

# REINSPECTION REPORT

## **Cambridgeshire LEA Reinspection**

**21 October 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.

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## REINSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Cambridgeshire adult and community learning service (CACL) is part of Cambridgeshire local education authority. CACL is a division of the education, libraries and heritage directorate of Cambridgeshire County Council (the county council). The Cambridgeshire adult and community learning provision is funded by the Cambridgeshire Learning and Skills Council, with a small amount of additional financial support from other funding bodies. Since August 2004, the county council subcontracts the provision in all but foundation programmes to three partner local further education colleges. These colleges also offer accredited provision for community learning either directly or through franchise arrangements. Provision is mostly delivered through 25 village and community colleges across the county. Provision for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and for family learning is organised directly by CACL. Much of the region is rural. In the academic year 2003-04, 11,582 learners enrolled on courses in 14 areas of learning. There were 13,935 enrolments in the three terms.

2. Planning and management of the subcontracted provision is co-ordinated through the Cambridgeshire adult learning management group (CALM), which consists of CACL's adult strategy manager, the principals of the three partner subcontractor colleges and local sixth-form colleges, and a representative of the Cambridgeshire secondary school head teachers. A subcommittee of CALM, comprising the adult strategy manager, and managers from the partner subcontractor colleges oversees operational management and implementation of the curriculum. There are local planning groups in each of the five areas bounded by the district councils. These are chaired by the partner subcontractor college's managers with representatives from local village colleges and other bodies.

3. CACL makes significant provision for information and communications technology (ICT); hospitality, sports, leisure and travel; and visual and performing arts and media. Inspectors judged these areas to be satisfactory at the previous inspection. Since then CACL has developed provision for family learning and family literacy. None of these areas are in the scope of the reinspection. During the reinspection process, inspectors observed 58 learning sessions.

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

#### English, languages & communications

4. CACL's modern foreign languages provision offers 114 courses in 10 languages: French, German, Spanish, Italian, Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, Turkish and British Sign Language (BSL). Progression from beginner to more advanced levels is available in all languages except Turkish. Learning sessions take place at 23 locations in the daytime and the evening. There are 930 learners. Most learning sessions last two hours. Courses last between three and 30 weeks. Shorter taster courses are offered at the start of the autumn term. No courses lead to external accreditation. Three

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full-time and two part-time staff manage the work of 50 tutors.

### Foundation programmes

5. CACL's provision for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities comprises programmes for adults with physical and sensory disabilities, learning difficulties, adults recovering from or with mental health conditions and for carers. There are 550 learners enrolled on these courses. At the previous inspection there were 450 learners. Two-thirds of learners, and 53 of the 68 courses offered, are for adults with learning difficulties. Classes include lip reading, creative crafts, computer studies, news review, pathways to work, gardening and cooking. Classes last between two and five hours a week over a period of 30 to 42 weeks a year. A full-time county co-ordinator and three-part-time district co-ordinators directly manage the provision. There are 31 part-time tutors, 13 teaching assistants, two volunteers and a management assistant.

## ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	7
Number of inspection days	38
Number of learner interviews	346
Number of staff interviews	33
Number of subcontractor interviews	49
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	33
Number of partner/external agency interviews	13
Number of learning sessions observed	58

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

6. At the previous inspection, the overall quality of the provision was not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, leadership and management were very weak. English, languages and communications; foundation programmes; and quality assurance were unsatisfactory. Equality of opportunity; ICT; hospitality, sport, leisure and travel; and visual and performing arts and media were all judged to be satisfactory.

7. At the end of the reinspection process leadership and management, equality of opportunity and foundation programmes were found to be satisfactory. Standards have been maintained in ICT; hospitality, sport, leisure and travel; and visual and performing arts and media. English, languages and communications and quality assurance were found to be unsatisfactory.

## GRADES

### Grades awarded at previous inspection

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

<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>5</b>
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	4

<b>Information &amp; communications technology</b>	<b>3</b>

<b>Hospitality, sport, leisure &amp; travel</b>	<b>3</b>

<b>Visual &amp; performing arts &amp; media</b>	<b>3</b>

<b>English, languages &amp; communications</b>	<b>4</b>

<b>Foundation programmes</b>	<b>4</b>

### Grades awarded at reinspection

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

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

<b>English, languages &amp; communications</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	4

Foundation programmes	3
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievement and standards

8. **Retention rates are good for the provision for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities**, and satisfactory for modern foreign languages. **Attendance at classes is good.**

9. **Achievement is good on most programmes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.** Since the previous inspection, unit certification at entry-level has been introduced for learners on most courses. Of those in learning, 107 learners have achieved unit certification, gaining a total of 229 credits. Other learners are progressing well to the completion of units.

