

# REINSPECTION REPORT

## **Barnsley LEA Reinspection**

**03 February 2005**



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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## Barnsley LEA Reinspection

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## REINSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. The Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council (BMBC) adult learning service (the service) has been a direct provider of adult education courses for the locality since July 2004. The service has contracts with the South Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council (LSCs) for further and adult education provision. Additional funding sources are used to enhance the provision. The LSC-funded adult and community learning provision is delivered through a direct delivery model. In addition to these arrangements, a specialist regional college is subcontracted to provide a number of mainly residential courses for voluntary and community-based groups. The service is also a major provider of courses for the Barnsley Neighbourhood Learning Net (Learning Net), which is funded by the LSC and managed by BMBC. The service's main purpose is to encourage adults, especially those who are disadvantaged and hard to reach, to become involved in learning. It has a number of published priorities, including supporting capacity building for voluntary organisations, community development and widening participation.

2. Learning opportunities are provided at over 100 venues spread throughout the 21 wards of the borough. Venues include resource centres, church halls, social services day centres, schools, libraries and a cinema. In 2003-04, 9,031 people enrolled for adult learning courses throughout the borough of Barnsley. The provision varies from 'taster' or bite-sized courses, to weekly sessions taking place over the academic year.

3. The metropolitan borough comprises 21 electoral wards, with Barnsley town itself located centrally. Affluent, lightly populated areas lie to the west of the borough, although there are scattered pockets of deprivation and some rural deprivation. In contrast, the east of the borough comprises the towns and villages of former coalfields. Eighty per cent of the borough's 218,100 people live in this industrialized urban area. During the past 20 years the borough has experienced dramatic changes. Coal, for so long the mainstay of the local economy, has disappeared, and new industries are taking its place within the region.

4. Barnsley had a 99.1 per cent white population in 2001, of whom 99 per cent are described as British. In 2003, the proportion of school leavers in Barnsley achieving five or more general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 39.3 per cent, compared with 52.9 per cent in England as a whole.

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

#### Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

5. Since September 2004, 455 learners have enrolled in hospitality, sport and leisure classes. Currently, there are 430 learners. At the time of inspection, 6 per cent of learners were men, 21 per cent had identified themselves as having a physical or learning difficulty, and less than 1 per cent were from minority ethnic backgrounds. During the

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period 2003-04, there were 682 learners. Currently, the service provides 23 sport and leisure courses, including exercise to music for older learners, yoga, qi gong, driving theory test and Pilates and 20 hospitality courses in cookery, sugarcraft and food hygiene. The courses, which are free, take place between Monday and Friday during the day and in the evening. Most courses run for two terms, each of 15 weeks. Lessons last from one and half to two hours and are held at a range of venues, including community centres, schools, church halls and libraries. Many of the classes include learners with a range of ability levels. Classes in food hygiene lead to an accredited qualification. The area of learning is managed by a curriculum co-ordinator and there are eight part-time teachers.

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

6. In September 2004, the service offered a total of 60 courses. These were in French, German, Spanish, Italian, British Sign Language, Croatian and Braille. There were 551 enrolments. At the time of the inspection, 511 learners were attending 57 classes. Learners can enrol for either two 15-week terms in foreign languages, or two 18-week terms for sign language. Courses are offered in 28 venues throughout the borough. In 2003-04, 66 per cent of learners were women. Fifty-four per cent of learners were aged 51 or over. Less than 1 per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups. Sixteen per cent of learners registered a disability. The service has a full-time co-ordinator for languages and a full-time teacher for sign language. In addition, there is one part-time teacher for sign language, another for Braille, and a team of eight part-time language teachers. Apart from the 'taster' courses in Spanish and Braille, all courses in this area of learning are accredited.

### **Foundation programmes**

7. Three areas of provision were inspected. These were literacy, numeracy and language and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), courses for people with learning difficulties and disabilities, and family learning. There is discrete provision for literacy, numeracy, key skills and ESOL at the Eldon centre, and throughout the borough in community venues. These include schools, resource centres, libraries and work centres. There are currently 31 literacy, 19 numeracy, seven key skills and six ESOL programmes, catering for 591 learners. Within the provision for people with learning difficulties and disabilities, 99 learners attend 34 classes in 16 venues, including specialist centres for those with physical and other disabilities, and mental health problems. The programme has recently been extended to include a range of personal care, advocacy, art, literacy and numeracy, cookery, community and leisure sessions. Specific profound and multiple learning disability provision is planned, but not fully developed. The provision has been reduced, compared with previous years. Teaching staff are receiving specialist training in the current year. Family learning provision has been extended, in spite of low attendance figures. The main focus is on literacy and numeracy throughout a number of schools. The seven courses and 12 workshops are attended by 111 parents. The courses and workshops are designed to attract new learners to further short courses. Eighteen additional schools will shortly be able to access the taster sessions.

## ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Number of inspectors                               | 13  |
| Number of inspection days                          | 86  |
| Number of learner interviews                       | 667 |
| Number of staff interviews                         | 93  |
| Number of subcontractor interviews                 | 4   |
| Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited | 72  |
| Number of partner/external agency interviews       | 16  |
| Number of visits                                   | 4   |

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

8. The ALI inspection in June 2003 found that the service's leadership and management were unsatisfactory, as were its arrangements for quality assurance. Measures to ensure equality of opportunity were satisfactory. The quality of provision in information and communications technology (ICT), and in visual and performing arts and media was satisfactory. The provision in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, English, languages and communications and foundation programmes was unsatisfactory.

