

INSPECTION REPORT

Tower Hamlets LEA

12 February 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

Tower Hamlets LEA

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. The adult and community learning programme is managed by the Tower Hamlets Lifelong Learning Service (the service) of Tower Hamlets Local Education Authority (LEA), which is part of the Tower Hamlets Borough Council (the council). It provides courses in woodwork, accounting, information and communications technology (ICT), sport and recreation, complementary therapies, nutrition, visual and performing arts, a range of language courses, family learning, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and courses for adults with specific learning needs. The service is contracted by the Learning and Skills Council for London East.
2. The head of lifelong learning has overall responsibility for the service and is managed by the service head for youth and community learning who works for the corporate director for education. Three programme managers support the head of lifelong learning, each responsible for a range of areas of learning, a special projects officer and a strategic development and quality assurance officer. A family learning manager and a community learning manager also work for the head of lifelong learning.
3. The Lifelong Learning Service (LLS) has recently developed a learning centre called Idea Store. This combines the library and the adult and community learning provision in a purpose-built centre. Two new Idea Stores are currently being built to open in summer 2004 and summer 2005. The service has plans for another four Idea Stores within the Borough of Tower Hamlets (the borough).
4. Currently the service provides most of its courses through staff employed directly by the LEA. Some provision is subcontracted to a college and national and local charities. There are approximately 280 staff of whom 240 are part-time, hourly paid staff.
5. The borough lies to the east of central London and covers just under eight square miles. The population of the borough has increased by 35 per cent over the past 10 years and now stands at approximately 196,000. It has one of the highest population densities in London. The proportion of the local population from minority ethnic groups is 48 per cent. Of those residents in the borough aged under 19, 74 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. Ninety different languages are spoken in the borough's schools. Although the borough contains areas of wealth and growth such as the Docklands area, 17 of the 19 wards in the borough are among the most deprived 5 per cent in the country. Only 39 per cent of the population have achieved a level 3 qualification compared with the London average of 45 per cent and a national average of 41 per cent. The level of unemployment is high at 12 per cent compared with the London average of 6.6 per cent.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Information & communications technology

6. ICT training is provided in the learning centres at Bethnal Green and Shadwell and in the Idea Store at Bow. It is also provided in five schools and various community venues. Courses include word processing, spreadsheets, databases, desktop publishing, using the internet and digital photography. Drop-in facilities are also provided for learners for additional practise. The length of courses ranges from short courses of a few hours to year-long courses. Currently 42 per cent of courses lead to recognised qualifications. ICT is also provided as part of the family learning programme. There are 429 learners on ICT programmes.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

7. Currently there are approximately 60 hospitality, sport, leisure and travel courses. These include exercise classes for older learners, yoga, pilates, Tai Chi, aerobics, swimming, weight training, Bollywood exercise, general practitioner (GP) referral, gym circuits, badminton and fencing. The courses run during the morning and evening. The provision is made directly by the LEA. Courses last from six to 42 weeks and are between one to two hours in duration. Eleven different venues are used including community centres, community schools and the Idea Store in Bow. There are currently 1,052 learners on non-accredited courses. All tutors work part time.

Visual & performing arts & media

8. There are approximately 1,500 learners on adult and community learning arts courses that take place during the day and in the evening, Monday to Saturday. There are accredited and non-accredited courses including taster one-day workshops, 10 week or one-year courses. Learners can study for a few hours a week part time or up to 16 hours a week on full-time courses. There are 17 accredited courses including art foundation, fashion and decorative arts and 35 non-accredited courses. Music currently has 13 non-accredited courses. Dance has one accredited dance foundation course and 25 non-accredited courses. There are 13 arts family learning, community and special learning needs courses in crafts, pottery, dance and sewing. The provision operates from accommodation across the borough, some with specific facilities such as the St Matthias centre which has a purpose-fitted dance studio, others in partnership with local learning centres or in outreach community venues. The Idea Store houses some courses and there are plans for some older learning centres to close and courses to move to new Idea Stores currently being built.

English, languages & communications

9. The provider currently runs 60 courses covering nine languages and British Sign Language (BSL). There are 21 Spanish courses, nine Bengali and nine French courses, eight Italian courses and four German courses. Just over 100 learners are enrolled on four accredited BSL classes. There are also Arabic, Somali, and Greek courses. In 2003, a total of 1,375 learners were enrolled on language courses, of whom 252 were on accredited courses and 1,123 on non-accredited courses.

10. All beginners classes work towards a record of achievement certificate. Learners can progress to level 2 courses in Arabic, Bengali, French, German, Italian and Spanish, and to general certificates of education at advanced supplementary (AS) level in French, German, Italian and Spanish. Learners on French courses can progress to general certificates of education at advanced (A) level. There are two full-time and 29 part-time tutors. A weekly tutorial class is provided to meet the specific needs of a small group of level 3 learners in Spanish. A diploma course in public service interpreting in Bengali also takes place.

11. Bethnal Green is the main learning centre for language provision with 37 classes currently running. The rest of the provision takes place at Bow, St Matthias, Shadwell, St Paul's Way and Wessex. Eleven classes in languages for families take place late in the afternoon throughout the week and on Saturday mornings. Beginners courses are run in three 11-week sessions. Level 2 courses last for 33 weeks, with AS and A levels lasting 35 weeks.

Foundation programmes

12. Foundation programmes are managed by the Tower Hamlets Lifelong Learning Service. The service has three core programme areas: creative and performing arts, health physical and technical education, and ICT, languages and humanities. Family learning and community-based activities are provided within these programme areas as part of the LEA's strategy to establish family learning, ESOL and literacy, numeracy and language in the core curriculum of the Lifelong Learning Service. Currently there are 226 learners on foundation programmes in 30 community venues. Some of the provision is provided jointly with other programme areas; for example, pottery for special needs.

13. Family learning courses are provided by Tower Hamlets Early Years Service, the Lifelong Learning Service and some provision is subcontracted provision to local colleges and a national charity. Most of the courses are non-accredited and range from family learning weekend activities and short taster courses to 12-week family literacy and numeracy courses. The small number of accredited courses such as Helping in Schools are subcontracted to a national charity. In 2002-03, there were 72 family learning courses with 681 learners. All partners that provide family learning in the borough are represented on the Family Learning Advisory group (FLAG). Most of the tutors are part-time, hourly-paid workers employed by the various partners. The LEA has established a management post to promote family learning in the borough and another to develop literacy, numeracy and language and ESOL.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	27
Number of inspection days	199
Number of learner interviews	664
Number of staff interviews	188
Number of subcontractor interviews	10
Number of partner/external agency interviews	6
Number of visits	70

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

14. The quality of provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the leadership and management of the LEA's adult and community learning provision are satisfactory as is equality of opportunity. Quality assurance is unsatisfactory. Sport, and the visual and performing arts are good and languages, and foundation are satisfactory. ICT courses are 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

Information & communications technology	4
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	4

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

Visual & performing arts & media	2
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	2

English, languages & communications	3
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

Foundation programmes	3
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

15. There is generally good attainment in classes and many learners have shown a considerable improvement. Learners with little or no previous experience have made quick progress in a number of areas. **This is particularly true in visual and performing arts and many learners attain good skills** and make good progress, often achieving beyond their learning goals.