10. **The finished work produced by learners in arts-based classes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, especially by those learners with mental health conditions, is good.** Learners gain a good range of skills in these classes. Learners also report significant gains in confidence. Learners work as part of a group, improve their concentration, memory and speaking skills.

11. Achievement for learners on modern foreign languages courses is satisfactory. Learners' skills and attainment in most classes observed is adequate. Many learners use a range of strategies to attain their personal language goals including self-directed independent study.

### Quality of education and training

12. **At the previous inspection CACL's provision for learners with mental health needs was good.** This strength has been maintained and improved and now extends to learners with other health needs.

13. CACL offers a broad range of modern foreign language courses at different levels, a strength also identified at the previous inspection. These include widely taught languages and less commonly offered languages. **Provision for learners to progress to more advanced courses is good.**

14. Training is satisfactory for foundation programmes. The proportion of lessons judged to be good or better has improved since the previous inspection. Classroom activities for learners with learning difficulties were identified as a weakness at the



previous inspection but are now satisfactory.

15. Learners on foundation programmes receive satisfactory support. Since the previous inspection the number of classroom assistants has increased significantly. In most lessons they work well with the tutor to give effective support to individual learners or the whole group. Learners on modern foreign language courses also receive satisfactory support in the classroom.

16. Initial advice and guidance for learners on modern foreign language courses is adequate. Most course publicity gives sufficient details of the level of knowledge and skills learners require to join a class. Some centres provide taster sessions where learners can sample classes before enrolment.

17. Tutors effectively encourage learners' development of literacy and numeracy skills in most classes for adults with learning difficulties. Tutors' awareness of the need to plan activities to promote these skills and record progress has increased since the previous inspection.

18. Accommodation for learning sessions for foundation programmes and the modern foreign languages provision is satisfactory.

19. Tutors for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are appropriately qualified and experienced in their subject area, and a few have specialist qualifications to teach adult learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Most tutors for the modern foreign languages provision are competent linguists and some are native speakers. However, not all have relevant teaching qualifications and some have little experience of teaching adults.

20. A suitable range of teaching resources is available for modern foreign language classes. Few tutors make use of computers in lessons.

21. At the previous inspection, insufficient use was made of specialist resources for learners with visual impairment on the foundation programmes. Since then CACL has purchased specialist equipment for these learners and for those learners with hearing impairments. Tutors make appropriate use of these specialist resources.

22. **There are insufficient teaching and learning materials for foundation programmes.** Tutors rely heavily on the use of flip-charts which are not large enough for the purpose for which tutors use them. Many photocopied handouts are of poor quality, which was a weakness identified at the previous inspection. **Computer resources for computer studies classes are good, but poor for learners following other subjects.**

23. At the previous inspection there were no systematic assessment procedures for modern foreign language courses. CACL now has a standard format for initial assessment, standard forms for individual learning plans and an assessment policy. However use of individual learning plans remains inconsistent, and many tutors do not routinely record learners' progress.

24. At the previous inspection initial assessment of individual learners' needs on foundation programmes was inadequate. Although CACL has made improvements, **the arrangements for initial assessment remain incomplete**. Tutors often know their learners from previous programmes, and use this information effectively when developing individual learning plans.

25. A significant proportion of training for modern foreign language courses is unsatisfactory. Of those lessons observed during the reinspection, 23 per cent received less than satisfactory grades, which is a greater proportion than at the previous inspection.

### **Leadership and management**

26. CACL has a good framework to ensure that the provision it offers meets the priorities of the county council. The annual adult learning plan clearly outlines the main aims of the service based on the priorities in the council's strategic plan. Each of the districts managed by the partner colleges produce a district plan which contributes directly to the achievement of the service's goals. CACL is further strengthening the link between the council's priorities and the curriculum through the effective use of a sizeable development fund. These arrangements represent a major improvement since the previous inspection where inspectors reported weak links between strategic and curriculum planning.

27. CACL has developed effective partnerships which benefit learners and the wider community. CACL and voluntary sector organisations work together successfully to ensure good provision suited to learners' needs, especially in the provision for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the family learning provision. Similarly, the relationships that CACL has with the colleges of further education are effective.

28. At the previous inspection, inspectors identified that systems for budget monitoring were inadequate. Financial and budget monitoring is now satisfactory. A review carried out by the county council identified significant savings in overheads which has allowed CACL to significantly increase the amount of funding available to the subcontracted provision and to a contingency fund. CACL has introduced well-designed systems and processes.

29. At the previous inspection, the provision of management information was judged as weak. This has improved considerably and is now satisfactory. CACL has implemented a new computerised management information system. The organisation has trained staff at a number of the centres to input data remotely. There is a high level of confidence in the accuracy of the system. Reports are produced at the appropriate times.

