provision is adequate, but there is poor co-ordination of the programmes, gaps in the provision and insufficient clarity between the levels of programmes.

22. **Learners are well supported.** Course information and guidance is generally adequate, and good individual support is provided from tutors at the start of their training and when required to complete particular tasks. Most tutors have a good awareness of their learners' needs and goals. Additional support is available, and some learners are referred for specialist support.

Leadership and management

23. **Strategic management is good.** The management team has been strengthened and a new strategic management group has been formed. Managers have worked effectively with staff to deal with many of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection.

24. The analysis and use of management information is now satisfactory. Reliable data are now collected and analysed and are also used as part of the review of service level agreements that have been put in place. Managers and staff have confidence in the data produced and are beginning to use it for planning the provision.

25. Communication between tutors has improved, and is now satisfactory. The appointment of curriculum leaders and termly meetings with staff have improved tutors' understanding of developments in the service.

26. The arrangements for staff development are now satisfactory. A comprehensive programme of training is offered, including the observation of teaching and learning, equality of opportunity, and the assessment and monitoring of learning.

27. **The service has developed comprehensive policies and procedures to improve equality of opportunity.** Tutors have a good knowledge of equality and elements of good practice are emerging in the areas of learning, such as differentiated learning and support for learners with particular difficulties.

28. **A wide range of programmes are offered in family learning which continue to engage new learners and widen participation.** Programmes have been sympathetically designed to develop personal skills and are offered in community venues.

29. The management of literacy, numeracy and language support is satisfactory.

30. **A range of comprehensive quality assurance measures have been put in place.** A quality assurance cycle has been produced and this is beginning to improve the links between management processes and quality improvement.

31. A satisfactory system of observing teaching and learning has been introduced and tutors are now observed by suitably trained observers who have good subject knowledge.

32. **Curriculum management is weak.** Too many inconsistencies remain in the standardisation of individual learning plans and the curriculum co-ordination in most of the areas of learning. Progression routes and clearly defined levels of courses have been insufficiently dealt with. This has been recognised by the adult and community learning service and actions have been put in place to deal with many of the weaknesses identified at inspection.

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

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good strategic management
- effective action to improve awareness of equality of opportunity and encourage wider participation
- particularly good progress to improve quality assurance

Weaknesses

- weak curriculum management

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Strengths

- good achievement of personal learning goals
- good teaching and learning of movement skills

Weaknesses

- weak initial assessment and monitoring of progress
- insufficient curriculum leadership

Visual & performing arts & media

Strengths

- good standard of learners' work
- good practical learning activities
- effective enrichment activities for learners

Weaknesses

- too much informal monitoring and recording of learners' progress
- insufficient curriculum co-ordination

English, languages & communications

Strengths

- good achievement of learning goals
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient co-ordination of the language courses

Family learning

Strengths

- good development of personal and learning skills
- well-planned and well-prepared teaching and learning activities
- responsive programmes to meet the needs of learners
- effective partnerships
- effective supervision and support for professional development

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses

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.

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

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

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

Strengths

- good strategic management
- effective action to improve awareness of equality of opportunity and encourage wider participation
- particularly good progress to improve quality assurance

Weaknesses

- weak curriculum management

33. Strategic management is good. This was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. There is now a revised management structure within the LEA for adult and community learning and the provision now has a much higher profile in the department for lifelong learning. The management team has been strengthened by the addition of two new posts and two curriculum leaders. A new strategic management group has been formed which includes representatives of the service providers and the senior management team. This group is chaired by a local councillor who has previous experience in adult and community learning. There are clear aims for this group. Managers have worked together effectively to improve many of the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection and these have been carefully monitored through the post-inspection action plan. There is a three-year strategic plan and a yearly operational plan which has clear objectives and targets. Staff have been fully consulted in the development of these plans. There is now a clear strategic vision and procedures have been implemented to support the operational management. Centre managers are clear about their roles and provide good leadership. Very significant progress has been made, but it is too early to assess the impact of all these changes on the overall provision.