16. There is good achievement of personal goals in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel. In family learning and community-based classes, individual personal goals are discussed with the tutor at the start of the course. These are met in most cases. **Language learners achieve good levels of oral and signing skills.**

17. **There are good progression routes in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel** and also in visual and performing arts and media courses. Many learners progress onto either higher levels or other related courses at the same level.

18. In most areas of learning, data for the previous three years are not sufficiently reliable for judgements to be made about retention and attainment.

Quality of education and training

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Information & communications technology	0	2	3	9	4	0	0	18
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	10	17	3	2	0	0	32
Visual & performing arts & media	5	15	25	10	2	0	0	57
English, languages & communications	1	9	9	13	2	1	0	35
Foundation programmes	0	2	13	11	1	0	0	27
Total	6	38	67	46	11	1	0	169

19. Most sessions are well planned. In the best sessions, teaching is very good. It is

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stimulating and imaginative and learners develop a good understanding of their work. Tutors use their expertise well and learners work well to achieve their goals.

20. **Learners receive good individual support from tutors.** Good use is made of individual demonstrations to learners. There is good differentiation between learners with differing needs, abilities, cultures and backgrounds. Tutors give thorough feedback to learners both individually and in groups.

21. Resources are good in most cases. **In ICT, resources are very good** with a wide range of equipment for learners with particular needs. **There are very good resources for dance and music.** The Idea Stores are good and there is a crèche at most learning centres. Good specialist equipment is provided in the community venues and access is generally good. However, there are poor resources and poor access in some learning centres, but staff work well to rectify this.

22. **Formal initial assessment is poor.** In some areas there is no initial assessment, and where it is carried out, it is not used to develop the individual learning plans. Learners' information is not systematically recorded and tutors do not always have access to initial assessment results.

23. **Formal recording of learners' progress is poor.** There is not enough short-term target-setting and no formal mechanism is used to monitor individual learners' progress. Learners are not always aware of their progress.

24. **Individual learning plans are not used effectively in most areas of learning.** The format does not enable tutors to ensure that each plan meets individual learners' needs, such as numeracy and literacy. They are not used as working documents. They are not updated and are not used as a basis for reviewing learners' progress or action-planning.

25. Most of the courses meet the needs of the local community. Although there is some ESOL provision, there is not enough provision to meet all learners' needs in numeracy, literacy and language.

26. Support and guidance are generally satisfactory. However, there is not enough pre-course guidance for ICT. Pre-course information for dance courses is good.

Leadership and management

27. **The LEA has a clear vision of the contributions that the lifelong learning service makes to the council's strategic objectives.** An effective infrastructure ensures the planning process considers and responds effectively to the needs of local residents.

28. **The LEA plans effectively the use of resources.** The service's strategic plan includes a very detailed implementation plan that clearly identifies resourcing. There is a detailed and appropriate strategy for the replacement of its learning centres and libraries with the new Idea Stores. Resources are well managed in community centres and the service has successfully managed a significant increase in enrolments.

29. **Managers provide good support for staff to develop and implement a wide range of effective initiatives.** Staff work well as a team and there is good cover for staff absences. Staff are currently testing out a number of innovative brand concepts and images. Staff work well with learners to enable them to effectively promote the provision to under-represented groups. There is an effective process of annual staff appraisal.

30. There is effective action to widen participation. The LEA has a well-established equal opportunities policy and an effective initiative to engage people from minority ethnic groups. The service has established a wide range of effective partnership arrangements to engage hard-to-reach groups.

31. **There is a well-developed scheme for observing learning sessions.** Managers produce appropriate schedules for annual observations of tutors to identify strengths and weaknesses in their teaching and provide oral and written feedback. All observers complete well-planned and appropriate training that is then reinforced annually. Good, regular observer meetings are used to discuss findings.

32. **Curriculum planning in some areas is inadequate.** There is no clear overall strategy for the development of the curriculum. There are plans for the development of the curriculum in Idea Stores but many staff do not fully understand these. Key meetings do not allow for sufficient planning, management and review of the curriculum and do not contain clear targets.

33. **Insufficient focus is given to meeting the needs of individual learners.** There is no overall policy or strategy for literacy, numeracy and language support. Initial assessment procedures are weak. Individual learning plans are inadequate. Monitoring of learners' progress is poor.

34. **Analysis and use of data for planning and target-setting are inadequate.** Until recently there was no reliable system for the management of information. There are not enough reliable data. There are not enough resources to support the management information. There is not enough systematic collection and management of data across the service.

35. Promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory. Course guides contain images of under-represented groups. The Idea Store at Bow has excellent reference and learning materials in a wide range of community and other languages.

36. There is not enough monitoring of trends against targets. The service has produced data on enrolments by ethnicity, gender and age, but these are unreliable.

37. **Procedures to review the courses and the curriculum are inadequate.** There is no organised and regular review of the courses provided in each area. Some managers do informally carry out such reviews, but most do not have access to a sufficient range of data on attainment or evaluations by tutors or learners.

38. **Quality assurance arrangements are incomplete.** The provider has made some progress towards organising a quality assurance system but there are a number of elements which are not yet fully developed or implemented. Tutors do not receive written guidance or sufficient training on using the quality assurance files and on completing documents such as individual learning plans.

39. Internal verification and moderation of externally accredited awards is satisfactory and takes place within the curriculum areas. Staff do not routinely meet colleagues from other areas to share good practice in assessment.

40. Self-assessment is satisfactory. Inspectors matched many of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report. Programme area managers consulted closely with their salaried staff teams and collected feedback from some teaching staff and an appropriate sample of learners. The provider did not formally consult with the subcontractors when producing the report.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Leadership and management

Strengths

- clear vision of the contribution to the council's strategic objectives
- effective planning and use of resources to support adult and community learning
- good support for staff to develop and implement a wide range of effective initiatives
- effective action to widen participation
- well-developed scheme for observing learning sessions

Weaknesses

- insufficient curriculum planning in some areas
- insufficient focus on meeting the full range of individual learners' needs
- inadequate analysis and use of data for planning and target-setting
- inadequate procedures for course review
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements

Information & communications technology

Strengths

- good support for individual learners in ICT sessions
- very good ICT resources

Weaknesses

- inadequate initial assessment
- inadequate use of individual learning plans
- insufficient monitoring of learners' progress
- poor curriculum management and organisation

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Strengths

- good achievement of personal goals
- good teaching and learning
- good progression

Weaknesses

- incomplete arrangements for recording initial assessment and health screening
- insufficient formal monitoring of learners' progress