30. Communications across CACL have improved since the previous inspection. Communications at management level are good with an appropriate range of meetings to ensure the relevant information is communicated to those who need it. Communications among tutors have improved but not to the same extent. Some tutors report that they feel isolated.

31. Two colleges have appointed specialist curriculum co-ordinators for the modern foreign languages provision, and the other has well-developed plans to do so. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when the absence of subject specialist co-ordination of the provision was identified as a weakness.

32. The previous inspection identified an unsystematic approach to staff development. This has improved for most areas. CACL now has a clear staff development plan. CACL has run a number of staff development events, although attendance is sometimes poor. Provision of staff development forms part of the colleges' service level agreements with CACL.

33. Training for staff in teaching languages is not sufficient, which was a weakness also identified at the previous inspection. CACL has run three training events for tutors of modern foreign languages since spring 2004, but none have focused on developing skills specific to language teaching.

34. Since the previous inspection, CACL has improved its procedures for staff to purchase teaching resources and made effective use of minor works funds to obtain some specialist equipment. In the subcontracted provision, resource management is now the responsibility of the partner colleges.

35. Areas that were judged satisfactory at the inspection remain so, and in all of these CACL has made some improvements. However, CACL has made slow progress towards remedying some weaknesses in curriculum areas, in particular modern foreign languages.

36. Implementation of the quality assurance arrangements in the provision for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities has improved since the previous inspection, where it was identified as a weakness. Programme co-ordinators take the responsibility for implementation of quality assurance arrangements. CACL has increased the number of co-ordinators since the previous inspection.

37. **CACL's quality assurance arrangements are at present incomplete**, although they have improved since the previous inspection, when inspectors judged them inadequate. However most changes are too recent to have had an impact on the provision.

38. **CACL has made too few observations of modern foreign language learning sessions**, despite identifying this as a priority. Subcontractors have developed frameworks for lesson observations which they plan to introduce to the provision, but it is too early to judge their effectiveness.

39. **Staff for the provision for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do not recognise and share good practice sufficiently.** Staff meetings take place at which tutors exchange ideas, but service-wide adoption of the best practices does not consistently follow these meetings.

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40. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. The self-assessment report is appropriately evaluative and critical. Many of the key issues inspectors identified were also identified by CACL.

41. **CACL has a good range of effective initiatives to widen participation in learning.** It has strong partnerships with schools, colleges, and voluntary and community organisations to support its drive to increase the participation of under-represented groups in learning. Family learning projects are particularly effective in widening participation in learning.

42. At the previous inspection, the use of data to monitor equality of opportunity was a weakness. The collection and analysis of data is now satisfactory.

43. Promotion of equality of opportunity was identified at the previous inspection as an area for improvement. It remains satisfactory. The county council continues to review and update its equal opportunities policy at the appropriate times.

44. Arrangements to ensure learners' understanding of equality of opportunity are mainly satisfactory. However, the language used in policy documents is not appropriate for learners with poor literacy skills. Many learners' understanding of equality of opportunity and diversity issues is not well developed.

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

### **Leadership and management**

#### **Strengths**

- good framework to ensure provision meets the priorities of the county council
- effective partnership working
- effective initiatives to widen participation in learning

#### **Weaknesses**

- slow progress in remedying some weaknesses in the curriculum areas
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements

### **English, languages & communications**

#### **Strengths**

- broad range of languages at different levels

### **Weaknesses**

- significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching
- insufficient staff training in language teaching

### **Foundation programmes**

#### **Strengths**

- good achievement
- good provision for learners with mental and other health needs
- effective partnership working

#### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient teaching and learning materials
- incomplete arrangements for initial assessment
- insufficient recognition and sharing of good practice

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

## Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

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

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



## DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 3**

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

#### **Strengths**

- good framework to ensure provision meets the priorities of the county council
- effective partnership working
- effective initiatives to widen participation in learning

#### **Weaknesses**

- slow progress in remedying some weaknesses in the curriculum areas
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements

45. CACL has a good framework to ensure that the provision it offers meets the priorities of the county council. The adult learning strategy manager leads on the production of the annual adult learning plan. This clearly outlines the main aims of the service which are based on the priorities the council's strategic plan. The council's chief executive and director of education agree this plan before its publication. It is closely scrutinised by a cross-party group of elected members who take a particular interest in the provision. Each of the districts managed by the partner colleges produces a district plan which contributes to the achievement of the goals in the adult learning plan.