9. At the end of the reinspection process, all aspects of the provision were satisfactory or better. More specifically, the service's leadership and management are good, as is the provision in English, languages and communications. Quality assurance arrangements and measures to ensure equality of opportunity are satisfactory. The provision for hospitality, sport and leisure, and foundation programmes is also satisfactory. Standards are being maintained in ICT and visual and performing arts and media. Family learning was reinspected as part of foundation provision as in the previous inspection.

## GRADES

Grades awarded at previous inspection

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

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Leadership and management</b>                   | <b>4</b> |
| Contributory grades:                               |          |
| Equality of opportunity                            | 3        |
| Quality assurance                                  | 4        |
| <b>Information &amp; communications technology</b> | <b>3</b> |
|  |          |

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|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Hospitality, sport, leisure &amp; travel</b> | <b>4</b> |
|   |          |

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

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

|                              |          |
|------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Foundation programmes</b> | <b>4</b> |
|                              |          |

Grades awarded at reinspection

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

|                                  |          |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Leadership and management</b> | <b>2</b> |
| Contributory grades:             |          |
| Equality of opportunity          | 3        |
| Quality assurance                | 3        |

|   |          |
|---|----------|
| <b>Hospitality, sport, leisure &amp; travel</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Contributory grades:                            |          |
| Adult and community learning                    | 3        |

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>English, languages &amp; communications</b> | <b>2</b> |
| Contributory grades:                           |          |
| Adult and community learning                   | 2        |

|                              |          |
|------------------------------|----------|
| <b>Foundation programmes</b> | <b>3</b> |
| Contributory grades:         |          |
| Adult and community learning | 3        |



## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievement and standards

10. **Standards of work are very good in cake decorating and sugarcraft classes.** Learners at all levels display good design, art and technical craft skills. Learners complement their classroom activities with time spent at home practising and refining techniques. Some learners have carried out commissions for family and friends, evidence of which is illustrated in well-presented portfolios.

11. Learners in sport, leisure and catering classes produce work to satisfactory standards. Many learners on sports courses report significant improvements in medical conditions and reductions in stress levels. **Retention rates are very good on most courses**, with an average of 95 per cent for all programmes.

12. **Retention and achievement levels have been good for languages courses during the past three years.** In 2003-04, retention and achievement rates were very good, at 91 per cent. Retention rates for level 2 sign language courses have been excellent for the past two years, but many learners have not gained qualifications.

13. In most language classes observed, learners spoke with good accents and with increasing confidence. In one French class, learners have compiled exemplary portfolios, but learners in other classes do not reach this standard. Learners in several classes demonstrated good mastery of the everyday life topics they had covered. Learners achieve their personal objectives well.

14. Retention rates are good for foundation programmes. Rates for the current year for family learning are 91 per cent, for literacy, numeracy and language provision, 85 per cent, and for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, 99 per cent.

15. Achievement rates for foundation programmes are satisfactory overall. Sixty-two learners in literacy, numeracy and language provision have taken national tests, with an 87 per cent achievement rate. Most learners have made progress through their individual learning plans. Last year 99 per cent achieved their learning goals.

16. Learners with disabilities are able to communicate more effectively, and staff report many instances of learners developing their skills and independence. The community access courses in particular are successful in giving learners greater confidence and skills in using public facilities. Many learners move on to other courses in other venues having gained confidence in their learning and personal skills.

## Quality of education and training

17. The standard of teaching and learning throughout the sport and leisure provision is satisfactory. Sixty-nine per cent of lessons observed were good or better. In the better classes, planning is detailed, with comprehensive schemes of work and lesson plans. In some sport and fitness classes, teachers link learning in the classroom with personal healthcare and lifestyle decision-making to improve learners' everyday lives.

18. In the 14 language lessons observed by inspectors, 65 per cent were graded good or better, with 21 per cent satisfactory and 14 per cent less than satisfactory. Most lesson planning focuses well on learning objectives, but some lessons are still organised around activities. The language being taught is used consistently to present and explain new material. Learners have developed good listening and comprehension skills. In many classes, learners practise new topics in pairs, using role-play to develop their ability to absorb and use newly acquired material. Imaginative use is made of simple resources like flashcards.

19. Most of the teaching and learning in foundation classes observed by the inspectors was satisfactory. Forty-one per cent of classes were good or better, and only one class was less than satisfactory. **However, the range of teaching strategies is restricted, with an over-emphasis on teacher-led discussion and the completion of worksheets.**

20. Sport and leisure teachers have appropriate teaching qualifications and most are suitably occupationally qualified for most of the courses that they teach. However, in a few instances teachers have extended their teaching into areas for which they are not sufficiently qualified or experienced.

21. A range of venues are used to deliver the sport and leisure curriculum and most are fit for purpose. Most have good access for those learners with mobility problems, and some premises have stairlifts. Learners appreciate being able to attend local venues, many of which have good parking facilities. Some of the venues are not owned by the service and, consequently, adaptations cannot easily be made. Changes are being considered for some premises and most now have storage facilities for equipment and learners' work.

22. Physical resources and accommodation to support language learning are satisfactory, but a small number of venues are inappropriate for their current use. No overall standard is set for the provision of teaching aids and materials. Teaching has relied largely on materials independently devised and produced by teachers, but staff development and management activities are now beginning to provide for a collaborative approach to resourcing.