34. Service level agreements with partner providers have now been put in place and the arrangements are satisfactory. This was a weakness at the previous inspection. The agreements include essential processes and contain targets for key areas of performance such as recruitment, retention and achievement. Progress is confirmed at the review meetings and the second full review has now taken place. Centrally produced data have been used to measure progress. Further reviews are scheduled to take place later in the year.

35. At the previous inspection there was ineffective use and analysis of data. Satisfactory arrangements are now in place. Data are collected electronically and are

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collated and analysed. Management information is used in the reviews of the service level agreements. Managers and centre heads are confident that the data are accurate and are beginning to use them in their management and curriculum planning. There are plans for the establishment of a wide area network to allow staff to access the management information system.

36. Communication between tutors is now much improved, and is satisfactory. This was a weakness at the previous inspection. The appointment of curriculum leaders has enabled better communication, as has the introduction of termly meetings which tutors are paid to attend. Staff are well informed and have a good understanding of developments in the service. Useful tutor handbooks have been developed and have been well received by staff. A staff newsletter is now used to communicate staff development events and examples of learner achievement, as well as discussion related to quality improvement.

37. Staff development opportunities are now satisfactory. This was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. A comprehensive professional development calendar includes training events on lesson observation, equality of opportunity, health and safety, and other priority areas for the service, such as assessment and monitoring of learning. Many events have already taken place and have been well attended and evaluated.

38. The management of resources is largely devolved to the relevant provider and is satisfactory. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced. Teaching rooms are fit for purpose and suitably equipped with resources.

39. Inadequate curriculum management was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. Many aspects of this have now been dealt with, but the management of the curriculum is still weak in most areas of learning. There is insufficient co-ordination and planning of courses and levels, and no standard curriculum. Progression routes are not clearly defined. Inconsistencies still exist in the application of key processes, such as the use of individual learning plans and schemes of work. Most of these weaknesses have been identified by the provider. Curriculum managers are now in post in two areas of learning and a service level agreement is in place for a partner organisation to provide curriculum leadership in the sports, hospitality and leisure area. Satisfactory interim arrangements to support this area through an external consultant have been made including the provision of professional development and the completion of teaching observations. The managers are used by staff as a resource to plan their teaching. Day-to-day management of tutors has been strengthened through consultation and communication with centre heads and termly staff meetings in each centre. Data are now available to curriculum leaders, but they are still not used to manage and develop the curriculum.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

40. There has been considerable progress made in dealing with the weaknesses from the previous inspection. The service has developed comprehensive policies and

procedures for equality of opportunity and carried out many effective actions. A comprehensive programme of staff development has taken place for tutors. Most of the staff have already attended equality of opportunity awareness training, and many have also received training in disability awareness. Tutors have a good knowledge of equality of opportunity and there are examples of good practice, such as the identification of learners' needs in lesson plans and support for learners with a hearing impairment. The service has developed an overall strategy for equality and a disability statement. A widely publicised learner charter is available and clear information is provided in handbooks on what learners should do if they identify a problem. More recently, a useful tutor checklist has been prepared which helps tutors to improve their sessions and ensure that their lessons are inclusive. Specialist equipment is provided when required, such as a hearing loop.

41. The family and parent learning service provides a good range of programmes, which are responsive to learners' needs and encourage wider participation through first steps into learning. Learners are well supported and receive free childcare and transport. Programmes are sympathetically designed and are offered in local community venues. Recently an innovative literacy and numeracy project has been planned to attract and meet the needs of learners in two communities of social and economic deprivation. The aims of the project include the development of staff who usually teach on leisure and recreation courses, and to influence change on recreational programmes.

42. The management of literacy, numeracy and language support is satisfactory. There is a range of effective programmes to meet the needs of learners through the family and parent learning service. The arrangements to identify learners' needs and refer learners who have particular difficulties to external agencies or other departments within the city council are satisfactory. Suitable access to translation and language support are also available.

