

REINSPECTION REPORT

Bradford Metropolitan District Council Reinspection

09 December 2004



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

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

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

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

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Bradford Metropolitan District Council (BMDC) is contracted by the West Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide adult and community learning services across Bradford. The provision has been managed by BMDC's department of community development and lifelong learning, and since March 2004 as part of its skills for work service. This consolidates management of the adult and community learning provision with BMDC's work-based learning provision. A service development manager has joint responsibilities for training management, quality assurance and self-assessment processes. She is supported by four key staff employed directly by BMDC, and two temporary managers employed on a seconded or consultancy basis. The service development manager reports to the head of the skills for work service and the director of the community development and lifelong learning department.

2. All provision is subcontracted and the service does not employ tutors directly. There is now a memorandum of agreement with seven providers, including other BMDC services, following the implementation of a new commissioning process in September 2004. Most tutors work on a fractional or part-time basis. A forum for the subcontracted providers meets regularly to discuss operational matters. The main sources of the budget are the West Yorkshire LSC and BMDC.

3. Bradford is the fourth largest metropolitan district in England. Nine of its 30 wards are within the most deprived 10 per cent in the country. The percentage of the working-age population who do not hold a recognised qualification is significantly above national and regional averages. In 2003, 39.6 per cent of 16 year olds in the district achieved five or more general certificates of secondary education, compared with the average in England of 52.9 per cent.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Information & communications technology

4. Information and communications technology (ICT) forms a major part of BMDC's adult and community learning provision. ICT courses are offered by five of the seven subcontracted providers. During 2003-04, BMDC provided 99 courses in ICT to 880 learners, with a total of 931 enrolments. Since September 2004, 35 courses have been offered to 282 learners, of whom 76 per cent were women, 17 per cent declared a disability and 9.6 per cent were from minority ethnic groups. At the time of the inspection, there were 206 learners enrolled on 27 courses. Most courses are at an introductory level. Sixteen are accredited. Courses are provided in 15 venues, of which 10 are outreach centres in which learners use portable computers. Courses range from six hours to 180 hours in length, and most are held during the day. There are a few classes in the evening but no weekend provision. A curriculum manager is directly responsible for the provision, supported by five newly appointed curriculum leaders, one

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at each of the five subcontracted providers. There are 17 ICT tutors with fractional, part-time and sessional working arrangements.

Community learning

5. BMDC currently has 67 learners on subcontracted, part-time community learning provision across the Bradford area. Fourteen of these learners attend courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) intended for men on shift work. The courses are offered at beginner and intermediate levels, for two evening sessions of two-and-a-half hours a week. A 12-step full-time course is based at a community rehabilitation project for substance misusers. It lasts for 34 weeks and has 14 learners. Learners with literacy and numeracy needs have one, two-hour group session a week. Additional support is also offered through individual learning sessions. A year-long theatre-making course for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities currently has five learners. They work towards literacy and numeracy milestones at pre-entry and at entry level 1, and external accreditation in theatre work. Learners on this programme have opportunities for work placements. They also have one hour a week for literacy and numeracy support. Thirty-four learners attend the four vocational courses in craft and soft furnishings, offered for two hours on two days a week at one of the community centres. Opportunities for external accreditation are available.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	4
Number of inspection days	16
Number of learner interviews	85
Number of staff interviews	31
Number of subcontractor interviews	26
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	23
Number of partner/external agency interviews	4

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

6. The ALI's previous inspection in June 2003 found that the provision in community learning, which included ICT provision, was unsatisfactory. Leadership and management overall were unsatisfactory, as were equality of opportunity and quality assurance. At the end of the reinspection process, all aspects of the provision were judged to be satisfactory or better.

GRADES

Grades awarded at previous inspection

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

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

Community learning	4
Contributory grades:	

Grades awarded at reinspection

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

Leadership and management	2
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	2
Quality assurance	2

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

Community learning	3
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

7. **Learners on ICT courses develop good practical skills** such as word-processing, desktop publishing, scanning, and editing photographs from digital cameras. There is also good development of beginners' confidence and computer skills. Achievement, retention, attendance and punctuality are all satisfactory.

8. **On community learning courses, learners develop good practical and vocational skills and work to a high standard.** They make good progress and are proud of their work.

They also increase their self-confidence and develop good management skills through participation in user forums and community management committees. The standard of learners' work in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory.