Visual & performing arts & media

Strengths

- good attainment of skills
- good teaching and learning
- good resources for music and dance
- particularly good range of courses in dance

Weaknesses

- insufficient formal monitoring of learners' progress
- insufficient use of data to set targets for retention and attainment

English, languages & communications

Strengths

- good oral and signing skills
- very good teaching of BSL
- successful action to increase participation in language courses
- good support for tutors to improve teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- poor retention and attainment on French GCSE and Spanish AS level courses
- unsuitable accommodation at three sites
- inadequate use of data
- inadequate course reviews

Foundation programmes

Strengths

- good use of venues in local communities
- particularly effective family learning and community lessons
- good resources in community venues

Weaknesses

- ineffective monitoring and recording of learners' progress and attainment
- inadequate use of initial assessment

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT TOWER HAMLETS LEA:

- the accessibility and affordability of the provision
- 'learning to use a word processor so that I can word process a letter to my MP'
- the friendly atmosphere in classes
- the informal support provided by tutors
- meeting and working with other learners
- being able to move on to other related courses
- developing skills which help them work better with their children

WHAT LEARNERS THINK TOWER HAMLETS LEA COULD IMPROVE:

- the heating in the sports hall
- the swimming pool facilities
- the acoustics in some language classes
- the information on course content and assessment procedures
- the standard of some of the books
- the amount of daytime classes
- the amount of classes which run during school holidays

KEY CHALLENGES FOR TOWER HAMLETS LEA:

- fully implement a quality assurance framework which leads to improvements
- use management information to guide the decision-making processes
- introduce better and more effective initial assessment of learners' skills
- introduce and implement a system to monitor learners' progress more effectively
- use individual learning plans more effectively
- fully deliver the LLS's vision
- ensure that the numeracy, literacy and language needs of learners are fully met
- ensure more consistent curriculum management

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

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- clear vision of the contribution to the council's strategic objectives
- effective planning and use of resources to support adult and community learning
- good support for staff to develop and implement a wide range of effective initiatives
- effective action to widen participation
- well-developed scheme for observing learning sessions

Weaknesses

- insufficient curriculum planning in some areas
- insufficient focus on meeting the full range of individual learners' needs
- inadequate analysis and use of data for planning and target-setting
- inadequate procedures for course review
- incomplete quality assurance arrangements

41. The LEA has a clear vision of the contribution of lifelong learning to the council's strategic objectives, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. After a long period of insufficient commitment to adult and community learning, the LEA is now developing specific and demanding objectives for the service and a new strategic direction. The LEA has an effective strategic planning framework. It has retained direct control of adult and community learning to ensure it has a high profile throughout the borough. The project to establish seven new Idea Stores is the single largest funded new initiative in the council and is a joint venture with other directorates. Priorities in the overall strategic plan clearly identify the importance of lifelong learning and are supported by specific success criteria in the education service's strategic planning. The LLS has an effective infrastructure to ensure that the planning process considers fully, and responds effectively to, the needs of local residents. Senior managers have a good understanding of lifelong learning and have considerable experience of managing post-19 education.

42. The LEA plans the use of resources to support adult and community learning effectively. Staff fully understand the need to control the costs of the lifelong learning provision and to increase the efficiency of the service. The service's strategic plan includes a very detailed implementation plan that clearly identifies the resourcing and cost implications for all its activities. There is good regular risk analysis of the activities of the service. The LEA has a detailed and appropriate strategy for the replacement of its learning centres and libraries with the new Idea Stores concept. It has carried out an effective analysis of existing accommodation, and has implemented achievable short and

medium-term improvements. Accommodation is good. Resources in community centres are managed well and are particularly good for learners in ICT and some visual and performing arts classes. External funding is used effectively to meet the learning needs of the community. The service has successfully managed the significant increase in enrolments in 2003-04. A system is being developed to allow partner organisations to make good use of the classrooms in the Idea Stores.

43. Managers provide good support for staff and encourage them to develop and implement effective initiatives. Staff work well as a team and there is good management of cover for staff absences. Staff have good access to managers to discuss ideas and other matters. As identified in the self-assessment report, a significant number of effective initiatives have been introduced, many in partnership with other local organisations. Staff are currently testing out a number of innovative brand concepts and images for the development of the seven Idea Stores. A new mentoring scheme for tutors is strengthening links with part-time staff and ensuring better communication and monitoring of their performance. Staff work with learners to enable them to effectively promote the provision to under-represented groups. The service has funded the development of a learning website that brings together approximately 50 providers from throughout the borough to promote over 4000 courses to local residents.

44. There is an effective process of annual appraisal for full-time staff to identify individual training needs linked to job roles and the needs of the provider. Programme managers carry out appraisals for part-time staff in small groups, but the outcomes are not always used to identify individual staff development needs. The recent appointment of mentors to support tutors is starting to ensure that the outcomes of classroom observations are linked to training and development needs. This process is not yet carried out across the provision. The service has a draft staff development plan linking staff training to the objectives in the strategic business plan. Staff are encouraged to develop their skills through a wide range of internal and external training activities and most staff are appropriately qualified for their roles. Part-time staff are paid for their attendance at staff development sessions and these are well attended.

45. Insufficient curriculum planning is carried out in some areas of the service, a weakness partly identified in the self-assessment report. There is no clear overall strategy for the development of the curriculum in a number of subject areas and there are not enough links between programme areas. Staff do not fully understand the plans for curriculum development in the Idea Stores. Key meetings are generally used to share information about the service and do not allow for sufficient planning, management and review of the curriculum. Minutes of some meetings do not contain clear and detailed targets and timescales for achieving identified actions. Progression routes are not always carefully planned and there are not enough systems for the validation of new courses. A recent survey of learners' views identified that learning centre staff do not know enough about the full range of programmes available. Staff responsible for enrolling new learners are not given sufficiently detailed information about the courses.

46. Insufficient focus is given to meeting the needs of individual learners. The service does not have an overall policy or strategy for literacy, numeracy and language support,

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and there is poor recruitment of appropriately qualified staff. Initial assessment procedures are weak and staff do not develop adequate individual learning plans. Staff do not use a good range of methods to assess and record learning outcomes on non-accredited courses and the monitoring of learners' progress is poor in many curriculum areas. Insufficient checking is carried out of learners' medical histories before they join sports and leisure courses. The service has recently implemented an action plan as a basis for its strategy for additional support needs. It is currently developing one of its learning centres to include multimedia resources and training rooms to provide staff with literacy, numeracy and language skills training.

