

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Durham LEA**

**24 October 2003**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## Grading

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

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

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

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

## Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

## Overall judgement

Where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

- more than one third of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas, **or**
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory.

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

# INSPECTION REPORT

## Durham LEA

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Durham County Council (the council) provides adult and community learning opportunities through Education in the Community, a service within the education department. The service comprises youth work, adult learning and learning for life, including family learning.
2. For the purposes of adult learning, the authority supports 90 community associations throughout the county. Forty are housed in buildings owned by the local authority. Sixteen of these are schools. The remainder use other types of community building. The local authority has designated 20 community centres as 'main' centres and the remainder as 'satellite' centres. Most adult and community learning takes place on community association premises. The service delivery units for literacy, numeracy and language skills and family learning provision are based in four areas of the county.
3. The service is organised on an area basis. There are five teams of qualified youth and community work staff, each led by an area co-ordinator, who oversee the work of full- and part-time youth workers and adult and community learning tutors. Each area team is expected to support the work of a number of community association management committees, including those at satellite centres. The five area co-ordinators report to the service manager. Foundation programmes, including family learning, are managed by an adult and community learning officer who reports to the service manager. She oversees the work of four area literacy, numeracy and language skills co-ordinators who, in turn are responsible for the work of development workers and part-time tutors. The service has two quality assurance officers, one responsible for the youth work aspect of provision and the other responsible for adult and community learning.
4. The council receives funding from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Approximately 62 per cent of the funding for adult literacy, language and numeracy and family learning comes from the local LSC. The authority reserves an element of its LSC funding to assist management committees in establishing new groups. The remainder comes from a number of external sources. The most significant of these are the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) and the European Social Fund (ESF). In the current year, the local authority is the managing agent for a project supported by the local learning partnership and funded through the LSC's Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities fund.
5. In 2002-03 there were LSC-funded adult and community learning courses in 11 areas of learning. The total number of learners was 7,680. This was an increase of 898 on the previous year. An estimated additional 8,411 learners took part in courses supported by the local authority through its own budgets. The largest areas of the LSC-funded provision were sports and leisure, the visual and performing arts, and foundation programmes, including family learning. Many foundation courses lead to accreditation. At the time of the inspection, there were no validated retention and completion data for

## DURHAM LEA

2002-03. Retention data for the previous year were unreliable. Over 1 per cent of learners were of minority ethnic origin, compared with 0.8 per cent of minority ethnic people within the county population as a whole; 3.3 per cent of learners identified themselves as having a disability; 77.5 per cent of learners were women; and 32 per cent were aged 60 years or older.

6. County Durham is predominantly a rural shire county covering an area of 223,200 hectares. The population is 493,470. More than half of its residents live in settlements of fewer than 1,000 people. Heavy industry has declined, and problems in the farming industry, particularly foot and mouth disease, have left a legacy of economic, social and environmental problems. There are significant pockets of social deprivation. The unemployment rate is 6 per cent, compared with the national average of 3.9 per cent.

## SCOPE OF PROVISION

### Information & communications technology

7. In 2002-03, 295 learners were enrolled on information and communications technology (ICT) courses. Most learners were studying information technology (IT) on entry level and level 1 programmes, organised as part of literacy, numeracy and language skills and family learning. Just under half of these learners were on accredited courses. Courses took place in community facilities such as village halls and schools. Seventy-eight learners studied courses which had been developed in response to requests from community associations. These courses ranged from beginners level to level 3 advanced. Just over half were externally accredited. The provision was spread across 20 community associations, and lessons took place during the day and in the evenings. The pattern of provision in the current year is broadly the same. Most of the courses offered are 12 weeks or less but some longer programmes are available. Currently, 62 courses are operating.

8. In 2002-03, approximately 80 per cent of learners were women. Twenty-three per cent of learners were over 60 years of age. Only 0.3 per cent of learners were of minority ethnic origin. Most learners attended daytime classes. The council has no retention data for 2002-03, and insufficient data on achievement of formal qualifications.

## **Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**

9. In 2002-03 there were 2,159 learners in this area of learning, taking courses in a wide range of disciplines, including keep fit, tae kwondo, aerobics, yoga, swimming, circuit training, bowls, archery, aikido, kick boxing and tai chi. Most courses are provided on a termly basis and last for an average of 10 weeks. Courses take place on weekdays and at weekends during the day and in the evening. Lessons last from one to two hours and take place at a range of venues across the county, including community centres, village halls and schools. Many of the courses are for learners of mixed ability. In 25 per cent of classes learners work towards qualifications awarded by national governing bodies. Most courses do not lead to any form of accreditation.

10. In 2002-03, 78 per cent of learners were women. Thirty-eight per cent of learners were aged over 60 and 1 per cent declared a disability. Less than 1 per cent of learners were of minority ethnic origin.

11. There are 48 part-time tutors. The provision is co-ordinated by five area co-ordinators. Much of the provision is developed in response to interests expressed by members of community associations.

## **Visual & performing arts & media**

12. There were 2,035 learners on visual and performing arts courses in 2002-03. Of these, 74 per cent were women. Three per cent were of minority ethnic origin. Most learners were over 19 years of age, and 44 per cent were over 60 years of age.

13. Courses take place in community associations throughout the area. During the week of inspection, 47 courses were on offer. Most of these were scheduled for weekdays, about 27 per cent during the daytime, but most during the evening. A small number of courses were weekend courses. None of the courses are accredited. Most classes last for two hours and courses last for between five and 10 weeks. Levels range from beginners to more advanced. Visual arts courses include drawing, watercolour painting, quilting, dressmaking, pottery, embroidery, and photography. Performing arts courses include line dancing, salsa, ballroom dancing, music, theatre skills, and singing.

## Foundation programmes

14. Literacy, numeracy and language provision is delivered by four area teams, which are supervised by the adult and community learning officer. There are four full-time coordinators, five other full-time staff and 85 part-time teaching staff on fractional and sessional contracts, ranging between two and 22 hours each week. The council recruits and trains volunteers to work in this field. There are currently more than 100 people working in this capacity. Some volunteers go on to become assistant tutors.

15. In 2002-03 there were 929 learners, 61 per cent of whom were women. Twenty-three per cent of learners had learning difficulties and/or disabilities and 6 per cent were of minority ethnic origin. Currently there are 436 learners, of whom 61 per cent are women. Forty-eight per cent of learners have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Almost 6 per cent of learners are of minority ethnic origin, compared with an overall population value of under 1 per cent for County Durham.

16. Programmes include literacy and numeracy tuition, specialist dyslexia support, two English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) groups, some classes for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and five workplace learning programmes. There are three- and six- hour assessment programmes, short courses and year-long programmes, in daytime, twilight and evenings sessions. There was a small summer programme in 2003. Activities take place at 62 venues, managed by schools, community organisations and Education in the Community.



## Family learning

17. Most family learning is delivered by the service's literacy, numeracy and language skills unit, but the service's area teams also make a contribution. The provision is funded by the local LSC and through the SRB and ESF. There are 371 learners enrolled on the council's 51 family learning courses. Eighty-three per cent of these learners are women. Five per cent of learners are over 60 years of age and 0.5 per cent are from black and minority ethnic groups. In 2002-03, an estimated 928 learners made a total of 1,199 enrolments on family learning programmes.