9. Retention and attendance rates are satisfactory on community learning courses.
There are too few progression opportunities and the range of community learning provision is narrow.

Quality of education and training

10. **Individual teaching and learning in ICT workshop sessions is good.** The patient, attentive tutors provide a very supportive, friendly environment. They give good individual support, enabling learners to work at their own pace. The teaching approach enables learners to build up their confidence and make good progress in learning new skills.

11. **Resources are generally good in ICT.** Some handouts are very good. The accommodation is spacious and accessible, and in most cases there are modern, well-maintained computers and printers. Most tutors are well qualified, with a small proportion still working towards teaching qualifications. Some venues have older computers which are less reliable. The portable computers do not have access to the internet and a few venues have non-adjustable chairs.

12. **The ICT provision is flexible and responsive to the needs of learners.** Learners often negotiate the delivery or content of the course. At some centres learners may use the computing facilities to practise or reinforce learning outside session times. There are many good progression opportunities. Many courses are provided directly in response to demand from learners. Fewer ICT courses are being provided than in previous years.

13. **Planning for learning in ICT is inadequate.** Schemes of work are often used without the needs of the group or individual learner being sufficiently considered. Lesson plans are insufficiently individualised and many contain no provision for assessment or reinforcement of learning.

14. **Many individual learning plans are inadequate or incomplete.** They make too little use of initial assessment results, set poor short-term targets, and are seldom reviewed. In the weaker teaching sessions, tasks are not planned at an appropriate level. Less able learners become disillusioned and frustrated by their lack of understanding and progress.

15. **The identification and recording of learners' progress is inadequate in ICT.** Some learners do not have a detailed initial assessment, and they join courses which are unsuitable or at an inappropriate level. There is insufficient assessment of prior learning. Inadequate recording of learners' progress means that learners do not always know how well they are doing. There is seldom enough written feedback to show learners the mistakes they are making or how to improve. Assessment practices for accredited courses are satisfactory and meet awarding body standards.

16. Teaching and learning are satisfactory on community learning courses. In the more successful sessions, tutors use activities that keep learners actively involved. A good atmosphere of trust is developed which greatly supports the learners. Learners also learn to break problems down into manageable tasks and to set specific personal targets. There is effective development and understanding of technical language relating to vocational skills.

17. **Individual support for learners is particularly good in community learning.** Learners with a history of substance misuse have good individual support both during and after their course. Good enrichment activities are offered to learners on the theatre-making course. These include work placements, the celebration of awards, and educational visits to theatres, places of interest and cultural events. On other courses, effective bilingual support enables learners to understand complex concepts.

18. **In community learning, the planning of teaching and learning is inadequate to meet individual needs.** Too much of the planning aims to meet the needs of whole groups. Insufficient account is taken of learners' initial and diagnostic assessments and learning styles results. Most learners take an initial assessment and have a diagnostic test to assess their language, literacy and numeracy levels. However, in some cases the period between initial assessments and the drawing up of individual learning plans can be too long.

19. Although learners are involved in developing their own individual learning plans, there is **little evidence of effective monitoring and recording of individual learners' progress.** Progress reviews vary from course to course, and insufficient use is made of learners' evaluations and comments.

20. **There is insufficient development of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills.** Literacy, numeracy and language targets are agreed with learners, but many of these are too generic. On some courses, the teaching of literacy, numeracy and language is being integrated with vocational teaching. However, tutors have not been trained to meet learners' literacy and numeracy needs effectively. There is little separate literacy, numeracy and language provision.

Leadership and management

21. **BMDC has significantly improved its strategic and operational management since the previous inspection,** and it is now good. Managers set a clear strategic direction for the development of the adult and community learning provision. There has been particularly good progress in the setting up of new structures, which greatly support the implementation of the strategic objectives.

22. The decision to move the management of the adult and community learning provision into the service area responsible for work-based learning, is proving very successful. **Strong leadership, clearly defined roles and responsibilities and the use of well-established policies and procedures provide coherence and very good support both**

for staff and subcontracted providers.

23. Very effective leadership and well-managed policies and procedures have resulted in the **successful implementation of new, comprehensive arrangements for the allocation of subcontracts**. These include a clear appeals procedure and have resulted in an open and balanced commissioning process. Good support mechanisms are in place for all the subcontracted providers.