47. Analysis and use of data for planning and target-setting is inadequate. Until recently, there was no reliable system for the management of information, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. Staff have found it very difficult to analyse trends in retention and attainment, or to manage budgets and course waiting lists. Until this academic year, the LEA had no clear strategy for the regular collection, analysis, and use of learners' data for planning the provision. There is not enough reliable data, and staff are unable to carry out accurate self-assessment. There are not enough resources to support the management information requirements of the service, particularly the administration of examination entries and results. A new management information system has been purchased and staff are now able to produce well-presented and accurate data that managers are using to plan their provision more effectively. The service is working to integrate this system with that used by the local further education college to help with the joint management of the Idea Stores, and to monitor learners' progression.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

48. The council has a well-established and recorded equal opportunities policy that is fully understood by senior managers responsible for the LLS. There is effective action to widen participation. Through an effective initiative to engage people from minority ethnic groups in learning, the number of learners from these groups involved in learning has doubled over the past three and a half years. The provider has worked well to recruit a significant number of managers and staff from minority ethnic groups. It has well-established crèche arrangements and the overall number of learners recruited onto courses is rising. The Idea Store at Bow is an effective source of enrolments on courses, and during the month before inspection, more learners enrolled through the Idea Store than any other route. The service has established a wide range of effective partnership arrangements to engage hard-to-reach groups including minority ethnic groups, residents from disadvantaged estates, and more recently, disabled members of the community. The service is also fully involved in a number of projects with other council services and has had some success in reaching under-represented groups through various schools, housing and youth service projects.

49. Promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory. Course guides contain appropriate images of under-represented groups as well as clearly presented equal opportunities policy statements, complaint procedures and the refunds policy. Learning centres have welcome signs in a number of community languages and other equal opportunities promotional materials on noticeboards and in classrooms. Many learners do not receive

formal inductions onto courses, although some tutors do provide informal inductions. All complaints are dealt with by managers quickly and appropriately. Although equal opportunities policies and procedures are covered in staff inductions, tutors do not have a good understanding of them.

50. The LLS does not produce enough information about the service for learners in community languages other than English or Bengali. The service has made this decision while preparing its strategy for engaging with other minority ethnic groups. However, the Idea Store at Bow has excellent reference and learning materials in a wide range of community and other languages.

51. There is satisfactory access to most of the providers' sites. The council has carried out a thorough audit of its community sites and has identified all the improvements needed to be compliant with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Following this audit, there is now an ongoing programme of access improvements that is not yet complete.

52. The service has not monitored equal opportunities trends against targets effectively. The service produces data on enrolments by age group, gender and ethnicity, but the data have not been sufficiently reliable. Neither has the service analysed success rates by these groups. A new management information system has recently been introduced within the service, but it is too early to judge its impact.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

53. There is a well-developed scheme for observing learning sessions, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Managers and staff have worked effectively to improve the scheme. Managers produce appropriate schedules for annual observations of tutors to identify strengths and weaknesses in their teaching and provide oral and written feedback. Where teaching sessions are less than satisfactory, a further observation takes place. If no improvement is identified, managers arrange an appropriate development programme for the tutor. All observers complete well-planned and appropriate training that is then reinforced annually. Experienced observers work with new observers to carry out joint observations. Good, regular observer meetings are used to discuss findings, ensure common standards and grade lessons in line with the 'Common Inspection Framework'. The provider uses both teaching and non-teaching staff as observers to help ensure a significant number of staff have a good understanding of teaching and learning. More subject-specific feedback is provided to tutors by those observers who are skilled practitioners in their own learning area. At the end of every cycle of observations the provider produces a detailed analysis of the key strengths and weaknesses identified in each area and uses this to provide appropriate training. The scheme also identifies general areas to improve the provision. The provider has well-developed plans to share observation practices with a partner college and for a university to accredit its observer training.

54. Satisfactory training is given to staff who enrol learners and provide initial guidance about the provision. These activities are monitored and reviewed appropriately.

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Administration staff thoroughly monitor tutors' completion of learners' attendance registers and work with the tutors to contact learners who are absent for more than three sessions.

55. Procedures to review the courses and the curriculum are inadequate, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. Most subject area teams make good use of a standard agenda for meetings to discuss the provision with topics clearly recorded and actions identified. Although most of these meetings are satisfactory, there is no organised and regular review of the courses provided in each area. Some managers do informally carry out such reviews, but most do not have access to a sufficient range of data on attainment or evaluations by tutors or learners to help them make judgements. The processes for reviewing and developing the provision are not adequate. However, one curriculum area is soon to pilot a structured course review process.

56. Quality assurance arrangements are incomplete. The provider has made some progress towards developing systematic quality assurance. The quality assurance policy and manual are not up to date. Within the past few months, the provider has started to produce a new quality assurance manual including clear policies on discipline, complaints and class observation. There is a quality assurance schedule for the current academic year with dates for meetings, reviews of activity such as enrolment, and deadlines for the development of the self-assessment report. However, this does not clearly indicate how the activities and processes fit together, who is responsible for monitoring their outcomes, and how the individual parts contribute to self-assessment. Although service level agreements between the provider and its subcontractors specify regular quality assurance monitoring visits by the provider, these are not included in the schedule. There are no arrangements to routinely review and update documents and procedures. Some documents exist in different versions and staff do not know which are the most up to date. All tutors are required to maintain a file of documents for each course they teach. Administration staff monitor these files regularly against a checklist to identify where gaps exist and recently appointed learning mentors are already working effectively with some tutors to help them remedy these. However, as partly identified in the self-assessment report, in many course files individual learning plans and other documents are missing or are poorly completed or not used. Tutors do not receive written guidance or sufficient training on using the files and in completing documents such as individual learning plans.

57. Internal verification and moderation of externally accredited awards takes place within the curriculum areas. While procedures at this level are satisfactory, staff do not routinely meet colleagues from other curriculum areas to share good practice in assessment. In languages, internal moderation of learners' progress towards non-accredited outcomes is thorough. However, it is not thorough in the other curriculum areas.

58. Self-assessment is satisfactory. The most recent report is the third produced by the provider. Inspectors agreed with many of the strengths and weaknesses. Programme area managers consulted closely with their salaried staff teams and collected feedback from some teaching staff and an appropriate sample of learners. In reaching their

judgements they made satisfactory use of information on lesson observations and the data on enrolments and retention rates. Senior managers moderated and collated effectively the area of learning reports and also wrote the sections on leadership and management. However, attainment data are generally poor. The provider did not formally consult with the subcontractors when producing the report.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information & communications technology

Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	429	4

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good support for individual learners in ICT sessions
- very good ICT resources

Weaknesses

- inadequate initial assessment
- inadequate use of individual learning plans
- insufficient monitoring of learners' progress
- poor curriculum management and organisation

Achievement and standards

59. Learners are generally well motivated and acquire a range of ICT skills. Beginners who attend classes regularly soon become confident and competent computer users. A retired learner, who had no knowledge of computers before the course, achieved his goal of developing word-processing skills. Some learners also gain national and European qualifications. However, attendance is poor and the average number of learners attending observed sessions was 58 per cent. Retention and attainment data for the past three years are not sufficiently accurate for reliable judgements to be made.

