

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Suffolk LEA**

**18 March 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

## Suffolk LEA

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## INSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Suffolk local education authority (the LEA) contracts with the Suffolk Learning and Skills Council for the provision of accredited and non-accredited adult and community learning in the area. Provision is delivered directly by the adult community learning service and through three subcontracted further education colleges and five schools. The adult and community service is based in Suffolk County Council's (the council's) education directorate and is part of its community education services. Courses are offered in 14 areas of learning, but some have very few enrolments. Information and communications technology (ICT); hospitality, sport, leisure and travel; visual and performing arts and media; English, languages and communications; foundation programmes, and family learning were inspected. In 2002-03, there were 39,000 enrolments by around 21,000 learners on approximately 4,000 separate courses.

2. Adult and community learning is the responsibility of the senior education officer (community), reporting to the acting director of learning. Two community education managers: one for adult and community learning and one for literacy, numeracy and language skills, manage the adult curriculum. Twenty-four community education officers, located in six geographical teams around the county, manage day-to-day activities. Twelve of them also manage specific curriculum areas. The community education manager for resource and community development, assisted by six locally based community partnership and resource officers, manages the delivery infrastructure for the service. Over 500 tutors are employed by the LEA and by subcontractors, teaching on accredited and non-accredited courses, in around 450 locations in the county. All tutors work part time and are paid hourly. Quality assurance management is the responsibility of a community education officer. Staff development is the responsibility of two part-time community education officers.

3. Suffolk is a large, economically and socially diverse county. It is largely rural, with three main centres of population in the county town of Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft. The February 2004 unemployment rate of 2.2 per cent is lower than the national average of 2.5 per cent, but this masks significant variations where the decline in the agriculture and fishing industries has affected particular local communities. Wards in Ipswich and Lowestoft are in the most deprived 10 per cent of wards nationally, as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation. Significant established minority ethnic communities exist in Ipswich and Forest Heath, making up 4.5 per cent and 5.9 per cent of the population respectively, the latter being the site of American military air bases. Approximately 600 asylum seekers, mainly single men above school age, live in the area.

## SCOPE OF PROVISION

### **Information & communications technology**

4. ICT programmes are offered to adults in over 10 regular community venues, through two further education colleges and in two schools. Accredited and non-accredited provision is available, with many classes offering both. During 2002-03 approximately 1,800 learners attended 354 courses. So far in 2003-2004, 118 courses have been attended by 965 learners. At the time of inspection 52 classes were being directly delivered by 20 part-time tutors, together with six run by a local college and four by schools. Topics covered include word processing, spreadsheets, databases, using the internet, digital photography and genealogy. Many courses are operated on a five-week rolling programme that learners can join at any time. Special programmes encourage the participation of individuals who would not otherwise have accessed learning. ICT is an important component of the council's workplace literacy and numeracy skills programme, 'Training Matters'. Fifty per cent of learners are aged over 55 years and nearly two-thirds are women. Ninety-four per cent identify themselves as white British. Curriculum co-ordinators are in place for the various aspects of the ICT provision, including for the information technology (IT) in the community department, for Training Matters and for the colleges.

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

5. The inspection covered the LEA's sport and leisure programme, together with some recreational catering classes. Courses are offered at a range of over 100 venues across the county that include further education colleges, church halls, village halls and schools. During 2002-03, 5,219 learners were enrolled on just over 900 accredited and non-accredited courses. In 2003-04 so far, 3,466 learners have enrolled on 361 courses. Courses include keep fit, aerobics, yoga, swimming, tai chi, food hygiene, cookery, sugar craft and golf. Most courses correspond to academic terms and last for an average of 10 weeks. They take place on weekdays and at weekends, during the day and in the evening. Approximately 15 per cent of learners are men and 3.2 per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups. Twenty-six per cent of learners are over 65 years old, and most learners are aged over 45 years. Tutors are employed part time. Co-ordinators are in place for each of the colleges' and the schools' provision. Co-ordinators for each of the community development teams report to the community education manager for adult and community learning.

## **Visual & performing arts & media**

6. Visual and performing arts provision was inspected as part of the leisure learning programme for adults. No media studies programmes were inspected. During 2002-03, 7,350 enrolments were made by 4,035 learners, on 681 courses. In 2003-04 so far, 3,569 learners had enrolled on 458 courses. All learners study part time, on non-accredited courses. A wide range of courses are offered covering music, dance and art and craft. They include Arabic dance, Chinese opera, taught in Cantonese, glass and upholstery, digital photography and sculpture, and the largest area of provision, art and watercolour classes. Some courses are specifically aimed at building the confidence of minority and disadvantaged groups. Most run for one term, of 10 weeks, with some courses repeating the programme for two further terms. The provision covers the whole of Suffolk and most of it is delivered by the two major subcontracting further education colleges. Classes are offered in the premises of schools and colleges across the county with many being held in village halls or urban community centres. The provision is geographically managed by partner organisations and community education officers.

## **English, languages & communications**

7. The inspection covered foreign language programmes and some aspects of English provision. During 2002-03, 1,056 learners were enrolled on 165 courses. In 2003-04, 827 learners had so far enrolled on 77 courses. Forty modern language courses run in 25 locations throughout the county, covering tuition in French, Spanish, German, Italian, Greek and Dutch. Thirteen specialist courses are run in literature, scriptwriting and poetry. Most courses consist of 10 weeks of two-hour learning sessions, and most centres offer at least beginners and intermediate tuition in French and Spanish. No courses lead to accredited qualifications. About three-quarters of the classes are evening courses. Shorter courses, as taster sessions, are held between May and September in some centres. French and Spanish courses are offered at all main centres but courses in other languages only run in specific venues according to demand. Most learners are aged over 45. The provision is geographically managed by partner organisations and community education officers.

## Foundation programmes

8. The LEA provides foundation programmes for adults in literacy and numeracy, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. During 2002-03, 3,779 learners were enrolled on 650 courses. Since September 2003, 2,319 learners have enrolled on 419 courses. Two community education managers manage the provision. One manages the Suffolk Basic Skills unit, covering literacy and numeracy and ESOL programmes, and the other manages adult learning, covering provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. For this area of their work they are assisted by 11 community education officers.

9. At the time of the inspection, Suffolk Basic Skills offered 149 literacy courses for 1,099 learners in a variety of community settings across the county. Of these, 30 also provided numeracy tuition for 218 learners and ESOL tuition alongside literacy, and 56 linked literacy with ICT. Fifteen courses are run in partnership with other agencies, with the particular aim of meeting the LEA's objectives for social regeneration and widening participation. Course lengths range from 20 to 120 hours, with approximately 50 per cent running for 60 hours. Most learners attend part time, during the day or evening. Most courses provide the opportunity for accreditation, primarily at level 1 or 2 by a national awarding body.

10. Seventy-two courses were offered for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities at the time of the inspection. Forty-six were pre-entry accredited courses and 26 were non-accredited courses, with 263 and 327 learners respectively. Many courses are delivered with partners, such as further education colleges, local authority social care departments and the national health service. The provision includes one-day workshops, short courses and residential programmes. These are delivered in a range of settings across the county, including community centres, further education colleges and sheltered workplaces. Courses have no typical length or time. They cover subjects such as personal and social development, life skills, community awareness, health education, personal safety, IT and work-related skills. Accreditation is offered through the Suffolk achievement award and an external organisation.