24. **Networking with key partners is very effective.** BMDC works with a large number of partners across the Bradford area, including voluntary and community organisations and local colleges. This helps BMDC to respond to identified needs in a planned, coherent way, to help meet both local and national priorities and to investigate areas for common development. There are also well-established and productive internal partnership arrangements with other BMDC departments. BMDC's partnership arrangements were a strength at the previous inspection.

25. **Curriculum management is much improved.** There is now a clear curriculum development plan and curriculum leaders' roles are well defined. Curriculum leaders hold regular curriculum focus meetings with the subcontracted providers, at which staff discuss key issues, consider strategies to improve teaching and learning, and share good practice. Curriculum co-ordination was a weakness at the previous inspection, and this work has greatly contributed to the raising of standards of teaching and learning.

26. The monitoring of subcontractors and the use of performance data and target-setting were weaknesses at the previous inspection. Each subcontracted provider now has a key worker, who very usefully monitors clearly identified performance indicators for each provider. These cover recruitment, retention, achievement, progression and equality of opportunity. A highly effective recording system provides clear indicators of success and areas for concern. In addition, key workers have clearly identified themes to help them monitor significant aspects of the provision. They also oversee the implementation of the quality assurance system. The use of key workers has improved communication between the subcontracted providers and BMDC's managers.

27. **Insufficient action has been taken to develop literacy, numeracy and language provision.** The key staff in this area, although effective, are only on temporary employment contracts. No accredited provision is available and the curriculum offered is relatively small. However, over the past six months, arrangements for the management and delivery of this provision have greatly improved, with a significant benefit to learners.

28. Strategies to widen participation are effective. **Provision is targeted well at a diverse range of learners**, and greatly improves their access to learning opportunities. In particular, specialist provision is available for learners with learning disabilities who wish to enter the acting profession, for former drug users, for single parents and for learners from minority ethnic groups. Provision is also available in isolated communities and in areas of social deprivation.

29. The commissioning process has reduced the number of subcontracted providers to

seven. This currently leaves a narrow range of provision, with many areas of learning no longer receiving funding from the LSC. However, BMDC has a well-planned strategy to gradually increase the number of providers and range of courses. Other providers continue to be funded by BMDC's Community Funding Unit and are receiving support to help them develop procedures and systems that meet the requirements of the commissioning process. This should enable them to bid successfully for subcontracts in the future.

30. Inadequate marketing and publicity were a weakness at the previous inspection. There are now **good-quality, well-produced marketing materials that provide extremely positive images of learners.** BMDC's work with learners who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities greatly challenges stereotypes, both by the high standard of learners' achievements, and the quality of the theatre performances. Former drug misusers report that participating in the programme is helping them to turn their lives around.

31. **Equality of opportunity is promoted well.** All key managers have attended BMDC's training on equality and diversity. Equal rights and diversity are included in key worker themes for 2004-05 and in the tutors' induction at the beginning of the academic year. A checklist on equality of opportunity has been produced for centre managers and tutors. Equality of opportunity is considered during teaching and learning observations. Helpful fact sheets on celebrating diversity are available to all tutors.

32. The complaints' procedures are clear. There are copies in the learners' welcome pack and prominently displayed around most venues. Access for people with restricted mobility is satisfactory at most centres. Compliance with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 is satisfactory.

33. For a year following the previous inspection, there was very little monitoring, analysis and use of equal opportunities data. Since September 2004, however, this has improved. Learners' gender, ethnicity and disability are now regarded as key performance indicators and will be reviewed with all providers during 2005. The narrow range of curriculum provision limits learners' choices.

34. **BMDC's quality assurance arrangements are good.** The subcontracted providers are expected to achieve and maintain good standards against criteria set in the contracting memorandum of agreement. A very good and extensive quality assurance manual gives staff and subcontracted providers detailed information about the quality assurance policies and procedures. The manual also contains a range of very good-quality exemplar documents to support many of the procedures described. The manual is being used effectively by subcontracted providers to drive quality improvements.

35. The quality assurance manual includes a clear schedule for the operation of the systems. The key workers effectively monitor quality assurance with the subcontracted providers. Although the first scheduled audit point has not yet been reached, non-compliance has already been identified and prompt action has been taken to deal with it. Key performance indicators are monitored effectively and interim reports are produced. Areas of concern are reviewed and discussed at a range of management

meetings.

36. There is an extensive process for the observation of teaching and learning, and all the tutors have already been observed. Managers use effective criteria to evaluate teaching and learning, and provide clear and constructive feedback that often results in staff development activities. All observations result in clear action plans, and these are rigorously followed up by the key workers.

