

INSPECTION REPORT

Northumberland LEA

08 October 2004



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

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

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

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

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

Overall judgement

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

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

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

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

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

INSPECTION REPORT

Northumberland LEA

Contents

Summary

Description of the provider	1
Scope of provision	1
About the inspection	5
Overall judgement	5
Grades	5
Key findings	8
What learners like about Northumberland LEA	22
What learners think Northumberland LEA could improve	22
Key challenges for Northumberland LEA	23

Detailed inspection findings

Leadership and management	27
Equality of opportunity	29
Quality assurance	30
Sciences & mathematics	32
Business administration, management & professional	35
Information & communications technology	38
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	41
Health, social care & public services	44
Visual & performing arts & media	47
Humanities	51
English, languages & communications	55
Foundation programmes	58

INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Northumberland County Council Adult Learning Service (NCCALS) is part of the Lifelong Learning Service within the education directorate of Northumberland County Council. The service directly delivers a large programme across Northumberland. It also manages provision for two specialist secure hospitals in the area. In one, it directly delivers the programme and in the other it uses a subcontractor. This inspection includes the provision in science and mathematics, business administration, information and communications technology (ICT), hospitality, sport and leisure; health, social care and public services; visual and performing arts and media; humanities; English, languages and communications, and foundation programmes. There were too few learners in construction, land-based provision and hairdressing and beauty therapy for these areas to be inspected separately.

2. There is a principal adult education officer who reports to the head of lifelong learning and is supported by a quality assurance manager and a management information systems manager. The principal adult education officer also has three curriculum co-ordinators responsible for essential skills, family learning and ICT development. The team has three administrative assistants and a community development worker who is responsible for particular geographical regions. Most of the team, including the principal adult education officer, have been with the service in its present form for less than a year.

3. NCCALS receives most of its funding through Northumberland Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Further funding for targeted areas of work is accessed through the Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities Fund and the Training and Enterprise Council Legacy Fund. Immediately before this inspection, NCCALS took over management of the LSC contracts for two specialist secure hospitals in the region. Northumberland is a county council in the northeast of England where, at less than 1 per cent, the population from minority ethnic groups is considerably below the national average of 9.1 per cent. A number of wards in the county have high indices of deprivation, although others are extremely affluent.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Sciences & mathematics

4. In 2004-05 there are 140 enrolments on approximately 20 courses, mainly in mathematics and biology-related subjects. Most courses take place during the late afternoon or in the evening at centres throughout Northumberland, mainly in schools or community centres. Most mathematics provision is the general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) but one centre offers AS levels and another offers the Higher Education Foundation Certificate in biology for mature candidates seeking qualifications suitable for entry to university. There is one course in renewable energy and one in astronomy which do not lead to a formal qualification. There is no provision of full A-level qualifications but

the centre offering AS mathematics plans to provide this if the learners want to progress. Over 70 per cent of the learners are over 19 years old and about 75 per cent are women. There are no learners from minority ethnic groups.

Business administration, management & professional

5. There are 240 learner enrolments on business administration, management and professional courses. Most learners are studying business administration on text and word-processing programmes at levels 1, 2 and 3, but there is also accounts and teacher training provision. In the academic year 2003-04, there were 397 learner enrolments. Courses take place in community facilities, such as community and open learning centres and schools. These range from beginner level to level 4 and all are externally accredited. The provision is spread across 12 centres, and lessons take place during the day and in the evenings. Most of the courses last 15 weeks or less, but some longer programmes are available. Currently, there are 31 courses in 12 of NCCALS's 21 centres. Most courses run two or three times during the year.

6. Approximately 85 per cent of the learners are women and less than 10 per cent of the learners are under 19 year's old. There are no learners from minority ethnic backgrounds. Most of the learners attend evening classes.

Information & communications technology

7. In 2003-04, NCCALS offered 151 ICT courses across the county. There were 1,479 individual learner enrolments, of which 962 were men. There is a good balance of male and female learners and age ranges on all of the ICT programmes.

8. Approximately 90 per cent of the courses lead to an accredited qualification. Most of the accredited courses are basic and intermediate computer literacy classes, with a small number of classes offering higher-level qualifications. They range in duration from 10 weeks to 30 weeks. The higher-level courses cover more complex word processing, databases and spreadsheets, as well as topics such as desktop publishing and graphics. The non-accredited courses include short introductory sessions, and longer courses for beginners on programmes, covering such subjects as word processing, introduction to the internet and digital photography. Courses are provided in around 30 centres, spread across the county. NCCALS employs 85 tutors to provide ICT programmes, of whom 53 per cent are men and almost all of them work part time. NCCALS has recently appointed an ICT curriculum co-ordinator.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

9. NCCALS reports 98 courses on offer in this area of learning but several were withdrawn or cancelled at the time of inspection. Courses include yoga, keep fit, aerobics, swimming, tai chi, golf, food hygiene, cookery and sugar craft. Most of the provision is non-accredited. There is one accredited course for sport: the basic expedition leader award. In hospitality there are two accredited courses: foundation food hygiene and sugar craft. Eighty-nine per cent of courses are in sport and leisure. Hospitality, sport and leisure is NCCALS's fourth largest area of provision, with 19.6 per cent of the total number of learners. Most courses recruit each term and last for an average of 10 weeks. To date this year there have been 1,455 enrolments, 82.5 per cent of whom are women. Courses are mainly given in community schools facilities. NCCALS manages its part-time tutors through a network of 22 centre managers throughout the county. The area of learning has no curriculum leader.

Health, social care & public services

10. In 2004-05, there are 127 enrolments on a range of accredited and non-accredited programmes across the county. Learners are recruited through direct enquiries to the centres and from a range of promotional activities. Accredited courses include first-aid courses, the foundation certificate in health and safety, and counselling courses. Courses are offered in the day and in the evening across the county. Sessions are run in community schools and community venues. Most tutors are sessional.

Visual & performing arts & media

11. With 1,378 enrolments, visual and performing arts courses provide one of the largest programmes of adult and community education. This is approximately 20 per cent of the total number of learners across all areas of learning. At the time of the inspection, NCCALS offers 128 courses at over 20 venues throughout the area. Courses include a range of arts, crafts and drama. Classes are offered in the daytime and evening, with some Saturday workshops throughout the year. Many courses offered as leisure courses in previous years are now offered as accredited courses at entry level, and at levels 1, 2 and 3. Classes last from one and a half to four hours over 10 to 30 weeks and run at beginner, intermediate and more advanced levels. Most classes have a mix of beginners and improvers. Many of the sites are accessible for learners with restricted mobility.

Humanities

12. There are 333 enrolments in this area of learning, of which more than a third are 16 to 18 year olds. This differs significantly to other areas of learning. It offers 27 courses, most which are at level 3, mainly in history, law and genealogy. These courses are AS and A2 subjects, mainly taken by school pupils of the partner community schools to extend their portfolio for entry to university. Most courses are located at the main sites at Alnwick, Hexham and Morpeth. Women outnumber men by a ratio of two to one. The range of provision is based on programmes that have been successful in previous years. A quarter of the classes offered in the prospectus do not recruit sufficient learners to run. Most of the successful courses are AS and A2 subjects, and programmes for researching family history, often using the internet. Some centres are offering more innovative programmes, such as an 'Introduction to Shamanism.' Mature learners gain alternative qualifications to allow them to progress to higher education.

English, languages & communications

13. There are 89 courses in modern languages and English in 30 different venues across the county, of which some three-quarters are accredited. There are 1,085 enrolments in 2004-05 for which NCCALS employs 46 tutors. Modern languages courses account for over 80 per cent of the total provision in this area of learning. Most of these courses are at levels 1 and 2. NCCALS has recently closed AS and A2 language courses because of dwindling numbers. The range of languages is average, although there is a good selection of courses in the larger centres in French, Spanish and Italian. However, there is only a small number of courses in Greek, Russian and German. The few GCSE English courses are largely, but not exclusively, for learners resitting their examinations. Most courses take place in the evening, with only nine morning and 13 afternoon sessions.

Foundation programmes

14. NCCALS offers day and evening courses for learners to develop literacy and numeracy skills at 19 venues across the county. There are 604 enrolments on 147 courses from pre-entry to level 2. The courses are delivered in periods ranging from one day to two-hour sessions over 36 weeks. Learners are encouraged to sit national literacy and numeracy tests. The section is staffed by 40 full-time, part-time and sessional tutors. There are 16 courses for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities, mainly in two specialist hospitals, staffed by nine tutors. At one hospital, the training provision is franchised to an educational agency. There are 108 enrolments, who attend classes mainly in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Sixty-five per cent of learners are over 19 year's old and 35 per cent are aged 16-19. Learners have a range of complex and challenging difficulties, including emotional disorders and mental health problems. Some are offenders and some are detained under the Mental Health Act, 1983. A very small number of courses for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities are offered at community sites.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	21
Number of inspection days	104
Number of learner interviews	533
Number of staff interviews	187
Number of subcontractor interviews	2
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	108
Number of partner/external agency interviews	20

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

15. The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, NCCALS's leadership and management are satisfactory, as is its approach to equality of opportunity. However, its quality assurance arrangements are unsatisfactory. The quality of its provision in business administration, management and professional, and visual and performing arts and media is good. The quality of its provision is satisfactory in science and mathematics; ICT; health, social care and public service; humanities; English, languages and communications; and foundation. In hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, the provision is unsatisfactory.

GRADES

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

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

Sciences & mathematics		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Sciences		
- Adult and community learning	60	None
Mathematics		
- Adult and community learning	80	None

NORTHUMBERLAND LEA

Business administration, management & professional		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Business administration - Adult and community learning	150	None
Accounting and economics - Adult and community learning	50	None
Teacher/trainer awards - Adult and community learning	40	None

Information & communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT - Adult and community learning	1479	None

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Hospitality and catering - Adult and community learning	146	4
Leisure, sport and recreation - Adult and community learning	1309	4

Health, social care & public services		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Care - Adult and community learning	98	None
Counselling - Adult and community learning	29	None

Visual & performing arts & media		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts - Adult and community learning	550	2
Crafts - Adult and community learning	543	2
Drama - Adult and community learning	285	None

Humanities		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
History and genealogy - Adult and community learning	190	None
Sociology and psychology - Adult and community learning	143	None

English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
English - Adult and community learning	225	None
Languages - Adult and community learning	860	None

Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Literacy and numeracy - Adult and community learning	604	3
Independent living and leisure skills - Adult and community learning	108	3

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

16. **For those learners retained in science and mathematics, the pass rates are high.** Although the numbers of learners are low in AS mathematics, the pass rate for the past two years was 100 per cent. Most learners achieve a grade in GCSE, despite the fact that they have failed the subject previously.

17. **The achievement rates in business administration and accounting are good.** In the academic year 2003-04, over 80 per cent of business administration learners who completed their course of study achieved their qualification aims. In accounting subjects, over 73 per cent of learners achieved their qualification aims.

18. **On sport and hospitality programmes there is good skills development.** In cookery classes, learners improve their food preparation and cooking skills. The tutor in one fitness session gave learners a fitness test in their first week and repeated this so that they could see their own improvements. Learners make significant gains to their physical and mental health through sports and leisure programmes. Retention and achievement overall are satisfactory.

19. **There is good skills development for learners in health, social care and public services.** Learners gain increased knowledge, learning skills that enable them to apply theory to practice, enhance their practical skills and increase their confidence and self-esteem. Older learners and younger ones mix well in sessions and work together very effectively to complement each others' strengths and weaknesses.