43. Management information is adequately used to monitor and agree targets for under-represented groups. Successful bids for funding have enabled centres to improve access to classrooms, and in some cases classes have been relocated to more accessible locations. Marketing and promotional material is satisfactory. The availability of information in other formats, such as on tape or in Braille, or in other languages is also satisfactory.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

44. There has been particularly good progress in the improvement of quality assurance arrangements. Policies and procedures are now satisfactory and cover all the necessary processes to assure the quality of the provision. Useful checklists have been prepared for a number of processes such as individual learning plans and course information sheets. A quality assurance cycle has been produced which is beginning to improve the links between management processes and quality monitoring. Examples of this are the use of management information and the collection of evidence for the self-assessment report. Each centre has a quality action file which contains all relevant documents. The service level agreements, action plans, targets and reviews are available to all staff.

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45. The learner satisfaction questionnaire has been through several revised versions and has been used to influence management decisions, such as the level and length of some courses. The information from these surveys has been analysed extensively and reported back to managers and the staff teams. Early leaver rates are monitored and plans are in place to examine the reasons why some learners do not complete their programmes.

46. There has been considerable improvement in the management information system, and the collection and use of this information is now satisfactory. Managers are confident that the information is accurate and it is beginning to be used for management decision-making. However, it is too early to assess the impact of this information on the provision.

47. Satisfactory service level agreements have now been established with partner providers which clearly set out quality assurance procedures. These have clarified the partners' role and enable the appropriate level of accountability. Reviews of the agreements are used to measure the progress providers are making towards their targets.

48. There is now an adequate system for the observation of teaching and learning. There are training courses for staff who wish to become observers, and planned follow-up training. Observations are detailed, are carried out against agreed criteria and are subject to moderation to ensure consistency. Tutors are given appropriate feedback.

49. The implementation of individual learning plans and observation of teaching and learning have been met enthusiastically. Staff are applying quality assurance measures, but there are still some inconsistencies, such as the standard application of individual learning plans. There has been insufficient time for these procedures to be evaluated properly.

50. The self-assessment process is comprehensive and involves all staff completing an evaluation of the organisation against the 'Common Inspection Framework'. Feedback from learners was also used in the report. The grades given in the self-assessment report matched those given at the reinspection, although there were differences in the strengths and weaknesses. References to evidence in the self-assessment report were sometimes unclear. The early version of the post inspection plan contained little description of how key interim indicators of improvement would be recognised. The plan was amended and updated throughout the reinspection and overall, it was a satisfactory tool to plan and schedule improvements.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	1694	3

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

Strengths

- good achievement of personal learning goals
- good teaching and learning of movement skills

Weaknesses

- weak initial assessment and monitoring of progress
- insufficient curriculum leadership

Achievement and standards

51. Learners achieve their personal goals well. This was a strength recognised at the previous inspection, but not in the self-assessment report. Learners develop their knowledge and understanding of motor skills particularly well. Many learners have applied their knowledge to lead healthy lifestyles, such as learners in their 70s gaining relief from the effects of arthritis and osteoporosis. Learners in cookery who have little prior experience, make recognisable improvements in culinary skills. Older learners gain mental stimulation from movement sequence challenges, and social gains from working in partnerships. Learners on exercise courses improve their co-ordination, balance and flexibility and they gain strength and increase stamina. Other learners gain significant benefits such as self-esteem, general health and happiness, relaxation and the ability to correct and improve posture. Overall, retention rates are good, although rates are variable between centres with a current average of just over 85 per cent.

Quality of education and training

52. There is good teaching and learning of movement skills and this is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. This strength was not recognised in the self-assessment report. In the best lessons there is good whole-group and individual teaching and learners of different ability achieve well. For example, in a pilates class the tutor allocated different levels of task so that less confident learners could work more slowly and consolidate their learning and more advanced learners were challenged by difficult postures and movements. In most sessions learners fully participate in their own learning and the learning of others. In karate classes, the tutor arranged the learners into ability

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groups and the more advanced groups helped and advised those with less experience. Individual coaching is a strong feature in many classes. In the poorer sessions there is an over-reliance on tutor-led activities with little differentiation in tasks or individual correction or coaching.