11. At the time of the inspection, Suffolk Basic Skills offered 57 ESOL courses in 25 venues across the county for 342 learners. Fifteen of these venues are in Ipswich, reflecting the concentration of speakers of other languages there. Provision covers pre-entry level and entry level 1 to level 2. Twelve of the courses are adapted for particular learners and are run in the workplace, funded through the Training Matters project. Other courses are held at community venues and local schools. Classes meet once or twice a week for between 90 minutes and three hours. Only four classes are offered in the evening at only two venues. Accreditation is available on many programmes through a national examining body.



## Family learning

12. The inspection covered provision for family literacy, language and numeracy, wider family learning and parenting programmes. During 2002-03, 2,266 learners enrolled on 330 courses. In 2003-04 so far, 896 learners had enrolled on 102 courses. Family literacy, language and numeracy programmes include taster literacy and numeracy workshops and short courses such as 'keeping up with the children' which help parents to support their children's learning. They also include intensive literacy and numeracy courses, ESOL and new pilot programmes, such as 'playing with language', for parents and their young children, as part of a national pilot project to extend family literacy, language and numeracy. Most courses run for between 12 and 80 hours. The courses are offered at schools, community centres, libraries and village halls. A national pilot project manager and a family literacy, language and numeracy co-ordinator manage the team of organisers and tutors. The wider family learning programme includes the 'sharing parenting' and 'families' projects. The 'sharing parenting' programme provides courses on parenting skills to parents and carers with children and teenagers. It works closely with key agencies involved with parents and young children, such as health visitors and the youth offending unit. The 'families' project looks at health, environment, IT and culture. Courses are offered at a range of venues including schools, family centres and health centres. A co-ordinator leads a large team of part-time tutors and project workers.

## ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	18
Number of inspection days	118
Number of learner interviews	563
Number of staff interviews	175
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	137
Number of partner/external agency interviews	82

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

13. The quality of provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, Suffolk LEA's leadership and management are satisfactory, as is its approach to equality of opportunity. Its arrangements for quality assurance are unsatisfactory. Provision is good in ICT, foundation studies and family learning, and satisfactory in visual and performing arts and media, and English, languages and communication. Provision in hospitality, sport, leisure and tourism is unsatisfactory.

## GRADES

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

<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	4

<b>Information &amp; communications technology</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	2

<b>Hospitality, sport, leisure &amp; travel</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	4

<b>Visual &amp; performing arts &amp; media</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

<b>English, languages &amp; communications</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

<b>Foundation programmes</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	2

<b>Family learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	2

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievement and standards

14. **Learners' attainment is good.** In all of the areas inspected, learners are successful in achieving their individual learning goals. Learners' success in test and examinations is often good, with many good pass rates in ICT and foundation studies. In non-accredited provision, learners' retention rates and attainment are often good.

15. Learners' standards of work are often good and they make good progress. ICT learners readily develop useable skills which they are able to apply to their home and community environments. Sport and leisure learners develop good skills, which many use outside classes. Learners in performing arts reach good levels of attainment, especially in dance. Learners' work is at least satisfactory in the arts and crafts, languages and ESOL programmes.

16. Most learners gain substantially in self-confidence and develop their personal skills, particularly in foundation studies and family learning, where learners are able to talk eloquently about the positive effect of their courses on their daily lives.

## 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	2	4	9	4	1	0	0	20
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	6	10	7	1	3	0	27
Visual & performing arts & media	1	5	12	12	4	0	0	34
English, languages & communications	0	2	4	3	1	1	0	11
Foundation programmes	2	12	13	8	4	0	0	39
Family learning	0	4	4	3	0	0	0	11
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>142</b>

17. **Overall, much of the teaching is good.** Sixty-three per cent of all learning sessions observed were better than satisfactory and 27 per cent were graded as very good or excellent. **The best teaching is in ICT, family learning and foundation studies,** where learning sessions are planned well. Learners are motivated by the tasks they are set and the enthusiasm of the tutors, and learners can progress at their own pace. Many sports, leisure and catering classes involved good demonstrations.

18. A small amount of teaching is unsatisfactory: most significantly in sport and leisure. **Health screenings for sports and fitness learners are inadequate.** Tutors use too much whole-group activity, do not correct learners' errors and become participants, rather than tutors. **Poor and unsafe techniques are not satisfactorily corrected in fitness classes.** In the visual and performing arts, teaching in the performing arts is good, but **art and craft lessons are insufficiently challenging.**

19. Resources to support teaching and learning are largely satisfactory. **Learning resources are good in ICT,** where welcoming and comfortable environments are resourced well with modern computers and teachers are provided with good-quality learning materials. **However, ICT learners receive insufficient technical support.** In other areas, the quality of accommodation varies widely. Some accommodation used for ESOL lessons is particularly poor or poorly furnished. **Not enough use is made of multimedia resources in teaching literacy and numeracy.**

20. The initial assessment of learners' needs, while good or satisfactory in some areas, is inadequate in others. It is thorough and comprehensive for literacy and numeracy learners and satisfactory in ESOL. **However, initial assessment is of inconsistent quality in provision for learners with learning difficulties and in family learning.** In languages and in the visual and performing arts it is informal, but effective.

21. **The range of courses available, with flexible attendance options, is good overall.** The provision in ICT, the visual and performing arts, languages, foundation studies and family learning is particularly good. **Visual and performing arts courses for minority and disadvantaged groups are good,** although progression opportunities to higher level courses are narrow for most learners. **The overall planning of the curriculum in ICT and the visual and performing arts is not adequate.**

22. **Learners receive very good individual support in foundation studies and family learning.** Support for learners is at least satisfactory in all areas. **However, the systematic monitoring of learners' progress, including the setting of targets for improvement, is inadequate in sports and leisure, and the visual and performing arts.**

### Leadership and management

23. **The adult and community education service has good strategic direction and leadership.** Clear priorities have been set and are pursued with vigour, including those for attracting a wider range of learners to courses. Staff members have a good understanding of the service's mission and priorities.

24. **The adult and community learning service works actively with many local and national external organisations at strategic and operational levels. It has consulted extensively in establishing many partnerships to meet local needs.** A lot of joint project activity takes place, which broadens the scope of the courses offered, attracts additional funding and increases the range of support available to learners.

25. **Courses successfully, and increasingly, attract learners from under-represented groups.** The LEA has implemented a number of well-conceived strategies, such as placing culturally representative community workers in minority ethnic groups. The LEA's promotion of equality of opportunity and its response to key legislation are satisfactory, but its co-ordination of equality of opportunity practices in adult and community education is inadequate.

26. The LEA's curriculum management secures good results for most learners. **However, some aspect of the provision are not managed consistently,** including the application of policies and procedures for initial assessment, progress monitoring and individual learning plans. Management of the many strands of provision is not sufficiently coherent, including the relationships between partners and subcontractors. Internal communications are satisfactory.

27. Staff training, development and appraisal are satisfactory. Well-planned central training events are held, although local staff development plans are not detailed enough.

28. **The LEA's use of data is inadequate.** While one new computerised management information system is in place, it is new and not yet being used to its full effect. Not all staff members understand the potential of data analysis to help them in their work.