20. **Learners achieve good standards of work in visual, performing arts and media.** They develop a range of skills throughout the course, such as different painting techniques or creative crafts. Portfolios of work show good progress made from the start of the course and learners appreciate their achievements. Learners' artwork is of a professional standard and members of the public often purchase it. Overall retention is satisfactory.

21. **Achievement for learners on humanities programmes leading to access to higher education is good.** Most are accredited at level 3. Learners achieve well on the programmes which provide non-traditional entry qualifications for higher education. In some subjects, such as A2 history, every learner completing the course was successful.

22. **Achievement in GCSE English is good.** GCSE classes are geared to improving grades and tutors are skilled and experienced at helping learners to perform to their potential. Good and improving results are clear evidence of their success. The A*-C pass rates in 2003 were 53 per cent and, in 2004, are particularly high at 65 per cent.

23. **Learners' listening and speaking skills develop rapidly, particularly when the foreign language is used most of the time in the classroom.** Beginners can often form basic sentences on rehearsed topics in the foreign language after only a few weeks' tuition. Where learners choose to sit examinations, achievement rates at all levels are good.

24. **In foundation programmes, there is good achievement in national literacy and numeracy tests.** Out of 817 learners who sat the test, 811 passed. For 2003-04, the retention rate on short courses was 93.5 per cent and, for long courses, the retention rate was 85.7 per cent.

25. **In foundation programmes, there is good development of skills and confidence for learners with learning difficulties.** They are confident in talking about the skills they have learnt and the benefits of attending classes, particularly away from the hospital wards. They show a good level of understanding and answer confidently.

26. In ICT, retention and achievement rates and standards of work, are satisfactory.

27. **The retention rate in GCSE biology is poor.** In 2002-03, the retention rate was as low as 50 per cent and never any higher than 63 per cent.

28. **Achievement for 16-18 year olds in humanities is unsatisfactory.** On average, younger learners have a 50 per cent chance of achievement, while adults rates are significantly higher.

Quality of education and training

29. The overall teaching profile for NCCALS is satisfactory, with 68 per cent of sessions judged good or better and 7 per cent less than satisfactory.

30. **In business administration, management and professional, teaching and learning are good.** Over 87 per cent of observed lessons were rated as good or better. Teaching methods and materials are varied and of a high quality. Learners make good progress, participate well and enjoy the sessions.

31. **In health, social care and public services, teaching and learning are good.** Tutors are flexible with the planning of sessions so as to meet individual learners' needs. They are knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subject and link theory and practical work well. The pace of learning meets learners' needs. Learners are well motivated, enthusiastic, and they enjoy the learning sessions and participate fully in discussions.

32. **In visual and performing arts and media, teaching and learning are good.** In practical sessions, tutors ensure that learners receive individual attention related to their specific needs, with good individual coaching. Teaching styles are appropriate for the needs of the adult learners. Learners appreciate the individual attention that they receive from their tutors. Individual artistic interests are catered for, which extend the learners' knowledge and experience.

33. **Personal development activities are good for humanities learners.** Tutors make good use of external visits to support classroom learning. For example, the archaeology course

NORTHUMBERLAND LEA

involves field trips to explore the topography of the area, and all learners on the family history courses are taken to visit local archives.

34. In English, languages and communications, teaching and learning are good. Of the sessions observed, 67 per cent were good or better and none were unsatisfactory. Lessons are well planned and well organised. Paired work is very effective in enabling tutors to identify and remedy learners' problems. Learners enjoy working together and are mutually encouraging and supportive.

35. In mathematics, teaching methods vary insufficiently. NCCALS makes little use of computers or practical mathematics equipment to stimulate learners who lack confidence or find topics too difficult. In many lessons tutors use a limited range of learning activities.

36. In ICT, learners individual needs receive insufficient attention. Many lessons and plans pay insufficient attention to varying learners' activities and do not use an adequate range of methods to check their understanding.

37. There is poor planning of individual learning in hospitality, sports, leisure and tourism. In hospitality, some learners are assessed for literacy and numeracy but this process is not made vocationally relevant. In sport, these assessments do not generally take place at all. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. Where needs are identified, tutors are unclear what they should do, so issues are often not picked up or acted upon. Individual learning plans have recently been introduced, but many tutors have yet to implement them and some were not used appropriately. Health-screening forms have recently been introduced for all learners, but these are not being completed by all.

38. NCCALS makes ineffective use of individual learning plans in literacy and numeracy and independent living and leisure skills. Records of progress list teaching activities rather than what the learners have achieved. In literacy and numeracy classes, there is no planning of personal targets related to improvements in confidence or communication skills. There are not always clear links between assessments and the individual learning plans for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. Some individual learning plans focus on literacy skills in practical sessions, such as cookery, but they do not identify and record practical skills development.

39. Facilities, equipment and resources are good in business administration, management and professional. The accommodation and teaching resources are of a consistently high standard. Computer equipment is up to date and enhanced by the use of current industry-standard software.

40. In art and design, NCCALS makes insufficient use of new technologies. For example, in a graphic design course, computers were not available to support learning. In another session where equipment was available it was not used.

41. Accommodation in some centres is inappropriate for the needs of humanities learners. One evening class was held in a school science laboratory. Classes in one

school were held in a building with no access to toilets or refreshments. Noise from schoolchildren disrupts adult classes.

42. Accommodation in some locations is unsuitable for English, languages and communication learners. In classes held on school premises, the noise from children often disrupts sessions. Some classes are too large for the rooms in which they are held. Some poor furniture arrangement makes it impossible for tutors to assess all learners in the group adequately.

43. There are insufficient resources in some centres in the community for literacy and numeracy learners. There is an insufficient range of textbooks and insufficient access to computers. Many classes rely heavily on paper-based resources, which do not support the learners' preferred learning style.

44. In business administration, management and professional, the initial assessment process is weak. It fails to adequately identify the learners' prior knowledge of the subject or their support needs.

45. In ICT, the initial assessment process is inadequate. Tutors have insufficient understanding of the skills that individual learners bring to their courses. Tutors do not use diagnostic assessment or computer tests to determine the learners' previous experience or levels of literacy or numeracy needs.

46. In science and mathematics, NCCALS responds well to the needs of the community. Centres take responsibility for managing their budgets and are able to run classes for small numbers of learners. Courses are given across a wide geographical area. Some have been developed specifically in response to the needs of learners who have previously failed GCSEs.

47. The range of courses offered in ICT is extensive. It includes short introductory courses, internationally recognised information technology (IT) qualifications and specialist subjects, such as digital photography and internet genealogy. Learning is provided across the region in many different venues including public houses. Taster courses, open days and 'silver surfer' days are successful in attracting new learners, including senior citizens, the unemployed, and those who have returned to learning after many years.

48. The courses in visual and performing arts and media, cover a wide range of subjects and are responsive to local needs. There is a wide range of courses in arts and crafts, and performing arts given across the region. Courses are offered at times to suit the learners, for example, 10-week courses from October to March are organised as these are more appropriate for the farming community. However, there are insufficient opportunities for the display of learners' work in the visual arts and crafts. An exhibition of learners' art was recently held in a village hall and in two local adult centres. However, there are very few arrangements made to display and celebrate learners' work across the county.

49. In humanities, there is a good range of level 3 courses, particularly those reflecting

the needs of the younger learners. Many of these courses are unavailable at the local schools and learners are able to supplement the range of their A levels. Adults are able to join these classes, which might not otherwise have run.

50. **In English, language and communications there are insufficient opportunities for learners to progress beyond level 2.** In previous years, learners did well in higher-level external examinations, although the number of candidates was small. Current learners have no opportunities to progress in the curriculum anywhere in NCCALS's provision, and links with other providers are insufficiently clear.

51. **There is very effective course provision in literacy and numeracy to meet community needs.** Many learners in rural areas attend classes that have been specifically established for them and, in some cases, the class may consist of only one or two learners. At harvest time, learners cannot always attend, so classes are arranged to suit them.

52. **There is good celebration of success for learners on independent living and leisure skills programmes.** At one hospital, certificates are awarded upon completion of induction, giving learners a sense of achievement early in the course. Younger learners have formal presentation evenings at which they are awarded certificates. In community classes, adults with learning difficulties are working towards public performances in dance, drama and singing.

53. **NCCALS creates a good, supportive learning environment to enable learners with learning difficulties and disabilities to focus on educational activities.** Some learners have been resident in the hospital for many years. Tutors in the hospitals are sensitive to the learners' complex and challenging individual needs. They are aware which topics of conversation or resources are inappropriate. Some learners are taught in single-sex groups. Some younger learners are taught on their own as they experience difficulty with group interaction.

54. **In science and mathematics, centres have strong partnerships, which broaden the curriculum and enhance the learners' experience.** Their links with local schools, communities and employers help to identify demand for new courses and provide suitable venues, staffing and equipment.

55. **In science and mathematics, there is insufficient curriculum co-ordination and few opportunities for sharing good practice.** Few lesson observations have been completed to identify areas of good practice and share this with other tutors.

56. **There is insufficient quality assurance of the learning process in business administration, management and professional.** Although a curriculum co-ordinator has done much work to develop some new processes, these are new and not yet fully established. There has been no observation of teaching in the past year.

57. **In ICT, curriculum management is responsive.** A curriculum co-ordinator is now in place. Several recent initiatives to improve the provision have been successfully implemented and there is a clear strategy for the area of learning. NCCALS uses data to

plan its provision. Managers respond quickly to learners' concerns.

58. In ICT, managers and tutors do not share good practice sufficiently about teaching methods. NCCALS schedules too few lesson observations in this area of learning and managers do not receive sufficient information about the quality of teaching and learning.

59. There is poor curriculum management in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel. There is no clear strategic planning for the curriculum area. There is insufficient progression planning and a limited range of provision. There is no opportunity for the sharing of good practice between staff. Management does not monitor course documents, such as schemes of work and lesson plans. Risk assessments have not been completed for all activities in all centres.

60. There is inadequate co-ordination of the programme in health, social care and public services. Subject specialists have not carried out observations of teaching and learning. There are insufficient formal links with partners to widen participation or increase curriculum development in a sustained strategic way.

61. Curriculum co-ordination is weak in visual and performing arts and media. Managers at local centres manage the individual curriculum in their area. The planning of the course offer and the implementation of systems and procedures are inconsistent. Progression routes are insufficiently developed. There are few cross-region events to give learners opportunities to display work or celebrate their achievements in a public arena.

62. There is no curriculum co-ordination of the humanities provision. While there is a strong programme for learners at level 3, there has been little development of entry-level programmes and inadequate thought regarding sensible progression opportunities. Individual centres have some pockets of good practice, but NCCALS does not share this adequately.

63. Curriculum co-ordination is inadequate in English, languages and communications. There is no overview and forward planning to consolidate strengths and eradicate weaknesses across the curriculum. Planning of progression routes, internally and with other partners, is inadequate.

64. NCCALS has very effective partnership arrangements for literacy and numeracy programmes. For example, the partnership with Northumberland Care Trust enabled 30 employees to pass the national literacy and numeracy tests. Good partnerships are in place with the fire service and a range of unions to develop employees' essential skills.

65. There is unsatisfactory co-ordination of provision for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities at one site. Many clients are moving from the hospital to live in community settings in the near future and the curriculum is limited and insufficiently focused on the skills needed for the move to the community. There are no links between teaching and nursing staff in assessing learners' needs and providing an overall package of care.