Quality of education and training

60. Support for individual learners is good. Learners come from a wide range of backgrounds and include young unemployed people, those with family responsibilities and retired people. Tutors develop good working relationships with learners who they help to acquire a range of ICT skills. Tutors fully understand learners' individual learning needs and their barriers to learning. For example, one tutor made special arrangements for one learner with poor self-confidence to take a preliminary ICT examination outside the usual class time so she would not be distracted by other learners. As learners progress, their self-confidence and self-esteem generally improve. Older learners particularly develop skills beyond their initial expectations. In ICT family learning sessions, tutors work well with parents and their children and help them to become confident computer users.

61. ICT resources are very good and include flat-screen monitors, scanners, laser printers and colour printers. There is good internet access in all the learning venues. Learners can reserve time in computer workshops when they require additional practise. For learners with particular learning needs there is a good range of special equipment and software, such as adapted keyboards, large monitors, enlarged text and a Braille printer. Learners use a wide variety of industry-standard software, including word-processing, databases, spreadsheets, photography processing and presentations. Tutors have very good access to digital projectors and interactive computerised display boards, although this equipment is not always used sufficiently to enhance learning. Some staff do not know how to use it effectively. There is good technical support in the learning centres at Bow, Bethnal Green and Shadwell. Most learners have sufficient desk space for their notes and books although some desks are too small. Some computer rooms have inadequate space for learners to move around in some parts of the room.

62. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Of those lessons observed, 50 per cent were judged to be satisfactory and 28 per cent were good or better. However, 22 per cent of sessions were unsatisfactory. In the good sessions, tutors teach well-prepared lessons and provide appropriate guidance notes and good learning activities. Worksheets are designed to meet learners' individual learning needs and learners are carefully supervised. In the poor sessions, the subject content is not well planned, tutors' explanations are not appropriate, there is insufficient practical work related to the topic taught by the teacher and the pace of learning is too slow. There are not enough displays of learners' work in the learning centres to celebrate attainment and encourage potential learners. Some tutors and many learners have poor keyboarding skills. The computerised keyboard training software in the learning centres is inadequately used. There is not enough emphasis on keyboarding skills throughout learners' training.

63. Initial assessment is inadequate. Although learners complete an enrolment form and discuss their learning requirements with the tutors, insufficient information is obtained about their written and spoken language skills. Learners' literacy and numeracy skills are not formally assessed. Although learners are asked to indicate on a tick-list the extent of their ICT skills and knowledge, this information is not used effectively to design individual learning programmes. Learners do not take a basic screening test or a diagnostic assessment to identify their individual learning needs. There is inadequate use of ICT to help learners to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Although arrangements have been made to train subject tutors to provide literacy, numeracy and language support, most ICT tutors are inadequately trained to help learners to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. As indicated in the self-assessment report, there are not enough basic skills tutors within the service.

64. There is inadequate use of individual learning plans. Although individual learning plans have only recently been introduced, the format is inappropriate and they are not used effectively. Learners do not fully understand the purpose of the plans and they are not used as working documents to guide learning. There is inadequate emphasis by tutors on negotiating short-term targets with learners and recording them on the learning plans. Some learners are not provided with sufficiently demanding tasks and they do not work at an adequate pace.

65. Learners' progress is insufficiently monitored on all courses. Tutors do not have a reliable system for measuring and recording learners' progress. Some learners' work is not marked and they are not given sufficient information about the progress they have made and what they still have to complete. Many progress records are not kept up to date. There are, however, end-of-course records showing which competences learners have satisfied during their course.

Leadership and management

66. There is inadequate long-term curriculum planning of accredited and non-accredited courses and there are not enough accredited basic level courses. There is no clear strategic plan to guide the management and development of ICT courses. Inadequate attention is given to identifying and developing courses that are different from those run by other local providers. Insufficient consideration is given to providing courses for specific groups of learners. There is no overall strategy for recruiting hard-to-reach groups. Recruitment to courses is low and learners' attendance is often poor. Targets are not set for recruitment and progression. Data supplied from the management information system are not sufficiently accurate to enable retention and attainment rates to be judged accurately.

67. There are not enough courses combining ICT with other subjects such as languages or music, for example. There are insufficient computer-based and multimedia resources to support individual learners in ICT workshops. The current provision relies on learners attending learning centres for a defined number of hours on the same day or evening each week.

68. There is not enough sharing of good practice by the tutors. Tutors are, however, encouraged to attend staff meetings and are paid for their attendance. A mentoring scheme has recently been introduced to give less experienced tutors five hours' mentoring and support from experienced colleagues during the year. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of this initiative. Staff share the provider's commitment to equal opportunities. Tutors are good role models of appropriate behaviour and practice for learners.

69. Although ICT courses for families are taught well, attendance is poor. For example, in one school the number of participating parents has fallen from five in September 2003 to one in February 2004. There are no formally arranged meetings of the family learning tutors and there is inadequate promotion of family learning programmes. Although the schools have good resources, the provider does not make adequate use of them. Arrangements for quality assuring ICT courses are not adequate. The provider, however, has recently carried out a learner survey to collect their views on the provision. The outcomes indicated that although 41 per cent of courses met learner expectations, an equal proportion did not. Insufficient action has been taken to develop and improve the provision in response to this feedback.

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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	1052	2

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good achievement of personal goals
- good teaching and learning
- good progression

Weaknesses

- incomplete arrangements for recording initial assessment and health screening
- insufficient formal monitoring of learners' progress

Achievement and standards

70. There is good achievement of personal goals by learners. Many learners discuss their personal goals with their tutor at the beginning of the courses and most do not attend classes to achieve certificates, but rather to improve their general lifestyle. Learners experience the benefits of their sport and recreation classes including improved ability and fitness levels and greater relaxation, flexibility, improved self-confidence and general well being. One learner has improved her flexibility and is able to carry out tasks in the home that before the course she found difficult. Older learners gain personal and social benefits as well as the physical benefits from their fitness classes. Some exercise classes are specifically for elderly people with mental health problems and carers have noted that the activities and relaxation techniques help the learners with their stress management and slow their regression.

Quality of education and training

71. Teaching and learning are good. Of those sessions observed, 84 per cent were judged to be good or better. In the good sessions, learners are motivated, enthusiastic and fully engaged in the activities to develop their health and fitness. Tutors are appropriately qualified, have a good knowledge of their subjects and clearly demonstrate various techniques. Many tutors update their skills through further professional and teacher training. They fully understand learners' individual needs and regularly discuss the exercises and activities with learners to ensure their needs are met. Tutors have good working relationships with learners and help them to gain confidence and overcome any anxieties about the exercise classes. Tutors use good motivational techniques and learners' progress is informally monitored thoroughly during classes. In the pilates classes, the tutor has a very good knowledge of how to assess the needs of

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the learners and gives clear advice on how to improve fitness levels after injury. Most tutors are qualified in other disciplines and use this experience to give good relevant advice and guidance. In some classes such as fencing, tutors encourage more advanced learners to work with other less advanced learners. Some tutors do not provide warm-up activities for learners who arrive late for their classes and other tutors do not use satisfactory teaching techniques or do not have up-to-date qualifications. Tutors are not provided with adequate guidance to deal with learners who join courses mid-way through.