46. CACL is further strengthening the link between the council's priorities and the curriculum through the effective use of a development fund. This accounts for approximately 30 per cent of the overall budget for the subcontracted provision. The three partner colleges are able to propose projects for funding out of this money. Successful bids must closely meet the council's priorities. CACL has also developed the provision it delivers directly to ensure that it meets the council's priorities. For example, the council identified family learning as a priority and CACL has expanded the programme from 50 families to reach 688 families in the past two years.

47. CACL makes good use of its recently implemented management information system to help with the appropriate planning of new courses. Colleges are already developing plans for a more coherent programme of courses. The good framework CACL has established represents a major improvement since the previous inspection where inspectors reported weak links between strategic and curriculum planning.

48. CACL has developed effective partnerships which benefit learners and the wider community. Examples include: working with a charity to make provision for the travelling community and vulnerable families, with a museum to run a series of family

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learning activities; with a youth mental health service to run a 10-week course for young people with a recent diagnosis of psychosis; and with a charity working with people who have Alzheimer's disease to provide art programmes for their clients and their carers. The relationships that CACL has with the colleges of further education are similarly effective. Although the colleges have only very recently taken over the provision, they have well-developed plans to use the adult and community learning alongside directly funded provision they make to ensure a coherent and improved service to learners. The partner colleges work effectively together for the benefit of learners. For example, one of the partner colleges has a franchise agreement with a school which is in the catchment area of another college. In the light of the new arrangements, it has agreed to pass this provision to the other college to enable a more coherently planned and managed provision in the school.

49. At the previous inspection, inspectors identified that systems for budget monitoring were inadequate. The county council carried out a thorough review of the financial systems associated with the adult and community learning provision. This review identified significant savings in overheads which has allowed CACL to increase the amount of funding available to the subcontracted provision by 50 per cent. It has also allowed CACL to allocate a significant contingency fund. This enables financially vulnerable provision, which CACL considers important for the community and its strategic objectives, to continue. CACL has appointed a finance manager who has specific responsibility for adult and community learning. The finance manager has introduced well-designed systems and processes. Financial and budget monitoring is now satisfactory.

50. At the previous inspection, the provision of management information was judged as weak. This has improved considerably and is now satisfactory. CACL has implemented a new computerised management information system. It has trained staff at a number of the centres to input data remotely. There is a high level of confidence in its accuracy. Reports are produced at appropriate times. The colleges receive regular monthly reports detailing the number of learners and retention and achievements rates. The system can also monitor learners' progress in a curriculum area or on a particular course. The colleges are beginning to use this information effectively in the planning of the provision.

51. Communications across CACL have improved since the previous inspection. Communications at management level are good with an appropriate range of meetings to ensure the relevant information is communicated to those who need it. The chief executive of the council has a good understanding of the CACL provision and receives regular reports about it. Significant issues surrounding the management of CACL are discussed at cabinet level in the council. Communications among tutors have also improved but not to the same extent. There is inconsistency in the communications in some of the provision. Most tutors receive regular information from CACL but some report that they do not always receive this and sometimes feel isolated.

52. The previous inspection identified an unsystematic approach to staff development. This has improved in most areas. CACL now has a clear staff development plan. Most staff report that they have good access to appropriate staff development. CACL has run

a number of staff development events, although attendance is sometimes poor. Since the involvement of the partner colleges, staff development opportunities have increased. For example, the three partner colleges have made some progress in developing joint staff training events. Provision of staff development forms part of the colleges' service level agreements with CACL.

53. Since the previous inspection, CACL has improved its procedures for staff to purchase teaching resources, and has made effective use of minor works funds to obtain some specialist equipment. In the subcontracted provision, resource management is now the responsibility of the partner colleges.

54. CACL has made slow progress towards remedying some weaknesses in some curriculum areas. Areas that were judged satisfactory at the previous inspection remain so, and in all of these CACL has made some improvements. However, while the accommodation and resources in ICT classes have improved significantly since the previous inspection, some classes continue in unsuitable accommodation with insufficient learning resources. In sport and recreation classes, risk assessment has become more systematic since the previous inspection but some staff still do not carry this out effectively. In the same curriculum area, inadequate curriculum co-ordination and management was also identified as a weakness. CACL has prioritised the need for curriculum leaders here, but some appointments have yet to be made. Inspectors identified weak assessment practices in visual and performing arts at the previous inspection. Many of these assessment practices are still not adequate. In the modern foreign languages area, judged unsatisfactory at the previous inspection, inspectors identified insufficient training for modern foreign languages staff in teaching languages. A more recent report that CACL commissioned on its language teaching also identified this. However, while some language teachers have received staff development, this has not focused on developing skills specific to language teaching.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