23. The service is currently creating a bank of language-teaching resources and plans to produce a collection of CD-ROMs and cassettes recorded by native speakers. A

dictionary of video clips for learners of sign language is also being created. Not all staff are appropriately qualified in the languages they teach, and one teacher used language inaccurately. Two staff have no teaching qualifications.

**24. Learning support resources are good in foundation programmes.** Adult literacy and numeracy teachers have personal laptop computers provided by the service. A few laptop computers are available for those outreach venues which do not have adequate information technology (IT) facilities. Adaptive technologies are used well in some community venues for learners with disabilities. Teaching materials are mainly of a very good quality. Good use is made of visual aids and materials for learners with disabilities. However, not enough teaching materials promote equality of opportunity and diversity in their content and images.

**25. Initial assessment is thorough for adult literacy and numeracy learners, and learners with learning difficulties and disabilities.** It identifies long-term personal aims and learning goals and allows appropriate short-term targets to be set. Learners in adult literacy and numeracy are placed in classes at a level suitable to them.

**26. Recently introduced initiatives have been effective in recruiting new learners and broadening partnerships** with voluntary, community and other bodies. Close links have been established with local learning networks and other agencies. A number of new courses in hospitality, sport and leisure, have been created, in addition to a taster programme covering the curriculum area, and planned activities for holiday periods.

**27. Good access is available to language provision in 28 venues throughout the borough, with a good range of daytime and evening courses.** Five languages are taught, including Croatian which is provided in response to demands from a small local community. Taster courses in Spanish have been introduced at a number of venues, for example a council depot, in an attempt to attract new learners, especially manual workers. Other taster courses have been provided at the request of local Learning Net managers.

**28. The service does not carry out sufficient risk assessment.** Neither the staff nor the teachers have been trained to carry out assessments in sufficient detail, or to carry out specific risk assessments linked to a particular venue, activity or group of learners. Sessions were observed where appropriate control measures had not been put established. The service has recognised this weakness and has arranged for training to take place in the near future.

**29. The range of hospitality, sport and leisure courses is restricted.** Classes are based on weekday, daytime provision, and are dependent on the expertise of the small number of teachers currently employed. The service, however, is currently recruiting new teachers with different areas of expertise in response to community requests.

**30. Learners' progress in foundation courses is not monitored effectively.** Some of the targets set are not measurable and some have imprecise learning outcomes, or focus on the completion of activities rather than on what has been learnt. Some evaluations of

learners' progress are vague and evaluations are not used consistently to plan subsequent learning. Some lesson plans have imprecise learning outcomes for the subject area and some do not identify individual learning needs.

### **Leadership and management**

31. **Good staff development initiatives exist for language teachers.** In-service meetings have been held which have been well attended, and further events are planned to cover issues such as differentiation. **The good staff development events have engendered a positive team spirit**, with teachers feeling a strong sense of collaboration and mutual support.

32. **The service has a good approach to planning and development in foundation programmes.** The three curriculum co-ordinators provide strong leadership. Each co-ordinator has a clear perception of their current position and has detailed long- and short-term action plans. These are used in the strategic planning of the service and are discussed and supported by senior management.

33. **The staff development programme provides good opportunities for foundation staff to develop and update their skills.** Within learning difficulties and disabilities provision, the system of all teachers verifying each other's teaching files has increased their understanding of the assessment processes and the sharing of good practice.

34. The management of the hospitality, sport and leisure sector is satisfactory. A new curriculum co-ordinator has been appointed recently. Communications are good, with regular, minuted curriculum meetings. Teachers share ideas and have, as a group, developed new documents. Occupational knowledge at management level is restricted, but support has been given by the use of consultants.

35. **The service's quality assurance of hospitality, sport and leisure programmes is incomplete.** The quality of schemes of work and the degree of detail in session planning varies from teacher to teacher. Observation of teaching and learning is well established, but in some cases, insufficient response has been made to identified weaknesses.

36. **The procedure for course reviews in language provision is clearly written and has been discussed at team meetings, but it is not used by all teachers.** Learners' feedback has been analysed in detail, but insufficient action has been taken on most of the issues raised.

37. **Actions to improve the service following the previous inspection have proved effective.** Management of resources, staffing and accommodation have improved significantly. Under the direct management of the borough's principal adviser for curriculum enrichment and extension, an effective senior management team is responsible for curriculum, staff development and quality improvement, support services, management information and data.

38. Curriculum co-ordinators have improved the management of each area of learning.

Co-ordinators provide good curriculum support for teachers, and effective operational management of service delivery.

39. **Strategic planning is very clear.** Operational planning is limited to the service's yearly business plan and the strategic direction set by the senior management team in the three-year adult learning development plan. The post-inspection action plan links service improvement at curriculum level to the strategic aims of BMBC.

40. **The service is managed in an open and consultative manner,** which contributes significantly to improved staff morale and learner satisfaction. Formal and informal communications are now very effective between senior managers, curriculum co-ordinators, teachers, support service staff, and learners.

41. **A good range of partnership arrangements helps to meet community needs.** BMBC, through the service, has played a major role in establishing a community-based organisation. This works with voluntary organisations and community groups to provide information, advice and guidance, and access to learning for harder-to-reach learners. The service also works with the BMBC youth and libraries services, MIND, SureStart and a further education college to provide learning opportunities for particular groups of disadvantaged learners.

42. Since the previous inspection, the service has shown a strong commitment to the development of thorough and wide-ranging quality assurance arrangements. Much work has been carried out over the past 18 months to develop staff's understanding of quality of provision. At the time of inspection, the quality assurance procedures were relatively new. In some curriculum areas, aspects of the quality assurance framework are not fully integrated with daily activities. Assessment and internal verification procedures are satisfactory.