66. **Quality assurance arrangements are incomplete for literacy and numeracy provision and for independent living and leisure skills.** Lesson observations vary in style and the content does not always identify what learning is occurring. The feedback to staff is inconsistent and in one instance took several weeks. In classes for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, some observation of teaching has taken place, but this has not been consistent for all tutors.

Leadership and management

67. **NCCALS provides strong strategic vision and direction, with clear support at the most senior levels.** Its plans to raise the aspirations of learners and regenerate the local economy and place learning in a central position. The organisation monitors progress against strategic objectives regularly. Action to meet the challenge of geographic diversity and rural isolation has begun.

68. NCCALS has **particularly effective partnerships that support all levels of the provision.** The organisation is well placed in strategic partnerships that work to develop infrastructure and influence provision. A wide range of area and centre-based partnerships benefit the learners. At individual level, staff make effective use of their own local networks for the benefit of the community.

69. **Intervention by the central staffing team is central in driving progress** throughout NCCALS. Target dates for action indicate a keen sense of urgency and pace. Centres are set clear targets for recruitment, retention and achievement, linked to priorities, where formerly there were none. The community education managers and other staff value highly the increased levels of central support and direction. Many staff comment on the significant improvements.

70. **NCCALS implements a highly effective range of measures to widen the participation of learners from under-represented groups.** Projects clearly link to the economic needs of the community. Successful projects include partnership arrangements with the fire service and a number of trade unions to provide essential skills training. NCCALS has exceeded the anticipated number of learners working towards national tests in literacy and numeracy by over 100 per cent. A project using the building and filming of robots to encourage the development of literacy, numeracy and IT skills is attracting learners from under-represented groups.

71. **Curriculum management is weak in many areas of learning.** Only three areas of learning have an overall programme manager or co-ordinator. Programme management is at centre level and there is no service-wide overview. Standardisation of aspects of curriculum management for other programmes has begun, but the degree of impact is limited so far. The use of newly introduced documents for initial assessment and individual learning plans varies considerably. Some centre heads monitor records of teaching and learning, but this is not always the case. There are insufficient opportunities for tutors to share good practice.

72. **There is no established annual appraisal cycle for all adult and community learning**

staff. NCCALS has appraised very few of the staff. Some centre managers carry out an informal annual meeting with part-time staff that combines programme review and appraisal, but they do not record it formally. There are a range of staff development activities but no individual or adult and community learning staff development plans. A lot of training is carried out informally and casually. It is not clear if records are updated to reflect training.

73. NCCALS's strategy and development plan for literacy, numeracy and language support were recently updated. However, they are in the early stages of implementation and it is too early to measure their impact. There are some examples of the additional learning support provided, but many tutors and managers are unclear about the procedure to obtain support. Sometimes no support is provided, and in others the need is identified too late.

74. NCCALS's **arrangements for quality assurance are still incomplete.** While significant developments have taken place to improve the provision, lesson planning, individual learning planning, initial assessment and the interpretation of the quality assurance procedures are inconsistent across the county. In some centres, lesson plans are not monitored and individual learning plans are not given to the learners or monitored for quality. Only a small percentage of tutors have been observed teaching. Inspectors in six out of the nine areas of learning found that incomplete quality assurance was a significant weakness.

75. **The equal opportunities strategy is insufficiently developed.** There is no single point of contact or person responsible for equality of opportunity. Staff handbooks include information on the local authority's equal opportunities policy, but not on how equality of opportunity applies to the learners. Centre co-ordinators have attended training courses that have included equality and diversity, but not all staff are aware of these and many tutors have not received equal opportunities training.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- strong strategic vision and direction
- particularly effective partnership working
- very effective action-planning
- highly effective arrangements to widen the participation of learners from under-represented groups

Weaknesses

- insufficient co-ordination of the curriculum in many areas of learning
- weak management of appraisal and staff development
- insufficiently established strategy for additional learning support
- insufficient development of equality of opportunity strategy
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements

Sciences & mathematics

Sciences

Strengths

- good achievement rates
- good response to needs of the local community
- strong partnerships with external organisations

Weaknesses

- poor retention in GCSE biology
- insufficient co-ordination of the curriculum

Mathematics

Strengths

- good achievement rates
- good response to the demand in the local community
- strong partnerships with external organisations

Weaknesses

- insufficient variation in teaching methods in mathematics
- insufficient co-ordination of the curriculum

Business administration, management & professional

Business administration

Strengths

- good achievement rates
- good teaching and learning
- good community venues and resources

Weaknesses

- weak initial assessment process
- insufficient quality assurance of the learning process

Accounting and economics

Strengths

- good achievement rates
- good teaching and learning
- good community venues and resources

Weaknesses

- weak initial assessment process
- insufficient quality assuring of the learning process

Teacher/trainer awards

Strengths

- good teaching and learning
- good community venues and resources

Weaknesses

- weak initial assessment process
- insufficient quality assuring of the learning process

Information & communications technology

Using IT

Strengths

- extensive course provision and clear progression routes
- responsive curriculum management

Weaknesses

- inadequate initial assessment process
- insufficient attention to the needs of individual learners
- insufficient sharing of good practice

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality and catering

Strengths

- good skills development

Weaknesses

- poor planning of individual learning
- poor curriculum management

Leisure, sport and recreation

Strengths

- good skills development

Weaknesses

- poor planning of individual learning
- poor curriculum management

Health, social care & public services

Care

Strengths

- good skills development
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- inadequate programme co-ordination

Counselling

Strengths

- good skills development
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- inadequate programme co-ordination

Visual & performing arts & media

Arts

Strengths

- good standards of work
- good teaching and learning
- wide range of courses responsive to local needs

Weaknesses

- insufficient opportunities for celebrating learners' achievements in visual arts and crafts
- insufficient use of new technologies in art and design
- weak curriculum management

Crafts

Strengths

- good standards of work
- good teaching and learning
- wide range of courses responsive to local needs

Weaknesses

- insufficient opportunities to celebrate learners' achievements in visual arts and crafts
- weak curriculum management

Drama

Strengths

- good standards of work
- good teaching and learning
- wide range of courses responsive to local needs

Weaknesses

- weak curriculum management

Humanities

History and genealogy

Strengths

- good achievement for learners on access to higher education courses
- good personal development activities
- good range of courses at level 3

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory achievement at level 3 for 16-18 year olds
- inappropriate accommodation in some centres
- insufficient curriculum co-ordination

Sociology and psychology

Strengths

- good achievement for learners on access to higher education courses
- good personal development activities
- good range of courses at level 3

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory achievement at level 3 for 16-18 year olds
- inappropriate accommodation in some centres
- insufficient curriculum co-ordination

English, languages & communications

English

Strengths

- good achievement rates in GCSE English
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- unsuitable accommodation in some locations
- insufficient opportunities for learners to progress beyond level 2
- inadequate curriculum co-ordination

Languages

Strengths

- good development of listening and speaking skills
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- unsuitable accommodation in some locations
- insufficient opportunities for learners to progress beyond level 2
- inadequate co-ordination of the curriculum

Foundation programmes

Literacy and numeracy

Strengths

- good achievements on the national literacy and numeracy tests
- very effective course provision to meet community needs
- very effective partnership arrangements

Weaknesses

- insufficient resources in some centres
- ineffective use of individual learning plans
- some incomplete quality assurance arrangements

Independent living and leisure skills

Strengths

- good development of learners' skills and confidence
- good celebration of learner success
- good, supportive learning environment

Weaknesses

- ineffective use of individual learning plans
- unsatisfactory co-ordination of provision at one site
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT NORTHUMBERLAND LEA:

- 'all the tutors and administrative staff are always very friendly and helpful'
- 'the tutors are very skilled'
- 'the range of courses available, and the times of classes'
- 'the way that we're supported to develop self-confidence - gaining a new outlook on life'
- 'I'm still learning something new even after coming for a few years'
- 'improved social contact - meeting new people'
- 'it's fun and learning together'
- 'the opportunity to achieve qualifications keeps me focused and gives me a sense of achievement'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK NORTHUMBERLAND LEA COULD IMPROVE:

- the number of forms and the amount of time they take to complete
- the availability of course books and some materials
- 'more space and better facilities; physical access to some rooms is difficult'
- more taster courses so that we can try new things
- earlier and better information about courses and fees

KEY CHALLENGES FOR NORTHUMBERLAND LEA:

- establish curriculum leadership for adults in each area of learning
- incorporate comprehensive quality assurance arrangements
- maintain the momentum for change
- establish cross-service additional learning support arrangements
- establish a cross-service strategy for equality of opportunity

Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

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

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

Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

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

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

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

Strengths

- strong strategic vision and direction
- particularly effective partnership working
- very effective action-planning
- highly effective arrangements to widen the participation of learners from under-represented groups

Weaknesses

- insufficient co-ordination of the curriculum in many areas of learning
- weak management of appraisal and staff development
- insufficiently established strategy for additional learning support
- insufficient development of equality of opportunity strategy
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements

76. NCCALS provides strong strategic vision and direction, with clear support at the most senior levels. Its plans to raise the aspirations of learners and regenerate the local economy place learning in a central position in the organisation. A recently published consultation document sets a challenging agenda and clear priorities for a unified approach to learning at all levels in the county. The organisation recently reviewed its vision, mission and strategic objectives, and ensures that it monitors progress regularly. E-learning is viewed as key to meeting the challenge of geographic diversity and rural isolation, and action to establish this at local level has begun.

77. NCCALS has particularly effective partnerships that support all levels of the provision. The organisation is well placed in strategic partnerships that work to develop infrastructure and influence provision. NCCALS has developed customised programmes for learners from trade unions and the fire service. Local area and centre-based partnerships benefit the learners. For example, one centre ensures that the local library is informed of the content of courses each term. The library responds by featuring relevant books in its stock. Links with local providers of information, advice and guidance for adults enhance support for the learners and, in some instances, Sure Start supports childcare arrangements. At individual level, staff make effective use of their own local networks for the benefit of the community. Shared resources, accommodation and expertise have supported new learning opportunities in villages where few previously existed. Informal partnerships with learners, who act as learning advocates or mentors, support new and less confident learners.

78. Action-planning in NCCALS is very effective. The new management team is highly active in driving this process forward. Target dates for action indicate a keen sense of

NORTHUMBERLAND LEA

urgency and pace. Centres are set clear targets for recruitment, retention and achievement, linked to priorities, where formerly there were none. NCCALS regularly monitors targets to ensure that contract requirements are met and, where necessary, it takes remedial action. For example, this can include changes to the programme offer or the quality of publicity materials to raise recruitment levels. The community education managers and other staff value highly the increased levels of central support and direction. Many of the staff made positive comments on the significant improvements made, many of which came about through consultation with them.

79. Communication is satisfactory. There are some good examples of effective communication at managerial level, where regular meetings are generally well recorded and supported by well-written briefing papers. However, the status of decisions is not always clear from minutes, or if action points have been followed up. Some centres and curriculum groups have regular communication with part-time staff, but this is not consistent.

80. NCCALS has invested significantly in a powerful central management information system, which makes data readily available in a range of report formats. NCCALS is starting to use this information to monitor targets and assist decision-making. However, use of the system is relatively new, and it is too early to judge its impact. The organisation recognises that further staff development is necessary. There is no reliable historical data to support the analysis of trends over time.