37. The self-assessment process is thorough and includes all staff and subcontracted providers. Each provider completes its own self-assessment with the help of the key workers, and this is incorporated into BMDC's self-assessment. This is discussed and reviewed at a number of meetings attended by staff. The outcome is a detailed report closely aligned to the 'Common Inspection Framework'. Many of the strengths and weaknesses in the self-assessment report matched those identified by inspectors.

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

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good strategic management
- very effective networking with key partners
- much improved curriculum management
- effective strategies to widen participation
- good promotion of equality of opportunity
- good quality assurance

Weaknesses

- narrow range of provision
- slow management response to literacy, numeracy and language development

Information & communications technology

Strengths

- good individual teaching in workshop sessions
- flexible and responsive provision

Weaknesses

- inadequate planning for learning
- inadequate identification and recording of learners' progress

Community learning

Strengths

- good development of learners' practical and vocational skills
- particularly good personal support for learners

Weaknesses

- inadequate planning to meet individual needs
- insufficient development of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills

Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

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

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

Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

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

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

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

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

Strengths

- good strategic management
- very effective networking with key partners
- much improved curriculum management
- effective strategies to widen participation
- good promotion of equality of opportunity
- good quality assurance

Weaknesses

- narrow range of provision
- slow management response to literacy, numeracy and language development

38. BMDC's strategic management is now good. Managers at all levels set a clear strategic direction for the development of the adult and community learning provision, which staff fully understand. BMDC's '2020 vision' document outlines clear, strategic themes for developments in the district at corporate level. This is fully supported by a comprehensive and detailed development plan for learning services, which provides clear strategic and operational objectives with regard to adult and community learning. There has been particularly good progress in the setting up of new structures that greatly support the implementation of the strategic objectives. The decision in March 2004 to move the management of the adult and community learning provision into the skills for work service, which already has a responsibility for work-based learning, is proving very successful. Strong leadership, clearly defined roles and responsibilities and the use in adult and community learning provision of already well-established policies and procedures, provide coherence and very good support both for BMDC's staff and the seven subcontracted providers.

39. A good example of strong, effective leadership is the successful implementation of new, comprehensive arrangements for the allocation of subcontracts. Shortcomings identified by the previous inspection report, such as the vagueness of service level agreements and the failure to update the allocation of budgets, have been usefully resolved. There is now a detailed, well-documented framework for subcontractors and a thorough and robust commissioning process that includes a clear appeals procedure. The commissioning process is now open and balanced for all providers. BMDC now only subcontracts with seven carefully selected providers. Good support mechanisms are in place for all of these providers. Many of the providers who were unsuccessful in

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their bid to become adult and community learning subcontractors now receive funding under BMDC's community funding arrangements.

40. Networking with key partners is very effective. BMDC works very closely with the seven subcontracted providers, and holds regular, productive meetings with them. It also works with a large number of other partners across the Bradford area, including voluntary and community organisations and local colleges. Participation in the Bradford Learning Partnership is good and supports the overall planning of provision for adult and community learning in Bradford. This helps BMDC to respond to identified needs in a planned, coherent way, to help meet both local and national priorities, and to investigate areas for common development. Productive internal partnership arrangements are also firmly established with other departments within BMDC itself. BMDC has an effective agreement with a locally based organisation to provide information, advice and guidance on all the adult provision. Partnership arrangements were a strength at the previous inspection.

41. Curriculum management was a weakness at the previous inspection and is now much improved. An experienced manager is currently on secondment from a local adult residential college and works with a skills for life consultant and key managers to provide good support in curriculum and staff development. However, these arrangements are temporary until the end of December 2004. They have greatly assisted senior managers in producing a clear curriculum development plan and well-defined roles for curriculum leaders. Managers hold regular curriculum focus meetings with the subcontracted providers, at which staff discuss key issues, consider strategies to improve teaching and learning, and share good practice. This work has greatly contributed to raising standards of teaching and learning.

42. Ineffective monitoring of subcontractors was a weakness at the previous inspection. Each subcontracted provider now has a key worker, who very usefully monitors the clearly identified and demanding performance indicators and targets the provider has been set. These cover recruitment, retention, achievement, progression and equality of opportunity. A highly effective recording system provides clear indicators both of success and areas for concern. In addition, key workers have clearly identified themes to help them monitor significant aspects of the provision. They are particularly effective in overseeing the implementation of the quality assurance system. The use of key workers greatly supports good communication between the subcontracted providers and BMDC's managers. Regular meetings are also held with the key managers of the subcontracted provision and centre managers have had individual training to support the effective development of key priorities. Arrangements for staff development and staff appraisal are satisfactory.