43. **The service has an established and effective self-assessment and action-planning process.** Teachers and managers work to a comprehensive post-inspection action plan linked to the service's yearly business plan and three-year development plan.

44. **Equality and diversity is not promoted adequately in the curriculum.** There is insufficient promotion of equality or diversity in classroom and curriculum activities.

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

## **Leadership and management**

### **Strengths**

- good improvement in the service's provision
- very clear strategic planning
- open and consultative management
- good range of partnership arrangements to meet community needs

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- good self-assessment and action-planning

### **Weaknesses**

- inadequate promotion of equality and diversity in the curriculum
- quality assurance arrangements not fully integrated

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

### **Strengths**

- very good standards of work on cake decorating and sugarcraft courses
- very good retention rates
- good initiatives to widen participation

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient risk assessment
- insufficient learning opportunities for some courses
- unsystematic approach to quality assurance

## **English, languages & communications**

### **Strengths**

- good retention and achievement rates
- good initiatives in staff development
- good range of courses to meet borough-wide community needs

### **Weaknesses**

- inconsistent use of course review process

## **Foundation programmes**

### **Strengths**

- good resources to support learning
- thorough initial assessment
- good team approach to planning and development
- well-focused staff development

**Weaknesses**

- insufficient teaching strategies to develop learners' skills
- ineffective monitoring of learners' progress

## Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

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

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



## Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

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

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

## DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

**Grade 2**

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

#### **Strengths**

- good improvement in the service's provision
- very clear strategic planning
- open and consultative management
- good range of partnership arrangements to meet community needs
- good self-assessment and action-planning

#### **Weaknesses**

- inadequate promotion of equality and diversity in the curriculum
- quality assurance arrangements not fully integrated

45. Following the previous inspection, the service has taken positive action to improve its provision. At the time of the previous inspection, in June 2003, the council delivered adult education through an internal subcontract process, and managers had limited control of quality or resources throughout the provision. The service now employs a direct delivery model which has significantly improved the management of resources, staffing and accommodation.

46. In July 2004, through a transference agreement with the local college, the service assumed direct responsibility for most LSC-funded adult and community learning in the borough. Clear management responsibilities for provision were established and improved quality assurance policies and procedures were developed and communicated to staff. An improved management structure has been established and there is now an effective senior management team. Targets set for improvements in the service have been met consistently since July 2004. Management of each area of learning has improved. Two new middle management posts have been created, to oversee the operational aspects of quality assurance, accreditation and examinations. The service has carried out a comprehensive programme of refurbishment and renewal during the past 12 months.

47. The service has very clear strategic plans which are well understood by staff. Clear links are established between the operational planning, the service's one-year business plan and the strategic direction set by the senior management team in the three-year adult learning development plan. Since the previous inspection, in June 2003, the service has been working to a post-inspection action plan which effectively links service improvement at curriculum level to the strategic aims of BMBC. Targets are set and

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reviewed to monitor progress against the post-inspection action plan, the development plan and other strategic plans.

48. The service is managed in an open and consultative manner. Formal and informal communications are very effective among senior managers, curriculum co-ordinators, teachers, support service staff, and learners. Weekly meetings are held at curriculum co-ordinator and senior management team levels, and senior managers attend curriculum co-ordinator meetings every two weeks. Learners' progress is reviewed by intake and individual progress issues are discussed. Good records are kept and action points are monitored in subsequent meetings. Frequent meetings are held by the management group and the support services team in addition to area of learning meetings. These allow discussions of good practice in reporting and monitoring learners' progress. Staff find managers very supportive and approachable and feel that their work is valued. Meetings take place very frequently between individual senior managers, curriculum co-ordinators and teachers. Learners have very good access to curriculum co-ordinators and senior managers.

49. Management information and data services are satisfactory. Teachers and curriculum co-ordinators now have confidence in the data, which managers are able to use for planning and monitoring activities. A new, live-access data service for curriculum co-ordinators is being introduced for a number of areas of learning. This data service is valued by co-ordinators, but at the time of inspection it was too soon to evaluate its effectiveness.

50. Venues for some classes and courses are inappropriate. The service has made good efforts to expand its provision and to reach under-represented groups, but in a small number of cases, courses are being offered in unsuitable rooms and settings. Classes in libraries can often be interrupted by other library users and the classes themselves disrupt other users' use of facilities. Some family learning classes are held in school halls which are often noisy and suffer interruptions from children and staff passing through the area. At one community venue, several classes take place within a large open-plan teaching space. During observations at this site, ICT, cookery and textiles classes took place at the same time. Insufficient consideration was given to hygiene, safety or ventilation.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

51. The service uses the council's equal opportunities policy, and is able to make use of the council officer responsible for promoting equal opportunities. Policy documents are comprehensive, clear and accessible. They include guidance for the recruitment and selection of staff and for dealing with grievances and complaints. The documents are available in a number of languages. The equal opportunities policy includes action points for the development and promotion of equal opportunities. The policy is reviewed regularly by a named officer.

52. Learners receive a copy of the adult learning equal opportunities statement at induction. This incorporates basic course details, learner and service entitlements, as

well as instructions about how to make comments or complaints, and information on health and safety. All staff are given an induction and a staff handbook, incorporating policies, guidance and course documents, as well as equal opportunities and health and safety information.