55. CACL has a good range of effective initiatives to widen participation in learning. It has strong partnerships with schools, colleges and voluntary and community organisations to support its drive to increase participation in learning by under-represented groups. The organisation has enhanced these links through local projects to devise courses and activities that are particularly responsive to the needs of disadvantaged learners. This includes provision for travellers, refugees and people with mental and other specific health needs. One local community project, in partnership with general practitioners, and with support from volunteers, provides courses in village and community colleges for isolated and vulnerable adults to gain new skills and confidence. In another project, a course was organised through a local trust for a group of women travellers to receive literacy support in their home environment by the roadside. This enabled them to pass the theory aspect of their driving tests. The language and social integration needs of agricultural workers have been met by providing courses in English for speakers of other languages and advice and guidance. Some learners progress to further learning opportunities. Family learning projects are particularly effective in widening participation in learning. The number of families

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reached through the family learning projects has increased from 50 in 2002-03 to 688 in 2003-04. One project has increased numeracy skills for 15 fathers and their children through the building of a sculpture for their school. The proportion of men involved in family learning has doubled from 2002-03 and is now 10 per cent of enrolments to the family learning provision in 2003-04. Six hundred and seventy-two learners on CACL's provision have disabilities, which represents 5.5 per cent of all enrolments.

56. At the previous inspection, the use of data for equal opportunities purposes was a weakness. The collection and analysis of data is now satisfactory. CACL produces reports by area of learning and centre, and managers use these reports effectively to identify priorities and set targets for including under-represented groups in learning. Trained staff in main centres input data and create useful management reports. CACL now sets challenging targets for increasing the participation of men, older adults and minority ethnic groups in learning. New and imaginative initiatives include a course to build bicycles from recycled parts, identified by outreach workers as an effective way to integrate the homeless with local communities. Since the previous inspection, the proportion of men taking part in learning has increased to 23 per cent. Partnerships with a number of national charities effectively supports the provision for older learners.

57. Promotion of equality of opportunity was identified at the previous inspection as an area for improvement. It remains satisfactory. The county council continues to review and update its equal opportunities policy at appropriate times which was identified as a strength in the previous report. Audit to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 remains well established and CACL makes good progress in adapting buildings to increase access for people with restricted mobility. Staff and council members continue to receive useful training on current legislation, including the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Few part-time staff have received training, though CACL has well-developed plans to release tutors from classes to attend the training it offers. Two established panels of staff from all departments and levels of the council promote equality of opportunity, and monitor proposals and developments in this area. They give helpful and appropriate guidance, particularly on disability and multi-culture and race issues. They consult with a wide range of organisations. Each service in the council has a member of staff with the responsibility of promoting equality and diversity.

58. Arrangements to ensure learners' understanding of equality of opportunity are satisfactory. Learners receive an appropriate range of policies and procedures at induction, including a copy of the equal opportunities policy, information on what to do if they experience bullying or harassment, and details of the complaints and grievance procedures. Complaints are dealt with promptly by the centre. However, the language used in the policies and procedures is not appropriate for learners with poor literacy skills. For example, learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are not provided with a suitable version for their needs. In some classes learners formally discuss and appropriately agree their rights and responsibilities towards others. However, many learners' understanding of equality of opportunity and diversity issues is not well developed. Insufficient attention is given to equality and diversity in some teaching and learning materials. CACL is consulting on improving its marketing materials to include

images that are more representative of diversity.

### Quality assurance

### Contributory grade 4

59. The LEA's quality assurance arrangements are currently incomplete. CACL has made some progress in improving quality assurance arrangements since the previous inspection, when inspectors judged quality assurance arrangements to be inadequate. However, most of these changes are too recent to have had an impact on the provision.

60. Operational quality assurance of the provision subcontracted to the further education colleges is the responsibility of each partner college. Most of this provision is further subcontracted by the further education colleges to local schools under a franchise arrangement. There is a clear service level agreement with each college detailing targets for areas such as retention and achievement rates, and requirements to observe learning sessions. However, at the time of the reinspection, these agreements had only been in place for eight weeks and it is too early to judge their effectiveness. The colleges have established quality assurance systems covering provision for adults for which they receive funding direct from the LSC and which they also franchise to the local schools. Much of what these include is appropriate. For example, there are satisfactory processes to assure the quality of tutors' lesson plans and schemes of work. However, some of their procedures manuals do not sufficiently cover all aspects of the learning process. Where this is the case, standards within the provision are often not consistently satisfactory.

61. Arrangements for assessing learners' prior knowledge are not documented. The effectiveness of initial assessment is inconsistent across the provision. The use of individual learning plans is not well documented in the procedures manual. In some classes there is a detailed plan for each learner and in others, individual learning plans are not used. The partner colleges have appropriate procedures for observing adult and community learning sessions, but few observations have taken place so far. The processes for subsequent action associated with lessons which are unsatisfactory are not documented. Managers at each of the partner colleges are required to submit a monthly report to the LEA giving details of performance in areas such as retention, achievement and recruitment rates. However, it is too early for this to have taken place. The colleges, together with the LEA, are developing appropriate opportunities for tutors in each curriculum area to meet and discuss common issues and share good practice. Two curriculum areas are currently meeting in this way.

