

INSPECTION REPORT

Hackney LEA

11 November 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
- **learnirect** 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

Hackney LEA

Contents

Summary

Description of the provider	1
Scope of provision	2
About the inspection	5
Overall judgement	5
Grades	5
Key findings	6
What learners like about Hackney LEA	13
What learners think Hackney LEA could improve	13
Key challenges for Hackney LEA	14

Detailed inspection findings

Leadership and management	18
Equality of opportunity	21
Quality assurance	22
Information & communications technology	24
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	27
Visual & performing arts & media	31
English, languages & communications	36
Foundation programmes	39
Family learning	42

INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. The Learning Trust is a not-for-profit company, limited by guarantee. Following a direction by the secretary of state for education, the Learning Trust was established specifically to provide education services in the London borough of Hackney. The Learning Trust took over responsibility for education services from the local education authority (LEA) in August 2002. It has a 10-year contract with the council.
2. The chief executive of the Learning Trust is accountable to a board of directors which include the chief executive of the London East Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the Hackney borough council's chief executive, who is also designated as the statutory chief education officer. An elected member of the borough council, who is a cabinet adviser on education matters, is also a member of the Learning Trust's board of directors. The council set the overall strategic direction for the education service by approving the Learning Trust's corporate and annual plan, education development plan and other key strategic plans, including the adult learning plan.
3. The Learning Trust is contracted by the London East LSC for the provision of adult and community learning in Hackney. The Learning Trust subcontracts the direct delivery of most of the adult and community learning programmes. The main subcontractor is a local college of further education, which offers programmes at its main campus, and a wide range of outreach centres. The Learning Trust currently subcontracts provision to a further 19 voluntary and community organisations in the borough. In 2002-03 there were 115 courses at 65 venues.
4. A small number of programmes involving adults, are provided by the Hackney Music Development Trust and Hackney summer university. Adult and community learning funding also ensures the delivery of an information, advice and guidance service for adults delivered through the Adult Education and Advice Service. Neighbourhood Learning for Deprived Communities (NLDC) funds some community outreach, literacy and numeracy programmes, and contributes to some extra outreach work of the Adult Education and Advice Service.
5. The Learning Trust directly manages a programme of family learning. The programme receives funds from Neighbourhood Renewal and the LSC. Within the borough there are a range of other family learning opportunities offered by other agencies that were not within the scope of this inspection.
6. Adult learning is managed by the Learning Trust's directorate for lifelong learning. A head of adult and community learning has day-to-day responsibility for the provision and reports to the director of lifelong learning. The head of adult and community learning leads a management team of four who have individual responsibilities for family learning, the education and advice service for adults, the summer university, and training and development. The post of quality assurance manager is currently vacant. A separate

HACKNEY LEA

commissioning unit has been recently established in the lifelong learning directorate to issue contracts and monitor service level agreements.

7. According to the Department of the Environment, Transport and Regions index of multiple deprivation, Hackney is the fourth most deprived authority in England and Wales. In July 2003, unemployment was 6.2 per cent in Hackney, compared with an average for inner London of 4.5 per cent and a national average of 2.5 per cent. The proportion of people from minority ethnic groups is 41 per cent, compared with 34 per cent in inner London, and 9.1 per cent nationally. It is estimated that there are 90 minority ethnic languages spoken by learners within the borough. Fifty per cent of school children have English as an additional language compared with 8 per cent nationally.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Information & communications technology

8. At the time of the inspection there were 24 courses in this area of learning. Sixteen are provided by the main subcontractor and the remainder provided by five community-based organisations. Courses are located at 11 different venues across the borough. There are 296 learners enrolled to date. Most courses are non-accredited and are intended for learners who have not used a computer before. A few courses are more specialised and some provision is targeted at particular client groups. Courses are mainly run on a termly basis, between six and 11 weeks in duration. Most consist of a single two-hour class meeting each week. Courses are offered in the day and evening with one class meeting on Saturday mornings. There are 18 tutors, all of whom are part time.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

9. At the time of the inspection there were 19 courses in this area of learning. The provision is subcontracted to two providers, with all of the provision inspected delivered by the main subcontractor. There are 277 learners enrolled to date. Almost all programmes are at beginner level with a few intermediate or mixed-ability classes. Courses include exercise and fitness for beginners and older adults, tai chi, yoga, general practitioner (GP) exercise referral, and cake decorating. There are no programmes leading to national accreditation. The courses are one to two hours in duration and run for 10-week periods. The provision is offered during the daytime, evenings and at weekends at a range of venues including colleges, schools, community halls, care centres, medical centres and gymnasiums. Most current learners are women, many are older adults, and there are many learners from minority ethnic groups. There are three centre managers responsible for the provision who work with a curriculum co-ordinator. There are 16 tutors currently employed for between one and four hours a week.

Visual & performing arts & media

10. Visual and performing arts and media courses provide the largest programme of the Learning Trust's adult and community learning programme with 42 per cent of the total enrolments at the time of inspection. This area of learning is delivered through three subcontractors. At the time of inspection there were 96 courses offered at 18 different venues spread geographically across the borough. There were 1,279 enrolments from 1,031 learners. Courses cover a range of visual arts, crafts, music, dance and lens media. These include clothes making, soft furnishings, textile printing, ceramics, painting, life drawing, singing, drama, theatre skills, guitar, saxophone, Indian music, percussion, jazz dance, African dance, salsa, video-making and photography. Forty-two per cent of classes are offered in the daytime and 58 per cent in the evening. There are a few short courses held at weekends and one- to two-week intensive courses are run throughout the summer period. Classes are usually of two hours duration and run over 10 weeks. These are repeated three times a year.

11. Most of the courses are non-accredited, although learners enrolled with the main subcontractor can gain a college certificate of achievement. One provider offers performing arts courses which are accredited through the London open college network. Most classes have a mix of beginners and improvers. Some sites have childcare provision and most are accessible for learners who have restricted mobility. Teaching is carried out by 61 tutors, four are full time, four are sessional hourly paid and 49 are visiting tutors.

English, languages & communications

12. At the time of the inspection 33 courses were running, of which 28 were modern foreign languages (MFL) courses. Eight-hundred and seventeen learners were enrolled on foreign language courses which are provided by the main subcontractor. Courses are offered in eleven foreign languages, creative writing and poetry, courses in Arabic, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Mandarin Chinese, Spanish, Swahili, Turkish and Yiddish are offered at beginner level. French, Hebrew and Spanish are available at intermediate level. British Sign Language is offered at level 2. There are accredited courses in French, German and Spanish at beginner level and in French and Spanish at intermediate level. Most courses run for two hours a week over 10 or 12 weeks. Courses take place during the day, afternoon and evening at seven learning centres. There is a course in Arabic for families on a Saturday for two hours over 10 weeks. Nearly three quarters of classes take place in the evening. Thirty-eight per cent of learners are men, 5 per cent are over 60 years of age and 21 per cent are from minority ethnic backgrounds. There are 22 tutors who are employed on a part-time basis.

Foundation programmes

13. Foundation programmes are subcontracted to 10 providers including the main subcontractor. There are three main types of provision. Literacy and numeracy programmes, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and courses for learners who have learning difficulties and disabilities. In the current academic year there are 311 learners enrolled on a range of courses which are a mixture of accredited and non-accredited programmes. There are 49 courses located at 22 venues, including a wide range of community locations. At the time of inspection there were 133 learners enrolled on ESOL courses, 125 on literacy and numeracy and 53 on courses for learning difficulties and disabilities.

14. Most courses are held in the day with a small number held on weekday evenings. There is some literacy and numeracy provision on a Saturday. In addition to literacy and numeracy classes, the range of programmes includes a literacy course linked to lyric writing, reading and writing linked to computers, courses for learners who have dyslexia, a horticulture project for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, and ESOL classes ranging from pre-entry to entry level 3.

15. Some of the foundation provision is linked with the Hackney Music Development Trust which has a borough-wide community opera initiative, Operation. ESOL, literacy and classes for those with basic skills needs including people with learning difficulties and disabilities are offered by the Operation project. Courses are a mixture of workshops and discrete literacy and language provision and operate for two hours a week for either 10 or 36 weeks, according to the level and type of provision.

Family learning

16. The Learning Trust's adult and community learning team manage the family learning provision. A family learning co-ordinator is responsible for leading and developing family learning. The co-ordinator reports directly to the head of adult and community learning. A project officer, employed by the main subcontractor, but half funded by the Learning Trust, supports the family literacy and numeracy tutors. Family learning is in the second year of operation. Most of the provision is subcontracted to other providers which include voluntary organisations, minority ethnic organisations and the main subcontractor.

17. There are currently 75 learners on family learning programmes. There were 50 families involved in wider family learning events during a family learning weekend in October 2003. In 2002-03, 430 families participated in family literacy, language and numeracy and wider family learning programmes. Programmes range from three-hour taster workshops, under five's clubs, homework clubs, parenting classes, language acquisition classes and 12-week programmes of family literacy and numeracy.