43. The commissioning process greatly reduced the number of subcontracted providers and this has left a narrow range of provision, with many areas of learning no longer receiving funding from the LSC. However, there is a well-planned strategy to gradually increase the number of providers and the range of courses. Other providers continue to be funded by BMDC's community programme. BMDC is helping these providers to develop procedures and systems to meet the standards required by the commissioning

process, and to make more successful bids for subcontracted work in the future.

44. BMDC's response to the development of literacy, numeracy and language provision has been slow. The key staff, although effective, are only on temporary employment contracts. There is no accredited provision in the current programme and the curriculum offer is relatively small. However, over the past six months, arrangements for the management and delivery of this provision have greatly improved, with a significant benefit to learners.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

45. BMDC's strategies to widen participation are particularly effective. The provision is well targeted at a diverse range of learners. In particular, specialist provision is available for learners with learning disabilities who wish to enter the acting profession, lone parents, learners from minority ethnic groups and former drug users. Provision is also located in isolated communities, which otherwise have limited access to learning opportunities.

46. Good-quality, well-produced marketing materials show extremely positive images of learners with learning difficulties. These learners develop good personal and vocational skills on a year-long, accredited theatre-making course. The subcontracted provider has its own theatre company, which tours locally and nationally giving high profile performances, which learners with learning difficulties take part in. It fully supports the programme and provides good progression opportunities. This work greatly challenges stereotypes, both in terms of learners' achievements, which are of a high standard, and the quality of performances. On another programme, former drug users speak very positively about the very good support they receive and how participating is helping them to turn their lives around. They value the opportunities to develop skills and gain accreditation. Another subcontracted provider works usefully, but not exclusively, with lone parents and has a very good crèche facility. Learners greatly value existing opportunities and also the potential for their future development and progression. Class times are well organised to maximise the use of the crèche facilities.

47. A well-used community centre provides local opportunities, mainly in ICT and language development, for learners from minority ethnic groups. The complaints procedure and some materials for learners' induction have been translated into one of the community languages. Further translation work is planned. The centre is planning to hold a joint celebration to provide a useful social opportunity to bring together learners, tutors and managers from across all the adult and community provision. Other community venues are located in areas of social deprivation and in outreach centres. Many of the subcontracted providers have current and past learners on their management committees. In one community venue, a local café provides a useful forum for people to meet, which helps to increase social inclusion, particularly for older members of the community. It also helps to promote and market learning opportunities. The narrow range of curriculum areas and courses that BMDC currently offers limits the choice available to learners.

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48. In 2003-04, BMDC helped to promote positive community relationship by twinning two of its adult and community learning providers. This project involved two women-only groups of ICT learners visiting each other's centres and following joint sessions in citizenship. However, although this was beneficial to the learners, insufficient consideration was given to the literacy and language needs of the participants, particularly with regard to completing the final evaluation forms.

49. All key managers have attended BMDC's training on equality and diversity. Equal rights and diversity are included in key worker themes for 2004/2005. A well-designed session on equality and diversity, with a strong curriculum and teaching and learning focus, was also included in the tutors' induction at the beginning of the academic year. A checklist has been produced on equality of opportunity for centre managers, with individual interviews held to discuss its implementation. A similar checklist has been provided for all tutors. Equality of opportunity issues are considered during teaching and learning observations, and some useful suggestions are made to tutors on improving teaching and resources. Helpful fact sheets on celebrating diversity are available to all tutors.

50. The complaints procedures are clear. They form part of the learners' welcome pack and are prominently displayed around most venues. Access for people with restricted mobility is satisfactory at most centres. Good use has been made of external funding to make improvements to accessibility. However, a couple of centres still do not have satisfactory access and further work is required.