81. NCCALS recognised and responded promptly to some inconsistencies in centre-based financial monitoring that audits identified. There is now a clearly described central process, with detailed guidelines and a standardised spreadsheet. Monthly financial monitoring takes place and there are audit arrangements through the council's systems. Franchise arrangements are satisfactory. There is a contract and service level agreement. NCCALS produces a weekly report and checks data for accuracy. There have been a number of meetings, observations and franchise monitoring activities. A shared approach to the management and use of resources maximises their use.

82. There is insufficient co-ordination of the curriculum in many areas. Much programme management is at centre level and there is an insufficient overview across the service. Standardisation of aspects of curriculum management for other programmes has begun, but so far its impact is limited. At some centres, centre heads monitor records of teaching and learning, but this is not always the case. There are insufficient opportunities for tutors to share good practice. Progression opportunities, both within NCCALS's own provision and with partners, are insufficiently developed. In some areas of learning, such as humanities, there is inadequate provision at lower levels to provide steps up to higher courses. In others, such as hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, there are gaps at almost every level, with insufficient opportunities to take accredited courses. Where classes in individual centres are so small that it is inefficient to set them up, there is little systematic consultation to see if learners at other centres would provide a large enough class across the region.

83. NCCALS uses the standard county council appraisal scheme and documents, but

there is no established annual appraisal cycle for all adult and community learning staff, and it has appraised very few people. Some centre managers carry out an informal annual meeting with part-time staff that combines programme review and appraisal, but they do not record this formally. There are a range of staff development activities, including training in the use of the management information system, health and safety and e-learning, but no individual or adult and community learning staff development plans. Although training at some centres has been structured, for others it is carried out informally and casually. Some part-time staff benefit from informal staff development at a range of classes in the centres where they work, but it is not clear if their records are updated to reflect this.

84. NCCALS has a clearly written strategy and development plan for literacy, numeracy and language support that was updated in August 2004. The development plan sets clear targets in local and national context, but is in the early stages of implementation and it is too early to measure its impact. There are some examples of the additional learning support provided, but many tutors and managers are unclear about the procedure to obtain support. Sometimes no support is provided, and in others the need is identified too late.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

85. NCCALS implements a highly effective range of measures to widen the participation of learners from under-represented groups throughout the county. Projects clearly link to the developing economic needs of the local community. Successful projects include partnership arrangements with the fire service and a number of trade unions to provide essential skills training. Sensitive arrangements are in place to carry out this training, including the options of delivering training in the workplace, at learning centres or through open learning. NCCALS has exceeded its anticipated number of learners working towards national tests in literacy and numeracy by over 100 per cent. The programme is very successful, with a pass rate of 99 per cent. A highly successful open day for fathers and children led to the development of a good pilot programme involving fathers in family learning. This project used the building and filming of robots to encourage the development of literacy, numeracy and IT skills. There are good arrangements with other national programmes to provide support for family learning. NCCALS is developing a programme to provide learning opportunities for the travelling community. Learning is responsive to local needs, for example, in rural areas some courses do not run during harvest or lambing seasons. Daytime crèche facilities are available in a number of areas across the county. The organisation offers fee remissions for eligible learners.

86. NCCALS and the schools have made satisfactory progress towards meeting the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001. Audits of premises have been carried out and funding obtained to make a range of improvements to premises. These include the installation of access ramps and the widening of doors, the repainting of internal walls to assist partially sighted learners, alteration of lighting, installation of hearing loop systems in some premises and the purchase of specialist IT equipment. Access to premises is satisfactory,

but at some sites directional signage to classes and offices is poor. Promotional materials are available covering courses in each of the schools, but the content does not always break down stereotypical views or attract applicants from under-represented groups. NCCALS collects data that records learners' participation by gender, age, ethnicity and disability. There is also data available to show the percentage of the local population from minority ethnic groups and this is used to help target under-represented groups within the areas of learning. NCCALS has used data from each area of learning to identify rates of achievement and measure progress within curriculum areas.

87. There is some promotion of equality of opportunity to staff and learners. Senior staff have attended external training courses on racial equality. Centre managers within the local authority have a good understanding of equality issues. Learners' awareness of equal opportunities is satisfactory. Learners receive a pocket-sized handbook which gives detailed information about their rights and responsibilities. The comprehensive complaints procedure is also included. Copies of the handbook are readily available in large print.

88. The equal opportunities strategy is insufficiently developed. There is no single point of contact or responsibility for equality of opportunity. NCCALS has an equal opportunities policy, although this only applies to its employees and their workplaces. Schools also have their own equal opportunities policies, although these do not fully extend to adult and community learning. Staff handbooks include information on the local authority equal opportunities policy, but not on how equality of opportunity applies to learners. Centre co-ordinators have attended training courses which have included equality and diversity. However, not all staff are aware of these and many tutors have not received equal opportunities training. Some tutors, including those who have attended training, are uncertain about equality issues, particularly those relating to their responsibilities under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

89. Policies and procedures are satisfactory. They are the county council's procedures, covering all relevant legislation and are updated regularly. They are not yet fully adapted to reflect adult learners, although there are plans to remedy this. A quality assurance manager was appointed in January as part of the management restructuring. A quality assurance handbook has been developed and updated recently, after extensive research with centre managers. The procedures are sufficiently flexible to accommodate the different characteristics of each centre. Managers have attended training on the new quality assurance arrangements and tutors have been supplied with a comprehensive tutor handbook based on the toolkit produced by the Adult Learning Inspectorate. This includes details of the quality monitoring process. A learners' handbook has also been produced, which is compact, well designed and includes support arrangements and a learners' charter.

90. NCCALS collects learners' feedback and has made improvements, but the organisation does not always record them formally. For example, a group of IT learners complained of systems that crashed and about out-of-date software, and NCCALS

resolved these problems. A telephone survey of learners has produced some good-quality feedback. Similarly, a 'mystery shopper' exercise has provided useful information on the quality of initial guidance and support at each centre.

91. There is a procedure for internal verification and this process is generally satisfactory. A recognised credit-based organisation accredits a number of courses and NCCALS has reached an agreement with it to develop a framework of external and internal moderation. However, the target date for implementation of these procedures is September 2005.

92. While significant developments have taken place to improve the provision, NCCALS's arrangements for quality assurance are still incomplete. Although the quality assurance handbook is a good improvement, it does not cover all aspects of teaching and learning. Lesson planning, induction, individual learning plans and initial assessment are not covered in the handbook, although there is a suggested lesson plan standard form in the tutors' handbook. Lesson planning, individual learning planning, initial assessment and the interpretation of the quality assurance procedures are inconsistent across the county. Some centres do not monitor lesson plans, provide learners with individual learning plans, or monitor them for quality. In one area of learning, group plans are used inappropriately. There is some inappropriate phraseology in the tutors' handbook, which confuses some tutors. Some procedures have insufficient information on how, when and by whom they will be monitored. NCCALS assumes that franchised and subcontracted provision is subject to the quality assurance arrangements, but does not specify this in the handbook. Only a small percentage of tutors have been observed teaching. Observation forms do not encourage sufficient detail on teaching methodology or the quality of learning. NCCALS has developed a new, much improved standard form but it has not used it yet. Most of the action plans developed as a result of centre monitoring visits have not yet been reviewed, although some targets have been set. Some significant issues identified in the survey of initial advice and guidance and learners' feedback, which relate to the quality of pre-course information, have not been dealt with before the start of the new term. Inspectors in six out of the nine areas of learning found that incomplete quality assurance was a significant weakness. The self-assessment process is unsatisfactory. This was written before the new management team took over. In some areas of learning, such as humanities, and English, languages and communications, the self-assessment confused the areas of learning, so little information is given on them. In others, strengths and weaknesses often differed from the inspectors' findings. A position statement had been supplied by the new management team detailing changes in provision since the self-assessment. Although limited in scope to leadership and management, and foundation, the findings within it are broadly accurate.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Sciences & mathematics

Sciences & mathematics		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Sciences - Adult and community learning	60	None
Mathematics - Adult and community learning	80	None

Sciences

Strengths

- good achievement rates
- good response to needs of the local community
- strong partnerships with external organisations

Weaknesses

- poor retention in GCSE biology
- insufficient co-ordination of the curriculum

Mathematics

Strengths

- good achievement rates
- good response to the demand in the local community
- strong partnerships with external organisations

Weaknesses

- insufficient variation in teaching methods in mathematics
- insufficient co-ordination of the curriculum

Achievement and standards

93. For those learners retained, the pass rates are high. Although the numbers of learners are low in AS mathematics, the pass rate for the last two years was 100 per cent. Most learners achieve a grade in GCSE, despite the fact that they have failed the subject previously. The progress of these learners is good, since their ability at the start of the programme is often poor, and their confidence and self-esteem is low. All learners improve their mathematical skills and knowledge, even when they do not gain a grade C or above in examinations. The standard of learners' work is generally high. Learners show clear mathematical calculations and keep good notes for future revision. Biology

learners' work is of a good standard. GCSE coursework is also of a high standard.

94. The retention rate in GCSE biology is poor. In 2002-03, the retention rate was as low as 50 per cent and never any higher than 63 per cent. This weakness is noted in NCCALS's most recent self-assessment report.

Quality of education and training

95. NCCALS responds well to the needs of the local community. Centres take responsibility for managing their budgets and are able to run classes for small numbers of learners which are not available elsewhere. Learners comment about the clear advice they receive when making course enquiries and of the support they receive from all centre staff. Courses are given across a wide geographical area. Some have been developed specifically in response to the needs of learners who have previously failed GCSEs. They are tailored to the needs of these learners and success rates are good.

96. Resources are satisfactory. The enthusiasm of tutors is high and they are knowledgeable. All have suitable academic qualifications and experience and nearly all of them have teacher training qualifications. Classrooms in which mathematics is taught are adequately furnished, but there is insufficient access to practical mathematics equipment. Learners have access to computers. The usefulness of classrooms used for science courses varies, with some lessons taking place in properly equipped laboratories but a small number in ordinary rooms with few visual aids or specialist equipment.

97. Assessment practices are satisfactory. Initial assessment is given mainly by a self-assessment process, with some tutors supplementing this with objective assessments. In the few instances where this is done, tutors effectively use the information in planning their lessons. Assessment in class is given appropriately. Homework is marked in a timely way and learners receive appropriate written feedback. Quality assurance of the assessment process is in accordance with the awarding body's requirements.

98. Centres have facilities for supporting learners with additional learning needs, including those with hearing and visual impairments. Some schools have no lift facilities for learners with mobility impairments, but all of the centres are able to rearrange room allocations to provide access. Although there is little objective assessment for literacy and numeracy support needs, tutors are very sensitive to these issues and can refer learners for extra support to discrete essential skills sessions.

99. Overall, the teaching profile is satisfactory, with 62 per cent of lessons judged to be good. Lessons are well planned. Learners are given lists of topics to study and key assessment dates. There are good relationships between tutors and learners, which motivates the learners to contribute in lessons.

100. Teaching methods in mathematics vary insufficiently. NCCALS makes little use of computers or practical mathematics equipment to stimulate learners who lack confidence or find topics too abstract. In many lessons, tutors use a limited range of learning

activities which do not give the learners sufficient opportunities to make contributions in lessons and take more responsibility for their own learning. In some lessons, insufficient account is taken of the learners existing knowledge and more able learners do not work on differentiated tasks to improve their skills to a higher level.