18. At the time of the inspection, family learning is provided by two tutors, five school teachers and five community workers from three community venues and eight primary schools. One family learning course observed is supported through the neighbourhood renewal fund.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	17
Number of inspection days	102
Number of learner interviews	476
Number of staff interviews	21
Number of subcontractor interviews	110
Number of partner/external agency interviews	24
Number of visits	77

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

19. The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Overall, leadership and management are unsatisfactory and the arrangements for quality assurance are very weak. The approach to equality of opportunity is satisfactory and there is satisfactory provision in the areas of information and communications technology (ICT), visual and performing arts and media, and foundation programmes. Provision in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel is unsatisfactory, and it is very weak in English, languages and communication and in family learning.

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	5

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

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

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

English, languages & communications	5
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	5

Foundation programmes	3
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

Family learning	5
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	5

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

20. **There is good attainment of skills and personal goals in ICT programmes.** In visual and performing arts and media, learners gain good technical skills in life drawing, crafts, three-dimensional art work, theatre skills and music performance. Learners exhibit their work locally and perform to public audiences. Learners achieve well in creative writing classes. There is good attainment in classes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These learners are set challenging targets and their achievements are celebrated imaginatively.

21. There is satisfactory attainment of language skills in most ESOL sessions and learners on literacy and numeracy programmes make satisfactory progress in achieving group learning goals and personal objectives. Learners gain social benefits and improved mental and physical fitness through attending sports and leisure sessions. However, in some sessions they display weak exercise technique and have insufficient knowledge about the exercises they perform.

22. **Learners' achievement in modern foreign languages is poor.** They do not have the basic vocabulary and structures to communicate confidently on a simple level. In the better family learning sessions, learners develop skills to communicate more effectively with teachers and to support their children in their learning. However, learners gain very little from attending many of the sessions used to widen participation in family learning.

23. **Poor attendance and punctuality adversely affects learning in sports and leisure, visual and performing arts and media, and modern foreign languages.** In some cases, learners are kept waiting until there are sufficient numbers for the session to start. Some tutors repeat the introduction to their classes several times. Learners who arrive late cause disruption and in some instances they miss the warm-up exercises and start the main learning activities physically unprepared.

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	4	4	10	0	0	0	18
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	2	0	4	2	2	0	10
Visual & performing arts & media	1	12	15	11	5	1	0	45
English, languages & communications	0	2	2	3	5	3	1	16
Foundation programmes	0	5	7	6	1	1	0	20
Family learning	1	2	3	1	3	0	1	11
Total	2	27	31	35	16	7	2	120

24. **Of the 120 classes observed, half were good or better and over a quarter were satisfactory.** In the best sessions, teaching is imaginative, well planned, and stimulating. Learners develop a good understanding of their subjects and they explore a range of techniques with confidence. Tutors' expertise is well used to motivate learners.

25. **Twenty-one per cent of sessions were unsatisfactory, poor or very poor.** In these sessions, learners are not sufficiently directed, challenged or supported. In some fitness sessions there is little attempt to correct poor performance. Tutors are over reliant on the use of English in modern foreign language classes. Learners are passive for long periods of time and are reluctant or unable to use the foreign language. There is insufficient development of speaking and listening skills in ESOL classes. In some family learning classes, there is little evidence of any learning taking place.

26. Resources for learning are generally satisfactory with some **excellent resources for sport and leisure programmes and good resources for music and theatre skills learners.** In some locations, resources restrict learning. There are poor computing and printing facilities at some centres and in some visual arts classes, the number of recruited learners exceeds the equipment available to support learning.

27. **Assessment practice is inadequate in all areas of learning.** Although informal assessment is regularly provided in many programmes and helpful feedback is given to learners, formal assessment procedures are not being followed consistently. In some classes there is no initial assessment and in others, where it has been carried out, assessment is not used as a basis for individual learning plans. Formal recording of learners' progress is poor.

Leadership and management

28. The Learning Trust inherited a borough education provision that required drastic actions to ensure recovery. An initial lead in plan and annual plan were prepared to meet statutory requirements at the Trust's inception. There have been further recent decisive plans to resolve weaknesses in the structure of adult and community learning provision and measures are in place to secure improvements. Additional actions are

HACKNEY LEA

planned to ensure more community groups can gain access to funding. A learner forum has been introduced to enhance the Learning Trust's methods of enabling learners to shape the services.

29. There has been some effective initial capacity building with voluntary organisations.

The Learning Trust has widened access to funding through the adult and community learning budget. A support network has been established and regular meetings are held with providers.

30. The Learning Trust has an effective strategy to widen participation. Geographical communities and communities of interest in the borough are well served. The Learning Trust contracts with 19 small and medium-sized voluntary and community organisations and its main subcontractor also delivers much of its adult education contract by working with 40 voluntary organisations.

31. The non-accredited and first step provision is effective in attracting and engaging new learners. There are innovative strategies to deliver literacy and numeracy in a variety of contexts, particularly through programmes delivered by the voluntary and community organisations. For example, the Operation project encourages commitment from new learners and fosters a community ethos from a diverse range of learners. A wide range of cultural traditions and contemporary cultural practices are represented in the programmes in visual and performing arts and media, and there are good initiatives to meet the needs of both older and unfit learners in sports and leisure programmes.

32. The Learning Trust's recently revised race equality arrangements meet the requirements of the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000. Funding from the LSC for Special Educational Needs and Disability Act, 2001 (SENDA) is being used to ensure that providers' premises have good access. Sixteen providers have been identified as needing work to improve access. This year, work has been carried out on nine providers' sites. The remaining are to be completed next year.

33. The Learning Trust's approach to literacy, numeracy and language support is satisfactory at a strategic level. The Learning Trust is actively involved in the local learning partnership and its subgroups. However, at an operational level, the Learning Trust does not yet have satisfactory methods of monitoring and ensuring that learners' needs for literacy, numeracy, language support and other support are in place and are being delivered effectively.

34. The management of subcontractors is weak. The curriculum offer of the main subcontractor is not guided by the Learning Trust. The main subcontractor's needs analysis of the local area, which determines how the Learning Trust's adult and community learning funding is spent, is not shared with the Learning Trust.

35. Target-setting is ineffective. The current targets in the adult learning plan and its implementation plan are based on inaccurate data. A new management information system has been introduced. Voluntary organisations make applications for funding using a clearly defined set of criteria which determines how they are going to attract

learners from target groups. However, their funding bids and related programme proposals are not translated by the Learning Trust into contractual performance targets.

36. There is only one key performance indicator set by the local authority in its contract with the Learning Trust for adult and community learning, which is based on the Learning Trust's success at inspection. There are no performance measures of provision between inspections.

37. **There is ineffective curriculum management in most areas of learning.** Links with the main subcontractor in languages, sport, and ICT are unsatisfactory. The main subcontractor has recently reorganised the management of its adult and community learning provision. The new operational arrangements are not yet fully established. There is some confusion over roles and responsibilities, within the main subcontractor, and between the subcontractor and the Learning Trust.

38. **In family learning programmes, curriculum-planning does not focus on the needs of adult learners** and does not provide effective progression routes for families who have completed taster sessions or initial family literacy programmes. The process for the allocation of resources for family learning is not transparent and resources are not used effectively.

39. **Ineffective communications in a number of areas impact on the services received by learners.** A key theme in the annual plan is to restore the pride in Hackney's education services and to deal with the legacy of poor attainment. However, the profile of some of the Learning Trust funded provision is poor. Programmes funded by the Learning Trust are not always identified as such in subcontractors' publicity materials. Positive marketing opportunities are not taken. Nonetheless, some community partners and voluntary organisations report greatly improved communications and accessibility of Learning Trust officers, compared with the previous arrangements.

40. **There is poor monitoring of equal opportunities.** The Learning Trust is over reliant on providers making their own arrangements for equal opportunities. Overall targets are set in the adult learning plan for disability, gender, ethnicity and age, but the Learning Trust does not translate them into specific targets for providers.

41. The Learning Trust is in the process of developing a new quality assurance framework. In line with priorities set out in the adult learning plan, a commissioning team has been appointed with a focus on the tendering, procuring, evidence gathering and monitoring aspects of quality assurance.

42. New documents relating to the quality of teaching and learning have recently been devised. It is however, too early to assess the impact of these developments on the quality of provision.

43. **The current quality assurance arrangements are poorly managed.** There is an over reliance on the quality assurance systems of providers and they are not effectively monitored. The Learning Trust does not request adequate reports from providers to

HACKNEY LEA

assure itself of the quality of their provision. Some staff involved in the delivery of adult and community learning do not understand the quality assurance arrangements.