51. Compliance with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 is satisfactory. There have, however, been some delays in action-planning and the monitoring of progress, resulting from the transfer of the adult and community learning service between BMDC's departments. For a year following the previous inspection, there was little monitoring, analysis and use of equal opportunities data. Since September 2004, however, learners' gender, ethnicity and disability are being monitored. BMDC plans to review these key performance indicators with all providers in January 2005.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 2

52. BMDC's quality assurance arrangements are good. When the skills for work section took responsibility for the provision it carried out a rigorous audit of all the providers. This was particularly effective and identified both good and poor practice. This process fed into the new commissioning process and led to a reduction in the overall number of providers. The current subcontracted providers are expected to achieve and maintain good standards against criteria set in the contracting memorandum of agreement. A very good and extensive quality assurance manual gives all BMDC's staff and subcontracted providers detailed and highly relevant information about quality assurance policies and procedures. The manual also contains very good examples of documents to support many of the procedures described. Providers are encouraged to use these or incorporate them into their own procedures. The manual is being used effectively by providers to drive quality improvements. Key workers carefully review the use of centre

documents and overall quality assurance arrangements, to ensure that they comply with the quality standards in the memorandum of agreement.

53. The quality assurance manual contains a clear schedule which identifies at what time in the learning cycle each action should occur and who is responsible for completing it. The key workers have quickly become recognised by providers as a significant source of support, and they are welcomed and appreciated by the provider's staff. Although the first scheduled audit point has not yet been reached, non-compliance has already been identified and BMDC has taken prompt action to deal with it. This has reinforced the new focus on high standards and system compliance with providers. Key performance indicators are monitored effectively and interim reports are routinely produced. Areas of concern are reviewed and discussed at a range of management meetings.

54. There is an extensive process for the observation of teaching and learning, and all the tutors have already been observed. The process uses effective criteria to evaluate teaching and learning, and provides clear and constructive feedback that often results in staff development activities. All observations lead to clear action plans, which are rigorously followed up by the key workers. There are well-established arrangements for gathering feedback from learners, including useful learner satisfaction surveys which are acted on promptly. Internal moderation of both accredited and non-accredited provision is effective and includes a schedule and appropriate paperwork.

55. The use of management information in decision-making is satisfactory. A wide range of data is collected and recorded and can easily be extracted in reports for managers and subcontracted providers. Reports can be created in text and graphic formats. Providers do not currently have remote access to the database but this is being investigated for future development. BMDC's staff respond quickly to requests for information from providers.

56. The self-assessment process is thorough and includes all staff and subcontracted providers. Each subcontractor completes its own self-assessment with assistance from its key workers and this is incorporated into the overall self-assessment. This is discussed and reviewed at a number of meetings attended by staff. The outcome is a detailed report closely aligned to the 'Common Inspection Framework'. Inspectors found many of the same strengths and weaknesses as were identified in the self-assessment report.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information & communications technology

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	206	3

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

Strengths

- good individual teaching in workshop sessions
- flexible and responsive provision

Weaknesses

- inadequate planning for learning
- inadequate identification and recording of learners' progress

Achievement and standards

57. There is some good development of practical skills such as word-processing, desktop publishing, scanning, and editing photographs from digital cameras. There is also some good development of beginners' confidence and ability to use computers at home, achieve accreditation and improve their job prospects. One learner, who is a language teacher, is particularly pleased with her development of computer skills, as she is hoping to develop e-learning in her own classes and pass on the information to her learners. In observed sessions, learners made satisfactory progress on accredited computer literacy modules. However, there was insufficient emphasis on basic techniques such as keyboard and mouse skills and the use of floppy disks. Overall, achievement retention, attendance and punctuality are satisfactory.

Quality of education and training

58. Individual teaching and learning are good in workshop sessions. The patient, attentive tutors provide a very supportive, friendly environment, and have a good rapport with the learners. Tutors give good individual support, while learners are able to work at their own pace. In the better sessions there are good, clear instructions and particularly effective exercises for learners to work through. The teaching approach enables learners to build up their confidence and make good progress in learning new skills.

59. The ICT provision is flexible and responsive to the needs of learners. Learners often negotiate the delivery or content of the course. On many courses, learners are allowed to enrol late. At some centres, learners may use the computing facilities to practise or

reinforce learning outside session times. One centre has arranged the time of the course to allow the learners to maximise their use of facilities such as the crèche. There are many good progression opportunities. Courses are often provided in direct response to demand from learners. For example, a 36-week accredited text-processing course and continuation introductory courses have been provided in outreach venues. Fewer courses are being provided than in previous years and there are waiting lists in some rural areas. In other areas, courses are not always advertised or marketed well, and are sometimes cancelled because of low numbers.