18. Literacy, numeracy and language skills staff manage family programmes which primarily focus on literacy and numeracy. These include longer family literacy and numeracy courses, tasters, short courses, 'Keeping Up With the Children', story sacks and essential skills through ICT. Sessions involve adults and children learning together, and independently. Programmes are offered at a large number of venues, including local schools and community centres, and take place mainly during the day. Accreditation is available for 60 per cent of the courses. These include external accreditation through the regional Open College Network (OCN) and the national literacy and numeracy certificates at levels 1 and 2. The programme is managed and co-ordinated from four area centres by four co-ordinators. A new post, family programmes manager, has just been established. There are five full-time staff, five fractional staff and 24 sessional tutors.

19. SRB funding has been used to provide additional staff and crèches and to develop new programmes, such as family literacy through sport. The remainder has been allocated to the five Education in the Community area teams to develop intergenerational learning.

## Community development

20. The service has operated in partnership with the voluntary sector for many years, and views this partnership as an important means of maintaining community infrastructure and developing social capital. It currently supports the work of 228 community associations throughout the county. Each association has a management committee of 15-17 members (a total of approximately 1,500 people), drawn from its local community. An elected member sits on each committee. It places a qualified youth and community worker in each of the 20 main centres. These staff are managed by the service's area co-ordinators. Their role is to develop the capacity of the management committees of their particular centre and satellite centres to design and implement a programme of learning and activity which will meet the needs and aspirations of their communities. The programme is expected to take account of the issues affecting young people, as well as adults. The youth and community workers attend each management committee meeting, and have a duty to report on how work has progressed between meetings.

21. The council views voluntary activity and the development of voluntary workers as fundamental to the process of community development, and gives a structured programme of training for volunteers which ultimately leads to qualified worker status and paid employment. The level 3 course has been offered for eight years, but youth and community work training has always been a feature of the service. There are currently 71 volunteers on level 1 training.

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	13
Number of inspection days	89
Number of learner interviews	426
Number of staff interviews	267
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	101
Number of partner/external agency interviews	109

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

22. The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, leadership and management are unsatisfactory, as are quality assurance and visual and performing arts and media. ICT and equality of opportunity are satisfactory. Sports and leisure, foundation programmes, family learning and community development are good.

## GRADES

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

Leadership and management	4
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	4

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

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	2
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	2

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

Foundation programmes	2
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	2

Family learning	2
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	2

Community development	2
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	2

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievement and standards

23. For many learners on ICT courses, ICT is their introduction to adult learning. This has an immediate and significant effect on their lives. **They develop skills which they**

**then use to good effect** to support other members of their families, and to contribute to the wider community.

24. **In sports and leisure, learners achieve very good levels of proficiency.** In sports activities such as basketball, they show a good understanding of tactics, as well as proficiency in the skills which are essential to the game. In circuit training, fitness and yoga, learners demonstrate very good levels of stamina and flexibility. They also have a good understanding of their discipline. Many learners are knowledgeable and well organised, and can operate independently. They understand the benefits that learning has brought them in terms of their mental and physical well-being.

25. **In the visual and performing arts, the standard of craft work produced, particularly in traditional areas such as quilting, patchwork and lace-making, is very good,** with some learners producing work of a professional standard and exhibiting it publicly. In art, dressmaking, photography and dance, achievement is satisfactory. **There are many gains for learners in terms of personal and social development.** Some learners go on to contribute to community initiatives.

26. Achievement on literacy and numeracy programmes is good, with a very large proportion of those who are entered for awards achieving them. **Most learners achieve their personal learning goals** and go on to use their skills in their everyday lives. Learning has often had an effect on their employability, as well as on their self-confidence.

27. **Achievement on family learning programmes is also good.** Learners gain confidence and use their newly acquired skills at work. They also gain a greater understanding of how their children are being taught at school, and make educational aids to help them learn. Many learners progress to other activities or courses.

28. Volunteers are highly valued and are a significant part of the authority's efforts to improve communities. **The initial training course for youth and community workers is a valuable career route from voluntary to paid work and to professional status.** The standard of the training is good, and many who take this route reinvest their learning in the community, acting as role models for those around them.

29. **Some community association management committees, with the support of their youth and community workers, have developed imaginative approaches to dealing with problematic social issues** in their locality. These issues include teenage pregnancy, unemployment and ill health. These initiatives have brought real improvements in quality of life for those who participate.

## Quality of education and training

### Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Information & communications technology	0	2	6	2	2	0	0	12
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	2	8	5	4	0	1	0	20
Visual & performing arts & media	0	1	9	9	2	0	0	21
Foundation programmes	2	8	7	6	0	0	0	23
Family learning	0	5	4	2	1	0	0	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>88</b>

30. In ICT, there is a lot of good teaching, but a little is unsatisfactory. Tutors produce some good materials, but other materials are not adapted sufficiently to learners' needs. Lessons are well planned and learners' progress satisfactory. There are few opportunities for staff to share good practice or to carry out staff development. **Premises have welcoming staff and good support facilities for people with disabilities and sensory impairments.** Hardware and software within individual centres are of a good standard, but there is no standardisation among the centres. There is no community-based intranet. Courses are not always designed appropriately to meet the needs of learners and there are few progression opportunities.

31. **The standard of teaching in sports and leisure is very good,** and sometimes inspirational. Lessons are stimulating and are structured to enable learners to develop their knowledge, skills and physical condition, according to their individual objectives. In the best lessons, challenging targets are set and achieved. **Tutors are very well qualified and have extensive teaching experience. Pre-exercise screening is not conducted systematically,** most tutors have their own methods of doing this. The range of provision is limited, and few men participate. Many resources are provided by tutors, the quality of some facilities is poor, and insufficient attention is paid health and safety issues. Pre-course information is inadequate.

32. The standard of teaching and learning in the visual and performing arts courses is satisfactory. Tutors demonstrate techniques effectively, and give a good level of individual support and instruction. Visits are made to places of interest to enhance the learning experience. However, learners are not challenged sufficiently to develop their understanding of a wide variety of styles and cultural perspectives. Low numbers in some groups have an adverse effect on learning. **Resources are poor.** Practice in monitoring and evaluating learners' progress varies in effectiveness and more experienced learners are not challenged sufficiently. **The curriculum is not sufficiently coherent, is narrow in range and, although largely based on European culture, there are many courses that are not European-based.** There are few daytime learning opportunities, and men are under-represented among the learner group. **Pre-course information and guidance is poor.**

33. **Standards of learning and teaching in literacy and numeracy skills lessons are good.**

Lessons are well planned and are fine-tuned to meet the needs of individual learners. Good use is made of real-life materials and activities, and learners receive much positive feedback. The standard of the work they produce is good. **Volunteers and assistant tutors make a valuable contribution to the teaching and learning process. Initial assessment is effective and good use is made of the findings to develop learning plans.** Learners' progress is regularly reviewed. **There is a good range of provision,** conveniently located, and relevant to learners' circumstances and interests. **Support for learners with dyslexia is of a particularly good standard.** Most accommodation is satisfactory.

34. **The teaching and the level of learning within family learning programmes are both good.** Lessons have clear objectives and learners are able to give a good account of what they have learnt. They frequently use their new skills to help their peers. **Initial assessment is good** and learners' progress is carefully recorded. **A good range of programmes and courses** caters for parents with children at various stages of development, and crèche facilities are provided free of charge. Programmes take place within easy reach of where learners live. Learners receive an appropriate level of information advice and guidance. **Some accommodation is unsatisfactory.**

35. Teaching on the initial training course in youth and community work is good, and tutors take account of the evaluations received from learners.

36. Community association management committees do not have sufficient, appropriate support to be able to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively. **Many are over-reliant on their youth and community worker for the development and evaluation of the programmes for which the committee is responsible.** However, **some committee members show particular dedication and skill in attracting funding** from a wide range of external funding sources. They have successfully secured grants which have been put at the service of local communities, and have often led to the construction or refurbishment of community facilities. **The council provides a good range of specialist support** to enable management committees to prepare and submit funding applications. It also provides training in areas relevant to the delivery of community centre programmes.