44. The current self-assessment report is the Learning Trust's second. **The self-assessment process is weak** and the main subcontractor was insufficiently involved in the process. The report was not informed by accurate data on learners and is not sufficiently judgemental. The development plan does not deal with the specific weaknesses identified in the areas of learning, and the actions required from providers have not been well communicated to them.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- decisive recent plans to secure improvements
- some good initial capacity building with voluntary organisations
- effective strategy to widen participation

Weaknesses

- weak management of subcontractors
- ineffective target-setting
- ineffective curriculum management
- some ineffective communications
- poor monitoring of equal opportunities
- poor management of quality assurance
- weak self-assessment process

Information & communications technology

Strengths

- good attainment of skills and personal goals
- effective strategies to engage new learners

Weaknesses

- some poorly equipped and inappropriate accommodation
- inadequate assessment procedures
- poor curriculum management

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Strengths

- good resources to enhance learning
- good initiatives for older and for unfit learners

Weaknesses

- poor attendance and punctuality
- unsatisfactory teaching and learning
- insufficient health screening
- inadequate formal assessment practice
- ineffective curriculum management

Visual & performing arts & media

Strengths

- good achievement in dance, music performance, theatre skills and pottery
- good development of technical skills
- stimulating enrichment opportunities for learners
- good specialist resources in music and theatre skills to enhance learning
- particularly broad and responsive curriculum offered

Weaknesses

- poor punctuality, attendance and retention rates
- poor planning in some classes
- ineffective assessment practices
- ineffective pre-course information, guidance and enrolment procedures for some learners
- ineffective procedures to monitor performance

English, languages & communications

Strengths

- good achievement in creative writing

Weaknesses

- poor achievement in modern foreign languages
- very poor teaching and learning in modern foreign languages
- weak assessment practices
- ineffective curriculum management

Foundation programmes

Strengths

- good attainment for learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- good teaching and learning for learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- very effective range of community-based provision
- innovative strategies to deliver literacy and numeracy training in a variety of contexts

Weaknesses

- insufficient development of speaking and listening skills in ESOL classes
- poor response to individual learners' needs in some sessions
- poor use of assessment and monitoring as a basis for planning and future work

Family learning

Strengths

- some good development of initiatives through working with partners

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory teaching and learning
- weak use of initial assessment
- insufficient priority given to the needs of adults
- inadequate curriculum development
- weak leadership and management

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT HACKNEY LEA:

- the pleasant and positive atmosphere in many courses
- the warmth and friendliness of tutors
- the accessibility of locations - classes close to home
- the opportunity to learn new skills
- the opportunity to develop self-confidence
- the opportunity to enjoy the social aspects of attending a course

WHAT LEARNERS THINK HACKNEY LEA COULD IMPROVE:

- the quality of the pre-course information - more detailed and timely information
- the size of some classes - they are too large, and learners do not get sufficient attention

KEY CHALLENGES FOR HACKNEY LEA:

- maintain the current strategy for recovery and implement plans for improvement
- improve the use of data and target setting
- strengthen the management of subcontractors
- fully implement procedures for quality assurance
- improve the monitoring of equal opportunities
- develop a strategy for family learning
- further develop the initial capacity building with voluntary organisations
- develop a strategy to improve teaching and learning, particularly in modern foreign languages, sport and leisure, and in family learning
- establish more effective assessment procedures for learners
- improve the support for tutors and the sharing of good practice

Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

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

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

Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

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

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

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 4

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- decisive recent plans to secure improvements
- some good initial capacity building with voluntary organisations
- effective strategy to widen participation

Weaknesses

- weak management of subcontractors
- ineffective target-setting
- ineffective curriculum management
- some ineffective communications
- poor monitoring of equal opportunities
- poor management of quality assurance
- weak self-assessment process

45. The Learning Trust inherited a borough education provision that required drastic actions to ensure recovery. An initial lead-in plan and annual plan were prepared to meet statutory requirements at the Learning Trust's inception. There have been further recent decisive plans to resolve weaknesses in the structure of adult and community learning provision. Measures are in place to secure improvements. A best value review of the service carried out by the local authority was ineffective and did not identify some major weaknesses. A further review of the lifelong learning division has resulted in a new staffing structure and the introduction of a commissioning unit. This has separated the monitoring and contract compliance functions from the operational management of adult and community learning provision. The commissioning unit has not yet started monitoring the work of adult and community learning providers. However, the proposals will ensure closer monitoring of the work of all subcontracted provision. It will provide an additional process of internal challenge and assessment of the effectiveness of the use of the Learning Trust's resources to meet its aims for adult and community learning.

46. Additional actions are planned to ensure that more community groups can gain access to funding. Consultations are taking place to ensure that fee structures throughout the borough are consistent. A new fee policy has been developed and subcontractors have agreed a general statement of intent. However, this has yet to be implemented. A learner forum has been introduced to enhance the Learning Trust's methods of enabling learners to shape the services.

47. There has been some effective initial capacity building with voluntary organisations. The Learning Trust has widened access to funding through the adult and community learning budget. A support network has been established and regular meetings are held with providers. A series of short, focused training sessions have included support for the development of quality assurance systems, designing lesson plans, and schemes of work. Funding for staff to gain relevant teaching qualifications has been taken up by 10 staff in community and voluntary organisations.

48. Learning resources are generally satisfactory with excellent resources for sport and leisure courses at the main subcontractor. There are also good specialist resources for music and theatre skills learners. However, in some locations, resources restrict learning. For example, there are poor computer resources in some centres, and insufficient audio tapes for ESOL learners. On some programmes, there are too many learners for the size of the room and the amount of equipment in the class. In the provision of family learning, the process of allocation of resources is not transparent and resources are not used effectively. The post of quality assurance manager within the Learning Trust's adult and community learning team is currently vacant.

49. Health and safety is checked as part of the monitoring visits to providers' premises by the adult and community learning team. The health and safety policy has recently been revised. However, the policy has yet to be agreed by the Learning Trust's health and safety manager. The new commissioning unit includes a health and safety officer who will be carrying out these duties under the new policy.

50. The Learning Trust's approach to literacy, numeracy and language support is satisfactory at a strategic level. The Learning Trust is actively involved in the learning partnership and its subgroups for literacy and numeracy. In Hackney, a strategy for literacy and numeracy has been in place since 2000 and a new strategy is to be launched in December 2003. The Learning Trust gives a high priority to funding programmes at an initial level for new learners across a range of curriculum areas. This policy links with the local authority's community planning process and its focus on the need for literacy and numeracy programmes, and the high level of diversity in the community. There are some effective programmes to provide literacy, numeracy and language support in a variety of contexts: for example, in the Operation programme. However, at an operational level, the Learning Trust does not yet have satisfactory methods of monitoring and ensuring that learners' needs for literacy, numeracy, language support and other support is in place and is being delivered effectively.

51. The management of subcontractors is weak. The situation inherited by the Learning Trust was one in which subcontractors were ineffectively monitored. Historically, the funding of provision was seen as a grant-giving function and the main subcontractor's performance was not monitored systematically. The curriculum offer of the main subcontractor is not guided by the Learning Trust. The main subcontractor's needs analysis of the local area, which determines how the Learning Trust's adult and community learning funding is spent, is not shared with the Learning Trust. Outcomes of quality assurance reviews and checks, such as lesson observations of tutors, initial assessments of learners, and the monitoring of learner progress, are not reported to the

HACKNEY LEA

Learning Trust. The Learning Trust is in the process of resolving this issue and is moving towards more equitable requirements for all subcontractors. The system for newer subcontractors involves detailed applications for funding and the new systems will involve more effective monitoring of performance. Course folders and more detailed records of provision have been established in the past year.

52. Target-setting is ineffective. The current targets in the adult learning plan and its implementation plan are based on inaccurate data. Previous monitoring returns from the main subcontractor were based on the numbers of total enrolments on individual programmes, while other data collected by the Learning Trust recorded the numbers of learners enrolled by providers. The previous management information system did not enable accurate data collection or provide effective analysis of data to plan programmes or grant allocations. A new system has been put in place which will enable detailed analysis of new learners, target groups, and postcodes. The baseline data are currently being set and this will help develop subsequent target-setting. There is an informal protocol for data sharing with subcontractors, but this is not yet in a written format. Voluntary organisations make applications for funding using a clearly defined set of criteria which determines how they are going to attract learners from target groups. However, their funding bids and related programme proposals are not translated by the Learning Trust into contractual performance targets.

53. There is only one key performance indicator set by the local authority in its contract with the Learning Trust for adult and community learning, and this is based on the Learning Trust's success at inspection. There are no performance measures of provision between inspections. However, the contract sets out some general objectives, such as to develop family learning and to report on achievement. There are currently no value for money indicators set for the adult and community learning service.