60. Resources are satisfactory. Some handouts are very good, clear and easy to read. Workshop exercises are normally accurate and plentiful. The accommodation is spacious and accessible with, in most cases, modern computers and printers which are well maintained. Some classrooms have data projectors. There are some good-quality portable computers used in outreach centres with a digital camera and scanner. Most tutors are well qualified, with a small proportion still working towards teaching qualifications. However some venues have older computers which are less reliable and have different versions of software, which can be confusing to learners. The portable computers do not have access to the internet and a few venues have non-adjustable chairs.

61. Support for learners is satisfactory. There is some good support both inside and outside the teaching sessions. In one large accredited session, there are two tutors so that learners can be given individual support according to their needs. Some learners receive good advice and guidance from a partner agency, but learners are not all given accurate information about their course before they begin, and some consequently find the course inappropriate. Progression opportunities, other than the immediate continuation course, are not always made evident. This is particularly true in outreach areas. Most learners receive a good induction but health and safety issues are not always reinforced and a few learners do not know how long they should spend at a computer terminal or how they should sit to avoid back problems.

62. Planning for learning is inadequate. Schemes of work are often used without the needs of the group or individual learner being sufficiently considered. In the better sessions observed, there is good planning for learning with differentiated tasks and group work. However, in too many cases, lesson plans are insufficiently individualised and contain no provision for assessment or reinforcement of learning. In one case, the approach to teaching a mixed-ability group was to use two different weeks' generic lesson plans. There are many inadequate or incomplete individual learning plans which are not sufficiently informed by initial assessment, have poor short-term targets and are not reviewed often enough. Poorer sessions centre too much on the tutor, and the learners do not learn to work independently. The planned tasks are at an inappropriate level, so that less able learners become disillusioned and frustrated by their lack of understanding and progress.

63. The identification and recording of learners' progress are inadequate. Some learners are not given a proper initial assessment and join courses which are unsuitable or at the wrong level. There is not enough assessment of prior learning, and in many sessions

insufficient emphasis is placed on assessment techniques. Learners' progress is not recorded adequately, and some do not know how well they are doing. On one accredited course, the tutor had no record of learners' progress. There is often insufficient written feedback and learners can be unaware of the mistakes they are making or how to improve. Some learners have learning logs in which to record their own progress, but these are often incomplete and learners do not always fully understand their function. However, at one centre the logs are analysed well and acted upon. Assessment practices for accredited courses are satisfactory and meet awarding body standards.

Leadership and management

64. The leadership and management of the curriculum area are much improved. A temporary curriculum manager is responsible for the provision, supported by five new curriculum leaders who have been trained individually. Although there is no specific curriculum development plan, these curriculum leaders have regular meetings, with a clear agenda. One subcontracted provider has a weekly forum for tutors but most other tutors meet informally when they can. There is some evidence of recent sharing of good practice, for example the learning log at one centre. Staff development is good and most tutors feel well supported. However, staff absence at one centre has been inadequately managed until recently, and this has affected a considerable number of learners who have had several different tutors over a period of months.

65. Providers are well supported by key workers, who also monitor the implementation of the comprehensive quality assurance procedures. Internal verification is satisfactory and there are some good external verification reports. Sampling schedules ensure that an adequate range of learners' work is examined. Verification decisions are clearly recorded and provide feedback on assessors' performance. Interviews with learners indicate that their understanding of the assessment and appeals procedures is satisfactory. All tutors have been observed and reports of lesson observations are comprehensive, with action plans for improvement which are followed up. The self-assessment report was fairly accurate, and identified all the key weaknesses.

66. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. There are some good efforts to widen participation, such as the recruitment of women from minority ethnic groups into sewing classes, and the provision of appropriately timetabled courses for lone parents. There are some good community links and there has been a successful project to arrange visits between learners from minority ethnic groups and learners from a predominantly white community. Good links with community leaders in rural areas lead to numerous opportunities for older learners who would not otherwise have access to learning. However, equality of opportunity is not always reinforced sufficiently during induction and the number of learners from minority ethnic groups is still low.

Community learning**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	67	3

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

Strengths

- good development of learners' practical and vocational skills
- particularly good personal support for learners

Weaknesses

- inadequate planning to meet individual needs
- insufficient development of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills

Achievement and standards

67. Learners develop good practical and vocational skills and work to a high standard. They are proud of their work, and examples of practical and project work demonstrate that they are making good progress. On one programme, learners learn complex sequential dancing steps and a good range of acting skills. In the soft-furnishing sessions, learners develop good skills in making tapestry, curtains and cushions. In some sessions learners and teachers effectively use bilingual approaches to increase learners' understanding of abstract concepts. Learners on the rehabilitation for substance misusers programmes develop increased self-confidence and the ability to reflect usefully on their past experiences. Many of these learners are able to use complex language and to articulate views and opinions assertively. Many learners develop good management skills through participation in user forums and community management committees.