### Leadership and management

37. **The ICT curriculum has not been planned effectively. The council has no strategy in place for linking communities electronically,** which affects existing and potential learners, as well as staff. **Quality assurance is at an early stage of development and has had insufficient effect on this area of learning.**

38. **Curriculum planning in sports and leisure is poor, with insufficient attention given to the availability of courses or opportunities for learners to progress.** A lesson observation scheme has been introduced, but too recently to have had any effect. There are not enough other methods for assuring quality of provision.

39. **Curriculum planning in the visual and performing arts is ineffective.** The programme is largely demand-led or dictated by tutor availability. It has few links with arts organisations in the local community, and there are no opportunities for tutors to discuss

their teaching practice. Although observation of teaching and learning has been introduced, there is no specialist advice available for tutors.

40. **In literacy, numeracy and language skills lessons, programme evaluation is inadequate.** There is no clear link between various plans and reviews, and statements tend to be detailed and descriptive, rather than evaluative. Insufficient use is made of data to help make judgements about the quality of provision. **Programme planning is not co-ordinated effectively at county level,** although it is carried out within area teams.

41. Strategic planning for family learning is satisfactory, but the structure for delivery is not coherent. **The provision is not evaluated effectively,** and there is insufficient use of data. The observation of teaching and learning is well established, and the arrangements for supporting and developing tutors are satisfactory.

42. The council does not have sufficient, structured planning for the process of community development. **In most instances, targets for planning and reviewing activity are not incorporated into either unit plans, or the staff appraisal process.**

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

## Leadership and management

### Strengths

- well-defined strategic aims
- effective work with partners to target priority groups
- some good strategies for promoting learning to non-participants

### Weaknesses

- poor management of provision
- ineffective management of information
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements
- poor target-setting and use of performance indicators
- insufficient monitoring of equality of opportunity
- no systematic promotion of equality of opportunity

## **Information & communications technology**

### **Strengths**

- good application of knowledge and skills
- good community facilities
- some good teaching

### **Weaknesses**

- restricted range of provision at many centres
- unco-ordinated curriculum development
- underdeveloped ICT strategy for community-based learning

## **Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**

### **Strengths**

- good achievement of knowledge and skills
- very good teaching
- very well-qualified and experienced tutors

### **Weaknesses**

- no systematic pre-exercise screening
- poor curriculum planning and resourcing
- insufficient monitoring of the quality of provision

## **Visual & performing arts & media**

### **Strengths**

- good standard of craft work
- good enhancement of learners' social skills

### **Weaknesses**

- inadequate resources
- poor pre-course information and guidance
- ineffective curriculum planning



## **Foundation programmes**

### **Strengths**

- good achievement of personal learning goals
- good standards of teaching and learning
- good use of volunteers and assistant tutors
- good use of initial assessment and learning plans
- good range of provision
- excellent specialist dyslexia support

### **Weaknesses**

- inadequate process for programme evaluation
- unco-ordinated approach to programme planning

## **Family learning**

### **Strengths**

- good achievement level
- good standards of teaching and learning
- good initial assessment and recording of progress
- good range of programmes

### **Weaknesses**

- some unsatisfactory accommodation
- poor arrangements for overall service programme evaluation

## **Community development**

### **Strengths**

- effective development of volunteers
- good strategies for some social issues
- very good acquisition of external funding
- good specialist advice and support by the council

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient planning and evaluation of their programmes by management committees
- insufficient reference to community development targets in many unit plans and staff appraisals

## DURHAM LEA

### **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT DURHAM LEA:**

- the supportiveness of tutors
- the opportunity to attend classes locally
- the sense of being part of a learning culture
- the crèches that support family learning

### **WHAT LEARNERS THINK DURHAM LEA COULD IMPROVE:**

- learning resources
- the amount of daytime provision available
- pre-course and end-of-course advice and information

## **KEY CHALLENGES FOR DURHAM LEA:**

- establish clear performance indicators for the various aspects of the provision
- improve the management of its programmes
- improve curriculum development
- continue to develop and implement its quality assurance arrangements
- improve its use of data
- develop an ICT infrastructure to support teaching and learning and the process of community development
- promote equal opportunities more effectively

## 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.

<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 INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 4

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

#### Strengths

- well-defined strategic aims
- effective work with partners to target priority groups
- some good strategies for promoting learning to non-participants

#### Weaknesses

- poor management of provision
- ineffective management of information
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements
- poor target-setting and use of performance indicators
- insufficient monitoring of equality of opportunity
- no systematic promotion of equality of opportunity

43. The service has a very clear and well-researched plan which outlines the local education authority's (LEA's) priorities in relation to adult and community learning. These are to develop the range and balance of provision, to increase widening participation activity, to maintain existing partnerships and to meet external inspection and quality assurance requirements. The plan is well referenced to detailed regional demographics, survey data and recent government policies, and the targets set are challenging. Staff are well aware of the key objectives of the plan. Most staff are also aware of the aims and objectives of the corporate plan, to which they were all invited to contribute.

44. The service has a long-standing partnership with the voluntary sector and has constructive links with over 350 external organisations in the county. In recent years, partnerships have been used to good effect to widen participation in the area of foundation programmes, and the number of courses in this area of learning has increased significantly. However, there is insufficient evidence of inter-agency planning to achieve coherence and consistency in other areas of learning such as ICT or the visual and performing arts. The LEA is successfully bidding for external funds for adult and community learning provision and supports local communities to develop their lifelong learning plans. Communication between the LEA and community organisations is good. A review of the provision at local level is carried out annually. Some local managers and workers have a good knowledge of their communities and their learning needs.

45. The management of the provision is poor. Although curriculum strategies and plans exist for family learning and literacy and numeracy, there is no overarching plan covering the whole service. The LEA's intention is that provision should be responsive to local

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needs and interests. However, this is widely interpreted as meaning that programmes and initiatives should be developed purely on a reactive basis. With the exception of foundation programmes, there are few attempts to innovate, and few attempts to educate people's expectations about what learning might have to offer them. In the visual and performing arts, for example, the programme is traditional and serves a long-standing clientele. Although sports and leisure is a thriving area of learning in many respects, it principally serves learners who have been attending for many years. ICT provision is available in 20 centres across the county taking into account provision already offered by four further education colleges, UK online centres and learndirect centres. The daytime provision is poor in some areas of learning, but there are no plans to resolve this problem.

46. The quality of Education in the Community's area plans and reviews is poor. Reports tend to be narrative or descriptive, rather than evaluative. Community development activities are not systematically planned for, implemented and reviewed at either team or individual levels. Only a minority of workers set out to achieve specific targets in this area. The LEA has introduced service level agreements with community associations for the adult and community learning provision delivered on their premises. However, these do not have enough detail about programme standards to be a valuable monitoring tool. The marketing and publicity of adult and community learning courses are in the early stages of development.

47. The management and support of part-time tutors in ICT, the visual and performing arts, and sports and leisure are inadequate. Communication with part-time tutors is poor. Some were unaware of the inspection and of the criteria against which the quality of teaching and learning are judged. There is insufficient sharing of good practice. The turnover of tutors in some areas of learning has been high - as high as 30 per cent at one point. In some areas of learning, managers are finding it difficult to recruit tutors and expand the programme. The authority is dealing with this by reviewing tutors' pay and conditions. Tutors' qualifications, experience or their ability to teach are not adequately checked.