53. A curriculum co-ordinator has responsibility for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. Specialist equipment or adaptive technologies are available based on individual needs, and the service is competent in referring learners to staff with specialist skills as appropriate.

54. The service provides all courses free of charge, and uses a wide range of easily accessible venues. Crèche or childminding facilities are available in most BMBC resource centres, at no cost to learners on benefits. Where available, play activity workers are provided on a flexible basis to support learning for parents of pre-school children.

55. A good range of partnership arrangements meets community needs. BMBC has played a major role in establishing a neighbourhood learning network. This is a community-based organisation which works with voluntary organisations and community groups. It provides information, advice and guidance, and access to learning for harder-to-reach groups of learners. The service works with the BMBC youth and libraries services, MIND, SureStart and Northern College to provide learning opportunities for particular groups of disadvantaged learners. Together with a local further education college, the service has identified gaps in provision. Clear guidance is offered to learners about which organisation provides classes at each level of the curriculum.

56. Equality and diversity is not promoted adequately in the curriculum. Although teachers and learners have a good understanding of the service's equal opportunities policies, equality or diversity is not promoted actively enough in classroom and curriculum activities.

### **Quality assurance**

### **Contributory grade 3**

57. The provider has shown a strong commitment to the development of thorough and wide-ranging quality assurance procedures and processes since the previous inspection. Much work has been carried out over the past 18 months to establish and refine quality assurance arrangements. A comprehensive and well-understood quality assurance framework has been implemented throughout the service. The framework was developed in consultation with the local LSC, and a consultant was employed to provide advice and guidance on key aspects of quality assurance procedures. The framework takes account of the BMBC corporate objectives and four strategic goal statements as detailed in the borough community plan. Staff understand the quality assurance framework and can easily relate its requirements to their work. The framework is clearly described in a comprehensive handbook for managers, and teachers receive relevant and accessible information in their handbooks.

58. The service's quality and staff development manager has direct management

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responsibility for quality assurance. A quality assurance board has been established recently. It meets termly to discuss new initiatives and to review monitoring cycles and procedures. Clearly written documents set out the terms of reference and remit of the board. A new post of quality assurance officer has been created. This officer will take on many day-to-day monitoring activities.

59. The provider's self-assessment process is well established and effective. It is understood and valued by staff and managers. Self-assessment reports are produced annually, and updates are produced during each term of the academic year. The contents are fully discussed during the four staff development weeks which take place throughout the year. At the same time, staff decide the approach to be taken for self-assessment of each area of learning. Co-ordinators and teachers discuss the strengths and weaknesses of their provision, and identify any examples of good or poor practice. During this process, learners' feedback is analysed and comments incorporated into a draft text. All area of learning reports are moderated by the curriculum co-ordinator group, to ensure equality in standards and to enable sharing of information and good practice. The draft reports are circulated among the senior management team and reviewed by the council cabinet member with responsibility for education. All comments and revisions are incorporated into the final report.

60. Teachers and managers work to a comprehensive and effective post-inspection action plan. This sets out clear actions, milestones, deadlines and responsibilities for service improvement. The plan is linked to the service's yearly business plan and three-year development plan. Curriculum co-ordinators and senior managers have a very good understanding of their responsibilities under the action-planning process. Each target set to date has been met within the allotted timescale. Co-ordinators' and managers' meeting agendas regularly feature action plan items for review. Clear improvements have occurred in service standards.

61. The service has a satisfactory lesson observation process. This was established jointly by curriculum co-ordinators and an external consultant. All staff are observed at least yearly and an action plan is drawn up following each observation. Staff value the observation process and have identified ways in which teaching practice has improved following observations.

62. Clearly written and readily available documents outline processes and advise staff of their responsibilities under the new quality assurance framework. A series of needs analysis activities have been carried out by curriculum co-ordinators to identify management strengths and weaknesses with regard to quality assurance. A number of staff development events have been held to inform staff of the new framework requirements. Meetings and events were held during the four weeks of paid staff development time. Meetings about key aspects of quality assurance were held during the day and again in the evenings. Teachers and managers have a good understanding of the importance of quality assurance, and of most key elements of the quality assurance framework. Throughout the service there is a shared commitment to raising standards and improving learners' experiences. However, at the time of inspection, the quality assurance framework and procedures were relatively new. In some curriculum

areas, aspects of the quality assurance framework are not fully integrated with daily activities.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Grade 3

| Programmes inspected         | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Adult and community learning | 455                | 3                  |

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

#### Strengths

- very good standards of work on cake decorating and sugarcraft courses
- very good retention rates
- good initiatives to widen participation

#### Weaknesses

- insufficient risk assessment
- insufficient learning opportunities for some courses
- unsystematic approach to quality assurance

#### Achievement and standards

63. Standards of work are very good in cake decorating and sugarcraft classes. Learners work in a relaxed atmosphere and in a methodical and practised way. Learners are committed to increasing their skills and are guided by the teacher in gradually building up an impressive range of equipment and materials. Learners at all levels display good design, art and technical craft skills. Some very intricate and delicate pieces of work are produced. Learners complement their classroom activities with time spent at home practising and refining techniques. Some learners have carried out commissions for family and friends, evidence of which is illustrated in well-presented portfolios. Two new learners have recently joined courses with the incentive to make and decorate wedding cakes for family members. Standards of work in sports, leisure and catering classes are satisfactory. Many learners on sports courses report significant improvements in their medical conditions and reduction in stress levels. Retention rates are very good on most courses, with an average of 95 per cent attendance. In food hygiene courses, achievement rates are satisfactory.