29. **The LEA's quality assurance system is incomplete**, with many recently introduced procedures yet to be fully implemented and moderated. **However, self-assessment is well developed and conducted thoroughly, honestly and self-critically.** Most of the judgements in the self-assessment report matched those of the inspectors.

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

## **Leadership and management**

### **Strengths**

- good strategic direction and leadership
- active consultation with external organisations
- successful strategies to widen participation
- very effective partnership arrangements to meet local needs
- honest and self-critical self-assessment

### **Weaknesses**

- inadequate use of data
- insufficient management of some aspects of the provision
- inadequate arrangements for the co-ordination of equality of opportunity
- incomplete quality assurance systems

## **Information & communications technology**

### **Strengths**

- good achievement of individual learning goals
- very good teaching
- good learning resources
- good range of flexible courses to meet learners' needs

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient technical support
- fragmented curriculum management

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

### **Strengths**

- effective development of skills in many learning sessions
- good retention
- good demonstration techniques in many learning sessions

### **Weaknesses**

- poor and unsafe techniques in fitness sessions
- inadequate target-setting and progress monitoring
- poor health screening of learners
- inadequate curriculum management

## **Visual & performing arts & media**

### **Strengths**

- good teaching and achievement in the performing arts
- very satisfied learners
- very good provision for minority and disadvantaged groups

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient challenge in most art and craft learning sessions
- inadequate progress monitoring
- inadequate overall planning of the curriculum

## **English, languages & communications**

### **Strengths**

- good achievement of personal goals
- good development of independent study habits
- good range of courses to meet learners' needs

### **Weaknesses**

- inadequate development of learners' pronunciation skills
- insufficient curriculum management
- inconsistently applied quality assurance measures

## **Foundation programmes**

### **Strengths**

- good attainment
- much good teaching and learning
- good individual support
- good curriculum planning
- very effective use of partnerships to widen participation

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient use of multimedia resources in teaching literacy and numeracy skills
- inconsistent assessment of some learners' needs
- some inadequate curriculum management in one area

## **Family learning**

### **Strengths**

- good gains in learners' self-confidence and personal skills
- good attainment, retention and progress
- good teaching and learning
- particularly good range of provision

### **Weaknesses**

- insufficient initial and ongoing assessment

### **WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT SUFFOLK LEA:**

- the accessible local courses
- the baby and childcare facilities
- the opportunity to meet new people and make new friends
- the friendly and helpful tutors
- the opportunities to improve their self-confidence
- the encouragement to continue studies, in spite of any difficulties
- the courses, which provide older people with a new lease of life
- that everyone is treated as equal
- the relaxed and pleasant atmosphere

### **WHAT LEARNERS THINK SUFFOLK LEA COULD IMPROVE:**

- the accommodation - some is dirty and unsuitable
- the school environment
- the number of holiday weeks between terms - there are too many
- the opportunity to take longer courses
- the advertising of courses



## **KEY CHALLENGES FOR SUFFOLK LEA:**

- strengthen curriculum planning and co-ordination
- improve quality assurance
- use data more effectively
- strengthen the overall co-ordination of equality of opportunity
- develop the consistency of initial assessment and progress monitoring

## Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

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

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

## Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

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

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

## DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

#### Strengths

- good strategic direction and leadership
- active consultation with external organisations
- successful strategies to widen participation
- very effective partnership arrangements to meet local needs
- honest and self-critical self-assessment

#### Weaknesses

- inadequate use of data
- insufficient management of some aspects of the provision
- inadequate arrangements for the co-ordination of equality of opportunity
- incomplete quality assurance systems

30. The LEA has a clearly defined strategic vision for the development of adult and community learning. It focuses on local issues to ensure that adults with the greatest learning needs are given priority. The LEA's strategic planning process is good. Its education plan recognises the importance of adult and community learning in meeting the overall objectives for education. The community education department has produced a detailed three-year development plan, clearly outlining its vision of how it will work towards supporting local priorities. Short-term direction is contained in a detailed one-year plan. The LEA manages the implementation of its strategic and development plans well. Senior managers provide clear leadership and staff members share the service's mission and priorities.

31. The LEA actively consults with external organisations. Senior managers ensure that they form strong links with key organisations. Staff members have developed a very wide range of valuable contacts with external agencies, both nationally and locally. The service is able to share good practice, learn from other organisations' experiences and increase access to a range of practical support for learners. New projects are rarely started in the absence of well-founded partnerships.

32. Internal communications are satisfactory. Regular team meetings, especially in the major sites of provision, keep staff members informed and allow the sharing of information. Detailed minutes are produced, although these are not always shared with all tutors. Information about new initiatives and activities is often shared through informal and personal contacts. More geographically distant tutors can feel isolated, although those interviewed often praised the local management support they receive. Staff development and appraisal are satisfactory. The LEA's staff deliver well-planned

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training events, although departmental staff development plans are not detailed enough. Priority areas, such as training in equality of opportunity are not dealt with quickly enough.

33. The LEA's use of data is inadequate. The LEA has made good progress to establish one overall computerised management information system. The system is relatively new. As identified in the self-assessment report, insufficient historical data are available to establish and monitor trends, especially in key areas such as learners' attainment, retention and progression. It has only recently become possible to produce accurate and timely management reports. Some staff members have an insufficient understanding of the reports and the potential of the system to assist them in their work. Data are not available to help determine whether the provision provides value for money.

34. Management of some aspects of the provision is insufficient. The overall management for programmes operated by Suffolk Basic Skills is separate, and there are working practices and areas of overlap between teams. With the exception of ICT and most of the foundation area of learning, no curriculum managers are in place to provide subject leadership. The self-assessment report accurately identifies that the roles and responsibilities of curriculum managers are unclear. In many curriculum areas, inspectors found aspects of weaker management, often in relation to the inconsistent application of centrally agreed policies which were not understood locally. While the geographically based management structure assists the development of locally-led courses, the extent of the overall provision is not clear. A project to determine all the programmes offered throughout the county is not yet complete. No overall marketing strategy is in place for the provision.

35. The initial assessment of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills support needs is generally well-managed for learners on foundation programmes, but inconsistently applied in other parts of the provision.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

36. The LEA uses effective strategies to actively attract learners who traditionally would not participate in learning. For example, community workers, employed to work within minority ethnic communities, are culturally representative of the groups they are trying to reach. Participation from these groups has increased. Funding is vigorously and successfully sought to support initiatives and to meet the needs of specific groups, such as travellers. Short 'taster' courses were arranged in the past year as part of a national initiative. Many new learners were attracted and new courses were developed. Locally based staff members have a detailed understanding of their communities' needs, and have an influence on the classes to be offered. Free crèche facilities are available for all classes, helping to increase the participation of lone parents. Family learning programmes are used very effectively to attract non-traditional learners, many of whom continue with their studies in other areas after completing courses.

37. The LEA has formed many very effective partnerships to meet local needs. Partnership working is central to the LEA's aim of widening participation. Partnerships

embrace formal and national initiatives as well as many informal arrangements. They have significantly developed provision for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, where provision is partly funded by, and jointly managed with, Suffolk County Council's social care department. The LEA is involved in a partnership scheme with several agencies which has successfully increased the participation of minority ethnic groups and their acquisition of nationally recognised qualifications. New provision has been developed and bilingual tutors are employed. In ICT, for example, there are tutors who speak Bengali, Punjabi and Cantonese. Courses are run in a wide variety of locations to suit learners' needs. For example, exercise classes are held in residential homes for the elderly and courses have been run in the local mosque.