54. The curriculum management is ineffective in most areas of learning. The Learning Trust concentrates on funding first step learning opportunities and does not organise its management of programmes in separate curriculum areas, with the exception of family learning. Links with the curriculum areas of the subcontractors in languages, sport, and ICT are unsatisfactory. The main subcontractor has recently re-organised the management of its adult and community learning provision, but the new arrangements are not yet fully established. There is some confusion over roles and responsibilities within the main subcontractor, and between the subcontractor and the Learning Trust. Some part-time teaching staff feel isolated: for example, some ICT tutors have to open and lock isolated buildings. Some tutors do not take up training opportunities made available to them. In sport and leisure programmes, although there are general meetings, there are no training opportunities specifically relevant to the programmes being taught. In family learning programmes, the curriculum-planning does not focus on the needs of adult learners and does not provide effective progression routes for families who have completed taster sessions or initial family literacy programmes.

55. Ineffective communications in a number of areas impact on the services to learners. A key theme in the annual plan is to restore the pride in Hackney's education services and to deal with the legacy of poor attainment. However, the profile of some of the

Learning Trust-funded provision is poor. Programmes funded by the Learning Trust are not always identified as such in subcontractors' publicity materials. Many learners and some tutors on these programmes are unaware that they are provided by the Learning Trust. Positive marketing opportunities are not taken. Times of programmes and locations are changed without informing the Learning Trust. Some publicity material has the wrong course descriptions, times and activities. Some programmes have been cancelled, but the Learning Trust has not been informed.

56. Some partners and voluntary organisations reported greatly improved communications and accessibility of Learning Trust officers compared with previous arrangements. Learning Trust staff are readily available by telephone or to attend meetings. Within the Learning Trust's adult and community learning team, regular team meetings take place. All staff have detailed staff work plans which are monitored regularly by the performance manager.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

57. The Learning Trust has an effective strategy to widen participation. Geographical communities and communities of interest are well served. In 2002-03, courses were offered at 65 venues. At the time of the inspection, the Learning Trust has contracts with 19 small and medium sized voluntary and community organisations to deliver adult education courses on its behalf. Its major subcontractor also delivers much of its adult education contract by working with 40 voluntary organisations. These organisations allow the Learning Trust to reach new groups of learners such as homeless adults in foundation courses, adults who have mental health issues in visual and performing arts, and some hard to reach learners from more deprived areas through the main subcontractor.

58. Most of the provision is non-accredited and first step courses. These programmes are particularly effective in attracting and engaging new learners. There are innovative strategies for delivering literacy and numeracy skills in a variety of contexts, particularly through programmes delivered by the voluntary and community organisations. The provision is responsive to requests from the community. A wide range of cultural traditions and contemporary cultural practices are represented in the programmes offered in visual and performing arts and media programmes, and there are good initiatives to support older and unfit learners in sport and recreation.

59. There is a well resourced crèche at the main subcontractor's premises and crèche provision at 10 community locations, to enable single parents to attend courses. Learners are able to reserve places as part of the enrolment process.

60. Arrangements for initial advice and guidance are good overall. The Learning Trust manages a guidance centre for adults at a centrally located high street premises. The centre provides a wide range of reference materials on educational programmes and career routes for adults. Learners have access to computers and an electronic database of careers materials. However, there is insufficient information at some outreach centres about some visual and performing arts programmes.

61. The Learning Trust has an equality officer located in the lifelong learning directorate who is responsible for the Trust's equality policy. A revised race equality policy is undergoing consultation, and policies relating to disability and gender are also being developed. The policies will require each service to collect data and set and monitor equality targets. The new race equality arrangements meet the requirements of the Race Relations Amendment Act (2000).

62. Funding from the LSC for SENDA is being effectively used to ensure that providers' premises have good access. Sixteen providers have been identified as needing work. This year, work has been carried out on nine providers' sites. The remaining are to be completed next year.

63. There is poor monitoring of equal opportunities. The equality and diversity policy requires the Learning Trust to monitor the equal opportunities practices of subcontractors, but this is not adequately carried out. Monitoring visits to providers include equal opportunities but there is insufficient space on the monitoring form to record meaningful comments. The Learning Trust is over-reliant on providers making their own arrangements for equal opportunities. For example, all providers have a complaints procedure, and some can demonstrate how complaints have been handled. However, the Learning Trust has not monitored how effectively complaints have been dealt with. The Learning Trust ensures providers have a handbook and other materials which outline the service provided for adult learners. Providers are responsible for ensuring that the Learning Trust's information is disseminated, and if necessary translated, into other languages. However, these arrangements are not adequately monitored by the Learning Trust. Overall targets are set in the adult learning plan for disability, gender, ethnicity and age, but the Learning Trust does not translate them into specific targets for providers. While there are some good examples of sessions which are sensitive to a wide range of learners, and some good materials containing positive content, the Learning Trust does not yet have its own systems to monitor equal opportunities in teaching and learning.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 5

64. The Learning Trust is in the process of developing a new quality assurance framework. In line with priorities in the adult learning plan, a commissioning team has been appointed with a focus on the tendering, procuring, evidence-gathering and monitoring aspects of quality assurance. Quality development is the responsibility of the adult learning team. New documents relating to the quality of teaching and learning have recently been revised and now include requirements for schemes of work, lesson plans, guidelines for induction and a classroom observation policy. The current documents, although in draft form, have been disseminated to providers. It is, however, too early to assess the impact of these developments on the quality of provision.

65. The current quality assurance arrangements are poorly managed. There is an over-reliance on the quality assurance systems of providers and they are not effectively monitored. The Learning Trust does not request adequate reports from providers to

assure itself of the quality of their provision. Some staff involved in the delivery of adult and community learning do not understand the quality assurance arrangements. In some areas, lesson observations are carried out by non-specialist staff and are often graded too generously. In some cases, staff were confused as to whether they had been observed or not. There is no co-ordinated approach by the Learning Trust to allow the tutors to share good practice.

66. Attendance is not monitored effectively by the Learning Trust and inspectors identified instances of poor punctuality by some tutors. Attendance was unacceptably poor in many areas of learning. Learning in modern foreign languages, sports and leisure, and visual and performing arts and media sessions was disrupted by poor punctuality. The Learning Trust has recently produced a new attendance policy, which has been sent out to all providers, but it is too early to gauge its impact. However, in one programme which is directly managed by the Learning Trust, the summer university project which includes learners from the ages of 11 to 25, attendance is effectively monitored. Learners are awarded a certificate for 80 per cent or more attendance on the programme.

67. There is insufficient use of learners' feedback to improve learning. Learners complete a feedback form at the end of every term and this is collated by provider, but not by course. The information is not analysed by the Learning Trust. Learners, tutors and providers are not aware of how the information is used.

68. The current self-assessment report is the Learning Trust's second. It was written in July 2003 and was updated before the inspection. Subcontractors were asked to produce their own self-assessment, which alongside other evidence, formed part of the report. However, the self-assessment process is weak. The main subcontractor was insufficiently involved in the process. There was also insufficient involvement of learners and part-time tutors across the provision. The report did not use accurate data on learners, and this was recognised in the revised version of the report. There is no separate assessment of provision in ICT, sport and leisure, or family learning. The report is not sufficiently judgemental and many of the strengths are no more than normal practice. The development plan does not deal with the specific weaknesses identified in the areas of learning, and the actions required from providers have not been well communicated to them.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information & communications technology

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	296	3

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good attainment of skills and personal goals
- effective strategies to engage new learners

Weaknesses

- some poorly equipped and inappropriate accommodation
- inadequate assessment procedures
- poor curriculum management

Achievement and standards

69. There is good attainment of skills and personal goals. New learners quickly develop confidence in using ICT and gain skills in computer applications and in file management. Learners are using their skills to make applications for employment, to help their children with their homework, and, for those learners who work in community organisations, for the benefit of local residents. There is good retention and achievement on most accredited courses, particularly a new introductory ICT qualification that takes place at two centres. At one centre, retention is 90 per cent with all 19 learners achieving the qualification, and at the other, all learners were retained and 70 per cent of learners achieved the qualification.

Quality of education and training

70. There are effective strategies to engage new learners. Programmes are offered at a good range of community venues. A number of courses are specifically targeted at socially excluded groups. There are large numbers of first-time learners on ICT programmes and a significant number of learners are unemployed. There are good links with partner organisations to improve recruitment and progression, such as with local information and advice centres. Some centres actively enrol learners, for example by knocking on doors. Initial advice and induction procedures are satisfactory. Some centres provide employability training, arrange work experience, support job search and have online information and guidance. Crèche facilities or other forms of childcare are available at some centres. Informal open access to ICT facilities is offered at some centres when the machines are not otherwise in use.

71. Most of the observed sessions were satisfactory. Many of the tutors are experts in their fields and some have extensive industrial experience. In the better sessions, their expertise is effectively used to motivate learners and the training is delivered in a vocational context. For example, in a multimedia design class, the tutor was able to provide examples from webpages he had designed himself. Tutors make good use of data projectors that are available in a number of centres, including some community venues. Overall, tutors are approachable and supportive. They encourage mutual support and peer tuition in a relaxed learning environment, appropriate for insecure learners who, in some cases, have previously had a negative learning experience.