68. The standard of learners' literacy and numeracy work is satisfactory, although it is not always organised in a way that helps them to revise what they have learnt. There is no data available for achievements in literacy, numeracy and language. BMDC and its subcontracted providers cannot yet offer accreditation in literacy, numeracy and language directly, although some accreditation opportunities are available from October 2004 through partnership working with other providers. The retention rate is satisfactory. The attendance rate is satisfactory and was 60 per cent during the inspection. There are too few progression opportunities within the community learning provision and the range of provision is narrow.

Quality of education and training

69. Personal support for learners is particularly good. On the rehabilitation course for substance misusers, learners have personal counselling and after-course support with housing, health and social care. Learners on this course are given lunch and take part in sport and social activities to maintain their motivation and attendance. There are good enrichment activities on the theatre-making course, which include work placements, visits to theatres, work placements, places of interest and cultural events, and the opportunity to celebrate achievement. Staff are particularly helpful and supportive to learners. All learners have access to appropriate advice and guidance, provided through a contract with a local agency.

70. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The more successful taught sessions involve teachers using activities that keep learners actively involved. In some sessions, tutors build up a good atmosphere of trust, helping learners to share difficult situations in their personal life. By encouraging the use of humour, tutors make the lessons enjoyable. Learners also develop the skills they need to break problems down into manageable tasks and to set specific personal targets. There is effective development and understanding of technical language relating to vocational skills.

71. Staffing, accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Most staff have appropriate qualifications and sufficient experience in their specialist area of learning. However, a small percentage of staff do not yet have teaching qualifications. The two temporary, fractional literacy and numeracy staff have appropriate skills for life qualifications. Accommodation at most community centres is satisfactory, but there is little access to refreshments at some centres. There is generally an adequate range of appropriate teaching resources, although there are insufficient learning resources to support literacy, numeracy and language development.

72. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Learners on vocational courses are encouraged to achieve nationally recognised qualifications. The procedures for standardisation across the different centres are good. Targeting of courses is good, and there is provision for some particularly hard-to-reach learners such as those with a history of substance misuse.

73. The planning of teaching and learning sessions is inadequate to meet individual learning needs. Too many sessions are planned to meet the needs of whole groups. Too little account is taken of the results of initial assessments of learners' needs and learning styles. Learners on theatre-making, substance misuse rehabilitation and ESOL courses have an initial assessment and a diagnostic test to assess their literacy, numeracy and language skills. However, the period between initial assessments and the drawing up of individual learning plans can be too long. Although learners are involved in designing their own individual learning plans, there is little evidence of effective monitoring and recording of their progress. Progress reviews vary from course to course and insufficient use is made of learners' evaluations and comments.

74. There is insufficient development of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills. Literacy, numeracy and language targets are agreed with learners, but many of these are too generic. Some courses are piloting the integration of literacy, numeracy and language with vocational content and have matched the provision to the national core curriculum standards. However, tutors have not been sufficiently trained to be able to meet the literacy and numeracy needs of learners effectively. The range of separate literacy, numeracy and language provision is very limited.

Leadership and management

75. The management of community learning provision is much improved. Progress in literacy, numeracy and language development was slow for too long, but significant progress has been made since September 2004. BMDC put a comprehensive skills for life strategy in place in October 2004. It also now has a clear action plan outlining planned improvements to increase the numbers of learners across Bradford. However, the target for learners' progress towards external qualifications has not been met. There has been significant support from an external consultant in the recent development of this provision.

76. BMDC has established good communication channels and support structures to support tutors and managers in the subcontracted provision. The key workers play an essential role in the initial assessment of learners, in ongoing support of the providers and in ensuring that the quality assurance processes are fully implemented. All teaching staff have been observed teaching, although many of the grades awarded are higher than those given by inspectors. The self-assessment report adequately reflects the inspection findings.

77. Publicity materials are appropriate, often well designed and reflect positive images of learners. Staff from the subcontracted providers have had individual training to increase their awareness of equality of opportunity. Most staff are sufficiently aware of the implications of Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 and use the information well in supporting learners. Some staff, however, are less aware of the implications of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.