38. The LEA's response to changes in equal opportunities legislation is satisfactory. The audit of all council-owned premises is complete and an action plan has been produced to implement the improvements identified, to comply with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001. An audit of equipment has been carried out and additional resources have been identified and ordered.

39. The LEA's central co-ordination of equality of opportunity practices is inadequate. No-one in the adult and community education service has direct responsibility for equality of opportunity. Tutors and managers do not have a direct point of specialist contact. The council's comprehensive policies and procedures, complying with most aspects of legislation, are not adapted for use in adult and community provision. Learners are not given copies of the equal opportunities policy. They receive a 'charter' statement, but bullying and harassment are not mentioned in this. The learners' complaints procedure is not in a format suitable for learners with literacy support needs. A well-written disability statement booklet for adults with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is available, but many tutors are unaware of it or are not routinely using it. No overall planning and management of staff training in equality of opportunity takes place. Some tutors have not yet received training in response to recent changes in legislation. Equal opportunities data are collected but are not used effectively.

### **Quality assurance**

### **Contributory grade 4**

40. The LEA's quality assurance arrangements are incomplete. A comprehensive manual and timetable for monitoring and evaluating all quality assurance processes are due to be completed in June 2004. Current arrangements have been introduced over the past year. Many new forms and guidance notes have been developed, such as guidance for planning teaching and for monitoring learners' views. Comprehensive staff manuals have been produced for directly managed provision. The LEA also has an information pack for learners, a well-documented complaints procedure and information about how to carry out learners' evaluations. Initiatives have been introduced with varying degrees of success. For example, although well-conceived, the internal scheme for the observation of teaching and learning is not thorough enough. At the time of inspection, 58 graded observations had been completed by trained observers. The observations are moderated twice a year by the moderation panel, and their quality varies considerably. Over a third of the grades have been moderated downwards. Inspectors found that teaching observations in some areas, such as ESOL, were consistently

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overgraded. Some tutors are unaware of the developments in quality assurance and monitoring to ensure effective implementation is adequate. For example, well-planned attempts to standardise the recording of learners' attainment are yet to have a consistent effect. Internal verification is not fully developed and not contributing systematically to the assessment cycle.

41. Self-assessment is honest and self-critical. The LEA has self-assessed its provision twice over the past 15 months. Many staff, learners and partners have been involved in aspects of the self-assessment process, although not all have been involved in its final compilation. The report is clearly written and focuses on the key issues that most directly affect learners' experiences. It identifies most of the weaknesses identified by inspectors in leadership and management and in the areas of learning. A detailed development plan to rectify these weaknesses has been produced recently, but it is too early to judge its effects. Learners' feedback is collected formally at the end of all programmes and collated by curriculum co-ordinators. However, it is not yet evaluated across the whole provision or used to share good practice, although this is planned.

42. Regular quality assurance meetings are held with the subcontracting schools and colleges. Most subcontractors attend these regularly. Service level agreements are in place to ensure that subcontractors meet the minimum requirements. Some subcontractors implement these more effectively than others. Some concerns are identified by the quality community education officer and dealt with promptly.

43. Arrangements for dealing with learners' complaints are clear. Most complaints are resolved by community education officers. Where problems are raised at a higher level, they are resolved speedily and appropriately.



## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Information & communications technology

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	965	2

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

#### Strengths

- good achievement of individual learning goals
- very good teaching
- good learning resources
- good range of flexible courses to meet learners' needs

#### Weaknesses

- insufficient technical support
- fragmented curriculum management

#### Achievement and standards

44. Achievement of individual learning goals is good. Most learners attain their objectives and the pass rates for those seeking accreditation are excellent. For example, in 2002-03, the pass rate for basic computer literacy courses was 97 per cent and for stage 1 internet technologies qualifications was 92 per cent. In the same year, nearly 98 per cent of learners taking non-accredited courses completed 60 per cent or more of their programmes. Retention rates are also good, averaging 82 per cent overall in 2002-03 and 95 per cent on courses at the local college. As noted in the self-assessment report, 90 per cent of learners who complete their first five-week programme re-enrol and continue for another five weeks to develop their skills further. An increasing number of learners who start with no thought of accreditation move on to taking unit qualifications.

45. Learners' attainment on programmes, relative to their prior attainment, is often good. They reach good standards in learning sessions, often performing tasks which they would not have considered remotely possible some weeks earlier. In one case, learners designed and implemented a website for their village. Older learners, sometimes without their own computer, have learnt basic computer skills, moved on to spreadsheet use within months and now use a computer at home. Parents can now assist their children, and learners gaining qualifications have improved their job prospects. For example, an accountant with no knowledge of spreadsheets is now able to deal confidently with a new range of business. Learners interviewed often said that their greatest gain was increased confidence in using IT. During the inspection, attendance rates were good at 78 per cent.

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

46. Much ICT teaching is very good. Of the observed learning, 75 per cent were graded good or better and only one session was graded unsatisfactory. Well-managed learning sessions enable learners from a wide range of backgrounds to enjoy their studies and progress at their own rate. Enthusiastic and knowledgeable tutors create a good working atmosphere and ably assist a wide range of learners. Learners are usually busily engaged on individual projects and exercises, with the tutor patiently providing individual guidance. Tutors are very aware of the skill levels of their learners and regularly check learning. They ably match teaching to learners' individual needs, including those with additional learning or social needs, those wanting recreational learning and those rapidly progressing to accreditation. In one learning session, a tutor assisted learners who speak English as an additional language by giving individual guidance in Cantonese. Some learning sessions are enhanced by good presentations and discussions. For example, in one observed session an interactive whiteboard was effectively used, online, to explain e-mail attachments.

47. In poorer learning sessions, learners are confused by being shown too many different ways of achieving the same result, for example, when text processing. Computer terminology is not always explained, leaving some learners unable to proceed. In one session, not all of the group could see a demonstration on a visual display unit. In another, inappropriate software was used for inexperienced learners.

48. Teaching is well-supported by good learning resources. This is identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. Comfortable environments are provided following the recent refurbishment of several community venues. For instance, the Stone Lodge centre has been recently refurbished and 12 modern computers installed. Fifty laptop computers are provided for use in remote community venues. Learners are given sufficient space for their notes and workbooks in learning sessions, and often a document holder is provided. All venues are accessible to wheelchair users. Computers are generally suitable for the type of provision offered. Some laptop computers and a few desktop computers run slowly at times when more complex software is used. Software is appropriate and up to date, and suitable workbooks are provided at most centres.

49. The IT in the community department provides for each of their tutors an excellent CD-ROM of supporting materials including guidance, monitoring forms and learners' worksheets. Individual tutors produce additional materials that enhance learning and support specialist areas. All tutors have a teacher training qualification or are about to achieve one. Six volunteers support some learner groups by providing extra guidance to those with particular learning difficulties.

50. A good range of flexibly delivered courses meet learners' needs. They are generally in venues which are easy for learners to reach. Learners can start on an appropriate topic at a suitable level, and can progress to accredited learning when ready. New

learners are encouraged to attend. Specialist courses and brief one-day introductions are also offered. Learners who are ready for longer, accredited level 2 courses are encouraged to attend one of the local further education colleges. Rolling five-week courses encourage learners to start programmes without having to make a long-term commitment. Courses meet social, personal interest and work-related needs very well. Partnerships with other organisations provide further opportunities for learners. For example, the LEA worked with a group accommodating single homeless people to provide 24 ICT courses across 12 venues.