72. Some accommodation is inappropriate. In some centres, the accommodation cannot support the number of learners enrolled on the programmes. Conversely, classes sometimes take place in large, sterile and austere surroundings which are not conducive to student-centred learning. In these circumstances, tutors struggle to project their voices. There is an uneven standard of ICT resources. In some centres, equipment is state-of-the-art, at other centres the equipment is old and unreliable. The equipment maintenance is poor at some centres and in some cases, rooms are also in a poor state of repair. The non-availability of working computers reduces the number of learners that can be accommodated. The non-functioning of printers adversely affects the monitoring of learners' progress and diminishes the learners' motivation.

73. Assessment procedures are inadequate. In some classes there is no initial assessment. In others where initial assessment is carried out, it is not always used as a basis for the individual learning plans. The monitoring of learners' progress is generally poor with an over-reliance on self-assessment by learners. In many cases their assessment is insufficiently evaluative, and there is little follow up by tutors. There is inadequate written feedback from tutors to learners and a lack of awareness of its importance. Although tutors give verbal encouragement, printed work is frequently not collected or marked.

Leadership and management

74. Overall, management of this curriculum area is poor. Insufficient attention is given to the monitoring and development of ICT provision by the adult and community learning team. The self-assessment report and supporting documents from individual subcontractors contain limited evaluative information about the nature and organisation of the ICT programme. At some centres management information data are collected, but there is no overall collation and analysis of the data. There is no historical data to establish trends in performance.

75. Some tutors are unclear about who is responsible for providing support. Some tutors report physical isolation. For example, tutors are sometimes alone in a building with learners and in other cases they experience difficulty in finding room keys. Some tutors are not consulted about curriculum-planning. However, there has been significant improvement in recent months. There are now more regular meetings, and training needs analysis and classroom observation has been provided by the Learning Trust and

HACKNEY LEA

the main subcontractor.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**Grade 4**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	277	4

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good resources to enhance learning
- good initiatives for older and for unfit learners

Weaknesses

- poor attendance and punctuality
- unsatisfactory teaching and learning
- insufficient health screening
- inadequate formal assessment practice
- ineffective curriculum management

Achievement and standards

76. Learners achieve a range of benefits from the sessions they attend. These include social benefits, which are of particular value to older learners, and improved mental and physical fitness. In the better sessions, learners perform well and demonstrate a good level of skill and of body awareness. In the poorer sessions, learners display underdeveloped exercise technique and have insufficient knowledge and understanding about the exercises they perform. In some sessions, more advanced learners do not receive sufficient attention to allow them to progress at an appropriate rate.

77. Attendance and punctuality are poor. In the sessions observed during the inspection, less than half of the learners attended. Registers show poor patterns of attendance for many programmes. In many sessions, learners arrive late, and tutors delay the start of their classes. In some cases the time spent waiting is not used productively. Some tutors do not begin the class until as much as 15 minutes after the start time. In some classes tutors arrive just on time for the class to begin allowing little or no time for preparation. In some instances late arriving learners are allowed to join in physical exercises without carrying out an appropriate preparatory warm up exercise.

Quality of education and training

78. There are good resources to enhance learning. At the main campus of the main subcontractor where almost a third of all sessions take place, there is a large sports centre. This provides a very good range of facilities and resources, including a teaching gym, separated from the main gym. Learners benefit from this spacious and private

HACKNEY LEA

learning environment and the range of exercise equipment provided within it. Tai Chi is held in a secluded, appropriately lit, mirrored room which is conducive to the atmosphere sought for this type of session. Relaxing and calming music helps learners to release tension and focus on the session aims. Venues in other locations are adequate and fit for purpose. Equipment is provided for learners in all sessions including mats, blocks, weights and balls. Resources are regularly updated. When tutors request equipment it is ordered by the curriculum co-ordinator promptly. There are some knowledgeable and skilled tutors.

79. There are good initiatives for older and for unfit learners. The provision relates well to the Hackney borough council's plan for older people. The section in the plan on healthy living has the stated objectives to prevent illness and disease, and reduce the risk of falling. The exercise and fitness sessions offered for older adults deal with these objectives effectively. General Practitioner (GP) referral sessions have been introduced. There are good relations between GPs, medical centres and the main subcontractor to make sure that learners are appropriately referred and their needs are met. Older learners have requested particular types of classes and these have been included as part of the provision. Sessions are held in care centres, GP's surgeries, hospitals and local community centres, minimising travel to classes and ensuring accessibility.

80. The programmes on offer also respond well to the service plan for the directorate of community and environment and the culture services division. Those at risk of social exclusion are identified as target groups for exercise and fitness programmes. These groups are catered for well by the programmes on offer. There are specific sessions for beginners and unfit learners who are at risk of illness. The Learning Trust links its activities with that provided by Hackney council's sports division to ensure that there is coherent provision.

81. Initial advice, guidance and support are satisfactory. Course information varies in quality from one programme to another. For some courses the information is extensive, but it has insufficient detail. Learners are able to try out classes for a couple of weeks before making a decision to enrol. GPs are effective in advising on the potential benefits of programmes and in introducing learners to tutors.

82. There is unsatisfactory teaching and learning. Forty per cent of the teaching and learning sessions observed were unsatisfactory or poor. In some sessions the tutor's knowledge of the subject area is insufficient. Tutors offer exercises that pose a high risk to the body and are relatively ineffective. At times, exercises are taught incorrectly with the tutor demonstrating poor performance. In some fitness sessions tutors are unaware of the purpose of the exercises they use and give learners incorrect information. In some sessions there is a lack of observation of exercise performance, and little attempt to correct poor performance by learners.

83. In many sessions there are little or no adaptations to the learning activities or for the alternative exercises offered. This results in most learners carrying out the same exercises for most of the time, even when the level of work being offered is too difficult or too easy. At other times, learners with different ability levels to most of the group, are left

with nothing to do but sit and watch. These learners are not sufficiently challenged and supported.

84. There is insufficient health screening. In many sessions written health screening is not carried out, and some tutors do not see the significance of this. In some sessions the health screening is in use, but the screening has been carried out a few weeks after the start of the programme rather than before the commencement of physical activities. In a few cases, health screening has been carried out, but records are not kept by the tutor. They are not used to contribute to the planning of the sessions and to make appropriate adaptations for learners with particular health issues. The health screening form devised by the main subcontractor meets the required standard. However, it is not routinely used and some tutors are unaware of its existence. An exception to this is the GP referral sessions where health screening is carried out by the GP and information is shared with the tutor to ensure risks to the learners are clearly identified.

85. There is inadequate formal assessment practice. In many sessions, initial assessment has not been carried out. Fitness and skill levels are not measured at the start of the programme, and individual learning or fitness goals are not identified. A learner progress monitoring document exists for use by tutors in this area. However, in many cases it has not been completed, and tutors feel it is not appropriate to their sessions. Where tutors have used the document to identify goals, these are group goals rather than individual learner goals, and they are set by the tutor without agreement or input from the learners. The goals are not specific, measurable or timed.

86. Monitoring forms are not kept up to date. In the poorer sessions there is little monitoring and assessment of individual learners' performance, and learners are not given feedback about how well they are achieving. In the better sessions, tutors observe and monitor individual learners well. They regularly check and correct performance and learning, and give good, detailed specific and positive feedback. Some tutors use questions well to gauge learners' knowledge and understanding.

Leadership and management

87. Curriculum management is ineffective. There is some confusion about the roles and responsibilities of the curriculum co-ordinator and other managers at the main subcontractor. There is insufficient communication between the curriculum co-ordinator and subcontractor's managers and the Learning Trust. The Learning Trust is not made aware of timetable changes such as sessions that have been rescheduled to different days or times, or changes to the staffing. There are also gaps in communication between part-time tutors and the main subcontractor's managers. A tutor had changed the timing of one session without consultation with managers. Although the subcontractor's managers check attendance when they visit sessions, learners are not contacted if they do not attend.

88. Contact between the curriculum co-ordinator and part-time tutors is mostly informal. Tutors have little awareness of the quality assurance systems in place. They lack awareness and involvement in the self-assessment process. The observation of the

HACKNEY LEA

teaching and learning process is insufficiently thorough. Some tutors are not sure if they have been observed or just visited by subcontractor's managers or the curriculum co-ordinator. Often, when observations have taken place, tutors have received no written or verbal feedback. There is no staff development that is specific to the sessions taught by tutors. Part-time tutors have not taken up any equality of opportunity training, and they are not fully aware of how equal opportunity applies to the learners in the sessions they teach.