48. The LEA has satisfactory arrangements for identifying the professional development needs of salaried staff. This is done through the staff appraisal process. In most cases, identified staff development needs relate to the strategic objectives of the service. Not all hourly paid staff have any form of appraisal. Most have not had sufficient staff development.

49. The standard of accommodation used for adult and community learning is mixed. Some buildings are new and purpose-built, but most are old schools which are coming to the end of their useful lives. There are specific shortcomings in the accommodation and specialist facilities for family learning and sports and leisure. Health and safety is appropriately managed and risk management is conducted annually on all accommodation in the LEA. However, sports tutors are expected to carry out risk assessments on their activities with learners. The monitoring of this arrangement is weak.

50. The management of information is ineffective. The LEA recognises this issue. It has



purchased a computerised system, but this is not yet fully operational. The service has not had sufficient timely support from the council to install the system and to ensure that it can meet the complex demands placed upon it. As a result, the provider cannot use data systematically to identify trends, or successfully monitor standards. There are no learner retention and completion rates for 2002-03, and those for the previous year are unreliable.

51. Financial management and the deployment of resources within the service are satisfactory. The service has operated within its budget for the past three years. Area coordinators have a delegated share of the budget and have a clear understanding of what the priorities are for expenditure. Checks and monitoring are adequate to ensure the appropriate spending of funds.

52. The council has a firm commitment to the development of its literacy, numeracy and family learning provision. A lot of effort has been invested in significant expansion in provision in recent years. However, structural arrangements for these areas are under pressure, and planning and evaluation arrangements are not fully developed.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

53. Effective networking with a variety of agencies has brought many new learners to foundation courses. For example, relations with an agency have resulted in provision being set up for young parents. Where schools have identified children with learning difficulties, the service staff have successfully enrolled the children's parents in learning. Health visitors, social services, schools and doctors have referred potential learners to the LEA's outreach workers. The LEA has worked closely with the hearing impaired over a number of years. It has set up a comprehensive range of courses, including awareness of hearing impairment, communication tactics and British Sign Language, aimed at advancing and empowering the hearing impaired community, and at encouraging awareness and understanding in the hearing community. As a result of this long-standing relationship, hearing impaired tutors are now employed by the service to teach hearing impaired and hearing learners.

54. The LEA has developed some good strategies for promoting learning to people who have had insufficient or poor early education. Awards ceremonies are held for learners, which are reported in the local press and in community publications. Learners who have completed programmes are sometimes recruited to speak to other potential learners to encourage them into learning. Exhibitions of learners' work have been held for the general public. One learner with dyslexia, who came into learning with no literacy skills, has written and published a book about her childhood, and serves as a role model to other potential learners. The literacy and numeracy skills service employed community representatives as outreach workers. This led to coffee mornings for people not already engaged in education. These, in turn, evolved into literacy and numeracy sessions. Some wider adult learning opportunities have now been established in these communities as a result of this initiative. The service has also encouraged people into learning by providing taster days and bite-size courses. Some of the courses offered by the service are free, enabling a wider group of learners to participate.

55. Equality of opportunity is not monitored sufficiently. In some areas of learning there has been no monitoring of learning materials to ensure that they are inclusive and reflect good practice regarding equality of opportunity and diversity. Apart from literacy and numeracy, family learning and some ICT tutors, tutors have had no advice on how to present their courses to include all learners. All community centres have an equal opportunities policy adapted from the LEA's policy. Neither the policies nor their implementation have been monitored by the LEA. Data collected by the LEA are unreliable and cannot be used to set meaningful targets for attracting under-represented groups into learning. Available data have been broken down to give an assessment of participation, but have not been analysed to compare the retention rates and progress of different groups. Learners, including those leaving their courses before completion, have recently completed evaluation of learning programme forms. However, these have not been analysed by the LEA.

56. Equality of opportunity is not promoted systematically. Many courses have been running for a good number of years, sometimes with well-established groups of learners. Opportunities for new learners to join are limited and some courses have substantial waiting lists. There is not enough provision in some areas of learning to cater for the demands of new learners. Current courses are not always timetabled to suit the needs of some under-represented groups. Feedback from early leavers indicates that in some cases tutors teach to the level of established groups and give insufficient attention to the needs of new learners. The courses are largely traditional, and have developed unplanned, often on the basis of tutor availability. The content of some of these courses is unchallenging in terms of equality and diversity. The profile of learners in the older, established courses is often very traditional, contrasting with some of the newer provision, which has successfully targeted some under-represented groups such as men and young parents. Opportunities for progression are sometimes limited. This is exacerbated by the difficulty in recruiting suitable tutors in some areas.

57. Tutors in some areas of learning have had no training in equality and diversity, though there are plans for all staff to receive training. Training in literacy and numeracy awareness is also available, but has been poor to date. This contrasts with the very comprehensive training in equality and diversity given to youth and community workers. The promotion of courses is not sufficiently widespread, and the methods used do not reach people who have had not previous contact with the service. The LEA is aware of this, and has set up a marketing group to deal with this issue. Pre-course information is scarce. Learners are sometimes recruited to inappropriate courses.

58. Some premises are difficult to access for people with impaired mobility, and not all can be adapted. Where premises cannot be adapted, staff attempt to make alternative arrangements for users of the centres. The purpose-built buildings have good physical access. Minor improvement grants have been used to improve access and facilities in some centres. Some of these now have induction loops, facilities for learners with dyspraxia, visual and audio fire alarms, and notices in Braille.

**Quality assurance****Contributory grade 4**

59. Quality assurance arrangements are incomplete. The LEA is aware of this and has been working hard to make improvements. It has a quality assurance strategy, with associated quality assurance policies and procedures. These are detailed and form the basis for an effective evaluative process for the continuing improvement of adult and community learning. Adult and community managers and staff are committed to changes, and in the past year, 169 staff have had training in quality assurance procedures. This has raised the awareness of staff and community association committee members of this issue. Quality assurance was a key feature of the new part-time tutors' conference in the summer. This included the distribution of a useful tutor information pack. Most part-time and voluntary staff understand and carry out the quality assurance procedures which apply to them.

60. Comprehensive arrangements for the observation of teaching and learning have been developed. These were introduced in September. Staff responsible for carrying out the observations have had extensive training. Weaknesses identified from the observations are starting to influence tutor training, but in most areas of learning only a few lesson observations have been conducted. It is too early to expect an analysis of the issues emerging from lesson observations. Some staff who conduct observations are not qualified teachers, and there are no arrangements for giving tutors in some areas of learning subject-specific advice about their work.

61. The new quality assurance arrangements have not had sufficient effect. Course reviews, programme evaluations and learner surveys are not used as a matter of routine to ensure continuous improvements in provision. At the time of the inspection, evaluation forms were being sent out to learners. However, some returned forms did not have the basic details of the course title, venue, or date.

62. The LEA has not established any performance indicators for its adult learning provision, or for its community development activities. For example, there are no retention targets for adult learning courses, and no success criteria for community development initiatives. In unit plans for the communities there are not enough clear and measurable targets for adult and community learning. The small amount of target-setting that does take place is linked to contractual and funding arrangements. Performance indicators and targets are not used to contribute to important management decisions. Although they are aware of the strategic direction of the service, most staff are unaware of any explicit service targets. The LEA is aware of these shortcomings and is in the process of devising targets and performance indicators to meet the needs of the service.