62. The quality assurance arrangements for the provision which is delivered directly by CACL are currently being developed. CACL's adult learning strategy manager came into post eight months before the reinspection. Since then, and after consultation, CACL has redesigned many of the procedures. These are clearly written and some have recently been implemented. However, it is too early to judge their effectiveness. Observations of lessons have taken place in previous years but the records of these observations do not always contain action points to help subsequent improvement. New arrangements to observe lessons in these programmes have been introduced recently and a small number have taken place but it is too early to judge the effectiveness of these. Managers

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make regular unannounced visits to all centres to ensure that staff carry out standard processes such as such as health and safety assessments. When a new manager is appointed the adult learning strategy manager accompanies him or her on one of these visits to ensure that judgements made are consistent and appropriate.

63. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. Every establishment in each district produced its own self-assessment report which was then collated into a report covering the whole of the provision. It is appropriately evaluative and critical. Many of the key issues inspectors identified were also identified by CACL. CACL had successfully remedied some of the weaknesses by the time of the reinspection. However, quality assurance processes are not successful in ensuring consistent and continuous improvement in all curriculum areas, particularly in modern foreign languages where progress has been too slow.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### English, languages & communications

### Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	930	4

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

#### Strengths

- broad range of languages at different levels

#### Weaknesses

- significant proportion of unsatisfactory teaching
- insufficient staff training in language teaching

#### Achievement and standards

64. Retention rates are satisfactory. Tutors report improved retention rates on some courses since the introduction of a taster programme which allows people to sample a language lesson before deciding whether to enrol on a course. Attendance has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Attendance at the classes observed was 83 per cent.

65. Achievement is satisfactory. Learners' skills and attainment in most classes observed is adequate. Many learners use a range of strategies to attain their personal language goals including self-directed independent study. Their aims include increased confidence in speaking skills and the ability to cope in unexpected circumstances when abroad, such as an emergency visit to hospital. Some learners report development of oral presentation techniques and nearly all report they have increased fluency in their chosen language. However, learners in some classes acquire too little new vocabulary or grammar. Their fluency is weak and their pronunciation is poor.

#### Quality of education and training

66. A broad range of languages at different levels is on offer, a strength also identified at the previous inspection. These include widely taught languages such as BSL and French, and less commonly offered languages such as Arabic, Mandarin Chinese, and Japanese. Provision for learners to progress to more advanced levels is good, with availability in all but one of the languages. Provision is widely distributed, with classes at 23 centres. Most classes run in the evening but CACL has increased the number of daytime classes in response to learners' requests. However, the pattern of provision often reflects the



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availability of tutors and courses provided in the past. Managers have well-developed plans to use analysis of data from CACL's new management information system to identify more easily where to set up new provision.

67. Accommodation is satisfactory. Most rooms are bright, warm and carpeted. Lighting of the access to two of the centres is poor. The service provides a suitable range of teaching resources including photocopiers and relevant materials for tutors to use. Information technology facilities are available at some centres, but too few tutors make use of computers in lessons. Most tutors are competent linguists and some are native speakers. However, not all have relevant teaching qualifications and some have little experience of teaching adults. Some tutors are working towards teaching qualifications.

68. At the previous inspection there were no routine assessment procedures, which was identified as a weakness. CACL now has a standard format for initial assessment, standard forms for individual learning plans and an assessment policy. Approximately a third of tutors have attended training in the use and application of these. However use of individual learning plans remains inconsistent, and many tutors do not routinely record learners' progress. Some tutors readily experiment with different methods of planning individual learning. For example, in one class, a tutor uses an innovative group plan. During lessons, tutors give appropriate verbal feedback and most regularly set and mark homework.

69. Initial advice and guidance for learners is adequate. Most course publicity gives sufficient details of the level of knowledge and skills learners require to join a class. Some centres offer specialist advice by phone and others provide taster sessions where learners can sample classes before enrolment. One centre runs a three-week starter course to assist learners in making an informed choice about their courses. Support for learners in the classroom is satisfactory. Learners appreciate tutors' friendly and encouraging approach.