53. Resources are satisfactory overall and this was partly recognised in the self-assessment report. All tutors are appropriately or very well qualified. Many have received recent professional development training. There has been significant improvement in the use of health awareness forms and they are well used in all sports classes. There is now sufficient attention paid to safe working practices in sports classes. Accommodation is appropriate in most cases, but in a few classes overcrowding impedes effective learning. In most centres learning resources are satisfactory. In a cookery class, equipment is outdated and insufficient.

54. There remains a good range of courses which provide activities at different levels. Most tuition is provided during weekdays and evenings which allows for learners' differing employment and personal commitments. The needs of existing learners are appropriately considered, although there is little coherent planning of progression routes. Most courses are provided because of historical interest rather than an analysis of the needs of learners in local communities.

55. Learners are appropriately supported by centre managers and tutors. Brochures are satisfactory and some tutors produce additional course guidance which learners find particularly helpful. For example, in a pilates class learners have been given detailed guidelines for safe practice and clear aims and objectives of the class. Tutors and centre staff provide good personal support and guidance and take a keen interest in learners' welfare. In a few cases the written guidance for courses has too little information for learners. Crèche facilities are available in some centres.

56. The arrangements to support literacy, numeracy and language needs are satisfactory. Tutors have been briefed on how to deal with these needs and how to assess the difficulties in completing individual learning plans and health assessment forms. Evidence of this support was observed by inspectors.

57. The initial assessment and monitoring of progress is weak. This was recognised in the self-assessment report and at the previous inspection. In most classes there is an initial assessment of learners' needs, but the information gained is not always used to make teaching and learning more effective. The recording and monitoring of learners' progress is inconsistent between centres. Learners complete an individual learning plan which identifies their main learning goals, but the use of these plans varies greatly. The information and help given to learners to complete their individual learning plan also varies. However, for some learners the process is effective. These inconsistencies have contributed to the unreliable achievement data, and hampered the development of effective target-setting.

Leadership and management

58. The curriculum leadership is ineffective. There is no curriculum leader for the area, although a service level agreement is now in place with a local organisation to provide this role. There is little strategic planning and not enough focus on progression routes between courses. Data are not used as the basis for curriculum planning, although plans are in place to use the reliable data now available. The sharing of good practice is ineffective and staff development is insufficient. There is inconsistent use of individual learning plans by tutors and no understanding about what aspects of achievement should be targeted. Some aspects of management are satisfactory, such as the role centre managers play in the day-to-day management of the area, and the adherence to health and safety procedures. There is good communication between managers and tutors. Regular meetings take place and revised policies are to be installed. Tutors have attended staff development sessions to help them adopt new strategies and enable more effective teaching and learning.

59. Tutors and learners are fully aware of the services' equal opportunities policy. Although there are general targets to increase participation, the targets are not used for planning the curriculum. Under-represented groups are not successfully targeted.

60. Arrangements to ensure the quality of programmes have improved through the implementation of observations of teaching and learning. Staff development has taken place and clear improvements have been made to the planning and teaching of activities.

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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	2109	3

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

Strengths

- good standard of learners' work
- good practical learning activities
- effective enrichment activities for learners

Weaknesses

- too much informal monitoring and recording of learners' progress
- insufficient curriculum co-ordination

Achievement and standards

61. Learners achieve a good standard of work. Tutors set tasks which are suitable for different levels of ability and ensure that learners gain new skills each week. Most finished work in visual arts is of a high technical standard with careful attention to detail. More experienced learners in calligraphy, stained glass and needlework are encouraged to show their completed work to the class and in exhibitions. In a theatre painting class learners work together to design and make scenery and props for a forthcoming production. Learners apply and extend their skills well. A few learners achieve professional standards; they sell work or perform commercially. One of the music classes has links with a local band and learners are given the opportunity to perform on stage as part of the band. Learners also achieve wider personal goals. Many learners exceed their initial aims and gain self-confidence and establish a foundation for further achievement. Retention rates are satisfactory and attendance is good in most classes.