Leadership and management

101. Centres have strong partnerships with external organisations, which broaden the curriculum and enhance the learners' experience. Their links with local schools and communities help to identify demand for new courses and provide suitable venues, staffing and equipment. Good use is made of the resources in the community schools, providing adult learners with a level of resource in some centres that is very good. Some centres have good partnerships with local businesses and provide courses for them. There are ongoing developments with a local branch of a credit-based awarding body to accredit courses that do not have formal examinations and allow the learners to accumulate appropriate credits for their learning.

102. There is insufficient co-ordination of the curriculum and opportunities for sharing good practice. At the time of inspection there had been few lesson observations completed to identify areas of good practice and to then share this with other tutors. There is a tutors' forum available on an intranet but few people use it. Schemes of work vary considerably in the depth of detail and few demonstrate sufficient thought about the best teaching and learning styles for different topics. Through effective equal opportunities monitoring there is an awareness of problems and this has led to more specific marketing but it has yet to increase the number of men on courses. There is no curriculum manager for this area. While provision in individual centres is usually satisfactory or better, there is no overview of the provision across the range of courses or any systematic approach to opportunities for the learners to progress.

Business administration, management & professional

Business administration, management & professional		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Business administration</i> - Adult and community learning	150	None
<i>Accounting and economics</i> - Adult and community learning	50	None
<i>Teacher/trainer awards</i> - Adult and community learning	40	None

Business administration*Strengths*

- good achievement rates
- good teaching and learning
- good community venues and resources

Weaknesses

- weak initial assessment process
- insufficient quality assurance of the learning process

Accounting and economics*Strengths*

- good achievement rates
- good teaching and learning
- good community venues and resources

Weaknesses

- weak initial assessment process
- insufficient quality assuring of the learning process

Teacher/trainer awards*Strengths*

- good teaching and learning
- good community venues and resources

Weaknesses

- weak initial assessment process
- insufficient quality assuring of the learning process

Achievement and standards

103. The achievement rates in business administration and accounting are good. In the academic year 2003-04, over 80 per cent of business administration learners who completed their course of study achieved their qualification aims. In accounting subjects, over 73 per cent of learners achieved their qualification aims. Sixty-seven per cent of learners completing their courses in teacher and teaching assistant training achieved their qualifications. A further 10 per cent who have yet to complete are awaiting external verification. Business administration attracts the largest intake, with 64 per cent of learners, followed by learners on teaching courses at 22 per cent. The remainder were enrolled on accounting courses. Retention rates on all courses are satisfactory, with over 80 per cent of enrolled learners completing their courses of study. Learners make good progress in acquiring new skills.

Quality of education and training

104. Teaching and learning are good, with over 87 per cent of observed lessons rated as good or better. The remainder are satisfactory. All tutors are well qualified in their curriculum area and have good practical experience. Tutors hold a variety of teaching qualifications. Tutors are well prepared, with detailed schemes of work and lesson plans that are well matched to the needs of learners. Learners have a good understanding of the course programme and know what to expect and what is expected of them. Teaching materials are varied and of a high quality. Tutors employ a range of teaching methods that maintain the learners' interest and commitment. Good use is made of questioning techniques to bring learners into discussions, from which tutors draw on their comments and experiences to personalise the learning. Learners appreciate the small class sizes and the individual tuition that they often receive. Learners make good progress, often at a pace that surprises them. Learners participate well and enjoy the sessions.

105. Facilities, equipment and resources are good. In schools, dedicated community facilities and open learning centres, the accommodation and teaching resources are of a consistently high standard. Accommodation is clean, well maintained, comfortable and fit for its purpose. Courses that run on an outreach basis in other community halls are well suited to the learners' needs. There are no access difficulties for learners with mobility problems. Learners with other support needs, such as hearing or visual impairments, are given relevant learning aids. Computer equipment is up to date and enhanced by the use current industry-standard software. Tutors are well qualified and experienced in their area of expertise and as teachers. They develop and use high-quality teaching materials, course notes, coursework and assignments.

106. There are satisfactory processes for assessing and monitoring learners' progress. Tutors use varied strategies to assess and monitor the learners' progress. Some give homework assignments and provide the learners with written feedback the following week. Outcomes of courses are measured by achievement in formal, externally marked examinations. Achievement on teaching and classroom assistant courses is based on the

assessment of coursework and workplace observations requiring formal internal and external verification. These processes are satisfactory and meet awarding body criteria.

107. Courses meet the aims of learners to a satisfactory extent. All learners express satisfaction with their courses. There are 31 courses run at 12 locations across the county. Many have extremely small numbers of learners, such as four or less. The course duration, content and level satisfy their personal and occupational needs. Learners are enrolled on courses in places and at times convenient to them. None of the learners were unable to find a suitable course and none travelled more than three miles to a centre. The courses are all accredited by local or national bodies and provide entry-level qualifications to a variety of occupations. In most cases they also have very clear progression routes to higher-level courses, available either through the adult learning service or further and higher education.

108. The initial assessment process is weak. During the first session, learners complete an informal, unstructured and subjective initial assessment, which is poorly designed and confusing. It fails to adequately identify either their prior knowledge of the subject or their support needs. There is no objective testing to establish the learners' standards of literacy or numeracy. However, provision of literacy and numeracy support is satisfactory, with tutors often identifying a need for support during the course. One tutor has devised and introduced a testing procedure in which learners complete an assignment during the first session. This is assessed and a judgement is then made about the need for learning support. Many tutors have effective links with essential skills tutors. Learners in need of guidance or support for personal problems are referred to the adult learning service's administrators.

Leadership and management

109. There is insufficient quality assurance of the learning process. Although a curriculum co-ordinator has done much work to develop some new processes, these are new and not yet fully established. There has been no observation of teaching in the past year. The tutors, all well qualified and experienced, prepare their own course materials which, with few exceptions, are not subject to a routine quality check. All tutors are aware of and had copies of the recently introduced quality assurance manual. They had also received a tutors' handbook providing guidance on aspects of classroom management. There is no formal appraisal or development programme for tutors. Learners, many with prior experience of community learning, cannot recall giving any feedback about the quality of the teaching. None of the tutors interviewed had any direct involvement in the preparation of the organisation's most recent self-assessment report. Most were unable to recall having seen it.

110. All learners had received a learners' handbook and an induction to their course. They could clearly recall the presentations on both health and safety, and equality of opportunity. They were aware of the grievance and complaints procedures and how to use them.

Information & communications technology

Information & communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Using IT</i> - Adult and community learning	1479	None

Using IT

Strengths

- extensive course provision and clear progression routes
- responsive curriculum management

Weaknesses

- inadequate initial assessment process
- insufficient attention to the needs of individual learners
- insufficient sharing of good practice

Achievement and standards

111. In ICT, retention and achievement rates are satisfactory. In basic computer literacy qualifications in IT courses in 2003-04, the retention rate was 82 per cent out of 420 starts and the achievement rate was 58 per cent. Out of 791 learners who started an examination-based qualification in IT, retention is at 76 per cent and achievement at 54 per cent. On accredited introductory courses retention rates are good, with an 87 per cent retention rate and 73 per cent achievement. Achievement data for previous years is not sufficiently reliable to be able to make comparisons.

112. Learners on introductory programmes quickly overcome their fear of computers to perform a range of useful tasks, from letter-writing to e-mailing photographs and using the internet. Learners' self-confidence improves and they talk with pride of their achievements in using spreadsheets in their working life and offering support to work colleagues on computer applications. This experience encourages lifelong learning and significant numbers of learners sample several courses to develop their skills, for example in the use of professional digital-imaging software and setting up complex databases.

Quality of education and training

113. The range of courses offered in ICT is extensive and includes short introductory courses, internationally recognised IT qualifications and specialist subjects, such as digital photography and internet genealogy. Learning is provided in many different types of centres across the county including community halls, schools, dedicated and open-learning centres and a public house.

114. There are good opportunities for learners to progress to more advanced courses and many of them do so. Several learners are now taking their third course and centres maintain records of their learning plans and achievements as they progress. Centres are very flexible and encourage learners to drop in for further practice outside formal lesson times to accelerate their learning. Where this is not possible, good arrangements have been made with local libraries for learners to book IT facilities to support their studies. Taster courses and special events such as open days and 'silver surfer' days have been successful in attracting new learners, including senior citizens, those who are unemployed and those who have returned to learning after many years.

115. Resources are satisfactory. The new curriculum co-ordinator and centre managers are very keen to ensure that the IT facilities provided are appropriate for the courses offered, whether in a small village community hall or a large open-learning centre. Computer equipment and software in several centres have recently been upgraded to a very high standard. Most centres have internet access and many have good audiovisual aids, including data projectors and electronic whiteboards. Managers recognise that a minority of centres require further updating and these are scheduled in the near future. Productive discussions take place with staff in local schools to ensure that facilities meet the needs of both school pupils and adult learners.

116. Arrangements for internal verification are satisfactory. While initial assessment relies heavily on self-assessment, with little objective assessment, continuous assessment practices are adequate for the needs of learners. Quality assurance of this process is also adequate and meets the requirements of the individual awarding bodies.

117. The initial assessment process is inadequate. Some tutors have insufficient understanding of the skills that individual learners bring to their courses and they do not identify their individual needs sufficiently. On starting a course, learners answer written questions about their levels of understanding in communication and ICT. Tutors do not use detailed diagnostic assessment or practical computer tests to find out learners' previous experience or levels of literacy or numeracy needs. Occasionally, tutors are aware of previous experience and individual learning needs but fail to take sufficient account of this when planning lessons. For example, a teacher had identified that a learner had basic literacy needs that were hampering his progress but had not considered support arrangements. Several learners new to computing were unfamiliar with specialist terminology used by the teacher, while others working in IT found the practical exercises were repetitive and insufficiently challenging.

118. In sessions, learners' individual needs do not receive sufficient attention. Most tutors are clear about the content and scheduling of what they intend to teach and indicate this on lesson plans and schemes of work. Many lesson plans pay insufficient attention to varying learners' activities and do not consider using a range of assessment methods to check understanding. Many tutors rely too heavily on learners working individually with workbooks to practise computer applications. There is insufficient checking of this individual work to ensure that each learner understands the material. Where learning is successful, schemes of work and lesson plans have clear learning

objectives that show how lesson activities link closely to the requirements of the syllabus. One tutor planned a course for senior citizens to develop their confidence and skills in using computers before introducing the requirements for certificates. Learners had ample opportunities to ask questions about their personal home use of computers and could practise new techniques before confidently moving on to more complex tasks covered by the syllabus. Learners receive constructive and supportive feedback about their progress.

Leadership and management

119. Curriculum management in ICT is responsive. A curriculum co-ordinator is now in place. Several recent initiatives to improve the provision have been successfully implemented and there is a clear strategy for the area of learning. Managers respond quickly to learners' concerns. They are keen to seek learners' views about the quality of courses and also to discuss potential provision with community partners and current learners. Developments of the management information system have taken place and useful data is now available for centre managers and tutors.

120. Staff are knowledgeable on the wider aspects of equality of opportunity and there is adequate provision for disabled learners. There is a range of information on equal opportunities available in most centres. Several staff have attended training programmes but this does not have a high priority for all tutors and is not given systematically. Health and safety issues are reviewed regularly, action has been taken to avoid lone-working and the tutors have been provided with personal alarms. Arrangements have also been made for premises' management staff to escort tutors to their cars if they feel unsafe.