63. The 2001-02 self-assessment report was the first produced by the LEA. It was produced with the help of staff and the committees of community associations. There was a separate report for literacy, numeracy and language skills, which was written mostly by managers. The contents of the self-assessment report are often descriptive rather than evaluative. Some of the judgements made by inspectors matched those in the self-assessment reports, but many of the key strengths identified by the provider are no more than normal practice. Inspectors identified weaknesses in addition to those

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included in the reports. There is insufficient evaluation of the provision in terms of the quality of teaching and learning, learners' achievements and the impact of learning on them. The development plans are inadequate, and show insufficient evidence of planning for continuous improvement. Most targets are simply statements of intent, without saying clearly what will be achieved, and when.

64. Internal verification is only applicable at present to the foundation and ICT areas, as well as youth and community work training courses, where it is satisfactory.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Information & communications technology

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	295	3

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

#### Strengths

- good application of knowledge and skills
- good community facilities
- some good teaching

#### Weaknesses

- restricted range of provision at many centres
- unco-ordinated curriculum development
- underdeveloped ICT strategy for community-based learning

#### Achievement and standards

65. A large number of the learners are new to ICT. The programme can have a significant effect upon their lives, often within a short period of time. For many learners their initial achievement is in enrolling. They are developing good skills, which they are using to support children, grandchildren and partners. In one community centre, a group of elderly learners is in the process of producing a community newsletter, using desktop publishing skills which they have developed at the centre. Many learners are also gaining confidence and self-esteem and are benefiting from the experience of learning. Several are using e-mail to keep regular contact with distant relatives, other are collecting patterns from the internet to use in sewing classes. At many centres, learners progress from an ICT course to another, unrelated course at the same centre and sometimes to more advanced levels within an ICT programme, if available. The literacy and numeracy standards of learners on the ICT programmes are satisfactory.

#### Quality of education and training

66. Lessons are well planned and in the better ones learners' progress is effectively monitored, and the tutor uses this information to plan further work. Individual learning plans are not always used to set challenging targets. Learners' progress in lessons is satisfactory and most learners achieve the intended outcomes. In one instance during inspection, a tutor took advantage of an unplanned learning opportunity to make the session extremely pertinent and enjoyable for the learners involved.

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67. Most staff are appropriately qualified. One in five of the staff are volunteers. Part-time staff are rarely appraised and seldom observed. Specific staff development is rare. Accommodation used in the community is comfortable, with friendly and welcoming staff. In some centres learners move from taught classes to community activities such as centre lunches and social activities for the elderly living alone. Centres have good access for mobility impaired learners and some have specialised equipment for dyspraxic and visually impaired learners. Others have induction loops for the hearing impaired. The computing equipment is of industry standard, but in some cases noise detracts from the learning experience. Individual centres are well furnished and equipped with good hardware and software. However, throughout the county the operating systems and software versions differ, there is no standardisation of these features.

68. The service provides a lot of good teaching, but some is unsatisfactory. Some very good materials are produced and used by the tutors. These materials are accurately targeted at learners' needs and focus on key IT skills. Other materials, used with similar groups, involve too many software tools and functions and confuse the learners. Tutors are spending time producing very similar materials instead of sharing them. Data files are not prepared in advance and used sufficiently for teaching beginners. Beginners often spend too much time keying in data, at the expense of learning new skills. In the best sessions learning is regularly checked and reinforced.

69. Where courses lead to qualifications, staff have a good knowledge of awarding body requirements. Internal verification is satisfactory. The monitoring and recording of learners' progress are less effective when not subject to external scrutiny.

70. Beginners' courses vary considerably in the extent to which they meet learners' needs. Some are well designed, but many either try to cover too many functions of programs or cover too many types of software, when learners are only interested in one or two. Some of the externally accredited courses are too long for the learners, who would prefer to have shorter, more focused courses. Courses held during the day are very attractive to people reluctant to go out at night. Some local community venues are providing a very good service to people who would not otherwise be involved in learning. However, many other small communities do not have this facility. Provision often depends on individual centre's success in attracting funds from external sources. In many centres, learners are currently unable to move to higher levels, particularly in the more remote, smaller villages which are not well served by other providers.

71. The service does not provide formal initial assessment of learners' ICT skills, or additional support needs. It is difficult to direct teaching precisely to individual learners' requirements. Tutors do not know how to obtain additional support for learners.

## **Leadership and management**

72. The ICT curriculum has developed as a result of a range of local initiatives. It is uncoordinated. The LEA has no ICT strategy for community-based learning, although one exists in draft. The council as a whole has a more general ICT strategy. There is no intranet service to support tutors or remote communities. Tutors are not provided with

enough advice about the range of external accreditation available, or the suitability of their schemes of work or learning materials.

73. Quality assurance systems are underdeveloped and largely centre on the observation of teaching and learning. Few observations have taken place, and these were mostly of full-time staff. The grades given through the observation scheme were more generous than those given by inspectors. Targets are set for the recruitment of learners, but checks are not carried out regularly to see whether or not the targets have been met. The various centres offering ICT courses have no means of gauging the effectiveness of provision, other than whether or not classes are full. The self-assessment report dated 2002 identifies many of the weakness outlined above.

**Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	2159	2

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good achievement of knowledge and skills
- very good teaching
- very well-qualified and experienced tutors

**Weaknesses**

- no systematic pre-exercise screening
- poor curriculum planning and resourcing
- insufficient monitoring of the quality of provision

**Achievement and standards**

74. Learners achieve very good skill levels. They show a good understanding of the rules and tactics of sport. For example, in basketball they perform the skills of passing, dribbling and shooting to a very good standard, as well as applying strategy to the game. During martial arts lessons, learners use their knowledge of kicking, punching and blocking techniques effectively in a variety of situations, including class practices, and sparring and grading exercises. In the best lessons, the more experienced learners spend time leading the class, or working with the improver and beginner groups.

75. Learners involved in circuit training and keep-fit classes show considerable understanding of exercises designed to improve muscular and cardio-respiratory conditions and how to perform them. They select the intensity at which to work according to their own fitness levels. They are familiar with modified techniques and use them appropriately for their own fitness and injury status. In yoga classes, learners show good awareness of their physical limitations and use blocks, blankets and belts effectively to enable them to perform advanced postures. Learners demonstrate good levels of fitness including strength, flexibility and local muscular endurance.

76. Learners have a thorough awareness of their personal goals and can describe the physical, mental and social benefits that they have achieved. Many learners mention improved stamina and strength, as well as an overall sense of well-being, as a result of participation. Some report dramatic improvements in long-term medical conditions. Many learners apply their learning to everyday life and describe their ability to reduce stress through exercise.



## Quality of education and training

77. The standard of teaching is very good and sometimes inspirational. Fifty per cent of lessons observed were judged to be very good, or excellent, and 75 per cent good, or better. Lessons are stimulating. They are structured to enable learners to develop their knowledge, skills and physical condition according to their individual objectives. In the best lessons, challenging targets are set and achieved by learners. Tutors take great care to adapt exercises to meet individual needs. Tutors make good use of demonstration and individual instruction. In one beginners' swimming class, where the average age of those present was 65, learners had achieved their individual targets in their learner agreements and were swimming breaststroke and backstroke well. In many lessons, learners demonstrate their competence through the execution of skills, through discussion and analysis with fellow students and through critical evaluation of the performance of others. Where learners are working towards national governing body accreditation, tutors are adept at setting activities which enable learners to develop the skills necessary to progress to the next level.

78. Tutors are very well qualified and have extensive teaching experience. One member of staff is a national coach for his sport, another has a degree in physical education. There are two senior Iyengar yoga teachers, a number of Dan grade martial arts teachers and a master tai chi teacher. Many tutors attend a minimum of one refresher course annually to update their skills and some are working towards more senior qualifications. There are, however, a few instances of staff who are still in training and others who have not updated their skills for a number of years. The LEA does not fund training or continuing professional development activities.