72. Progression by learners is good. Learners are able to broaden their experience by moving onto additional courses and develop a good understanding of the benefits of healthy eating and doing regular exercise. Many individuals initially enrol onto classes to improve their physical fitness and then progress to further courses. For example, one learner attending a yoga class progressed through a number of courses and is now a qualified holistic massage therapist. In one yoga class, 58 per cent of the learners have also enrolled onto other lifelong learning courses. There is an effective system to monitor learners' progress. This records the initial courses learners enrolled on, the courses they progress onto and their achievements. This is used to measure the success of the provision and to assess the need for other courses. Learners fully understand the benefits of attending the classes and progressing to further courses.

73. Resources are satisfactory. Learners on the GP referral programme are provided with satisfactory handouts and have access to a wide range of activities through appropriate use of cardio-vascular equipment, free weights and agility mats. Some learners are supplied with heart rate monitors. However, accommodation for the GP referral programme does not provide adequate access for people with mobility difficulties. Facilities for tai chi and yoga are satisfactory; however, one room is not well maintained and the tutor provides additional heating facilities. The room and equipment for legs, bums and tums are adequate and water is readily available. Facilities for weight training are adequate and include a wide range of equipment such as cardio-vascular machines, dumbbells, agility mats, benches and aerobics steps. However, one weight training course does not have adequate facilities. Some rooms are not large enough to cope effectively with the actual number of registered learners. Although there are new swimming facilities, the management of safety is not adequate.

74. Arrangements for the recording of initial assessment and health-screening are incomplete and are not used to produce individual learning plans or monitor progress. Forms for initial assessment and health-screening have been developed to meet the needs of specific subject areas. Some forms are completed appropriately by learners and are stored confidentially. However, tutors are unclear about how to use these forms and some tutors do not effectively manage these processes. There is no initial assessment or health-screening for some courses and on other courses this is only carried out once the course had started. There are no forms for learners with disabilities or for learners who now speak English as an additional language. Some tutors do informally assess learners at the start of their course, but this is not recorded.

75. Formal monitoring of learners' progress is ineffective. Many tutors do not

understand how to use individual learners' plans. Some individual learning plans have not been completed or are only partially completed and some learners do not have individual learning plans. Although tutors have access to subject-specific assessment forms, these are not used adequately.

Leadership and management

76. The LEA has developed effective links with local leisure services to improve participation and there are good working partnerships with the Health trust, Healthy Lifestyle Steering Group and Age Concern. Management has established effective progression routes from exercise and yoga classes to anatomy and physiology, reflexology, raki, counselling and nutrition courses.

77. There are regular team and management meetings. Staff profiles are regularly updated and staff are encouraged to work towards further relevant qualifications professional and teaching qualifications. A pilot scheme to provide mentoring for part-time tutors has been recently introduced, but it is too early to judge its effectiveness. Monitoring of class registers is not effective and many classes record more learners than those who actually attend. A new management information system has been introduced and staff are beginning to use it to improve the provision.

Visual & performing arts & media**Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	1500	2

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good attainment of skills
- good teaching and learning
- good resources for music and dance
- particularly good range of courses in dance

Weaknesses

- insufficient formal monitoring of learners' progress
- insufficient use of data to set targets for retention and attainment

Achievement and standards

78. Learners attain good skills and both beginners and experienced learners make good progress. Their progress is demonstrated through interviews, performance and completed work. Learners are encouraged to set themselves high standards for achievement and some are attaining skills above their learning goals. For example, music learners work effectively through theory and practical work to demonstrate progressive rhythmic exercises using a drum kit. Learners in flamenco and tango sessions develop good dance skills, particularly those at an intermediate level. Learners produce very good work across a range of disciplines including design, craft, printing, drawing, painting and the use of complex software such as Photoshop. Learners' self-confidence improves through the course activities and tutors encourage learners to experiment with their ideas and to learn from mistakes. They are highly motivated and work well independently and in small groups. Some courses enable learners to exhibit and perform at professional festivals and venues.

79. There is good progression from the foundation courses in dance and art to further and higher education. Attendance is satisfactory overall, but is poor in some classes. Retention rates are satisfactory for all courses. There is inadequate management information to make a judgement on attainment for individual courses.

Quality of education and training

80. Teaching and learning are good across all areas with 9 per cent being judged as outstanding. Tutors fully understand and work well to meet the needs of all learners including those who are graduates and those with particular individual learning needs.

There is effective group and individual teaching. Most sessions are well-planned, although some schemes of work do not reflect in sufficient detail the range of activities that occur in sessions. Tutors monitor learners' progress both individually and in groups. There is effective individual learner support. In most sessions learners are encouraged to ask questions. In mosaic classes learners do complex learning activities using a wide range of materials. In music, tutors use a good range of well-prepared and appropriate activities. Learners work well together and in some mixed-ability groups, they share effectively knowledge, skills, experience and ideas. For example, in a mixed craft class, learners worked collaboratively to design two wall hangings for a local community chapel. In some visual arts classes, there is ineffective management of group work and insufficient use of peer group learning.

81. Resources for music and dance are good. Learners have good access to a range of equipment in keyboard classes. Learners in drum and percussion classes are provided with a good range of percussion instruments from around the world. One dance studio has a sprung floor and is well ventilated and well lit. Some dance classes include music played by musicians. Other sessions make good use of recorded music. The provider has access to good dance and music resources through a partnership arrangement. This includes an arts centre with multi-purpose spaces for performing arts. Video equipment is used very well on the foundation course.

82. There is a wide range of dance courses that meet learners' needs. There is good planning and recording of the courses relevant to the local community needs. The courses reflect current trends in dance and take into account learners' requests. Learners have access to a good range of dance activities that reflect cultures from around the world including African dance, Cuban salsa, kathak, line dancing and Argentinean tango. There are plans to reintroduce one dance style on completion of the building of a more appropriate dance venue.

83. The Idea Store at Bow has good facilities for digital photography. However, facilities for some practical groups are unsatisfactory. Technical resources and space for the activities are inadequate at two learning centres. However, there have been some recent significant resource developments in some learning centres to improve the facilities for visual arts courses.

84. Tutors are well qualified and experienced and many are leading practitioners in their own professional field. For example, one tutor used keyboard and singing skills to direct a large group of singers. Many tutors run their own businesses or perform in professional companies or bands. Tutors use their extensive knowledge to give learners an insight into current professional practice. Learners also benefit from the many commercial contacts that the tutors maintain.