51. The monitoring of learning and the provision of support for ICT learners are generally satisfactory. Whilst most tutors are aware of their learners' progress and encourage students to keep portfolios of their work, no consistently applied system is in place for measuring and recording learners' progress. A minority of classes have no formal progress records. Some good use is made of individual learning plans. The provision of formal support for those with particular difficulties is not yet fully implemented. A minority of learners have not been assessed for literacy, numeracy or language skills support. Six of the ICT tutors are bilingual. One tutor provides worksheets in Chinese script to assist learners. Excellent free crèche facilities are available at most centres.

52. Technical support for the ICT infrastructure is insufficient. This weakness is identified in the self-assessment report. Only one technician is employed to service all community ICT provision in 60 premises across Suffolk, of which seven have curriculum networks. The technician spends a lot of time travelling, the term-time workload is heavy and many repairs take two weeks or longer to complete. Unresolved technical problems impede the efficient delivery of learning. In one centre, a fast, high-capacity printer has been unusable for three months. Tutors are uncertain of the procedure to follow for quick resolution of maintenance problems. Different budgets exist for consumables and parts, and there are delays in making repairs. The LEA has no strategy for equipment replacement. Technician support in colleges and schools is satisfactory and managed separately.

## **Leadership and management**

53. The IT in the community department provides an extensive range of easily accessible courses, which many learners successfully pursue. Managers make considerable efforts to keep in touch with their widely dispersed tutors. Tutors have regular development visits from the co-ordinator and receive shared materials electronically. However, a wide range of partners is involved in the delivery of ICT courses and the overall management of ICT is fragmented. No strategy is in place to cover the planning and management of all adult ICT programmes, and no analysis of provision takes place across the county. Management is spread across six community teams, the leisure learning team, colleges and schools. They each have separate budgets, and responsibility for the management of an overall ICT budget is unclear. Communication and the sharing of good practice between partners are insufficient. The use of standard processes and forms, such as for learning plans and formative assessment records, is inconsistent.

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54. Commitment to equality of opportunity is strong in ICT. Equality of opportunity is effectively promoted and practised in work with learners, and courses to support equality are run in partnership with voluntary and community organisations. However, equality of opportunity data are not systematically collected or monitored.

55. Self-assessment is effective in ICT. The judgements in the self-assessment report matched most of the judgements made by inspectors. The internal scheme of learning session observation is beginning to provide data on the quality of teaching which can be effectively used. Data on attainment collected centrally are not provided locally in a format suitable for quality assurance.

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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	3466	4

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- effective development of skills in many learning sessions
- good retention
- good demonstration techniques in many learning sessions

**Weaknesses**

- poor and unsafe techniques in fitness sessions
- inadequate target-setting and progress monitoring
- poor health screening of learners
- inadequate curriculum management

**Achievement and standards**

56. Learners' skills are developed well, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. In many learning sessions, levels of strength, suppleness and local muscular endurance are above those normally seen. In many sessions for those aged 50 and over, good levels of fitness are demonstrated. Learners, some of whom are in their 80s and 90s, participate well in sessions and demonstrate good balance, co-ordination and endurance. Step, and dance sequences are performed well in exercise to music and keep fit classes. Learners' movements are co-ordinated well, are accurate and in good time to the music. Learners in yoga classes perform good bilateral poses, stretches and postures.

57. Cookery and sugarcraft learners achieve good standards and are able to describe techniques and styles clearly. Sugarcraft learners perform the skills of cutting, moulding and shaping leaves well, in a variety of contexts and at different levels. Some demonstrate good levels of dexterity. One learner produced a very good piece of work in her own time: an orchid made from sugar paste with excellent shape, symmetry and very good colouring.

58. Many learners are able to use the skills they learn on programmes in their wider life. Yoga learners use their breathing techniques to help relieve stress and for relaxation, and one student reported that a back injury had been significantly improved after attendance.

59. Most learners complete their courses. Retention for 2002-03 was good, at 87 per cent. Learners' attendance in the learning sessions observed was also good, at 77 per cent. Few classes lead to accredited qualifications and achievement figures are

calculated on attendance and completion of course units, which was nearly 100 per cent in 2002-03.

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

60. Teaching is often satisfactory or better, but a substantial minority of learning sessions observed were less than satisfactory. In the best lessons, tutors use good instructional techniques that reinforce their teaching points well. A variety of methods of instruction are used. Visual demonstrations provide good illustrations of the pace, tempo and rhythm at which performance should take place. In cookery and sugarcraft classes, steaming and colouring techniques are demonstrated well. Clear and concise verbal instructions that structure the learning tasks effectively are used in keep fit and cookery classes. Manual guidance is offered where necessary. For example, learners are effectively guided in stretching and balancing in exercise classes. Tutors effectively and expertly use techniques to meet the needs of individual learners and groups.

61. In the poorest teaching, tutors are often participating rather than observing, correcting and teaching. Many use teaching styles based on whole-class activity rather than partner, group or individual work. Tutors do not satisfactorily correct poor and unsafe techniques in fitness classes, or inaccurate techniques in games-related activities. Body position, weight transference and movement errors are not corrected. Incorrect performance of stretches and muscular endurance exercises, some of which are unsafe, are not corrected in weight training. Tutors use poor teaching positions and are sometimes unable to see all learners. The use of alternative exercises to accommodate the individual abilities of learners is frequently inadequate.

62. Resources are satisfactory. Teaching areas are suitable for their purpose, are clean, lit well and at the right temperature for activities. However, many rooms have equipment stacked and stored at their edges during physical activities, when learners are supporting themselves while balancing. Learners in many lessons have to supply their own items of small equipment, such as yoga mats, and many tutors have to supply their own music and music playing equipment. Most tutors have qualifications from their national associations to teach their specialist areas. A small number do not have specialist or up-to-date qualifications to work with particular groups. One yoga teacher is not qualified in yoga, a tutor who is working with the over 50s has no dedicated qualification to work with that group, and a tutor working with adult men has not updated his qualifications for 26 years.

63. The range of courses and progression opportunities are satisfactory. In particular, some good progression opportunities exist in yoga and tai chi. Seventy-five per cent of courses are delivered by partner colleges and the remainder by the schools and the community teams. Provision is planned to meet the needs of particular client groups and new classes have been introduced, such as swimming classes for Sikh men and women and badminton for Sikh men. Fourteen per cent of learners are men. It is a key strategic goal of the LEA to increase participation by men.

64. The self-assessment report accurately identified that target-setting and monitoring of learners' progress are inadequate. Learners' achievement records are used in many learning sessions, but individual learning outcomes are not planned. The often generalised targets and anticipated group outcomes are inappropriate for individual learners in mixed-ability lessons. Activities can be too challenging for some learners and not challenging enough for others. Insufficient systematic assessment of learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills support needs takes place, but co-ordinators and some tutors are aware of the wider support services available.