121. Managers and tutors do not share good practice about teaching methods sufficiently. Several tutors who have recently been appointed are not fully conversant with good practice relating to induction and lesson-planning. NCCALS schedules too few lesson observations in this area of learning and managers do not receive sufficient information about the quality of teaching and learning. While some staff development has been given, this is not systematically available to all. Recent developments, like the tutors' and learners' handbook, are insufficiently established with tutors to use them effectively.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Hospitality and catering</i> - Adult and community learning	146	4
<i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i> - Adult and community learning	1309	4

Hospitality and catering

Strengths

- good skills development

Weaknesses

- poor planning of individual learning
- poor curriculum management

Leisure, sport and recreation

Strengths

- good skills development

Weaknesses

- poor planning of individual learning
- poor curriculum management

Achievement and standards

122. There is good skills development on sport and hospitality programmes. In cookery classes, learners improve their food preparation and cooking skills. In one practical class learners were able to make quite complex dishes. In the third week of a cake decorating class, one learner with no previous experience made an excellent sugarcraft spray of carnation, rosebuds and full roses which was of a professional standard. In golf and badminton classes, learners responded to the tutors' advice to demonstrate significant improvement of skills. The tutor in one fitness session gave learners a fitness test in their first week and repeated this so that they could see their own improvements. Learners make significant gains in their physical and mental health. Some learners are less stressed as a result of attending fitness classes. Well-planned yoga and tai chi sessions promote safe exercise and improved posture and mobility. An exercise to music session, run in a very relaxed and informal way in an isolated village in the county, provides a convenient local opportunity for those learners to maintain their fitness levels.

NORTHUMBERLAND LEA

123. At over 90 per cent, the retention rate is satisfactory for accredited and non-accredited courses in sports and leisure. There is good retention on some accredited swimming course provision with 100 per cent in 2002-03 and 90 per cent in 2003-04 on a national pool lifeguard course. Overall, the retention rate for catering is lower at 82 per cent, but it is satisfactory.

124. Achievement on hospitality, sports and leisure courses is satisfactory. There is good achievement on the national pool lifeguard course of 100 per cent in 2002-03 and 95 per cent in 2003-04. Achievement on the intermediate sugarcraft and cake decorating courses in 2004-04 is low at 35 per cent overall, but the advanced course had 100 per cent achievement in 2002-03. Achievement on most food hygiene courses has been above 95 per cent since 2002-03, which is an expected rate for short courses.

Quality of education and training

125. Resources are satisfactory. There are some excellent facilities at some centres. For example, at one centre there is a modern sports complex comprising three sports halls, a gym and sports fields. Golf learners are able to access excellent practice facilities at a local golf course and driving range, with each learner provided with their own bay for driving practice. Accommodation and equipment in school facilities are generally satisfactory. Some tutors bring their own equipment, but electrical equipment is not routinely tested for safety compliance. There is sufficient equipment in most centres. However, in one cookery class learners had to work in pairs due to insufficient, small equipment. Kitchens used in school premises are generally clean and well maintained. At one centre a disabled hoist is in place at the swimming pool, which enables learners in wheelchairs to access the pool safely. However, at another centre, learners with mobility difficulties are unable to access the kitchens, which are on the second floor, as the lift has not worked for some years. In general, staff are appropriately experienced and qualified.

126. There is poor planning of individual learning. Some learners in observed sessions signed a learner agreement covering issues such as health and safety, and initial advice and guidance, without an appropriate induction. Teaching and learning in sport and hospitality is unsatisfactory. Of the lessons graded by inspectors, 15 per cent are unsatisfactory. Tutors in the better classes had well-detailed schemes of work and lesson plans, but in many instances documentary evidence of lesson planning was inadequate or absent. Some sessions were delivered casually and informally. In one practical cooking class there was no formal planning of skills to be gained or monitoring of what was learnt.

127. In hospitality, some learners are assessed for their literacy and numeracy skills, but this process is not made vocationally relevant. In sport, these assessments are not generally taking place. Where needs are identified, tutors are unclear what they should do. Learners are not always given appropriate advice and guidance for sports courses at enrolment. On one course, learners were enrolled before first meeting with the tutor but were not assessed for their ability level. Advanced learners were enrolled on an intermediate course and intermediate learners enrolled on an advanced course. Tutors

are invited to come to enrolment to discuss their course requirements but they do not attend regularly. NCCALS has recently introduced individual learning plans, but many tutors have yet to implement them and some were not used appropriately. In other classes, group learning plans had been introduced, but again these are not well used. Health-screening forms have recently been introduced for all learners, but these are not being completed by all learners and tutors do not always check them. There is little evidence of ongoing monitoring and recording of learners' progress. However, in one fitness class, learners completed a fitness test in their first week and this is repeated several times during the course to measure their progress.

Leadership and management

128. There is poor curriculum management. There is no vision or clear strategic planning for the curriculum area. There is insufficient progression planning and a limited range of provision. There is very little daytime provision and insufficient coverage of the curriculum area, particularly in hospitality, where the classes are mainly practical cookery classes, sugarcraft, cake decoration and food hygiene. Some learners form self-funding clubs as an alternative way of getting appropriate provision. This has happened in one area with tai chi and yoga learners. There are very few accredited courses across the curriculum area. During the inspection, a significant number of scheduled courses did not run and NCCALS was unaware of these cancellations. Most tutors have not been observed teaching. Tutors are not involved in the self-assessment process. There is no formal appraisal system to identify staff development needs. There is no opportunity for the sharing of good practice between staff in the same vocational area. Management does not monitor course documents, such as schemes of work and lesson plans. Tutors do not understand many of the documents that NCCALS has introduced or use them appropriately. The organisation does not monitor, analyse or action all course evaluations. Risk assessments have not been completed for all activities in all centres.

Health, social care & public services

Health, social care & public services		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Care - Adult and community learning	98	None
Counselling - Adult and community learning	29	None

Care*Strengths*

- good skills development
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- inadequate programme co-ordination

Counselling*Strengths*

- good skills development
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- inadequate programme co-ordination

Achievement and standards

129. There is good skills development. Learners gain increased knowledge, learning skills that enable them to apply theory to practice, enhance their practical skills and increase their confidence and self-esteem. In practical first-aid sessions, learners quickly develop skills and demonstrate them competently and confidently. They correct each other. Older learners and younger ones mix well in sessions and work together very effectively to complement each others' strengths and weaknesses.

130. Retention and achievement rates are satisfactory. In 2002-03, the retention rate was 94 per cent, and in the current year to date the retention rate is 89 per cent. The achievement rate for 2002-03 was 93 per cent. There are 15 short courses across the curriculum area. Since courses are short, retention and achievement are at an expected level. Assessments and samples of learners' work and assignments are of a satisfactory standard and meet the criteria set by awarding bodies.

Quality of education and training

131. Teaching and learning are good. Schemes of work and lessons are well planned, with appropriate timings that have clear aims and objectives. Tutors are flexible with the planning of sessions so as to meet individual learners' needs. They are generally knowledgeable and enthusiastic about their subject and link theory and practical work well. Tutors demonstrate skilful leadership of discussions to include all learners and give clear explanations to their questions. Learners' interest is sustained and engaged throughout the sessions observed. Learners contribute to and participate in all activities. Teaching and learning aids are used effectively. The pace of learning meets learners' needs. Learners are well motivated, enthusiastic, and they enjoy the learning sessions and participate fully in discussions. The learners demonstrate practical skills, such as first aid, confidently and competently. Learners value the training and report positively about the knowledge that they have gained.

132. Resources and accommodation are satisfactory. Most rooms are visually interesting and promote and value cultural and social diversity through displays, notices and leaflets. Staff are professionally qualified and experienced. A range of learning materials is used to support the learners. Access for people with disabilities and appropriate toilet facilities are available at all of the sites visited.

133. The monitoring and recording of learners' progress are satisfactory. All learners complete an individual learning plan that identifies previous knowledge, skills, expectations and review arrangements. Learning outcomes are identified at the start of the course which are used to monitor the learners' progress. Internal verification, for those courses requiring it, is satisfactory and meets awarding body requirements.

134. The range of courses is narrow but it meets the needs of the current learners. Fifteen courses were running at the time of inspection, including first aid, counselling, and health and safety. Decisions on what courses to provide come mainly from learners' feedback, consultation with voluntary groups and local research. Courses run during the day and the evening. Higher and lower level courses are given by other providers across the area in partnership with NCCALS.

135. Information, advice and guidance services for learners are satisfactory. Information brochures and the student handbook are attractive and user-friendly. Course descriptions are relevant to the courses provided. All learners receive effective pre-course information and have an opportunity to attend an open evening to discuss their concerns and ask questions. Induction is satisfactory. All learners have an induction. It provides a good foundation for learners at the start of their course and ensures that they have a good understanding of all aspects of their programme. Literacy and numeracy support is satisfactory. Learners are encouraged to make their support needs known through self-assessment. Most tutors have a good understanding of initial assessment and the need to adapt work to meet the learners' needs and interests. Separate literacy and numeracy sessions are made available to the learners.

Leadership and management

136. There is inadequate co-ordination of the programme. This curriculum area does not have a co-ordinator. NCCALS has identified this as a weakness and has planned action to deal with this. Subject specialists have not carried out observations of teaching and learning and some weaknesses have not been identified. Support, developmental needs and performance appraisal for sessional tutors in this area are not structured or clearly defined. There has been some staff training that includes lesson-planning, identifying learning outcomes and teaching strategies, but this is not specific to the area of learning. Good practice is not shared between subject tutors. There are insufficient formal links with partners to widen participation or increase curriculum development in a sustained strategic way. However, centre managers are effective in their individual centres at giving some support to staff. They are carrying out in-house teaching observations and supporting sessional tutors, but their time capacity is limited.

Visual & performing arts & media

Visual & performing arts & media		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts - Adult and community learning	550	2
Crafts - Adult and community learning	543	2
Drama - Adult and community learning	285	None

Arts

Strengths

- good standards of work
- good teaching and learning
- wide range of courses responsive to local needs

Weaknesses

- insufficient opportunities for celebrating learners' achievements in visual arts and crafts
- insufficient use of new technologies in art and design
- weak curriculum management

Crafts

Strengths

- good standards of work
- good teaching and learning
- wide range of courses responsive to local needs

Weaknesses

- insufficient opportunities to celebrate learners' achievements in visual arts and crafts
- weak curriculum management

Drama

Strengths

- good standards of work
- good teaching and learning
- wide range of courses responsive to local needs

Weaknesses

- weak curriculum management

Achievement and standards

137. Learners achieve good standards of work. They develop a range of skills throughout the course, such as different painting techniques or creative crafts. Portfolios of work show good progress made from the start of the course and learners appreciate their achievements. Learners gain confidence and the ability to carry on with their project on their own at home. Learners who have attended courses for many years develop very advanced skills. For example, in lace-making, learners develop the skills to create both their own designs and use more complex processes. In art, learners develop skills in sketching and watercolour painting before working on more challenging contextual studies. New learners are well supported and encouraged to participate in practical activities that develop their self-confidence. Within practical lessons, many experienced learners provide encouragement and specific help to new learners. In stick-dressing, new learners were shown how to work effectively with carving, heating and bending by more experienced learners.

138. In one craft session for beginners, three experienced learners returned as mentors to work with the new group. Learners artwork is of a professional standard and members of the public often purchase it.

139. Pass rates are high at between 85 to 95 per cent on courses in textiles, watercolour at level 2, lace-making, mixed crafts, porcelain restoration, stick-dressing, stained glass at level 3, and photography. In some instances, learners attend until the end of the course but fail to submit work for assessment. Pass rates for level 2 courses fell from 100 per cent in 2003 to 66 per cent in 2004.