79. Pre-exercise screening is not conducted systematically to a clearly defined standard. Eighty-five per cent of learners in the lessons observed had received some form of pre-exercise screening, but 15 per cent had had none at all. In many cases, tutors carry out an informal assessment. In some cases, the information collected is not recorded, and in other cases it is recorded, but not sufficiently detailed. In some cases tutors have devised a questionnaire themselves, or use one produced by another organisation. The LEA does not require tutors to collect information regarding learners' physical condition. The new tutor handbook does not refer to this matter. The fact that there is no screening has deterred some learners. However, many learners have been attending classes for a number of years and tutors have a good knowledge of their health status.

80. Curriculum planning is poor. The range of provision is limited: 87 per cent of classes are held during the week, from Monday to Friday and only 23 per cent begin before 5.00pm. The current pattern of provision is the product of numerous individual organisations and is not coherent. Male learners are under-represented and priority groups have not been identified for marketing purposes. Most classes are for learners of mixed ability and there are very limited opportunities for progression.

81. In almost half the lessons observed, resources were provided by the tutors, or learners were expected to provide their own. In some lessons, no mats were available.

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In others there were low-risk hazards such as trailing leads, cluttered work areas, dirty floors and worn matting. Some lessons take place in small, cold and stuffy rooms with poor acoustics and lighting. In one gymnasium, the emergency doors are of an inappropriate design and there is a risk of players falling through the doors during activities.

82. Pre-course information is inadequate. Leaflets do not indicate what level of experience the potential learner needs in order to participate, or what equipment they need to provide. At some centres, information is only available on request. Many tutors have not received an effective introduction to this year's provision. A new tutor handbook has been produced, but not all tutors have received it, or had it discussed with them.

### **Leadership and management**

83. The quality of the provision is not monitored sufficiently. An observation of teaching and learning scheme has been introduced, but few observations have been carried out in this area of learning. Course evaluations completed by learners have not been used to bring about improvements. Systems for monitoring tutors' compliance with the recently introduced systems and procedures are incomplete. There is no forum for sharing good practice between tutors. Tutors' qualifications and experience are not checked thoroughly, nor are they evaluated for their suitability. The provider does not ensure that tutors have carried out the specialist risk assessments for which they are responsible.

84. The self-assessment report was not focused sufficiently on the 'Common Inspection Framework'. It was not sufficiently self-critical and was not linked to the LEA's development plan. The self-assessment process did not involve tutors.

**Visual & performing arts & media****Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	2035	4

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good standard of craft work
- good enhancement of learners' social skills

**Weaknesses**

- inadequate resources
- poor pre-course information and guidance
- ineffective curriculum planning

**Achievement and standards**

85. Learners achieve a good standard of work in craft subjects. Some gain increasingly rare traditional craft skills. They produce finished pieces of lace, embroidery, quilting and patchwork of good quality. Completed work is often proficiently done and of a professional standard. Many learners are encouraged to exhibit their work, especially patchwork, in local venues and in learning centres. In art, dressmaking, photography, dance and music lessons, the standard achieved by learners is satisfactory. A new system for recording and reporting retention has recently been introduced; it is too soon to judge the effect of this. The council was unable to provide accurate retention figures.

86. Learning results in significant personal and social development for many learners. They are enthusiastic about the growth in their self-confidence, particularly following bereavement, retirement or redundancy. However, the subject-related learning goals set by tutors are often imprecise and progress is difficult to gauge. Learners make good use of skills learnt to make special occasion pieces for relatives and friends, such as invitations and dresses for weddings and cards for birthdays. Learners use their skills to benefit local communities. One group has made a patchwork quilt which was given to a residential home for people with severe learning difficulties. This has proved to be a focal point for visual and tactile stimulation in the centre. An intergenerational drama project at one community centre encouraged a sense of belonging and pride in the local community.

## Quality of education and training

87. The standard of teaching and learning is satisfactory. In art and craft lessons, learners practise a variety of techniques and processes to improve the standard of their work. Tutors demonstrate the techniques well. In the better lessons, demonstrations are accompanied by informative explanations and group discussions about the best techniques and methods to use to create finished pieces. Some tutors use a good range of handouts and examples of finished work to illustrate their points. Demonstrations of dance techniques are also good. Learners receive a good level of individual support and instruction. The rapport between tutors and learners is good. This encourages learners to take a more confident approach to their work. New learners make good progress; however, the learning activities carried out by many returning learners are not sufficiently challenging. The low numbers in some groups adversely affect group dynamics and creativity.

88. The service organises visits to places of local interest for visual arts students during class time and at weekends. This enables them to work from first-hand observation of local landscapes and coastal scenes. One photography class was planning a trip to the Northumberland coast to photograph seascapes. Learners aimed to further develop their skills in composition and the more technical aspects of the use of camera equipment to capture movement and tonal values. Learners also visit galleries and exhibitions. However, they are not challenged to develop their understanding of a wide variety of styles and cultural perspectives.

89. Resources are poor and often adversely affect the learners' experience. In a few cases classrooms are inadequate for practical purposes. Many have poor lighting and are too small for the number of learners. In many classrooms there is insufficient storage for equipment, materials and learners' work.

90. Insufficient information is gathered about learners' initial skill levels and individual learners' support needs are not always accurately identified. On some courses, however, tutors require learners to complete self-evaluation booklets to establish their starting point. Tutors give a verbal critique of learners' work, and feedback about their individual progress. In most lessons there is no formal method of recording learners' progress and achievement. The progress of more experienced learners is not monitored closely enough, and learners are not challenged sufficiently to improve their performance.

91. Learners throughout the county have local access to courses in visual art, crafts, dance, singing and photography. However, the curriculum is not coherent. There are not enough progression opportunities in arts, crafts and dance. Learners are unable to take courses leading to a qualification. The range of visual arts courses is narrow and largely European-influenced, based on drawing, painting and general crafts. There is one photography course. Courses in the performing arts are limited to ballroom and line dancing and one course in theatre skills. The need to attract a larger proportion of men, and a younger age group is not reflected in the design and marketing of the provision. Learners do not have sufficient opportunities to attend daytime courses.

92. Pre-course information and guidance is poor. There are not enough information sheets telling learners what to expect, or what they should bring to the first lesson. The leaflets that are produced are of a variable quality. Courses are not publicised effectively. Many start and continue with very few learners. There are no procedures for increasing enrolments in this situation. Some learners say that it took them a long time to discover that there were courses available in their own community. Guidance is only available on request, by telephone, or by visiting the centre where the course is held. Some learners have left because they were disappointed with the course content.

### **Leadership and management**

93. Curriculum planning is ineffective. The programme is largely demand-led or dictated by tutor availability and has not changed sufficiently in recent years. Service area co-ordinators are given a small development budget for 'loss leader' and taster courses and workshops. These are not planned with widening participation in mind. The arts are not used as a vehicle for community development and engagement, and the service has few links with arts organisations in the local community. Area co-ordinators and development workers are unclear about the number of part-time teaching staff they manage, the number of volunteer tutors they support and the number of courses provided in their area. There are no opportunities for teaching staff in this area of learning to share good practice and discuss curriculum issues.

94. Staff have had training in the observation of teaching and learning. As qualified teachers, they are able to comment on generic teaching and learning issues, but there are no arrangements for providing tutors with subject-specific feedback about their work.