Quality of education and training

62. There are good practical learning activities. This strength was partly recognised in self-assessment report and in the previous inspection report. Tutors illustrate their teaching well with references to their own work and bring in finished pieces and samples. Tutors prepare innovative ways to explain techniques and movements to ensure that learners have fun. Good use is made of descriptions, such as a calligraphy teacher who explained pen strokes as dancing on the page. In a music class the teacher used a participative method of demonstration to familiarise learners with complex rhythms. In some sessions, insufficient reference is made to the basic elements of design. Some tutors do not share the objectives of the lesson when they outline the

planned activity. Group criticism is not always used and opportunities to reflect on other learners' work are not taken.

63. The enrichment activities are effective. Most learners benefit from an extended learning experience. Tutors successfully arrange for learners to attend additional workshops and activity days. In drawing and painting, tutors encourage learners to attend external events, short courses and exhibitions. Learners are supported to join local arts' societies. In stained glass, learners produce kiln work on an external course and incorporate the pieces in to the class work to greatly enhance the final pieces.

64. Learners are well supported. Tutors know their learners well and are committed to their success. Tutors help by lending equipment and providing advice. Arrangements for the support of literacy, numeracy and language needs are satisfactory. Learners have the opportunity to identify specific needs through their individual learning plan. Specific learning needs such as dyslexia are identified and guidance is given to staff on how to ensure the appropriate level of support is provided. Health and safety practice is now satisfactory. It is given a high priority by tutors. Tutors carry out risk assessments and take necessary actions if problems are identified. Regular electrical safety testing takes place.

65. Resources are satisfactory, with some courses benefiting from specialist performance spaces and studios. Learners have adequate materials and equipment. Course information clearly indicates when learners need to purchase specialist equipment and materials. Tutors are frequently practising performers, artists, designers and craftspeople who successfully inspire learners through their passion for the subject.

66. There is a wide range of courses at different levels. Programmes are organised so that learners can attend either in the day or the evening.

67. There is too much informal monitoring and recording of learners' progress. This weakness was identified in the self-assessment report and is similar to the findings at the previous inspection. Tutors are aware of learners' achievements, but most do not keep enough records of their progress. Learners' achievements are not recorded on the individual learning plans. Standardised forms are used, but these do not allow clear feedback to learners. Most learners and tutors understand and value the individual learning plans and in some cases they are well used. Learners negotiate and agree appropriate learning goals.

Leadership and management

68. Much progress has been made since the previous inspection, but the curriculum co-ordination is still insufficient. Provision is not comprehensively planned across the city. New provision is developed mainly on the basis of existing demand and requests for progression courses. Many learners have attended the same classes for years. Managers are aware of these issues and have plans to deal with them. Some information is shared across centres and if courses do not fully recruit, learners are referred to another course.

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Other aspects of management are now satisfactory. Centre managers are clear about their role and are well supported by the new curriculum leader and the reorganised structure. Improved use of management information has started to highlight priority areas for development. The curriculum leader who was appointed in September 2003, has started to improve the communication and sharing of good practice.

69. Awareness of equal opportunities among staff is generally good. Tutors make good use of individual learning plans to identify the appropriate level of support needed for learners. In a textiles class, the teacher explained fastenings to the group to highlight their appropriateness for older people or for those with additional needs.

70. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. The observation of teaching and learning is well understood and is carried out by trained specialist staff. Learner feedback is beginning to be used to improve the provision. Reliable management information is now available, but it has not been used to plan courses as yet.