65. Learners' health screenings prior to their participation in sport and fitness lessons is inadequate, and is not systematically applied across the provision. Many tutors recognise the need for assessment but feel unsupported by the set of standards they are required to use to collect the information. They sometimes use their own form, or the form of their national governing body. Tutors do not systematically use assessments in learning sessions to develop learners' exercise schedules and their difficulty. The LEA has no overview of whether the assessment of learners' readiness to exercise is taking place. Information cannot be passed to replacement tutors when regular tutors are absent. Broader aspects of information and guidance provided to learners are satisfactory.

### **Leadership and management**

66. Curriculum management is inadequate. No effective arrangements are in place for designing, planning or developing the curriculum across the many different providers. The provision is the product of individual partners' initiatives in their local communities and not the product of a planned strategy. An exercise to analyse, and subsequently plan, provision across the county has recently started.

67. Risk management and the monitoring of health and safety on sport and leisure courses are inadequate and are ineffectively devolved to the individual partners. While the risk assessment of buildings takes place, it is insufficiently detailed. One risk assessment report on accommodation was nothing more than a conditions of use form with a short paragraph on evacuation procedures. The assessment of risk in learning sessions is very weak. A few partners have introduced assessment in sessions which they regard as having high risks, but they have not been extended to other sport and leisure provision. Hazards where teaching rooms are too small and have equipment stored in them are rarely identified. Staff members' qualifications are not systematically monitored. The LEA has no reliable overview of whether tutors are qualified to teach their classes, and has not planned any professional updating for staff.

68. Quality assurance of the curriculum is not sufficiently developed. An internal scheme for the observation of teaching and learning has recently been introduced and progress is good, but no system exists for sharing the results of observations. The reporting and analysis of achievement data are ineffective, with insufficient use of data to set improvement targets. Assessment of the thoroughness and effects of self-assessment is difficult as the area of learning was not separately assessed. However, many aspects of the self-assessment matched the inspectors' judgements, although the inspection did identify additional weaknesses.

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69. Equality of opportunity and diversity are satisfactorily promoted. Good progress has been made in widening the participation of people who would traditionally not participate in learning. However, the systematic monitoring of the application of equality of opportunity policies and the implementation of legislation is in its early stages.



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

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	3569	3

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good teaching and achievement in the performing arts
- very satisfied learners
- very good provision for minority and disadvantaged groups

**Weaknesses**

- insufficient challenge in most art and craft learning sessions
- inadequate progress monitoring
- inadequate overall planning of the curriculum

**Achievement and standards**

70. Learners' achievements are satisfactory overall, but much better in the performing arts. Learners reach good levels of attainment in dance classes. Inspectors observed contrasting styles of dance at appropriate levels of technical expertise, relevant to the experience of individual learners. In salsa dancing, an enthusiastic tutor led a large class to a successful level. In a tap dancing class, the tutor brought learners of a wide range of abilities and ages into a chorus with well-synchronised tap beats.

71. The work of art and craft learners is often technically good but its depth and breadth do not reflect the length of their studies. Many learners have attended the same programme for many years. Their objectives are often narrow, for example repairing a particular chair or painting a certain kind of watercolour of a particular subject. Most continue to work within their existing abilities. They are expert in certain narrow, easily achieved skills, and are not sufficiently challenged by tutors to extend or refine their skills. Many students have developed specific skills to a good level. For example, skills in cutting and grinding and solder work were quickly and effectively attained in stained glass learning sessions, and learners show considerable skills in upholstery and dressmaking.

72. Learners interviewed were invariably enthusiastic about their work. Tutors design learning in sessions to teach the skills that learners want. The skills they acquire are those they value in their home and leisure activities. Many make or improve items which they intend to use, such as clothing or furniture. Links between class and home are good, and many learners continue to develop their skills between classes. For example, one learner on a course for women in geographically isolated areas was making a decorated box to contain the memorabilia of her forthcoming wedding. In another course, one woman

made an African dress to wear at a dance the next day, and another made clothes which she could not afford to buy for her children. Progression opportunities for learners are not yet fully developed. Although the range of subjects offered is very wide, no courses are certificated and almost none are specifically planned for progression to study at a more advanced level.

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

73. Teaching in the performing arts is good, with no unsatisfactory learning sessions observed. Students in all observed sessions were enthusiastic about their tutors and activities, which they saw as building the skills which they liked to employ in their leisure time. Teaching is challenging, and observed learners approach their work with vigour. Learners in dance sessions gained basic capabilities quickly and were immediately introduced to partnering. One tutor planned a session carefully in advance, inviting men to partner the larger number of women learners and arranging live piano playing to encourage enthusiastic learning.

74. Teaching is largely satisfactory in art and craft classes, but often presents too little challenge to learners and is insufficiently thorough. While some tutors move learners along briskly, many are satisfied with a slow pace and little improvement in learners' work. Late arrivals often delay the start of sessions and time is taken up by socialising. Individual tuition is superficial in some sessions and learners are not corrected when they make basic errors. In too many sessions, the more experienced learners are left largely to their own devices or are not challenged to make continual progress. Tutors do not sufficiently organise their groups to observe the different skills each learner is mastering. Exceptions to this include a life drawing lesson, where challenge and pace were demanding. The model's pose was frequently changed and learners were challenged to complete accurate drawings in different media and styles. In the best sessions, tutors plan tasks to develop a range of thinking and technical skills. These are further enhanced by homework, with the results discussed, and understanding deepened, in the next session.

75. Courses for minority and disadvantaged groups, in both rural and urban areas, are planned and delivered very well. These courses effectively widen participation for the elderly, the isolated and minority ethnic groups. Learners develop self-confidence and are encouraged to progress on to certificated courses. Teaching is sensitively delivered to overcome fears and to encourage achievements by learners. Some good craftwork is produced, and several learners who had little experience of the education system before enrolling in art and craft classes have now applied for further courses.

76. Accommodation is satisfactory overall, but some is of inadequate quality. It includes new village community centres and good local college and school resources, but some other centres and studios are too small. Some rooms are poorly lit or have heating which is too noisy. Others have too few working surfaces. However, access to classes in more remote areas is good. Staff are adequately experienced and qualified to meet the learners' requirements. Some staff have teaching qualifications and a strong professional

background. In all lessons observed, students were enthused by the tutor's ability to help them develop the skills they value. Tutors themselves are enthusiastic.

77. Tutors give satisfactory support to individual learners in sessions. Support is intensive and strong in some learning sessions, but only informal in others. Learners in leisure classes are mostly unaware of further arrangements for additional support and guidance. However, learners attending courses targeted at disadvantaged minorities make better use of these support services.

78. Learners' progress is inadequately monitored, a weakness not identified in the self-assessment report. Although an assessment system has been recently introduced, it is not yet sufficiently established or detailed. For example, it assumes groups will have common target outcomes when, in reality, individual learners have different learning goals. Some tutors and learners are opposed to formal assessment and, in some cases, assessment is not carried out or judgements are not recorded. The results of assessment are generally not used to support learners' progress. In one class they were kept secret from learners. Some tutors use their own more effective assessment systems. For example, learners in a salsa dancing lesson were asked to make their own judgements as to whether their particular dance movements were mastered, not learnt or needed more practise. The tutor moderated their judgements in collaboration with them. Their self-critical comments showed good self-analysis and supported their progress.