140. Overall, retention is satisfactory. Retention rates on some courses are high. In 2003-04, 14 courses retained all the learners who started, all of whom achieved. However, retention of learners on other courses is poor with only 67 per cent of learners completing their courses. Attendance and punctuality are good.

Quality of education and training

141. Teaching and learning are good. Individual support for learners in the sessions is good. In practical sessions, tutors ensure that learners receive individual attention related to their specific needs, with good individual coaching. Tutors provide an encouraging atmosphere in the sessions and use challenging questions to support learning. Learners appreciate the individual attention received from the tutor related to their own project and level of ability. Individual artistic interests are catered for which extend the learners' knowledge and experience. For example, in the use of watercolours or acrylics, learners are encouraged to experiment with different techniques and mediums to enhance their practical skills. Learners appreciate the good working relationship with their colleagues and tutors. Teaching styles are appropriate for the needs of the adult learners. Effective demonstrations by the tutor, interspersed with learners' individual practical work, enhance the learning experience. Tutors encourage learners to look at the work of other members of the group to reinforce learning and develop critical analysis skills. In a practical drama workshop, learners were working on characterisation, sharing ideas within the group and analysing each member's contributions. The level of debate was of a high standard and learners of different abilities contributed ideas on aspects of characters' circumstances. Learners are encouraged to continue work outside of classes and follow up elements of research.

142. Tutors are well qualified, with wide teaching experience in adult education. Many of them have professional qualifications and experience in their chosen field. For example, some work as professional artists and some have relevant national experience of their craft.

143. The courses offered cover a wide range of subjects responsive to local needs. This includes some specialist crafts such as Northumbrian piping, landscape embroidery and stick dressing. There is a wide range of courses in arts and crafts and performing arts across the region. Courses are delivered at a variety of venues, such as schools and community centres. Village halls are used to widen participation and avoid the need for learners to travel to larger centres. However, some learners travel considerable distances for a specialist subject.

144. Courses are offered at times to suit the learners. For example, 10-week courses from October to March are organised as these are more appropriate for the farming community. Some advanced programmes are offered in schools in twilight times.

145. Physical resources are satisfactory. Accommodation is suitable for the purpose, with appropriate attention given to matters of health and safety. Many rooms are accessible for learners with restricted mobility. However, one site is unlit and learners need to walk along a dark path to get into the building. Some rooms are rather small for the number of learners involved in practical work. Tutors frequently bring in resources and learning materials, such as specialist art and craft items. In some centres, a good range of books and slides support learning. Tutors' handouts are of a satisfactory standard and most learners are provided with the course outline. There are some

NORTHUMBERLAND LEA

examples of good project briefs in performing arts that clarify the assessment objectives and include references for further research. Lesson plans and schemes of work are of a satisfactory standard.

146. There are insufficient opportunities for the display of learners' work in the visual arts and crafts. An exhibition of learners' art was recently held in a village hall and in two adult local centres. However, there are very few arrangements made to display and celebrate learners' work across the county. In the performing arts, learners have opportunities to perform. For example, in drama and theatre studies, learners produce, direct and act in an annual public performance as part of their assessed coursework.

147. Insufficient use is made of new technologies in art and design. For example, in a graphic design course computers were not used at all to support learning, in a subject area that is heavily reliant upon good computer skills to develop appropriately. In another session where equipment was available it was not used. Computers are not readily available to support the arts subjects.

Leadership and management

148. Curriculum management is weak. Managers at local centres manage the individual curriculum in their area. There is no central co-ordination across the programme area. The planning of the course offer and the implementation of systems and procedures are inconsistent. Local centres plan the course offer through a mixture of public demand, networking arrangements and the availability of appropriate tutors and accommodation. Although the course offer is wide, there is no central management to ensure a fair distribution across the area. Progression routes, both internally and in conjunction with other partners, are insufficiently developed. There are few cross-region events to give learners opportunities to display their work or celebrate their achievements in a public arena. Although some tutor events have been held to introduce new self-assessment forms for literacy and numeracy, individual learning plans and the learners' handbook, these are recent initiatives and have yet to have an impact.

149. Support for learners whose literacy or numeracy needs are identified is satisfactory. At one centre, learners are directed to literacy and numeracy sessions at the local library when needs are identified. A bank of support tutors can be called on if necessary. Recording of learning is inconsistent. The process of observing teaching and learning is insufficiently established to help develop quality across the region.

150. Some tutors who have been observed reported it to be a useful activity, although one tutor found the advice given by the observer on how to write lesson plans inappropriate for the adult group. In some well-managed centres co-ordinators visit outreach and community sessions every month. In one instance, the centre manager will organise and lead the induction element at the start of each new course. However, some tutors have insufficient communication with centre co-ordinators. Internal verification arrangements are satisfactory, with centre managers ensuring that the quality of assessments meet the appropriate awarding bodies.

Humanities

Humanities		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>History and genealogy</i> - Adult and community learning	190	None
<i>Sociology and psychology</i> - Adult and community learning	143	None

History and genealogy

Strengths

- good achievement for learners on access to higher education courses
- good personal development activities
- good range of courses at level 3

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory achievement at level 3 for 16-18 year olds
- inappropriate accommodation in some centres
- insufficient curriculum co-ordination

Sociology and psychology

Strengths

- good achievement for learners on access to higher education courses
- good personal development activities
- good range of courses at level 3

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory achievement at level 3 for 16-18 year olds
- inappropriate accommodation in some centres
- insufficient curriculum co-ordination

Achievement and standards

151. Achievement for learners on programmes leading to access to higher education is good. Most are accredited at level 3. Learners achieve well on the programmes which provide non-traditional entry qualifications for higher education. In some subjects, such as A2 history, every learner completing the course was successful. Adult learners are more successful at the higher levels than the younger learners. Their understanding of complex subjects is good and they produce a high standard of work. Three-quarters of adults on the GCSE courses are successful. Learners develop skills in handling complex

concepts and are proficient in subject terminology.

152. Most learners on courses that do not lead to a qualification achieve their goals. Some of these learners progress from introductory courses to higher-level accredited courses. For example, learners on a taster programme in archaeology progressed to a GCSE class, and some learners have now moved on to take this subject at higher levels. Retired learners on family history courses develop new interests and skills, provide good support for their colleagues and share experience. Some of these learners have become proficient in computer skills to support their new interest.

153. Achievement for 16-18 year olds is unsatisfactory. While adults achieve well, younger learners are less successful. On average, younger learners have a 50 per cent chance of achievement while adults' rates are significantly higher. Progress in work seen is satisfactory at best. Standards of work produced is inadequate in some cases.

Quality of education and training

154. Personal development activities are good. Tutors make good use of external visits to support classroom learning. For example, the archaeology course involves field trips to explore the topography of the area, and all learners on the family history courses are taken to visit local archives. On many courses, learners are able to make good use of ICT for their research and many have progressed to ICT courses.

155. There is a good range of courses at level 3, particularly reflecting the needs of the younger learners. Many of these courses are unavailable at the local schools and learners are able to supplement the range of their A-levels. Courses are often timetabled at the end of the school day to meet their needs, and some consist entirely of 16-18 year olds. Learners are able to access a range of courses across the geographical area. Adults are able to join these classes, which might not otherwise have run. Learners complete an evaluation at the end of their course and make suggestions about other courses they might like to join.

156. Most of the teaching is satisfactory and appropriate for the level of qualification studied. Half of the classes observed during the inspection were good or better. Tutors were generally well prepared for their classes and produced useful handouts to support learning. In a 'genealogy on the internet' class, the tutor researched useful websites which she encouraged learners to visit. This enabled one learner to discover a remote ancestor for whom he had been searching for several years. Most tutors involved learners in discussions and drew on their experiences to reinforce learning. In psychology, learners did a personality test which engaged their interest in the subject. In one class, the tutor gave an effective display using digital photography to explain the significance of the landscape in determining human settlement.

157. Learners are set satisfactory tasks to allow the tutors to assess their ability levels. Learners in a family history class completed different formats of pedigree charts to record their ancestors. In the non-accredited courses, tutors relate content and assessment

methods to the individual interests of the learners. Homework is set and marked work is moderated. Few of the lesson plans contained sections for recording methods of assessment. Centres place the emphasis on offering courses which lead to accreditation. Some courses have been re-written to meet the requirements of an awarding body, such as a family history course.

158. Learners complete a questionnaire at the start of the course to assess their need for support. Very few indicate that they need additional support. Tutors assess their learners' ability through written work. Learners needing help can be referred to a tutor specialising in essential skills, but there is no formal diagnostic process to assess the learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs.

159. There is some targeted provision. Centre managers have researched the needs of potential learners in their poorer wards and put on programmes to attract them into learning, but few of these are in the humanities area. In some rural areas there is insufficient provision.

160. Accommodation in some centres is inappropriate for the needs of adult learners. One evening class was held in a school science laboratory. Classes in one school were held away from the main school building and there was no access to a toilet or to refreshments. Learners on a daytime class needed access to computers to support research, but were not able to use the computers until after the end of the school day, which was 15 minutes before the class ended. Some classes are occasionally interrupted by noise from school activities. Tutors are appropriately qualified in their subject and those who do not yet have a teaching qualification are encouraged to acquire one. Nearly three-quarters of tutors either have, or are working towards, such qualifications.

Leadership and management

161. There is no overall curriculum co-ordination of the humanities provision. While there is a strong programme for learners at level 3, there has been little development of entry-level programmes and inadequate thought regarding sensible progression opportunities. Individual centres have some pockets of good practice but this is not shared adequately. There is an inadequate overview of the curriculum and how other partners in the area can make the optimum use of resources. The self-assessment of humanities is inadequate and there is no overall recognition of the issues which the area faces.

162. Close relationships exist between the head teachers and the heads of the centre, which is based in their school. The heads of centre are also accountable to NCCALS for managing the provision, meeting targets and maintaining the management and financial information. NCCALS's recent reorganisation has provided greater strategic direction and transparency for the managers of the learning centres. Greater consistency in procedures is now developing between the centres. Centre managers appreciate the greater reliability of the management information that they now receive. Tutors are invited to briefing sessions on equality of opportunity, and health and safety. All learners receive a comprehensive learners' handbook at the start of their course, which gives

NORTHUMBERLAND LEA

advice on financial help, health and safety, and the complaints procedures.

English, languages & communications

English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
English - Adult and community learning	225	None
Languages - Adult and community learning	860	None

English

Strengths

- good achievement rates in GCSE English
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- unsuitable accommodation in some locations
- insufficient opportunities for learners to progress beyond level 2
- inadequate curriculum co-ordination

Languages

Strengths

- good development of listening and speaking skills
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- unsuitable accommodation in some locations
- insufficient opportunities for learners to progress beyond level 2
- inadequate co-ordination of the curriculum

Achievement and standards

163. Achievement in GCSE English is good. GCSE classes are geared to improving grades and tutors are skilled and experienced at helping learners to perform to their potential. Most classes involve learners who have previously failed and there are significant gains in self-confidence and self-esteem for these learners. Good and improving results are clear evidence of their success. The A*-C pass rates in 2003 were 53 per cent and, in 2004, are particularly high at 65 per cent.

164. Learners' listening and speaking skills develop rapidly, particularly when the use of the foreign language is maximised in the classroom. Beginners can often form basic sentences on rehearsed topics in the foreign language after only a few weeks' tuition.