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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	1031	3

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good achievement in dance, music performance, theatre skills and pottery
- good development of technical skills
- stimulating enrichment opportunities for learners
- good specialist resources in music and theatre skills to enhance learning
- particularly broad and responsive curriculum offered

Weaknesses

- poor punctuality, attendance and retention rates
- poor planning in some classes
- ineffective assessment practices
- ineffective pre-course information, guidance and enrolment procedures for some learners
- ineffective procedures to monitor performance

Achievement and standards

89. Learners achieve a good standard of work in dance, music performance, theatre skills and pottery. In most dance classes, many new learners demonstrate good posture, flexibility and co-ordination and a strong sense of rhythm. They accurately perform challenging and complex dance patterns with energy and confidence. In most singing and instrumental music performance classes, learners perform with a good sense of rhythm and strong ensemble skills. They are confident in performance, and aspects of intonation, phrasing, stylistic awareness and tone quality are generally good. In theatre skills, learners demonstrate good spatial awareness and understanding of the effective use of language in performance. In pottery and clay sculpture classes, learners display good application of skills through the completion of finished three-dimensional and low-relief pieces.

90. Poor punctuality, attendance and retention impacts significantly on the learners' experience. Attendance in classes observed during the inspection was poor at 58.5 per cent of those enrolled. In most classes a significant number of learners had not attended for some time. In the main subcontractor, reasons for poor attendance are not adequately identified, nor are follow up actions implemented.

91. Punctuality in many classes is poor. Learning is often disrupted by learners arriving

late, and some arrive up to one hour after the class has started. Learners are often kept waiting in visual arts classes until there are sufficient numbers for the session to start or for demonstrations of the learning activity. Some tutors repeat the introduction to their classes several times. Learners in some performing arts classes miss the warm-up sessions and start the activity physically unprepared.

Quality of education and training

92. Learners develop good technical skills. They gain a good understanding of technical and rehearsal skills and effectively apply these to create finished drawings, paintings, artefacts and performance work. Learners use a good range of techniques and processes in life drawing, crafts, three-dimensional art work, theatre skills and music performance. In theatre skills, learners develop techniques in the use of voice and movement and develop their understanding of stillness and space. In one session, learners worked on an exercise where they moved in slow motion. At several points they stopped, froze, and established eye focus with the audience. This exercise extended and developed their physical control and their understanding of pace and timing. In the best sessions learners use their new skills and techniques creatively and expressively.

93. There are many stimulating enrichment opportunities for learners. Learners are encouraged to exhibit their art work locally and to perform to public audiences. In one centre the annual exhibition includes the art work of all learners attending the centre and is publicised widely in the local community. Photographic records of this exhibition are used in classes to extend learners' critical evaluation skills. Learners in a singing class for the over 50s increased their confidence following a well-received public performance of old music hall favourites in a local venue. Learners visit galleries and museums as an integral part of their learning schedule. For example, in a life drawing class, regular organised visits to contemporary exhibitions in the London area stimulate and inspire learners' work.

94. Learners have access to a particularly broad curriculum with a wide choice of subjects available at venues across the borough. Courses are often provided in response to local needs and requests. For example, a gospel singing course was developed in response to a request from the local community. Classes include subjects such as painting and drawing, three dimensional studies, craft work, clothes making, Indian music, Gospel singing, Salsa, jazz and African dance, theatre skills and lens media. Partnerships with external organisations enhance widening participation through the inclusion of non-traditional learners. Learners with mental health issues who are resident at one local hospital benefit from the provision of a pottery class which takes place in the ward. Mobile resources are used to ensure that learners can participate in a safe environment and without undue additional stress. These learners are encouraged to progress to pottery classes which are based at the centre for people with enduring mental health problems and eventually to mainstream adult and community learning provision.

95. Learners benefit from good specialist resources in music and theatre skills. They

have access to a good range of musical instruments and equipment such as Indian tablas and sitar, percussion and tuned musical instruments in addition to some industry-standard music technology equipment. The availability of piano accompanists enhances learning in some singing classes. Good facilities for theatre skills learners are available in one centre where an old music hall, with good theatre lighting and a clean well-polished floor, is regularly used by learners for rehearsal and performances. Learners are inspired by the ambience and the history of the venue. Some accommodation for dance classes at one outreach location is dirty and shabby and walkways at this venue are poorly lit.

96. Resources and accommodation for visual arts and media are satisfactory and generally suitable for purpose. Specialist practical rooms and studios are provided when necessary. In some art classes learning materials are used well to support learners. For instance, in one clay sculpture class, diagrams of the head clearly demonstrate proportion, balance and the effects of foreshortening. Learners gain a good understanding of working in three dimensions through the use of digital photographic self-portraits taken from a variety of angles and viewpoints.

97. In some classes there is poor planning. Some schemes of work and lesson plans comprise lists of tasks rather than specific learning aims. In some sessions learning activities are delayed as result of poor preparation and classroom organisation by tutors. Learners are not always clear about what they will learn in their classes and some are insufficiently challenged by the planned learning activities. Teaching and learning methods do not always meet the needs of all learners. In some of the better classes planning is good with clear objectives being understood by all learners. For example, in a saxophone workshop, a progressive and detailed lesson plan clearly integrated the teaching of theory with practical activities. The tutor prepared learning resources in the form of rehearsal tapes and backing tracks. The least able learners and also those with more experience were very effectively supported and challenged by the variety of teaching methods used.

98. Assessment practices are ineffective. In many cases there is no initial assessment of learners' needs. Where subcontractors are carrying out initial assessment, in many cases it does not adequately assess learners' starting points, nor does it identify previous experience in the subject. Individual learning plans are routinely used by the newer subcontractors. However, learners' personal learning goals are not always sufficiently identified nor do learners always receive adequate feedback on their progress to enable them to improve. New systems have been developed by the Learning Trust for recording learners' achievement. However, many tutors do not understand how to use these systems to support learners effectively.

99. There is ineffective pre-course information, guidance and enrolment procedures for some learners. Part-time course brochures contain titles of courses together with dates and venues. Course titles often do not adequately reflect the course content and in some cases, insufficient additional information is provided on course content and what learners need for the first session. Individual course descriptions are available from the main site of the main subcontractor but are not widely distributed to learning centres in the borough.

100. The recruitment and enrolment processes for learners at the main subcontractor are ineffective. Enrolment often continues beyond the maximum number agreed with the tutors in the area of learning. The number of learners enrolled in some classes exceeds the capacity of the allocated classrooms, studios and workshops. There are often too many learners for the practical nature of the class. For instance, one pattern drafting class had 22 learners enrolled. This exceeds the available table space for cutting this number of pattern blocks. Attendance in this class was consistently very poor after the third week of the course.

101. Information, guidance and enrolment procedures in most subcontractors are satisfactory. Most learners at these centres are interviewed and participate in induction activities. Learners referred by social services are effectively integrated with mainstream adult and community learning classes offered by the main subcontractor. Effective guidance and support is provided for these learners and individual timetables are negotiated to suit their personal circumstances. One subcontractor holds induction days and taster courses to generate and identify student interest in courses. This subcontractor also holds additional classes for learners identified as needing additional support for their studies. However, in the main subcontractor, learners with literacy, numeracy and language needs are not systematically referred for additional support, nor is language support available in classes.

Leadership and management

102. Procedures to monitor the performance of subcontractors are ineffective. Information regarding the operational management of the contracts is not communicated effectively between the subcontractors and the Learning Trust. Curriculum development and targets for participation are not sufficiently informed by market needs analysis. Management information data are inadequate and where they are available they are not used adequately for target-setting and curriculum development processes. Increasing opportunities are available for staff development at the main subcontractor. However, these focus on non-subject-specific teaching and learning issues. Opportunities for tutors to share good practice within the area of learning are limited. There is insufficient clarity among managers at the main subcontractor on responsibilities for quality assurance. Quality assurance processes are not sufficiently monitored by the Learning Trust.

103. A useful newsletter which contains information about staff development opportunities, events and curriculum issues is circulated to all staff by the main subcontractor. Regular team meetings are held once a term and focus on administrative matters. These are not attended by all tutors and face-to-face contact with some tutors is insufficient. Most tutors contribute to a course review process and feedback is analysed centrally. However, this does not result in effective action-planning to improve teaching and learning.

104. Observation of teaching and learning is carried out by subcontractors and classes are also being sampled by the Learning Trust. However, the observation reports are insufficiently evaluative and do not focus sufficiently on learning and attainment. All

subcontractors routinely collect feedback from learners, but it is not routinely used for action-planning, and learners are not aware of any resulting actions. Tutors are insufficiently involved in the Learning Trust's self-assessment process. The self-assessment report is insufficiently evaluative. Many of the strengths are no more than normal practice in adult and community learning provision.