## **Leadership and management**

79. Little overall planning of the curriculum takes place. Courses offered are mainly either those which have been in existence for a long time, or newer courses proposed by tutors. No planning for the geographical distribution of courses, and very little planning for progression, takes place. An exception is the development of courses for the disadvantaged and minority communities, where the LEA has worked strategically with partners to successfully widen participation, to promote inclusion and to secure equality of opportunity. Equality of opportunity is strongly promoted through the courses offered and in their teaching, but little monitoring of the implementation of policies or relevant data takes place.

80. The self-assessment report correctly identifies the weakness of inconsistent application of quality assurance systems. The LEA's internal schemes to observe teaching and learning are not all effective, although they are usually satisfactory for college partners. Partners have introduced procedures for course evaluation but these too vary in effectiveness. Most of the judgements in the self-assessment report matched those of the inspectors, although the structure of the report made it difficult to identify judgements specific to the area of learning.

**English, languages & communications****Grade 3**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	827	3

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good achievement of personal goals
- good development of independent study habits
- good range of courses to meet learners' needs

**Weaknesses**

- inadequate development of learners' pronunciation skills
- insufficient curriculum management
- inconsistently applied quality assurance measures

**Achievement and standards**

81. Learners' attainment of their personal goals is good. In new and established classes across the provision, most learners successfully develop the language skills they need in order to meet their personal aims, such as holiday language or the language needed by owners of homes abroad. They are very motivated and make good progress, particularly in learning new vocabulary.

82. Learners in most modern languages lessons display at least satisfactory spoken language skills, apart from in pronunciation and intonation. Learners' skills are sometimes very good, and they often make significant progress with their active, oral vocabulary. In the better teaching sessions, learners are comfortable speaking in the language being studied, even to the extent of making jokes in the language, and rarely revert to the use of English. In one very good session, learners confidently used the target language to discuss current community issues and the fund-raising activities of a new charity initiative; one learner gave a presentation and the others asked questions about what they could see in the accompanying pictures. Learners attain satisfactory standards in reading, listening and writing skills which they practise consistently. Punctuality was good during the inspection, and the average attendance was good at 76 per cent. The average retention rate for 2002-02 was 70 per cent.

**Quality of education and training**

83. Most learners develop good independent study habits. In most classes, learners are clearly in the habit of doing homework in preparation for the next session. In some instances, considerable amounts of independent study are evident: sometimes in excess

of one hour's work. Tutors support independent study by effectively linking it with session content. In most classes, students receive good feedback on the work they have completed. Many learners actively engage in group study outside class and exchange study materials.

84. A good range of courses meet learners' needs. Language classes are given a high priority in curriculum planning. Many classes are allowed to run with few learners. Spanish and, in particular, French classes are constantly offered at all main centres across the county, at a range of levels. Enquiries regarding other language courses are actively followed up, groups are combined across neighbouring sites, and extra courses are put on to cater for them. Some specialist courses such as Italian literature and 'brush up you Shakespeare' are running in response to demand. In some cases, local communities are involved in course planning, and classes are promoted at local events.

85. Most teaching is at least satisfactory. Lessons sessions are often planned well. Most tutors are aware of their learners' goals and take good measures to ensure that the session content matches them. Most tutors ensure that sessions are conducted in the target language and endeavour to keep translations into English to a minimum. In a very good Italian conversation session, the whole class used Italian throughout. The tutor guided the session, which had its own momentum generated by the learners' enjoyment and enthusiasm.

86. Resources are satisfactory. Most tutors are native speakers of the language they teach, and some have relevant teaching qualifications from their own country. Some tutors in schools and colleges have completed, or are in the process of completing, generic teacher training courses. Other tutors do not have basic language teaching skills, and their learning sessions are too tutor-centred. Tutors in most sessions produce satisfactory learning resources of their own, including cue cards and worksheets, but few collections of shared supplementary materials are available. Teaching accommodation is adequate, apart from some minor problems such as low chairs or, in one case, inadequate heating. Most premises have audio and video equipment, although in a small number of cases, tutors have to bring their own cassette recorders. Some centres provide computers with internet access, but little use is made of computers in lessons.

87. Initial assessment is informal but effective in most learning centres. Potential students meet with a tutor before enrolling on a class, and are able to sit in on a session before deciding whether to join. In a few instances learners have been placed in the wrong level of class. A good range of levels of French and Spanish classes are available, and tutors are quick to switch learners if they start in the wrong class. The level of support that established learners receive is varied, but satisfactory overall. Centres routinely collect and analyse learners' feedback, although their systems are not consistent. Most learners interviewed are aware of whom to seek guidance from and most feel their concerns are dealt with. Learning outcomes in most classes are recorded, but this is a new initiative and it is too soon to evaluate its effectiveness in terms of recording progress or attainment.

88. Learners do not develop adequate pronunciation skills in foreign languages. In most

new or established classes, for beginners or more advanced learners, insufficient attention is paid to the teaching of the sounds of the language or its intonation. Learners are mostly unaware of the new sounds they need to be able to make or the way sentences need to be phrased. Tutors rarely require learners to practise systematically difficult sounds in beginners' classes, or employ measures to counteract poor pronunciation or intonation in more advanced classes.

## **Leadership and management**

89. The provision is insufficiently co-ordinated. No individual member of staff has overall responsibility for language provision, and no coherent curriculum planning takes place across the provision. Two of the partner further education colleges have language specialists with responsibility for elements of curriculum management, but the other partners have insufficient access to such expertise. Policies and procedures are not consistently applied. At the colleges, most tutors meet regularly, and designated subject leaders support tutors' development. Language tutors at other learning centres seldom meet and most have little contact with any other language tutor. Opportunities to discuss good and poor practice are infrequent. The quality of initial assessment varies, and no standard approach exists to the use of multimedia resources in teaching.

90. Equality of opportunity is satisfactorily managed. Although learners and staff members receive no formal induction to equality of opportunity, the LEA has a strong commitment to meet the needs of individual learners, and few barriers exist to entry on language programmes. Learning centre managers are aware of the broad initiative to widen participation and recruit more young men to programmes, although no formal plans are in place to target specific, under-represented groups.

91. Quality assurance measures are inconsistently applied. The internal scheme of learning session observations, while established and effective in one college, is less established with other partners, and some language tutors with many years' service have yet to be formally observed. Some good informal observations take place across the provision, but they are not comprehensive or systematic and in some cases no written records are kept. Tutors do not consistently share good practice. Self-assessment is satisfactory. English languages and communications is included in the self-assessment report as part of leisure learning and does not have its own dedicated section. However, the strengths and weakness identified for leisure learning were similar to those identified for languages provision by inspectors. Managers in the schools and colleges are actively involved in developing the self-assessment report. A good amount of learners' feedback is systematically and regularly collected and analysed across the provision.

**Foundation programmes****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	2319	2

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good attainment
- much good teaching and learning
- good individual support
- good curriculum planning
- very effective use of partnerships to widen participation

**Weaknesses**

- insufficient use of multimedia resources in teaching literacy and numeracy skills
- inconsistent assessment of some learners' needs
- some inadequate curriculum management in one area

**Achievement and standards**

92. Learners' work is of a good standard. Most literacy and numeracy learners achieve their stated goals and make good progress towards their personal objectives of developing skills for personal, social and employment reasons. Learners following provision for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities complete worksheets effectively, either by hand or by using IT, and are proud of their work. ESOL learners' attainment is adequate and they routinely gain a satisfactory level of cultural knowledge. All learners develop confidence and many are helped to identify their future priorities more effectively. Learners' attendance and punctuality are satisfactory in ESOL and good for the other two areas.