English, languages & communications**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	1079	3

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

Strengths

- good achievement of learning goals
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient co-ordination of the language courses

Achievement and standards

71. There is good achievement of learning goals by learners. This was not identified in the self-assessment report. Most learners are able to use grammatical structures with a good degree of accuracy. In more advanced classes learners use the language confidently to express ideas and opinions on a variety of themes. In one lesson, learners were using sophisticated language structures and vocabulary to discuss philosophical aspects of a foreign language film with a high level of fluency. In another lesson learners were discussing the merits of a recycling project and the effect of a similar project in their own country. Learners participate well in lessons and are not afraid to make mistakes. However, in some lessons learners are less confident and are reluctant to use the foreign language spontaneously. Standards of pronunciation vary and some learners find it difficult to remedy poor skills. Overall, retention rates are satisfactory. However, retention for the current year is 78 per cent which is below the target of 85 per cent set by the service. Some of the data have not yet been gathered.

Quality of education and training

72. The standard of teaching and learning is good. This was identified in the self-assessment report and at the previous inspection. Tutors make effective use of the target language to develop learners' skills. Lessons are well planned. In one lesson a learner gave a presentation, in the foreign language, of a pilgrimage he had made to the country whose language he was learning. The tutor used the presentation topic to check the learners' understanding. In many lessons tutors use a variety of effective strategies to ensure that the needs of all learners are met. Tutors use resources imaginatively, such as games to develop learners' speaking skills, or to reinforce the learning of numbers and vocabulary. There is good sequential development of the language structures, visual aids and consolidation exercises. In a few lessons the pace is slow with too much time being

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spent on activities of limited value. Learners are enthusiastic and support each other well in whole-class and small-group activities.

73. Accommodation in the centres visited is generally satisfactory. This was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. Rooms are clean and well equipped with a suitable range of language resources. In one teaching room there are displays of foreign language materials. However, in one centre, the shape of the room used for one class is not conducive to learning and is an obstacle to group-work activities. All tutors are experienced, fluent speakers and have a teaching qualification. Learning resources are satisfactory, handouts are well produced and some tutors make good use of the internet as a source of materials. However, no use is made of information technology for teaching.

74. The assessment, recording and monitoring of learners' progress is satisfactory. This was identified as a weakness in the previous inspection. Individual learning plans are in place in all classes, and are being consistently used to assess and record learners' progress each term against individually negotiated and agreed objectives. Brief written feedback on progress is provided to learners at the end of each term.

75. Learners have the opportunity to identify their literacy, numeracy and language needs on their individual learning plans. Arrangements for the support of these needs are satisfactory, but there is no formal initial assessment to determine learners' linguistic needs. However, it is often done informally by tutors.

76. The range of languages and progression routes is satisfactory. This was identified in the self-assessment report. Seven foreign languages are offered across the service. There are opportunities for learners to progress onto courses leading to qualifications under collaborative arrangements with local colleges of further education. However, no needs analysis has been carried out in the community, and progression routes are often planned to meet the needs of existing learners.

77. Support for learners is satisfactory. Pre-enrolment advice and guidance is adequate and course information sheets are sufficiently comprehensive. There is good individual support for learners in lessons. Tutors or centre staff routinely contact absentees. Enrichment activities are organised voluntarily by the tutors and include trips to see foreign films.

Leadership and management

78. There is insufficient co-ordination of the languages' programme. This was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. There are inconsistencies in the naming of classes and courses. Schemes of work and learning materials are often not standardised. Progression routes are planned for current courses and learners, but there is little rationalisation of provision to ensure a cohesive programme. There are inconsistencies in the length and duration of courses. However, there is evidence that since the appointment of a curriculum leader in September 2003, many of the initiatives have

started to bring about improvements. The course team now meet regularly to share good practice. A budget has been provided to purchase resources and there are plans to establish a resource bank. Staff development has taken place to resolve a weakness which was identified at the previous inspection. There are regular meetings of the centre heads to plan the provision, but the impact of these measures is yet to be seen.

79. The arrangements for equality of opportunity are satisfactory. The establishment of a policy and the ongoing training has made tutors more aware of equal opportunity issues. The introduction of a learner handbook has improved the learners' awareness of equal opportunities.

80. Observations of teaching have been carried out by trained observers who are also linguists. However, there is no annual review of the languages programme to identify areas of concern.