English, languages & communications**Grade 5**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	817	5

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good achievement in creative writing

Weaknesses

- poor achievement in modern foreign languages
- very poor teaching and learning in modern foreign languages
- weak assessment practices
- ineffective curriculum management

Achievement and standards

105. Learners achieve well in creative writing classes. They write with clarity, perception and show good attention to style. Learners explore a wide range of personal experiences and discuss their own and one another's work with sensitivity. Learners can think for themselves, and appraise their writing using appropriate critical terminology. Examples of writing were at an early stage of drafting. Nevertheless, all represent considerable personal achievement, including work by learners who speak English as an additional language.

106. Learners' achievement in modern foreign languages is poor. Many learners are making little progress towards personal or professional learning goals. Their levels of achievement are below those expected. They do not have the basic vocabulary and structures to communicate confidently on a simple level. Learners are reluctant or unable to use the foreign language for effective communication. In many classes learners are passive for long periods of time. They rely heavily on the written word to express themselves, sometimes reading aloud from a prepared script. In these instances, they sometimes achieve technical accuracy but at the expense of fluency. Accredited courses have only recently been introduced and at the time of the inspection, learners have yet to complete these programmes.

107. Punctuality is poor. In half the classes observed at least three learners arrived late, often by 20 minutes, causing significant disruption to others' learning. Two tutors were late for their own classes. Attendance in classes observed was 74 per cent.

Quality of education and training

108. Resources to support language learning are satisfactory. There are some pleasant classrooms with good lighting and good furniture. Most tutors have access to whiteboards, overhead projectors and tape recorders. Video recorders and photocopying are available. In some classrooms there is a computer or a set of computers. In one class the tutor had used the internet to obtain authentic materials for use as a cultural reference. In others, effective use was made of video or audio tapes. However, tutors make little use of resources other than whiteboards, books or photocopied worksheets. All but one tutor have a recognised teaching qualification.

109. There is a satisfactory range of courses. The main subcontractor responds well to suggestions for courses received from the community. For example, a course in Turkish was provided at the request of the Turkish community. In some lessons, individual learners' needs are identified and addressed, but with varying degrees of success. There is good representation from minority ethnic groups on many courses.

110. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Learners receive helpful course information. Induction processes include a three-week taster phase on modern foreign language courses. Data are not yet available to measure the success of this recently introduced initiative, but one class has retained all those initially enrolled. However, the need to enrol again in the fourth week is unpopular with some learners, as the formalities require a time-consuming interruption to classes.

111. Teaching and learning in modern foreign languages are very poor. Over half of the lessons observed were judged unsatisfactory, poor or very poor. All tutors observed are native speakers of the languages taught. However, there is far too much reliance on the use of English by tutors, even when learners greet them in the foreign language or when learners' first language is not English. Sometimes English is used by tutors to convey simple classroom instructions which learners could easily understand in the foreign language. Sometimes English is used to explain points of grammar which could have been taken from well-chosen examples or activities in the foreign language. Tutors make insufficient use of listening exercises or other stimuli to prompt learners to use the foreign language. In the sessions where tutors rely too much on communication in English, learners are reluctant to practise speaking the foreign language, and their fluency is adversely affected.

112. Many learners are noticeably disadvantaged by unsatisfactory teaching techniques. For instance, in two classes the tutor used the foreign language for short grammatical expositions, but in far too much detail for learners to understand. In others, time was wasted in a variety of ways. For example, writing the whole present tense of verbs on the whiteboard and spending far longer than was necessary on repetition of the individual sounds of the alphabet. In the classes judged satisfactory or better, classroom management and the use of the foreign language by teachers were much more effective. In one lesson, learners responded with enthusiasm, comprehension and fluency to the teacher's sustained use of Arabic as the main language of the classroom.

HACKNEY LEA

At the beginning of another class, the tutor used Japanese to invite learners to greet a newcomer and introduce themselves. Learners used the language with confidence and demonstrated well-developed listening and speaking skills to communicate effectively.

113. Assessment practices are weak. Initial assessment is in place for most learners, but its extent and use varies. There is some testing in lessons, but it is not well-designed to facilitate or measure progress in speaking, listening or reading. It is more concerned with grammar than fluency and largely confined to inauthentic written exercises or drills. Few examples of corrected work was seen. There is limited recording of learners' progress, particularly on unaccredited courses. Individual learning plans do not identify the specific skills of language learners. Learners are often unaware of their progress and achievement. Some tutors use effective informal means to monitor learners' progress, but the results are not recorded or communicated to them. However, there is good peer review in creative writing lessons.

Leadership and management

114. Curriculum management is ineffective. There is ineffective communication between the Learning Trust and the main subcontractor. The adult and community learning team have no involvement in the process of designing and developing the curriculum or in decisions on class closures. Data on retention and attendance are incomplete. Tutor support and training sessions have been provided by the main subcontractor, but the current management structures are not effective in driving quality assurance or improvement. For example, schemes of work are often poor and rarely deal with the specific skills of language learning, even if the template suggests that they should.

115. Lesson observation reports are often written by non-linguists. Grades awarded are not accurate. Spaces for signature, to indicate that developmental action has been agreed by all parties, are frequently left blank. Present arrangements leave the Learning Trust unaware of how many observations have been carried out, the grades awarded or the professional development needs identified and looked at by the main subcontractor. The Learning Trust has no mechanism to monitor or evaluate the quality of the teaching and learning in classes provided by the main subcontractor. The self-assessment report is insufficiently evaluative and does not identify key weaknesses identified by inspectors.

116. There is no reference to the Learning Trust in course details in the main subcontractor's prospectus. Some staff in the main subcontractor's advice centre are unaware that any modern foreign language courses are provided on the Learning Trust's behalf. Some tutors have little understanding of the Learning Trust.

Foundation programmes**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	311	3

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good attainment for learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- good teaching and learning for learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- very effective range of community-based provision
- innovative strategies to deliver literacy and numeracy training in a variety of contexts

Weaknesses

- insufficient development of speaking and listening skills in ESOL classes
- poor response to individual learners' needs in some sessions
- poor use of assessment and monitoring as a basis for planning and future work

Achievement and standards

117. Learners' achievements are satisfactory in most foundation programmes. Learners on literacy and numeracy programmes increase their confidence and make satisfactory progress in achieving group learning goals and personal objectives. In ESOL programmes there is satisfactory attainment of language skills in most sessions.

118. There is good attainment in classes for learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Learners display a very good standard of attainment in individual and group learning goals. Expectations are high and learners are set challenging targets. Learners develop the skills to actively participate in their programmes and in the wider community. For example, a horticulture course takes place in a community garden on an estate in an economically deprived area. Learners are proud to show their achievements and the plants they have tended are made available for sale in an outdoor shop. Another group of learners in a drama class are preparing a play which will be performed at a local theatre and at other venues. Learners demonstrate enthusiasm and develop effective learning and personal skills.

119. The achievements of learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities are celebrated imaginatively on all programmes. Displays of good recent work by learners are a feature of classrooms. For example, in one session, a collage of the London skyline from a previous class provided the backdrop for an animation activity. In another session, the use of a digital camera enabled learners to have a continuous photographic record of their progress for their files.

Quality of education and training

120. There is good teaching for learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The teaching is imaginative, well prepared and stimulating. Learners achieve and progress well and tutors are skilled in using opportunities to encourage interaction in the group and to reinforce learning. Tutors give clear and sensitive instructions to enable learners to complete tasks successfully. In one horticulture class, learners were taught the health and safety aspects of wearing gloves for gardening alongside learning how to match a pair. In another class, learners in a sports and leisure session were taught concepts of weight while using the resistance machines in a well-equipped gymnasium.

121. There is a very effective range of community provision. Programmes are offered in appropriate locations across the borough to facilitate access by non-traditional learners. For example, an ESOL class takes place in a centre for homeless people, and literacy and numeracy classes are held at the local MIND drop-in centre, enabling learners who are reluctant to attend formal provision to access courses. Classes are located in venues which serve geographical communities, such as local housing estates, and venues which serve local communities of interest, such as the Vietnamese, Laotian and Cambodian community.

122. There are innovative strategies to deliver literacy and numeracy programmes, particularly in the programmes provided by the voluntary and community organisations. For example, in a reading and writing lyrics course, non-traditional learners were producing a music CD in a professional recording studio. Learners were improving their literacy and numeracy skills by writing song lyrics, drafting text for the CD sleeve and associated publicity material. Learners were also required to estimate the cost of the project and were taught the basic economics of producing a CD in a professional context. This approach motivated the learners and individual attainment of personal and group goals was very good. In another session, numerical concepts were introduced through the context of local history in a way that stimulated a diverse range of learners. A range of courses are delivered in community venues where opportunities to learn computer skills are effectively used to attract learners into literacy provision.

123. Tuition in basic skills is also provided through a particularly imaginative project run by the Hackney Music Development Trust, called Operaction. Groups of learners are working towards the production of a community opera, based on a local historical figure. There are currently 174 learners enrolled on a variety of literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses at community venues and 57 learners have been entered for accreditation. In one session, learners have been to see a well-known production and are using literacy skills to work on their own community opera libretto. Learners speak positively about this approach. One ESOL learner stated that the visit to the opera had given them confidence to speak out in the group, while others described the visit as increasing their motivation for learning. The project encourages commitment from new learners and fosters a community ethos from a diverse range of learners.

124. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in literacy and numeracy sessions. In the

more effective classes, tutors use real-life situations and contextual learning to interest and motivate learners. In the less-effective sessions, tutors are over-reliant on worksheets and insufficient use is made of visual aids.

125. There is insufficient development of speaking and listening skills in ESOL classes. Learners are not given sufficient opportunity to practise spoken English in a variety of relevant contexts. Tutors do not correct learners' errors and homework is not used to reinforce aural and oral skills development. For example, in one class, learners would have liked to take tapes home to reinforce listening and speaking skills.

126. The response to individual learners' needs is poor in some sessions. Whole group teaching in some ESOL lessons excludes beginners and does not challenge those with more advanced skills. In one session, a diverse group of learners were set a common task which was inappropriate for some learners. In some classes there is an over-reliance on paper-based materials to stimulate language development and a narrow focus of contexts in which language is practised. In some sessions, the ineffective lesson-planning and poor response to individual needs leads to some learners not making progress in learning and practising new skills.

127. In some ESOL and literacy and numeracy classes there is poor use of assessment and monitoring for planning future work. Learners' progress is not always formally recognised and in some programmes, insufficient recording of learners' progress hinders future planning. On some programmes, individual learning plans do not record learners' progress and do not reflect small steps in learning. In two ESOL groups, learners do not have course files. In another course, files are kept in a corner of the room and contain few examples of learners' work. Some tutors' session evaluations record the work of the group, but do not monitor individual learners' progress. Tutors are aware of learners' progress and provide feedback during sessions, but they do not always adequately record this.

Leadership and management

128. The Learning Trust's management of subcontracted partners is satisfactory. There is thorough scrutiny of new partners by the Learning Trust. In one organisation the provider had received very effective guidance on health and safety, equal opportunities and the requirements for teaching and learning, before learners were enrolled. However, there is insufficient clarity in some of the management roles and responsibilities of contracted partners. Communications between the partners and with the Learning Trust are sometimes ineffective. All partners have quality control procedures in place, although they vary in their effectiveness. In some cases, the systems used to monitor key processes are not sufficiently detailed and it is not clear whether the results of quality assurance reviews have been acted on. Although tutors have a satisfactory awareness of diversity, there is inadequate monitoring and reinforcement of equal opportunities by the Learning Trust. Some of the strengths in the self-assessment report matched those identified by inspectors, but additional weaknesses were also identified.

Family learning**Grade 5**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	75	5

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- some good development of initiatives through working with partners

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory teaching and learning
- weak use of initial assessment
- insufficient priority given to the needs of adults
- inadequate curriculum development
- weak leadership and management

Achievement and standards

129. Achievement is satisfactory in the better sessions. Learners gain confidence in their use of language and they develop skills to communicate more effectively with teachers and children. In some sessions they develop skills to play constructively with their children and support them in their learning.

130. There has been limited progression by learners. In 2002-03, two learners from a family literacy course progressed to a teacher training programme and three other learners attended ICT classes in the borough. However, most learners only complete an initial literacy or numeracy class, and do not achieve a qualification or progress to more advanced parenting classes.

131. Learners gain very little from their experience of attending many of the sessions used to widen participation. For example, in one session most of the activities were focused on engaging children while mothers had little involvement. Another session was used as a mother and toddler group with little input on its stated aim of developing parenting skills. In programmes which do not meet the needs of the learners, recruitment and attendance is poor.

Quality of education and training

132. There is some good development of initiatives through working with partners. The Learning Trust works with a variety of partners to widen participation and develop educational opportunities for adults. A good network of voluntary organisations and schools has been developed. At present there are partnerships with 11 primary and

secondary schools, 14 community groups and the main subcontractor and its outreach centres. Effective liaison between the family learning co-ordinator and the Learning Trust's under-fives co-ordinator has resulted in the development of family learning at the borough's libraries. There is also good liaison with the 'Sure Start' programme. Community organisations have recently provided a range of three-hour starter sessions and weekend activities.

133. Guidance given to parents is generally satisfactory. In some schools, useful information is provided and coffee mornings are held to explain the benefits of the courses. These sessions are often staffed by the teacher in the school and tutors from the main subcontractor. There is some good use of other support agencies in schools, for example, establishing a playgroup with Sure Start. Where guidance is most effective, learners' needs are identified at an early stage and this ensures successful recruitment to courses and commitment by parents. However, in some community provision, the links with schools are not effective. Parents are not committed to supporting the joint sessions and play no role in developing their understanding of the national curriculum. Some learners are recruited to the wrong courses.

134. Resources are satisfactory for family literacy and numeracy classes. Learning materials are readily available for these classes. There has been some effective basic skills staff development for teachers and tutors. The staff teaching literacy and numeracy courses are adequately qualified. Much of the accommodation is adequate and literacy and numeracy classes are held in inviting and comfortable local primary schools. Some schools have additional high-specification computer resources to support learning. In some community settings, the accommodation is poor. It is uninviting, untidy and has out of date computers. Many family learning classes have crèche facilities which are well used. In community settings, schools and libraries, there is a good selection of toys and accident prevention equipment which are available for loan to parents. In some sessions, play-sacks and other learning materials have been developed. In some parenting sessions there is good use of specialist staff, such as speech therapists and health visitors. Their input is valued by learners and in one session a child was identified as needing speech therapy.

135. There is much unsatisfactory teaching and learning. Of the 11 sessions observed, a third were unsatisfactory. In the weaker sessions, there is little evidence of learning taking place. Learners are not encouraged to keep a log of activities related to their children and there is no evidence of learners' work or progress which has been made. In one session, parents had no involvement in the session, and there was little opportunity to improve their own language skills or to help their children with their school work. In another session, an inappropriate text was used to develop learners' understanding of a school play. The use of language was too advanced and most learners made little progress. In another session, there were no learners present and there is little evidence of planning to ensure that they do attend.

136. In the better sessions, teachers engage learners in a range of learning activities including singing, writing, acting, designing games and learning with their children. In one session, the service of a professional puppeteer was effectively used to help parents

and children develop craft skills.

137. There is little use of initial assessment. In most wider family learning courses, there is no formal or informal identification of needs. In the sessions observed, some very obvious language needs had not been identified. Many learners on the weaker courses do not have an individual learning plan. Learners on these courses have poor attendance or leave courses early. However, in the family literacy and numeracy courses, all learners are initially assessed and individual learning plans are developed. In some cases they are not used to contribute to course planning, nor are they regularly reviewed.

138. Insufficient priority is given to the needs of adult learners. The number of literacy and numeracy courses is insufficient to meet the identified needs of local parents. There are too few literacy courses offered to parents of the under 5's. Twelve libraries are involved in the family learning project, accounting for 700 members. It is estimated that one-third of these learners would benefit from parenting skills and/or literacy courses. At present only 24 parents are enrolled on these courses. Learners are recruited to taster sessions but there are few opportunities to progress to other family learning courses. Despite well-evidenced high levels of interest, some courses are under subscribed and are postponed. For example, since April 2003, six family literacy courses have been cancelled or postponed. There are some successful classes for groups of Chinese and Turkish learners, but there are too few to meet demand.

139. There is inadequate curriculum development by the Learning Trust to meet the needs and interests of learners. The programme offered is narrow and unimaginative. Many learners are dissatisfied with the range and number of courses on offer. There is no regular forum for providers or learners to ensure the curriculum meets their needs. Where there are examples of innovation, this has been carried out independently by the providers themselves. For example, one school is developing a class for autistic children and parents, and another is introducing workshops for travellers' children and parents. Progression routes to higher level family learning or other courses are not clear and are not understood by learners.

Leadership and management

140. Curriculum leadership and management are weak. The provision is not meeting the Learning Trust's objectives and there is no overall family learning strategy. Targets for recruitment, attendance and outcomes are not systematically set and monitored. There is little feedback from subcontractors on course provision other than learner numbers. There is uncertainty about the numbers of learners currently on courses, course postponements and cancellations.

141. Tutors receive little or no guidance on the appropriateness of the curriculum content for their learners. There is no collation or analysis of learners' feedback and no system to share good practice. There are no records of meetings or information shared on teaching and learning observations or on the individual progress of learners. In some cases, problems are not identified until it is too late and learners have left the course.

142. The process for commissioning new programmes is weak. Criteria for selection are unclear to schools and community groups. There is little emphasis on ensuring the sustainability of projects. In some cases, funding has not been continued for providers with successful programmes. There is little formal and informal communication between the Learning Trust's family learning co-ordinator and the project officer with responsibility for literacy and numeracy tutors, who is based at the main subcontractor. There is no assessment of the family learning provision in the self-assessment report.