#### Quality of education and training

64. The standard of teaching and learning throughout the provision is satisfactory. Sixty-nine per cent of the lessons observed were good or better. The better classes have detailed planning with comprehensive schemes of work and lesson plans. Some learners in catering classes are very highly motivated. They select the dishes they wish to cook



and also purchase the ingredients. In some sport and fitness classes, teachers link learning in the classroom with personal healthcare and lifestyle decision-making to improve learners' everyday lives. In courses for the driving theory test, learners have the opportunity of hands-on experience of car maintenance.

65. Recent initiatives have been effective in recruiting new learners and broadening partnerships with voluntary, community and other bodies. Close links have been established with local learning networks and other agencies. A number of new courses have been introduced, as well as a taster programme for the whole curriculum area, and planned activities for holiday periods. Several new learning venues have been provided. The service is in the process of producing new information material and is reviewing its marketing strategy in response to learners' comments.

66. Support for learners is generally satisfactory. Most teachers give a good level of support to learners during lessons. The service has been responsive to requests for specific support and is actively recruiting general support staff.

67. A range of venues are used for learning and most are fit for purpose. Most have good access for learners with mobility problems and some have stairlifts. Learners appreciate having local venues for classes, many of which have good parking facilities. Changes are being considered for some venues and most now have storage facilities for equipment and learners' work. BMBC has purchased a good range of equipment and learning resources for some courses. Money is available from the access fund to purchase equipment for learners.

68. Initial assessments of learners' knowledge and experience are carried out adequately for most courses. A new format has recently been introduced to identify the numeracy and literacy needs of learners. Some learners, however, do not see the relevance of the paperwork they are asked to complete. In sport and fitness courses, learners complete a health questionnaire which is used by teachers to identify individual learning targets. For some courses, assessment is in accordance with qualification requirements. Target-setting for a number of learners is too general and assessment is not specific enough. In a few classes, teachers review and record learners' progress individually. Some learners are encouraged to maintain a reflective diary to record their own progress.

69. Teachers have appropriate teaching qualifications and most are suitably occupationally qualified for most of the courses that they teach. In a few instances, however, teachers have extended their teaching into areas for which they are not sufficiently qualified or experienced. Some teachers are undergoing staff development to update and extend their subject knowledge and acquire new technical skills to teach learners with specific needs and abilities.

70. A number of courses suffer from poor pre-planning and recording of results. Learning outcomes are not being met and learners are not able to take full advantage of the learning experiences. In some sport and fitness classes, good use has been made of modifications to suit the different physical abilities of individual learners. In other classes, insufficient attention is given to this differentiation.

71. Not enough risk assessment is carried out. Documents have been introduced recently which only list equipment and identify some broad areas of risk. Service staff and teachers have not been trained to carry out risk assessments in sufficient detail, or to carry out specific risk assessments for particular venues, activities, or groups of learners. Inspectors observed lessons which did not have appropriate control measures. The service has recognised this weakness and has arranged for risk assessment training to take place in the near future.

72. The timetabling of courses in some areas is restricted. It is done on a historical basis, involving mainly weekday, daytime provision. It is dependent on the expertise of the small number of teachers currently available. There are waiting lists for some of the courses within the sport and leisure provision, but, the service is recruiting new teachers with different areas of expertise, in response to community requests.

### **Leadership and management**

73. A new curriculum co-ordinator has been appointed recently. Communications are good, with regular minuted curriculum meetings. Teachers share ideas and have, as a group, developed new course documents. Some planning for individual staff development has taken place but not for the curriculum area as a whole. The service responds quickly to learners' feedback. Actions taken have included changes to venues and the timing of classes to suit learners' family responsibilities. Although occupational knowledge at management level is limited, support has been given by external consultants.

74. The service does not have a systematic approach to quality assurance in this area of learning. The quality of schemes of work and the degree of detail in lesson planning varies among teachers. Observations of teaching and learning are well established, and inspectors generally agreed with the grades given the service's observers. Some observations, however, are carried out by non-specialist observers. The thoroughness and detail of the comments on observation forms varies, and in some cases there have been insufficient responses to identified weaknesses. Teachers' qualifications are not monitored frequently enough to ensure suitability and currency. Newly developed quality assurance procedures have not yet ensured consistency in the setting and monitoring of targets.

**English, languages & communications****Grade 2**

| Programmes inspected         | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Adult and community learning | 512                | 2                  |

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

**Strengths**

- good retention and achievement rates
- good initiatives in staff development
- good range of courses to meet borough-wide community needs

**Weaknesses**

- inconsistent use of course review process

**Achievement and standards**

75. Good levels of retention and achievement are evident for the past three years. During 2003-04, retention and achievement rates were very good, at 91 per cent. Retention rates for level 2 sign language courses have been excellent for the past two years, but many learners have not gained a qualification. Attendance was good in the classes observed by inspectors. Where there were absences, learners were frequently travelling in places where they could practise the skills they are learning.

76. Learners develop a good range of skills and exhibit significant increases in confidence levels through their learning. They have a high level of commitment to long-term learning, and many learners progress through a number of courses over several years. In most of the language classes observed, learners spoke with good accents and with increasing confidence. In one French language class, learners have compiled exemplary portfolios, but learners in other classes do not display these standards. Learners in several classes demonstrated good mastery of the everyday life topics they had covered. There is a good level of achievement of personal objectives. For example, one learner of sign language is now able to communicate with her hearing impaired grandchild. Another learner had accepted a work placement in a special school.