85. Learners receive satisfactory support. If a learner does not attend a class, or gives no reason for not attending, tutors contact the learner to establish if there is any problem. In some cases, learners will also contact non-attendees. Tutors provide good support with matters such as health, finance and employment and work well to ensure that learners do not fall behind with their learning. There is a satisfactory tutorial system in place for

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learners on the foundation courses. Learners meet individually with their personal tutors twice a term to discuss progress. There is a good session at the end of each dance technique class where learners sit with their tutor and write down areas for further improvement. There is a very good information pack that clearly outlines exactly what can be expected on each course and what resources the learners need to provide themselves.

86. Monitoring of learner progress is inadequate. Although learners are on the right courses at the appropriate level, most initial assessment comprises of tests to check the technical competence of learners. However, there is no evidence of the test results in learner's individual learning plans. The plans are not used well to monitor progress. They do not contain enough specific information on learners' personal goals. The forms are generic and inadequate for some types of courses. Tutors do adequately assess learners' ability to perform tasks, but this is not recorded and referred to in subsequent classes. Learners receive good feedback when they achieve tasks and are told what they have to work on, but no log or record is kept of these verbal transactions.

87. Literacy and numeracy support is inadequate. New learners are asked to identify and record their learning support needs on individual learning plans, however many plans were not completed. Initial assessment for additional support is inadequate, and there is an unclear system for referral. However, satisfactory support is given to those learners who ask for it.

Leadership and management

88. There is satisfactory planning for arts provision. There are plans to provide specialist accommodation and good work is carried out to temporarily house courses after closure of existing buildings. Although there is an adequate project management brief, there is not enough detailed strategic arts information in the development plan and business plan.

89. Meetings involve all members of the department. Curriculum management is adequate with clear communication across the area. However, many of the systems are not structured or recorded, much of the information is with one person, and there is not enough succession planning. Monitoring of attendance and punctuality in arts classes is satisfactory. There are well-planned new initiatives such as a mentoring system designed to support tutors.

90. There are some excellent external partnerships with a variety of different community groups. There are good initiatives to promote the learning programmes to under-represented groups, including taster workshops at local cultural centres. However, some courses do not have an adequate number of learners from these prompts.

91. The self-assessment report adequately reflects the strengths and weaknesses found in the inspection. The self-assessment report also contains useful information on future developments, classroom observations and local demography. Meetings were held for members of staff to contribute, the process was consultative. However, course reviews

are done informally and do not form part of the self-assessment process.

92. There is insufficient use of data to set targets for retention and attainment. Data are available for enrolments, retention, and learners. However, information is not used well. There is some confusion over what information is needed and how to get it. Retention data are available but no course-by-course achievement data, central and local data has not yet been reconciled. Retention and attainment are not discussed adequately at team meetings.

English, languages & communications**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	1375	3

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good oral and signing skills
- very good teaching of BSL
- successful action to increase participation in language courses
- good support for tutors to improve teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- poor retention and attainment on French GCSE and Spanish AS level courses
- unsuitable accommodation at three sites
- inadequate use of data
- inadequate course reviews

Achievement and standards

93. Most learners develop good oral and signing skills and communicate confidently with one another and with the tutor. They demonstrate fluency in vocabulary and language structure. Learners of languages, other than sign language, work well to achieve good standards of pronunciation and intonation. Most learners effectively obtain and give information and express their own ideas. However, some learners do not express their taught language accurately. Most learners are able to write clearly in their taught language, including in the appropriate scripts on courses such as Arabic, Bengali and Greek.

94. Retention and attainment rates are poor on French general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) and Spanish AS level courses. These courses represent approximately 20 per cent of enrolments on accredited courses in 2002-03. From a total of 39 learners only three achieved a qualification. Of 29 learners working towards GCSE French, 12 completed the course but only two achieved the qualification. Of 10 learners working towards AS level Spanish, three completed the course and only one achieved a qualification. Attendance in the lessons visited during inspection was 71 per cent.

Quality of education and training

95. Teaching of BSL is very good. Lessons are very well planned and carefully structured to enable learners to communicate effectively. Learners are able to achieve their personal learning goals such as teaching hearing impaired children and caring for hearing

impaired patients. Tutors make good use of humour and facial expression to enhance learning. For example, in a level 2 signing language lesson, learners develop very good visual fluency and conversation skills. Where learners do not use the language correctly, tutors provide appropriate feedback. Tutors introduce effectively new vocabulary.

96. Managers in the curriculum area have recently taken successful action to increase participation in language courses. The number of learners and enrolments has increased significantly over the past two years. For example, the number of enrolments for the autumn term of 2002-03 exceeded that for the whole year by 50 per cent. Many learners enrol on more than one language course. There is effective publicity of the courses on a website, at the Idea Store, in brochures and through family learning lessons and weekend activities. Outreach work takes place in schools and in specific minority ethnic groups. There is good provision of holiday language courses and short courses combining languages and cookery in Arabic, French, Italian and Spanish. Many learners on these courses have enrolled on beginners' language courses.

97. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Of those sessions observed, 54 per cent were judged to be good or better, 37 per cent satisfactory and only 9 per cent to be unsatisfactory or poor. Most lessons are well planned and are based on structured schemes of work. In the best lessons, tutors use a wide range of useful strategies to develop effective communication. They make good use of anecdotes, gesture and a variety of activities to help learners develop their oral and signing skills. For example, in a German GCSE lesson, on the topic of recycling waste in Germany, the tutor made effective use of her acting skills to present new ideas and vocabulary in the target language. In other beginners language lessons, learners interview one another to complete surveys.

98. In many lessons, tutors clearly demonstrate well how to use the target language in a variety of contexts. Learners practise accurate pronunciation and intonation and errors are corrected appropriately by tutors. Learners work well in class discussions and in paired work. In many family language lessons tutors plan effectively the learning to meet the needs of learners of all ages, with good use of games and songs. However, in a minority of other lessons, tutors do not work effectively to meet the individual needs of learners, with some weak teaching and not enough provision of activities to improve learners' speaking skills. Some tutors do not give clear instructions and explanations, with too much use of English and poor learning materials. Tutors and learners do not make enough use of information technology in lessons. However, laptop computers are now available.

99. Most tutors have appropriate teaching qualifications and are fluent in the language they teach. They participate actively in a range of staff training activities including sharing good practice and developing strategies for teaching languages to families. Tutors also attend courses run by appropriate awarding bodies.

100. Initial assessment is generally adequate. Learners on beginners courses are assessed during their first lessons. Most learners on more advanced courses are assessed by a specialist tutor at a pre-enrolment interview unless they are progressing to a course

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on the recommendation of their tutors. Although written work is generally marked by the tutor with appropriate written feedback, some tutors do not carry this out effectively. The assessment and recording of learners' achievements and progress on non-accredited courses is detailed and standardised across language courses. However, this process does not link sufficiently with individual learning plans. Learners are not sufficiently aware of the assessments of their learning and there is not enough use of individual learning plans to improve learning.