Family learning**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	715	2

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

Strengths

- good development of personal and learning skills
- well-planned and well-prepared teaching and learning activities
- responsive programmes to meet the needs of learners
- effective partnerships
- effective supervision and support for professional development

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses

Achievement and standards

81. There is good development of personal and learning skills. Learners develop confidence and a positive attitude to help their children and their own learning. Learners become confident enough to join other family learning programmes. For example, learners gain knowledge and understanding of how their children are being taught numeracy at school and are able to help their child at home. Many learners from family and parent learning programmes move onto literacy and numeracy workshops to improve their skills. Retention and achievement rates are satisfactory. Between September 2003 and December 2003, 78 per cent of learners were retained and 87 per cent achieved their individual learning goals. Twenty-five learners have taken the national test in literacy or numeracy since January 2004.

Quality of education and training

82. Teaching and learning activities are well planned and well prepared. This was recognised in the self-assessment report and partly recognised at the previous inspection. Sessions are managed well and are enjoyable for parents and children. Session planning takes account of distractions by young children. Sessions have a clear purpose and shared learning objectives are set for the group and for individuals. A wide variety of learning activities promote the links between family learning and improve the parent's confidence to assist in their child's learning. In one session a numeracy game was introduced to demonstrate how the parent could help their child remember multiplication tables. The tutor followed this with a good explanation of how achieving a national qualification in numeracy would be useful for future employment or continuing

with further education or training.

83. There is a wide range of learning programmes, which are responsive to learners' needs. This was identified at the previous inspection and has been maintained. There are 22 different programmes. Good use is made of jewellery making for beginners, and family first aid to attract parents back into learning. Many courses are carefully designed for learners who have negative feelings towards learning who do not have confidence in their own learning abilities or have previously rejected learning. There are good opportunities for progression to new and more challenging programmes. Many learners move on to family literacy or family numeracy programmes, to workshops or to take a national qualification.

84. Resources for teaching and learning are satisfactory. Practical sessions such as art and crafts are well equipped. In a literacy and numeracy workshop, computers are available for learners to reinforce and practise numeracy and literacy skills before taking one of the national tests. Staff are experienced, and many have attended recent training on family learning. Tutors have good skills in working with parents and children. Some of the worksheets are poorly photocopied and without colour to aid recognition of key words.

85. Initial assessment is now adequate. This was a weakness at the previous inspection, and partly recognised in the self-assessment report. Initial assessment includes an informal discussion about a learner's prior experience, interests and what the learner wishes to achieve from the course. This information identifies the individual learning objectives. The recording and monitoring of learners' progress is satisfactory. A new procedure has been implemented since the previous inspection and this is monitored to ensure that comments on achievements and progress are relevant and are linked to individual learning activities.

86. Guidance and support are satisfactory. There are planned sessions in all programmes for information and guidance in the penultimate week of the course. There are opportunities for learners to attend a one day advice and guidance workshop where they can receive information on new careers, and discuss their personal skills profile.

Leadership and management

87. There are effective partnerships that are used to attract and recruit new learners. This was identified as strength in the previous inspection and has been maintained. There are 33 partner primary schools and two partner 11-19 community schools. There are good links with voluntary organisations and these continue to develop.

88. There is effective supervision and support for continuous professional development. All staff are regularly supervised and have a detailed appraisal. A comprehensive programme of staff development is produced which includes initial assessment, information, advice and guidance and effective teaching and learning approaches. Weekly team meetings take place and these are a good opportunity for staff to share

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good practice and developments in national curriculum initiatives. Other aspects of curriculum management are satisfactory. Regular team meetings are held and the team works well together. Staff are well informed and have a clear understanding of their role in the service.

89. Equality of opportunity is effectively provided through a range of widening participation initiatives. There is good support for learners to attend family learning programmes. Good childcare is available free of charge, and transport is provided for learners to venues that are not easily accessible.

90. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory. All teaching staff are regularly observed teaching and detailed actions for improvement are provided. Procedures for curriculum reviews have been revised and there have been improvements in the content of reviews. However, reviews are insufficiently evaluative and do not identify the outcomes of learning programmes.