70. A significant proportion of teaching is unsatisfactory. Of lessons observed during the reinspection, 23 per cent received less than satisfactory grades, which marks a decline in standards since the previous inspection. In weaker sessions, staff do not make sufficient use of the language being taught to encourage learners' development of listening and speaking skills or to provide correct models for pronunciation and intonation. Much of the activity focuses on the tutor and does not allow sufficient time for learners to practise their skills. Tutors do not routinely vary learning activities to accommodate individuals' different learning styles. Tutors place too much emphasis on the teaching of grammar. They do not plan effectively to meet the needs of learners' different levels of knowledge and skills. The pace of sessions is often too slow and too little learning takes place. For example, in one session learners working in pairs practised saying the same two sentences for almost 15 minutes. In the better lessons, tutors use very little English and allow appropriate time for worthwhile practise of oral language. They make good use of learning materials and adopt creative strategies to help learners remember new vocabulary. In one lesson, the tutor used paper dolls imaginatively in conjunction with a reading passage on mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to successfully revise the vocabulary



concerning the parts of the body, and verbs of action. These better lessons challenge learners effectively and allow them ample opportunities to progress.

### **Leadership and management**

71. Since August 2004, management of modern foreign languages provision has been the responsibility of the three further education colleges with which CACL has subcontracting arrangements. Two of these have appointed specialist curriculum co-ordinators for this provision, and the other has well-developed plans to do so. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when the absence of subject specialist co-ordination for modern foreign languages was identified as a weakness. Although the appointments are recent, one subcontractor has already introduced good initiatives to develop the language provision and provide support to language tutors. For example, one centre now has standard schemes of work for beginners' courses. Communications across the provision have improved. Minutes are taken at staff meetings and are later circulated to all tutors, including those not present. Managers make effective use of e-mail to inform tutors of new developments, to provide a forum for the exchange of ideas and best practice. Co-ordinators offer staff useful support to develop individual learning plans and encourage tutors to carry out professional development.

72. Training for staff in teaching languages is not sufficient, a weakness also identified at the previous inspection. Both CACL's post-inspection action plan, and a report subsequently commissioned by CACL list the training of tutors in teaching languages as a high priority. Progress in adopting these recommendations is slow. CACL has run three training events for modern foreign language tutors since spring 2004, but none with a focus on developing skills specific to language teaching. No plans exist for any further training events in the immediate future. Provision of staff development forms part of the service level agreements subcontractors have with CACL. CACL has made few observations of learning sessions, although this too is identified as a priority. Subcontractors have developed frameworks for lesson observations which they plan to introduce to the provision, but it is too early to judge their effectiveness, or that of a peer observation scheme tutors are keen to participate in.

**Foundation programmes****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	550	3

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

**Strengths**

- good achievement
- good provision for learners with mental and other health needs
- effective partnership working

**Weaknesses**

- insufficient teaching and learning materials
- incomplete arrangements for initial assessment
- insufficient recognition and sharing of good practice

**Achievement and standards**

73. Attendance and retention rates are good. Achievement is good on most programmes. Since the previous inspection unit certification at entry level has been introduced for learners on most courses. Of those in learning, 107 learners have achieved unit certification, gaining a total of 229 credits. Other learners are progressing well to complete units in areas which include communication, practical spelling and gardening. These are the first certificates many learners have received. The standard of finished work in arts-based classes, especially those for learners with mental health conditions, is good. Learners gain a good range of skills in these classes including watercolour painting, and designing and making greeting cards. Learners also report significant gains in confidence. Learners work as part of a group, improve their concentration, memory and speaking skills. However, tutors do not always set short-term targets sufficiently precisely to enable learners to see their progress clearly. A few learners progress to carry out voluntary work. For example, one learner is now a volunteer on a computer study course.

**Quality of education and training**

74. At the previous inspection CACL's provision for learners with mental health needs was good. This strength has been maintained and improved and now extends to learners with other health needs. The content of courses is appropriate. For example, gentle yoga is helpful for those with degenerative physical conditions. Activities such as art and craft, art appreciation and local history, cater well for those recovering from mental illness. Learners in art and craft sessions develop a wide range of craft skills, gain

confidence, learn to work in a group and develop friendships. Locations for courses are chosen well to help learners integrate back into their local communities.

75. Training is satisfactory. Of the learning sessions observed during the reinspection, over half were judged to be good or better and a further third were satisfactory. While the proportion of unsatisfactory lessons has remained the same since the previous inspection, the proportion of those judged to be good or better has improved significantly. Activities for learners with learning difficulties are now satisfactory, but were a weakness at the previous inspection. In the better classes, tutors use a wide variety of activities to interest and motivate learners. Tutors have made effective improvements to session planning to ensure that class activities are linked to real-life settings. In a few classes for learners with differing abilities, the work for more able learners is not sufficiently challenging.