101. Learner support is satisfactory overall. Learners are provided with appropriate initial information and guidance and they are able to identify their additional learning needs at enrolment and on their individual learning plans. Additional support for numeracy, literacy and language is also available. In most lessons tutors provide learners with appropriate help and encouragement to help them progress. They monitor and follow up absences and send learners information on missed work. On some courses learners attend films, concerts, museums and restaurants where the taught language is spoken. However, accredited courses do not meet the needs of all learners and a significant number of learners on accredited courses leave early. Many tutors do not make good use of individual learning plans to help learners identify and meet personal learning goals. However, most learners achieve their goals for family, social, travel or vocational purposes. Many older learners use the courses to maintain their existing language skills.

102. Accommodation is unsuitable at three of the sites where languages are taught. The rooms have poor acoustics and are often affected by noise from other areas. There is not enough space for the number of learners on courses or for shared teaching resources. There is inadequate access to ICT at some sites. The recently established Idea Store provides a good learning environment. Learners have good access to films and other resources in the previous language and they are able to take independent study.

Leadership and management

103. A programme area manager and a languages co-ordinator provide good support for tutors through coaching, training, mentoring, lesson observations and sharing of good practice and learning materials. Working relationships are good and communication with tutors is effective. There are regular staff meetings and minutes are given to all tutors. Tutors share good practice and work well to make improvements.

104. Promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory and curriculum managers and tutors implement effectively the service's central policy. Some staff, however, are not up to date with the most recent legislation concerning people with disabilities.

105. There is inadequate use of data by curriculum managers. For the years before 2003-04, data are not accurate or easily accessible. Managers are able to make adequate use of data to monitor, analyse and accurately evaluate achievement of qualifications, retention and learners' feedback. However, they do not analyse these data and no targets are set for retention and achievement.

106. Tutors do not make adequate use of course reviews. The reviews are not sufficiently monitored or analysed and any information collected is not used to produce action plans. However, curriculum managers are currently introducing a new process to improve the use of the course reviews.

Foundation programmes**Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	226	3

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good use of venues in local communities
- particularly effective family learning and community lessons
- good resources in community venues

Weaknesses

- ineffective monitoring and recording of learners' progress and attainment
- inadequate use of initial assessment

Achievement and standards

107. Learners on family and community based activities achieve their individual learning goals. Many learners develop effectively their literacy and numeracy skills and improve their self-confidence and self-esteem. On family learning programmes learners develop confidence in working with their children. Many learners use their skills to become more involved in school activities. Learners on the Keeping Up With The Children course receive a certificate of achievement on completion. Other courses celebrate learner achievement through photographic and written records of their achievements. Learners on a course for those with learning difficulties and disabilities achieved first prize in an art and poetry competition and their work was exhibited publicly.

108. Monitoring and recording of learners' progress and achievement is ineffective. Most family and community based programmes are non-accredited and tutors are aware of their learner's progress and achievement. However, on many courses recording of learners' progress is either poor or does not take place. Individual learning plans are inadequate and do not enable tutors to record to targets or learners' progress. Although some progress reviews evaluate the development of learner's skills, targets are not set. Data are not collected on learners' progression onto other courses.

Quality of education and training

109. The provider makes good use of community venues to provide family learning and community-based activities in the borough for hard-to-reach learners. Staff fully understand the needs of the communities in which they work. Classes are located in a variety of geographical areas and communities in venues including nursery, primary and secondary schools, health centres, church halls, community centres, shops on housing

estates and libraries. For example, a literacy and numeracy class is held at a drop-in shop on a housing estate. Venues are used effectively according to learners' social and working arrangements. For example, in one venue health courses are designed to meet the specific needs of older learners and those with disabilities.

110. Family learning and community lessons are particularly effective. The learning environment is very good and tutors use an appropriate variety of learning activities and workshop sessions are effective. Tutors are appropriately qualified and experienced. Learners are fully involved in setting their own learning goals. In family learning sessions tutors use clear lesson plans and schemes of work. Parents are given appropriate guidance in preparing for the learning activities with their children. There is effective use of volunteers in some sessions who work well with tutors and learners. For example, in one lesson, the tutor provided in-depth individual teaching to less confident learners, while volunteers worked with those learners able to work independently. Some schemes of work do not relate to the specific needs of individual learners. In some ESOL classes there is too much use of worksheets and learners are not provided with sufficient time to practise their oral language skills.

111. Resources at community venues are good. Most venues have good access for people with mobility difficulties. Crèche facilities are also available at most venues and all family learning sessions include appropriately staffed crèche provision. There are good ICT facilities at many venues, including computers and other audiovisual equipment. One outreach centre has a specialist craft and pottery room. There are sufficient supplies of consumable resources and family learning courses are provided with a good range of books and other learning materials. On some art and craft workshops, tutors provide learning activities relevant to the local community. For example, learners on one course are commissioned artwork and generate substantial income for future resources.

112. There is inadequate and inconsistent use of initial assessment on many foundation courses and the results are not adequate for curriculum planning and setting targets. Tutors are not able to measure and record learners' progress and attainment. For example, in some sessions, learners' additional support needs are not identified at the beginning of the course and individual learning plans are not sufficiently detailed to ensure that learners' development needs are met. In one workshop session a learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs were not identified until near the end of the course. No diagnostic assessment is carried out on ESOL courses. The provider is currently introducing additional support for learners on mainstream courses. Seventeen learners on six courses currently receive support. On four courses, learners are provided with support during learning sessions and group support is provided in the other two courses. Learners request additional support on their individual learning plans. However, there are no records of initial or diagnostic assessment of learners' language, numeracy or literacy needs. Learners are not set specific targets to develop their background knowledge and no records are kept of learners' progress or attainment in language, literacy or numeracy.

Leadership and management

113. The LEA subcontracts the provision of some family learning to partners. The lifelong learning service and the early years service run other courses. Although there is a family learning advisory group that meets regularly with all partners to consider the development of family learning, there are no effective measures to implement recommendations. Individual contractors' management is generally effective. However, there is no standard approach to course management across the family learning provision. For example, each contractor has different tutor and course files for similar provision. There are plans to develop literacy, numeracy and language and ESOL provision, but there is no overall strategy for its development across the service as a whole.

114. Quality assurance is satisfactory. Staff development is effective with some staff having attended a three-day residential course on establishing literacy, numeracy and language. Most staff have attended recent national training on the literacy, numeracy, ESOL and pre-entry core curricula and on the new teaching and diagnostic assessment materials. The lesson observation scheme and tutor mentor scheme are becoming integrated with of the quality assurance process. All tutors have been observed in the current academic year.

115. The LEA provides a diverse range of programmes to reflect the community it serves. It is reviewing its publicity materials to ensure that course information is provided in those languages used in the borough. Work is underway to attract hard-to-reach learners. For example, the work well sewing project provides additional ESOL and ICT training to men from a specific minority ethnic group with mental health problems.