The rate of learning in lessons is appropriate to the learners' prior knowledge and ability. They make logical and systematic progress towards their attainment targets in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Occasionally, however, tutors use English unnecessarily in lessons. Where learners choose to sit examinations, achievement rates at all levels are good. Retention is satisfactory overall at around 70 per cent, although a small minority of courses fall below this level.

Quality of education and training

165. Teaching and learning are good. Of the learning sessions observed, 67 per cent of sessions were good or better and none were unsatisfactory. Lessons are well planned and well organised. The pace of lessons is often rapid, which affords ample opportunities for practice and reinforcement. Valuable lesson time is fully utilised. In some classes there was clear evidence of recent learning having been fully understood. This enables learners to base new learning on solid foundations. Tutors vary methods and activities to sustain interest and momentum, and in the better lessons, they manage to find exactly the right balance between enjoyment and hard work. In a minority of beginners' lessons, tutors do not follow the customary sequencing of listening, speaking, reading and writing and some learners do not develop their listening and speaking skills sufficiently quickly. Many learners are keen, ambitious and well focused on their work. Staff and learners enjoy their languages, which enhances the whole learning experience. The use of closely monitored paired work is very effective in enabling tutors to identify and remedy learners' problems and, if necessary, provide them with instant individual help. Learners also enjoy working together and are mutually encouraging and supportive. Lesson plans and schemes of work have been standardised and formalised and are now usually adequate.

166. Staffing levels are satisfactory. Almost all tutors are academically qualified in their subjects and hold appropriate teaching qualifications. Many are practising linguists with a wealth of experience. GCSE English tutors are well versed in understanding how to get learners to improve their grades substantially.

167. The assessment of learning is satisfactory and the monitoring of learning during lessons is often good. Internal verification arrangements are satisfactory. Initial assessment is improving and is now adequate, although the process is sometimes too informal with insufficient guidance from tutors. Assessment on English GCSE courses is suitably thorough and learners are clear about their performance levels and also understand what they need to do to improve.

168. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Most centres publish helpful booklets, which describe and explain course requirements as well as centre facilities. Administrative staff at centres are a good source of advice and guidance. Tutors know their students well and this is facilitated by the paired work, which is a feature of many lessons. Literacy or numeracy needs are identified by self-assessment or self-declaration on enrolment forms. Where learners are identified as having additional learning needs, NCCALS provides them with appropriate support. Every effort is made to be sufficiently flexible to ensure that nobody is denied access. In one centre, staff await the arrival of a

partially sighted learner and her guide dog at each session. They greet her warmly at the entrance and escort her to the classroom.

169. Accommodation in some locations is unsuitable for adult learners. In classes held on school premises, the noise from children outside the rooms often disrupts sessions. Some classes are too large for the rooms in which they are held. In some instances, poor arrangement of furniture makes it impossible for tutors to assess all learners in the group adequately.

170. There are insufficient opportunities for learners to progress beyond level 2. There are no level 3 courses. In previous years learners did well in higher-level external examinations, although the number of candidates was small. Current learners have no opportunities to progress in the curriculum anywhere in NCCALS's provision. Less popular languages do not figure strongly but centre managers do try to widen the choice and levels of course when they identify a demand.

Leadership and management

171. Curriculum co-ordination is inadequate. There is no overview and forward planning to consolidate strengths and eradicate weaknesses across the curriculum. Planning of progression routes internally and with other partners is inadequate. The observation of teaching and learning schedule is insufficiently established. Only about 25 per cent of tutors in this curriculum area have gone through the process. The reports and feedback vary in quality, but the awarded grades are realistic.

172. Management at centre level is satisfactory. The new management structure established in NCCALS has standardised and formalised procedures and documents, and has directed centres towards more regular co-operation. This change is relatively new and it will take more time for the impact to be fully felt. However, the quality of the self-assessment report was very poor. It was inaccurate, made no mention of teaching and learning and other significant issues, and also failed to record a number of strengths and weaknesses.

Foundation programmes

Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i> - Adult and community learning	604	3
<i>Independent living and leisure skills</i> - Adult and community learning	108	3

Literacy and numeracy

Strengths

- good achievements on the national literacy and numeracy tests
- very effective course provision to meet community needs
- very effective partnership arrangements

Weaknesses

- insufficient resources in some centres
- ineffective use of individual learning plans
- some incomplete quality assurance arrangements

Independent living and leisure skills

Strengths

- good development of learners' skills and confidence
- good celebration of learner success
- good, supportive learning environment

Weaknesses

- ineffective use of individual learning plans
- unsatisfactory co-ordination of provision at one site
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements

Achievement and standards

173. There are very good achievements in national literacy and numeracy tests. Out of 817 learners who sat the test, 811 passed. The retention rate for 2003-04 on short courses was 93.5 per cent and, for long courses, the retention rate was 85.7 per cent. NCCALS sets literacy and numeracy learning targets and most learners who attend accredited and non-accredited programmes achieve them. The standard of learners' work is good, although they do not make personal targets and are often unaware of the progress they are making. Learners' attendance and punctuality are good. Attainment is

satisfactory.

174. There is good development of skills and confidence for learners with learning difficulties. They are confident in talking about the skills they have learnt and the benefits of attending classes, particularly away from the hospital wards. They show a good level of understanding. For example, in a class on using money, learners talked about different coins and, in a cookery class, they chose what they would like to cook each week. By the end of a computer class, new learners were able to use appropriate technical terms.

Quality of education and training

175. There is good celebration of learners' success. Tutors in the hospitals have developed imaginative ways of acknowledging learners' achievements. At one hospital, certificates are awarded upon completion of induction, giving the learners a sense of achievement early in the course. Younger learners have formal presentation evenings at which they are awarded certificates to mark the completion of their course. Photographic evidence of these events is widely displayed within the hospital. In community classes, adults with learning difficulties are working towards public performances in dance, drama and singing. They video their performances and have photographs displayed in community centres. Learners in a video arts workshop produce films that are shown at the community centre and on the website that they have created.

176. There is very effective course provision in literacy and numeracy to meet community needs. Many learners in rural areas attend classes that have been established specifically for them and, in some cases, the class may consist of only one or two learners. At harvest time, learners cannot always attend and the classes are delivered around the needs of the learner. In order to attract learners, the marketing of literacy and numeracy courses is high priority. The Get On at Work project was promoted through NCCALS's internal bulletin, posters and by personal recommendation and 788 participants went on to sit the national test. Progression routes from literacy and numeracy courses are satisfactory. Some learners progress to further courses such as business, ICT or GCSEs.

177. NCCALS creates a good, supportive learning environment to enable learners with learning difficulties and disabilities to focus on educational activities. Many of the learners in the hospitals display challenging behaviour. Some have been resident in the hospital for many years. In one art class, a learner who had earlier been distressed produced a creative and colourful collage after staff calmed her and made her comfortable. Tutors in the hospitals are sensitive to the individual, complex and challenging needs of learners. They are aware which topics of conversation or resources are inappropriate. Some learners are taught in single-sex groups. Some younger learners are taught on their own, as they experience difficulty with group interaction. Learners speak positively of the classes. They appreciate the opportunity to leave the hospital ward. They welcome the activity that the classes provide and enjoy learning new skills. Classes in community centres provide friendly and supportive learning environments. Learners are confident to talk to the tutors and express their views, and they enjoy the

NORTHUMBERLAND LEA

opportunity to meet people and make new friends. In one drama and dance class, all activities were designed to ensure the full inclusion of a wheelchair user.

178. There are very effective partnership arrangements for literacy and numeracy, such as that with Northumberland Care Trust, which enabled 30 employees to pass the national literacy and numeracy tests using flexible learning opportunities. The fire service recruits retained firefighters, of whom at least 80 per cent fail to meet the requirements for literacy and numeracy. A programme has now been designed to assist them to meet the educational criteria. There are collaborative arrangements with union organisations and these partnerships raise the profile of the Skills for Life Agenda and bring more learners into the provision.

179. Teaching and learning in most lessons are satisfactory. In literacy and numeracy classes, the individual needs of most learners are met through the detailed planning and management of lessons. Tutors use well-planned teaching strategies. In the weaker lessons, teaching does not meet the needs of individual learners. Activities are uninspiring and do not extend the learners' skills and knowledge.

180. The quality of accommodation and physical access is satisfactory.

181. All learners in literacy and numeracy classes have an initial interview and literacy and numeracy assessment, during which NCCALS identifies any additional support needs. If additional support is identified, learners may receive extra tutor support or specialist external support, such as a communicator for people who are deaf. The induction process is linked to the initial assessment process and is satisfactory. Assessment practices are satisfactory. There are appropriate arrangements to quality assure the assessment processes, although some are new and not well developed.

182. Some centres in the community have insufficient resources. There is an insufficient range of textbooks and insufficient access to computers. Where physical resources are available, they are used effectively in most lessons. The Gatehouse Centre at Hexham is well resourced and is an example of good practice within NCCALS. The resources in many of the classes are paper-based and, when used in class activities, they do not support the learners' preferred learning style. In the hospitals, there are a number of computers available in most teaching rooms. However, in many classes these are not used effectively to support the learners' development.

183. NCCALS makes ineffective use of individual learning plans. Learners' progress is regularly assessed against their learning targets. However, recording of progress lists teaching activities rather than what the learner has achieved. Tutors and learners cannot monitor the skills that have been developed. The learners are initially assessed for their literacy and numeracy skills using either a paper-based assessment or an electronic version. The findings from the assessments are used to plan learning targets. In literacy and numeracy classes, there is no planning of personal targets to do with improvements in confidence or communication skills. There are not always clear links between these assessments and the learners' individual learning plans for those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Some individual learning plans focus on literacy skills in practical sessions

such as cookery, but do not identify and record practical skills development. All learners identify their learning styles during the assessment process. However, the outcomes from this activity are not always taken into account when delivering the lessons.

Leadership and management

184. Overall literacy and numeracy are managed satisfactorily. The manager has been in post for a year and has implemented a number of key processes, such as effective partnership arrangements and a flexible curriculum. Full-time development workers have been recruited to encourage learners who are hard to reach, to attend classes. This has proved successful in the Alnwick area where, in six months, 120 people have gained awards. Communication is satisfactory, with regular team meetings and e-mails to tutors. Tutors share good practice in a number of ways, for example, tutors are given good practice guides that have been proven to work well. Staff also have the opportunity at meetings to share ideas.

185. There is unsatisfactory co-ordination of provision for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities at one site. It does not meet the learners' needs. Many learners are moving from the hospital to live in community settings in the near future. The curriculum is limited and insufficiently focused on the skills needed for the move to the community. There are no links between teaching and nursing staff in assessing learners' needs and providing an overall package of care. Tutors and other staff involved in the care of the learners do not meet as a team. There are no links between the teaching staff at the two hospitals to enable the sharing of good practice. The need for the co-ordination of this area of work has been identified and an education manager has been appointed for the hospital provision. It is too soon to measure the impact of this. At the other site there is good collaborative working between tutors and nurses. Learning opportunities are linked to overall care plans. Monthly multidisciplinary team meetings are held.

186. In most of the centres that the inspection visited, quality assurance arrangements are incomplete. Lesson observations vary in style and the content does not always identify what learning is occurring. The feedback to staff is inconsistent and in one instance took several weeks. There is not always a grade given. In classes for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, some observation of teaching has taken place, but this has not been consistent for all tutors. The paperwork used for schemes of work, lesson-planning and individual learning plans, varies in style and format and is not checked regularly to ensure correct completion. Evaluations of learners are not used systematically across the section. Arrangements for internal verification are satisfactory.