**Foundation programmes****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	436	2

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good achievement of personal learning goals
- good standards of teaching and learning
- good use of volunteers and assistant tutors
- good use of initial assessment and learning plans
- good range of provision
- excellent specialist dyslexia support

**Weaknesses**

- inadequate process for programme evaluation
- unco-ordinated approach to programme planning

**Achievement and standards**

95. Achievement rates are good. Learners are successful in achieving their personal learning goals. Most learners are entered for external accreditation in literacy and numeracy, including OCN units of credit, entry level awards and the national tests in literacy and numeracy at level 1 and level 2. Although data about achievement for 2002-03 are not yet validated, it is clear that over 85 per cent of learners achieve these qualifications. In-house certificates are also awarded to recognise achievement of non-accredited learning. The skills and confidence which learners gain have a significant effect on their everyday lives. Learners can point to real benefits they have experienced. One learner with dyslexia has applied for promotion as a result of increased self-esteem. Learners clearly demonstrate new skills and achievement in lessons. Learning activities are referenced to literacy, numeracy and language curriculum standards. Good individual learning plans identify personal learning goals. Achievements are well documented in end-of-course reviews. Retention showed a rising trend up to 2001-02, but figures since then have not been validated.

**Quality of education and training**

96. Standards of teaching and learning are good. The lessons observed were all satisfactory or better, with 74 per cent judged to be good, very good or excellent. In two outstanding sessions, learners worked through a structured literacy programme, and tutors demonstrated very good levels of technical expertise. Lessons are well planned, with a lot of detail for each learner on lesson plans. Tutors are well prepared and lessons

have a good variety of activities and pace. Tutors take good account of different learning needs and learning styles within a group. Learners receive a lot of positive feedback. The standard of work in portfolios and in motivational displays around the rooms is good. There is a good ratio of teaching staff to learners, on average one to four. Many groups have a team comprising a tutor, assistant tutors and volunteers. Individual tuition is used effectively when required. The provider makes good use of volunteer and assistant tutors. All volunteers are trained using the new level 2 qualification, and demonstrate good skill levels. Volunteers are well supported and often progress to become assistant and group tutors. A wide range of development opportunities is available to all staff.

97. Initial assessment is carried out effectively and good use is made of learning plans. Tutors use a wide range of assessment tools including the new Basic Skills Agency initial assessment pack and a comprehensive ESOL assessment. Outcomes are clearly documented in individual learning plans and lead to appropriate individual learning aims. Individual learning plans have a good format and targets are broken down into skills, with manageable steps for the learner. The plans are thorough and detailed. Group learning plans effectively incorporate learning aims for individual group members. However, in some lessons, tutors only record accreditation aims. Regular review and feedback about progress is given to learners and recorded in the plan, but dates are not always specified for the achievement of short-term targets.

98. The range of provision is good across the county, often taking place in venues convenient to a village or town centre. Learning is provided in a wide range of contexts and for different purposes, for example literacy and numeracy skills through the medium of creative writing, computer skills and local history. Some programmes are specially designed for specific target groups, for example people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those with a history of mental illness, and young people developing committee skills to manage their youth club. There is also a small amount of provision for speakers of English as an additional language. Tutors cater well for mixed ability groups and make good use of learners' interests in planning activities.

99. Specialist dyslexia support is of a very good standard. Twenty-five per cent of tutors have a specialist dyslexia support qualification and other literacy and numeracy teaching staff have a good awareness of dyslexia. The LEA works closely with the Dyslexia Institute and also offers awareness-raising sessions for other organisations. Tutors use a wide range of good assessment tools for screening and can provide full diagnoses in-house. The council has recently launched a pilot project, in conjunction with Connexions. This aims to screen all young clients for dyslexia to assess the scale of need.

100. Learners can have dyslexia support on an individual basis, or in a group, with effective multi-sensory strategies and learning aids. A qualified dyslexia support worker also makes home visits to support isolated and vulnerable learners. A short course for parents of children with dyslexia is available. The service has a range of good-quality learning materials and structured programmes. Standards of teaching and learning were very good, or excellent in all the dyslexia support sessions observed. There are clear gains in confidence and achievement for learners who have had previous negative

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experiences.

101. Learning resources overall are satisfactory, and most accommodation is satisfactory.

### **Leadership and management**

102. The process for programme evaluation is inadequate. The LEA's strategic plan 2003-2006 is mainly descriptive, with few evaluative statements. It is not significantly different from the previous plan, with targets carried forward, but no indication of why they have not been achieved. There is no clear link between this plan and the self-assessment report for literacy and numeracy skills programmes. The self-assessment report itself contains a lot of detail, but no grade. The development plan is undated. It identifies 10 action points, but these do not relate clearly to the judgements within the self-assessment report.

103. The service does not collect enough data to contribute to programme evaluation, either from the management information system or any other sources. There is insufficient analysis of data. Course evaluations are completed by learners at the end of every course, but the findings are not systematically collated. Information from course evaluations is not used sufficiently to assist programme planning.

104. The LEA's literacy, numeracy and language skills programme planning is unco-ordinated. The service is organised on the basis of four geographical areas, each with its own co-ordinator. Each area has a separate approach to programme planning and separate marketing strategies. Needs analysis is not used sufficiently to ensure that programme planning is specifically targeted, and insufficient time is allocated to curriculum planning. Part-time tutors are seldom involved in overall curriculum development. Teaching staff meet termly within their area, and discuss ideas for new programmes, but there is no systematic approach to sharing good practice between the areas. Area co-ordinators now meet weekly. Internal verification is inconsistent among the four areas. Most internal verification consists of reports about completed portfolios. Some verifiers have started doing interim reports and visits to observe assessors, but there is no clear, overall procedure and planning.

105. The organisational structure for literacy, numeracy and language skills provision does not correspond with other adult and community learning provision. Communications are complete. The literacy and numeracy and family learning provisions have good links.



**Family learning****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	371	2

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good achievement level
- good standards of teaching and learning
- good initial assessment and recording of progress
- good range of programmes

**Weaknesses**

- some unsatisfactory accommodation
- poor arrangements for overall service programme evaluation

**Achievement and standards**

106. Accreditation was offered on 30 per cent of courses in 2002-03 and 332 learners, 35 per cent, were successful. All learners who complete non-accredited courses receive an internal certificate stating what they have accomplished. Their achievements are referenced to the core curriculum. Learners gain confidence and make good progress in achieving their learning goals. They apply their new skills at home and work. One learner on a dyslexia awareness course is using the skills and knowledge gained to help her child and intends to progress to an accredited course, then seek paid employment in this field. Another is approaching numerical aspects of her work in an accounts department with new-found confidence. Many learners become involved in new activities or go on to further study. Parents gain a greater understanding of how their child is taught in school and of the requirements of the national curriculum.

**Quality of education and training**

107. Standards of teaching and learning are good. Seventy-five per cent of lessons observed were good or better. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives, referenced to the core curriculum. Teaching resources are appropriate, many being created by tutors. A bank of materials is available. A range of teaching methods is used; for example, a group of key stage three children and their parents spent time estimating distance and finding directions in a wood before a lesson about direction. Learners are able to give a good account of what they have learnt. They understand the purpose of tasks and take responsibility for their own learning. They frequently draw upon what they have learnt to help their peers. In family ICT courses, learners complete tasks and move on to further work, or offer assistance to other learners by referring to the lesson

plan and objectives.