**Quality of education and training**

77. In the 14 lessons observed, 65 per cent were graded good or better, with 21 per cent satisfactory and 14 per cent less than satisfactory. The language being taught is used effectively to present and explain new material. Learners have developed good listening and comprehension skills. In many classes, learners practise new topics in pairs, using role-play to develop their ability to absorb and use newly acquired material.

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Imaginative use is made of simple resources like flashcards. Some teachers maintain value-added books which give opportunities for learners to say how their lives have been enhanced by studying a different language. Many examples of learners' experiences in other countries are given in classes, giving a real sense of achievement, as well as motivation for further study. Most lesson planning focuses well on learning objectives, but a small number of lessons are still organised around activities. In the better sessions, lessons plans are systematically evaluated and used in the next stage of the learning process.

78. Access to the provision is good in 28 venues throughout the borough, with a good range of courses in the daytime and evenings. There are classes in five languages, with Croatian classes having been provided very quickly in response to demand from a small local community. Taster courses in Spanish have been introduced in a number of venues, such as a council depot. This represents an attempt to attract new learners, especially manual workers. Other taster courses have been provided at the request of Learning Net managers. The programme of courses has been rationalised and courses better defined in an attempt to eliminate mixed-level courses. Progression routes are now clearer. In sign language, there are good opportunities for progression from deaf awareness training, through elementary signing to nationally recognised qualifications.

79. Good use of individual learning plans provides an opportunity for regular dialogue about progress between teachers and learners. Learners of sign language use the plans to log their revision needs and set themselves finger-spelling targets which are monitored by the teacher.

80. Physical resources and accommodation to support learning are satisfactory, but a small number of venues are inappropriate for their current use. In one church hall, learning was disturbed by a portable whiteboard that frequently fell over. In the same venue, access to a video machine was restricted to one floor of the building.

81. Staff development and management activities are now beginning to generate a collaborative approach to resources. The service is currently assembling a bank of resources and has plans to produce a collection of CD-ROMs and cassettes recorded by native speakers, for use by staff and learners. A dictionary of video clips for learners of sign language is also being created. Not all staff hold academic qualifications in the languages they offer, and two members of staff do not have a teaching qualification.

82. Classes in libraries are able to use the library's computers and internet access. Teachers are now making positive and imaginative use of internet materials. Learners in many classes have been directed to useful interactive sites which they use successfully for language practice. Teachers download culturally interesting materials for use in class. For example, a colourful Croatian weather map was drawn from one day's newspaper. Lessons in some libraries can be interrupted by other users. The noise generated by the classes can also disturb library users.

83. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. Accreditation has been introduced throughout the whole provision. Although this has provided a uniform structure, it is not

always appropriate for learners' needs. In some classes, the syllabus is not sufficiently challenging for the level of competence of the learners.

84. Many learners speak appreciatively of the personal interest and attention shown by their teachers. One teacher has been supplying learning materials to a learner confined at home due to illness. Learners provide mutual support and encouragement. Pre-course information has been rewritten and brochures redesigned, to resolve an issue identified in the previous inspection. The service has also now devised effective ways of assessing learners' previous language-learning experience, at the beginning of each course.

### **Leadership and management**

85. A good range of staff development events have engendered a positive team spirit, with teachers feeling a strong sense of collaboration and mutual support. Staff development initiatives focus on quality improvement and on ways to develop teachers' skills and plan for more effective learning. Staff development activities have increased significantly. In-service meetings are well attended, and forthcoming events will cover issues such as differentiation and accreditation. Lesson observations now include action plans to deal with any observed shortcomings on the part of the service and the team, as well as individual teachers.

86. Significant improvements have been made in the management of the area of learning since the previous inspection. The co-ordination and planning of learning are now effective. A subject specialist has been appointed to manage the area. Staff now have access to professional guidance and expertise. Learners and teachers value the increased management support for improvements to the languages programmes.

87. Improved quality assurance arrangements have been established since the previous inspection, but the procedure for course reviews has not been developed sufficiently. The procedures are clearly written, and they are discussed at team meetings. They are well understood by staff, but are not used to their full extent by all teachers. Learners' feedback has been analysed in detail, but at the time of inspection, staff had not had sufficient time to resolve most of the issues raised. Some venues have been changed in a swift response to critical comments from learners. Programme planning takes into account teachers' and current learners' perceptions, but plans to take account of national trends and professional subject developments have not been implemented.

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

| Programmes inspected         | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
|------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Adult and community learning | 801                | 3                  |

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

**Strengths**

- good resources to support learning
- thorough initial assessment
- good team approach to planning and development
- well-focused staff development

**Weaknesses**

- insufficient teaching strategies to develop learners' skills
- ineffective monitoring of learners' progress

**Achievement and standards**

88. Retention rates are good. Rates for the current year for family learning are 91 per cent, for literacy, numeracy and language courses, 85 per cent, and for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, 99 per cent. Achievements are satisfactory overall. Within literacy, numeracy and language provision, 62 learners have taken national tests, with an 87 per cent achievement rate. Last year Open College Network accreditation was achieved by all learners who applied. Most learners' progress is measured through their negotiated individual learning plans. Last year, 99 per cent achieved the learning goals negotiated. In all three areas of learning, learners gain confidence and skills. Evaluations of literacy, numeracy and language learners show that they can use their learning effectively, for example in buying the correct numbers of tiles to decorate a bathroom, improving their spelling and increasing their ability to complete forms independently. Learners progress to level 2 and many then continue to other teaching and training providers.