76. Support for learners is satisfactory. Since the previous inspection the number of teaching assistants has increased significantly. In most lessons they work well with the tutor to effectively support individual learners or the whole group. Support for learners from tutors and classroom assistants is responsive to the needs of individual learners and encourage and motivate them. In a few lessons the classroom assistant's role is not sufficiently well defined and in these sessions learners do not receive the level of individual support they need. Tutors sensitively deal with learners when difficulties arise in lessons which are related to health conditions.

77. Tutors effectively encourage learners' development of literacy and numeracy skills in most classes for adults with learning difficulties. Tutors' awareness of the need to plan activities to promote these skills and record progress has increased since the previous inspection. Many learners produce useful diaries or files recording their work and achievements in a lesson. Some tutors are unsure of the best way to encourage and support this.

78. There are insufficient teaching and learning materials. Many classrooms do not have accessible whiteboards. Tutors rely heavily on the use of flip-charts which are not large enough for the purpose for which tutors use them. Many photocopied handouts are of poor quality which was also a weakness at the previous inspection. Most worksheets used in lessons for adults with learning difficulties do not contain colour or images to increase learners' interest and enjoyment. In the classes where the achievement of craft and art skills is particularly good, the tutors supplement materials well from their personal resources. However in a few sessions involving the use of art and craft, tutors make insufficient use of materials designed to stimulate the senses.

79. At the previous inspection, insufficient use was made of specialist resources for learners with visual impairments. Since then CACL has purchased specialist equipment for such learners and for those with hearing impairments. Tutors make appropriate use of these resources. Nevertheless, in some classes with large numbers of learners or where learners have some degree of visual impairment, the images tutors use for demonstration are too small. Computer resources for computer studies classes are good, but poor for learners following other subjects. Tutors' understanding of how to purchase

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resources has improved since the previous inspection, where it was another improvement needed. Tutors are appropriately qualified and experienced in their subject area, and a few have specialist qualifications to teach learners with difficulties and disabilities. Accommodation is satisfactory.

80. At the previous inspection, initial assessment of learners' needs was inadequate. Although CACL has made improvements, the arrangements for initial assessment remain incomplete. CACL now has standard forms for learners to complete at initial assessments. However, these forms are poorly designed. They do not adequately allow or encourage the recording of sufficient information to fully aid identification of individuals' needs. They are not easily adapted to cater for the range of assessment appropriate to different length courses, different groups of learners or learners with significant learning, social, health and emotional needs. The completion of the initial assessment for adults with learning difficulties is often unsatisfactory. For a few learners senior support workers provide appropriate and important information on health and emotional needs, which tutors use effectively when preparing the individual learning plans. For other learners, tutors have completed the assessment with little of this information, and in many cases, do not complete parts of the assessment form. However, tutors often know their learners from previous programmes, and use this information effectively when developing individual learning plans.

### **Leadership and management**

81. Partnership working with the local community is effective and was a strength identified at the previous inspection. CACL and voluntary sector organisations work together successfully to ensure good provision suited to learners' particular needs. For example, CACL runs programmes developed at the request of a national mental health charity, a national charity for people suffering from a progressive condition and an organisation promoting self-advocacy for adults with learning difficulties. CACL readily experiments with course design and content when setting up new programmes. CACL ensures good use is made of the respective strengths of the partners, providing the tutor and teaching material while the partner organisations, in most instances, provide the accommodation and expert support workers. Communication between the staff involved is good. Discussions between the partners are regular, and appropriate changes to courses often follow these discussions. However, most communication is informal and the roles and responsibilities of the partners are not formally defined.

82. Implementation of the quality assurance policy has improved since the previous inspection, where it was identified a weakness. Programme co-ordinators take much of the responsibility for implementation of quality assurance arrangements. CACL has increased the number of co-ordinators since the previous inspection. Planned observations of learning sessions are more frequent. The process and standard of recording of lesson observations has improved. However, actions identified to improve training are not always sufficiently specific or time bound, and often focus too heavily on improvement in record-keeping rather than training technique. Staff effectively plan and carry out the internal moderation of the accreditation scheme CACL uses to meet the

requirements of the validating bodies. The area of learning's self-assessment report identified two of the strengths and one of the weaknesses identified by inspectors.

83. Staff do not recognise and share good practice sufficiently. Staff meetings take place at which tutors exchange ideas, but service-wide adoption of the best practices does not consistently follow these meetings. For instance, methods some tutors use for maintaining records of learners' progress are good, while those others use are weak. For example, one tutor makes effective use of images in one programme but colleagues do not replicate this in similar programmes. Tutors efficiently complete risk assessment for individual learners in one area of the provision, but not in others. Communications between staff have improved since the previous inspection. However, while most tutors have high expectations for their learners' achievement, a few have low expectations, especially of those learners with learning difficulties.