108. Initial assessment is good and progress is carefully recorded. The Basic Skills Agency initial assessment is used for the longer literacy and numeracy courses. A range of assessment methods is used on other courses, including the use of free writing, crosswords, number puzzles, quizzes and recorded observation. On many courses, learners assess their own knowledge and skills against the course content. This is carried out at the beginning and end of the course, and provides a useful measure of progress. On some courses, learners are encouraged to develop their own learner diaries. There are well-formulated collective goals for short courses, and individual learning plans are used for the longer courses. A monitoring document is used for recording the progress of groups of learners on short courses, and in some cases individuals as well. Tutors also have other, appropriate, ways of recording progress.

109. The service provides a good range of programmes and courses. These range from one-off tasters and short courses, to more extensive provision, much of which is accredited. There is also an imaginative summer programme. Venues are chosen close to where learners live and are easily accessible. They include primary schools, secondary schools and community centres. Part of a session on story telling for parents of pre-school children was held in a children's library. Funding for family learning has been used flexibly and innovatively to develop an extensive programme. One example is an accredited course about family literacy through football. This encourages men to participate and is very popular with children and adults. The provision caters for parents with children at various stages of development; most provision is for parents with children of primary age, but opportunities are being developed for those with children at key stage three. There is also provision for adults with babies and those with pre-school children. More general intergenerational learning is being developed through the service's area teams and includes arts and crafts, ICT and sport.

110. Learners receive an appropriate level of support. Information, advice and guidance are offered at the end of each of the longer courses and tutors provide information on progression between shorter courses. The literacy and numeracy service has two approved centres, the other two are working towards accreditation. Crèches are provided free for family learning programmes. Dyslexia support is available when needed.

111. Some accommodation is unsatisfactory. In some lessons, which take place in primary schools, adults use the small chairs normally used by children. ICT lessons are sometimes in cramped rooms which are uncomfortably hot, with poor ventilation. In one lesson observed, the noise from an adjoining room used for music lessons was a considerable distraction for learners on a family ICT course and this distraction lasted for the whole of the lesson.

## Leadership and management

112. Tutors receive line management support, appraisal and appropriate staff development and training opportunities, including the opportunity to share good practice. Observation of teaching and learning is well established, and includes the additional option of peer observation.
113. Widening participation is promoted through a range of strategies. SRB-funded programmes are focused on areas of deprivation, and a range of initiatives has been developed to include a greater number of men in the programme. An evaluation by the local university indicated that the parents most in need of provision were making use of it.
114. Strategic planning arrangements for family learning within the LEA are satisfactory. A multidisciplinary partnership carries out this role. This group has produced an action plan that is currently being evaluated. The SRB project has a steering group representing a wide range of partners.
115. The structure for the delivery of family learning is not coherent. The rapid expansion of this provision, has placed literacy and numeracy co-ordinators, who are largely responsible for delivering it, under considerable pressure. Information about the nature and quality of delivery is not shared effectively between literacy and numeracy and community education area teams. There are not enough links between family learning staff and those involved in other areas of learning. A family learning programme manager has recently been appointed, but it is too soon for this to have had any effect.
116. The family learning provision overall is not effectively evaluated. There is no specific reference to family learning in either of the service's self-assessment reports. There is no systematic analysis of data to assist curriculum and service planning. There are no retention and achievement data. Insufficient use is made of learner evaluation in general, and there is no analysis of enrolment in terms of widening participation apart from the SRB-funded areas, where it is a requirement. Progression data are poor.

**Community development****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	1510	2

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- effective development of volunteers
- good strategies for some social issues
- very good acquisition of external funding
- good specialist advice and support by the council

**Weaknesses**

- insufficient planning and evaluation of their programmes by management committees
- insufficient reference to community development targets in many unit plans and staff appraisals

**Achievement and standards**

117. The initial training programme is a valuable route into paid employment for many learners. Over the past eight years, 253 learners have achieved youth and community work qualifications. Many of those who start on the course as volunteers have few or no previous qualifications. They occupy various roles in their communities, including youth leader, cleaner and caretaker. Learners are very positive about the level of support they receive from their course tutors and from staff at the community centres where they work. One man was identified as having dyslexia when he had to produce portfolios of course work. The support he was given enabled him to go on and gain a degree in youth and community work. The achievements of learners are celebrated and they provide encouragement for others. Over 50 per cent of successful graduates from this course still work in the service, providing a valuable role model for others.

118. Some management committees have had a significant impact on the quality of life of their community by involving themselves in pressing social or economic problems. In some cases, this has been done in partnership with other agencies. For example, one area was identified as having the highest incidence of teenage pregnancies in Europe, so a joint initiative was established to offer advice about childcare, finances and healthy eating. In another area, waste land was converted into an allotment to provide work for unemployed men. Their traditional skills were shared with younger people. They now plan to develop a sensory garden for people with disabilities.

## Quality of education and training

119. Teaching on the initial training programme is good. Tutors make activities varied, challenging and relevant. Learners complete evaluation sheets and tutors modify the course accordingly. The course is normally provided in the evening, but a daytime option was introduced recently to widen participation. The course moves to different locations periodically to make it more convenient for learners.

120. Members of management committees are often extremely effective fund-raisers. Some individuals show great determination in this respect, preparing bids and, in one case, writing over 400 letters. Over recent years, committee members have raised significant amounts of money by applying to various funding bodies. This funding has then been put to good use within communities, providing the means to refurbish community facilities, or to rebuild them. Many community associations have extremely healthy financial accounts. In one case, a large amount of money was held in a savings account as a contingency fund. No proposals had been made to consider planning for the use of these funds.

121. The council provides good specialist advice and support for staff and management committees. This includes the secondment of staff to work on specific regeneration projects, guidance through the planning application process and advice about the implications of a wide range of legislation, including health and safety and child protection. The council also offers relevant training in areas such as equal opportunities, drugs awareness, and team-building.

122. Management committees are not sufficiently involved in planning and evaluating the programmes for their communities. Committees meet regularly at approximately monthly intervals, and meetings are formally convened and minuted. However, discussion at many meetings focuses entirely on operational issues, as does the contribution of the youth and community worker. Training for committee members is provided by a number of organisations in the county, including the council. Despite this, many committee members are unprepared for their role. Many say they have had no induction into the demands of their role, and are unaware of their responsibilities. Many committees are over-reliant on their youth and community worker to propose a programme which they then approve with insufficient discussion of its appropriateness, and without a meaningful evaluation of past activities. In many cases, programmes are being offered for the 10th or 11th year, to the same group of participants.

123. Some participants have been recruited because of their particular professional background. Although the knowledge and skills they have are obviously valuable, youth and community workers are not always effective in ensuring that meetings operate democratically, so that everyone can contribute. Many committee members are representatives of centre-user groups, and therefore have a vested interest. Again, youth and community workers are not effective in alerting committee members to their responsibilities to the wider community. Multi-agency partnerships have recently carried out community audits throughout the county. These have provided valuable information

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about issues affecting particular sections of the community. The information has not had any effect on the work of the voluntary management committees.

### **Leadership and management**

124. The service provides insufficient structured planning for the process of community development. Although staff often believe they are engaged in this process, much of the activity they and their management committees generate stops short of this. The programmes offered bring gains in terms of personal and social development for some people, often those who have been using community facilities for a long time, but many do not constitute the type of learning and action which transform communities. Youth and community workers are well respected by local people for their knowledge and well-developed networks, but they are not challenged sufficiently by managers to identify appropriate outcomes for community development in their area, or to identify strategies for achieving them. Of 15 community centre plans studied, only four made reference to community development and related targets and the timescales for completion.

125. Similarly, insufficient emphasis is placed on community development in the staff appraisal process. Although staff have an awareness of the strategic direction of the LEA, its intentions in relation to community development are not translated into specific targets in its planning and review processes, at either area team or individual level.