89. Learners with disabilities are able to communicate more effectively, and carers and teaching staff report many instances of learners developing the skills to make them more independent. Learners benefit particularly from the community access courses in gaining greater confidence and skills in using public facilities. Many learners move on to other courses with other providers having gained confidence in their learning and personal skills.

90. Many parents and carers attending family learning taster sessions and workshops move on to short courses. Achievements on these courses are not well documented,

but parents report much better understanding of what their children are doing at school. In a number of cases these short courses have developed into longer, accredited courses.

### **Quality of education and training**

91. Learning support resources are good. Adult literacy and numeracy teachers are supplied with personal laptop computers. A small number of laptop computers are used in outreach venues which do not have adequate IT facilities. In some community venues, adaptive technologies are used well for learners with disabilities. Teaching materials are mostly of very good quality. However, not enough teaching materials promote equality of opportunity and diversity in their content and images. All teachers are qualified, or are working towards a qualification, and many have received additional specialist training in working with learners with learning disabilities, or in teaching key skills. The standard of accommodation varies. Many community venues provide accommodation to a good standard, but much of the accommodation in schools for family learning is noisy, uncomfortable or has an unsuitable layout. This situation is identified in the service's self-assessment report. Family learning has recently acquired a new resource room.

92. Initial assessments are thorough for learners on adult literacy and numeracy courses, and for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. The assessments identify long-term personal aims and learning goals and allow appropriate short-term targets to be set. Staff use the outcomes of initial assessments to plan effective programmes for learners. Learners on adult literacy and numeracy courses are placed in classes at a suitable level and receive effective guidance and support. For learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, a subject-specific assessment reduces the possibility of duplicating goals that have already been achieved.

93. The range of programmes and courses offered is responsive to many learners' needs and interests. However, the service has recognised that the needs of learners with profound and multiple learning disabilities are not adequately provided for. In family learning, opportunities for progression to literacy and numeracy courses are promoted at taster sessions and workshops. Local demand is assessed. End-of-course reviews are used to identify further learning needs. Many courses are planned in consultation with other agencies and organisations. In adult numeracy, short modular courses are offered which provide learners with progression opportunities in manageable stages. Many learners appreciate being able to attend a convenient local venue at times that fit in with childcare and other responsibilities.

94. Most of the teaching and learning in classes observed by the inspectors was satisfactory. Forty-one per cent of classes were good or better and only one class was less than satisfactory. However, the range of teaching strategies to develop learners' skills was limited, with an over-emphasis on teacher-led discussions and the completion of worksheets. Learners in these classes were not given sufficient opportunities to develop and practise skills. There were several instances of long periods of teacher activity with learners sitting passively. Learners were unable to maintain focus on the

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lesson and found it difficult to begin working again after the teacher-led period. Many lesson plans still focus on the completion of activities and not on the process of learning or learners' skill development.

95. Support for learners is satisfactory. All adult literacy and numeracy learners have an individual guidance session before enrolment. All learners receive an induction where ground rules are negotiated. Learners find the teachers helpful and approachable. Learners' additional support needs are assessed effectively and specialist support is provided where needed. For example, sign language interpreters and personal care assistants are provided for learners. Class sizes for learners with learning disabilities are small. Care workers accompany and assist individuals where needed and work well with the teachers. Funding has been secured for the service to employ a number of dedicated support workers next year.

96. Learners' progress is not monitored effectively. Some of the individual targets set are not measurable and some have imprecise learning outcomes, or focus on the completion of activities rather than on what has been learnt. Some evaluations of learners' progress are vague and evaluations are not used consistently to plan subsequent learning. Some lesson plans have imprecise learning outcomes for the subject area and some do not identify individual learning needs. Assessment of the achievement of individual targets is not always accurate. There are instances of teachers signing records indicating achievement before a target has been achieved in full.

### **Leadership and management**

97. The three curriculum co-ordinators provide strong and effective leadership. They each have a clear perception of their current position and have detailed long- and short-term action plans. These are used in strategic planning by the service and are discussed and supported by senior management. The termly self-assessment report updates provide measurable action points, most of which are met within the allocated timescales. Course numbers and retention targets are monitored and action is taken to remedy cases of non-achievement. Co-operative working is encouraged through regular and focused team meetings which allow good practice to be shared. Named teachers are given development time to work on aspects of the curriculum. The curriculum co-ordinator for literacy, numeracy and language provision has a brief to develop these skills in all programme areas. Assessment processes and documents for target-setting in individual learning plans have been implemented following staff training. These processes and documents are monitored by a comprehensive teaching observation programme.

98. The well-focused staff development programme includes four weeks' paid staff development activity each year for all part-time and full-time teachers. Teachers are financially supported while working towards teaching qualifications in specialist areas. The service also provides paid support for staff wishing to develop and update their skills in literacy and numeracy at level 4. Other staff have been supported by the service in taking post-graduate level qualifications. There is also significant support from the service



for staff involvement in local networks and development groups. Good systems for internal verification have been approved by the external moderator. Within the learning difficulties and disabilities provision, the system of teachers verifying each other's teaching files has considerably increased their understanding of the assessment processes, and increased the sharing of good practice. Staff development activity is also used to bring about quality improvement in the area. Weaknesses identified through monitoring of teaching and the inspection of schemes of work and lesson plans are resolved by devising action plans.