93. Retention and achievement rates are good in provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. For accredited provision in 2002-03, the average rate of achievement was 99 per cent and retention was 81 per cent. A large proportion of learners, 85 per cent in 2002-03, progress into either community education or mainstream leisure programmes. The pass rate for those taking one externally accredited ESOL examination was slightly above the national average, at just under 90 per cent. Overall achievement rates are close to the national average for adult and community learning ESOL provision. In 2002-03, almost 60 per cent of non-accredited learners completed at least 60 per cent of their courses. Many literacy and numeracy learners achieve certificates at entry level or levels 1 and 2, and their overall attainment and achievement rates are good.

## Quality of education and training

94. Much foundation teaching and learning are good. Nearly 70 per cent of the learning sessions observed were judged to be better than satisfactory and over half of these were very good or excellent. In literacy and numeracy, all teaching observed was considered to be good or better. Learning sessions are planned, structured and managed well. Objectives are shared with learners at the start of sessions. Learners' individual needs are taken in to account and tutors design or choose appropriate learning materials to meet specific targets in learners' individual learning plans. An observed pottery session for learners with learning difficulties fully met their individual learning needs. Each was producing a pottery piece which the tutor and support workers, in discussion with learners, had determined to be the best for them. Learners made good progress, developed confidence, enjoyed their suitably challenging tasks and were able to take away the completed piece of pottery.

95. Teachers motivate their learners, who gain in interest and confidence. In an outstanding literacy session observed, in a relatively poorly equipped youth centre, the well-prepared and inspirational tutor taught with creativity and imagination. The tutor suitably challenged the learners to acquire new grammatical knowledge in preparation for their assessment. Individual learning plans were carefully used to contribute to the session's activities. A learner in another literacy class, encouraged by his tutor, had published poetry and had begun the draft of a novel following a major debilitation. Supporting learning materials are of a good standard and are used effectively by learners as aids to their classwork and homework.

96. A minority of classes observed were poorly managed and insufficiently challenging, especially in ESOL provision. In these classes, tutors tend to talk too much, provide inadequate opportunities for learners to practise their developing skills and do not correct their basic errors.

97. Learners receive good individual support. Tutors are very committed to their learners and provide effective support in learning sessions. They also give freely of their time, before and after sessions, to deal with learners' concerns and to set individual work assignments. Tutors successfully create situations to allow learners to support each other. For example, learners on some courses plan their own diary of events and are encouraged to lead parts of learning sessions. Adequately qualified staff with appropriate skills provide additional learning support. Well-managed and trained volunteers are also present in many classes to provide additional support. Bilingual support staff or volunteers provide help for entry-level ESOL learners. However, the wide range of broader support services for learners, including progression and careers advice, is not consistently or sufficiently well known to them. They depend on tutors to help them use these services.

98. Most teaching and accommodation resources are satisfactory. The wide range of venues across the county vary considerably in their suitability for teaching, but most are safe, accessible and appropriate. Some, especially the college venues, are very good.



Some particularly poor accommodation is used for ESOL classes. For example, one course shares a room with a crèche, some teaching rooms are too noisy and some rooms in schools have inappropriately sized furniture. Most tutors are suitably qualified and have sufficient knowledge of their subject areas. A few are under-qualified and inexperienced. Tutors receive sufficient opportunities for development.

99. Overall, tutors do not use modern, IT-related resources enough in their teaching. For example, except in the literacy classes linked with ICT, inspectors rarely saw ICT used to aid teaching and learning. In literacy and numeracy, in particular, while the quality of paper-based learning materials was good, tutors often did not use multimedia resources such as digital cameras when it would have been appropriate. Sometimes, as in provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, little or no IT equipment or software is available for learners to use. This weakness is identified in the self-assessment report. In other locations, such as the main learning centres, resources are available but not used. Many ESOL tutors rely too much on text-based materials, including worksheets, which are sometimes of poor quality.

100. In provision for learners with learning difficulties, initial assessments and individual learning plans do not have a standard format and are of inconsistent quality. A few learners are placed on inappropriate courses, some are set inappropriate targets and most plans do not contain specific, measurable and achievable targets. Initial assessment of ESOL learners is largely satisfactory. Individual learning plans are used effectively, most learners are aware of their individual targets and evidence of non-accredited achievement is satisfactorily recorded and moderated. All literacy and numeracy learners receive initial assessments. This assessment is recorded in individual learning plans and used effectively to support continuing diagnosis. Learners' work is effectively marked, and results are recorded in the plans to support the monitoring of their learning goals.

## **Leadership and management**

101. Curriculum planning is good. Key managers for the foundation curriculum work closely and effectively together. Curriculum planning takes place in line with the LEA's service objectives for community education. The curriculum is regularly reviewed in response to the needs of learners and the community. It is frequently adapted following consultation with learners, through the LEA's learners' forum, which is attended well. The curriculum for workplace courses is developed in conjunction with employers and trades unions, and at Training Matters meetings.

102. Some aspects of the management of foundation provision are inadequate, particularly in courses for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Here, the curriculum does not provide adequate coherence and progression and no core curriculum exists, although one is under development. The LEA has no standardised format for recording and monitoring learners' progress. Staff meetings are held regularly, but are poorly recorded.

103. The quality assurance of provision for learners with learning and/or social difficulties is managed well. Course co-ordinators and tutors are fully involved in self-

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assessment. Course reviews are regularly carried out and feedback from stakeholders contributes to review and planning. Teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy are effectively observed and trends in performance are monitored at course level. However, as the self-assessment report identifies, literacy and numeracy staff are insufficiently involved in self-assessment. Most of the judgements in the self-assessment report matched the judgements made by inspectors.

104. The LEA makes very effective use of partnerships to attract learners who traditionally would not participate in learning. An extensive number and range of partner organisations effectively help plan, fund, accommodate and deliver programmes. The extent and location of courses enables learners to attend often. Partnership projects and programmes cover working towards employment, healthy living, and arts workshops for learners with disabilities. First-time adult learners are identified and approached through an ESOL support group, made up of representatives of various minority ethnic communities and other partners. The needs of refugees and asylum seekers are effectively identified through the local refugee support forum. Staff work closely with a range of organisations such as Business Link and Jobcentre plus and a national business information and support network to ensure wide publicity for programmes.

105. Equality and diversity are effectively promoted. The LEA's classes include many learners who have previously been denied learning opportunities, older people, those isolated by social and geographical circumstances, members of minority ethnic groups and travelling communities, and asylum seekers. Many learners are women and are at a mature stage in their lives where learning presents many obstacles. Most of the classes support the growth of confidence as a vital feature of learners' achievement. Equal opportunities data are not formally recorded or monitored.

**Family learning****Grade 2**

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	896	2

*The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:*

**Strengths**

- good gains in learners' self-confidence and personal skills
- good attainment, retention and progress
- good teaching and learning
- particularly good range of provision

**Weaknesses**

- insufficient initial and ongoing assessment

**Achievement and standards**

106. Learners make good progress and gain in self-confidence. For many learners joining classes, it is the first time they have attended any form of education since leaving school. Their main goal is to help their children, which they do successfully. However, they also improve their own literacy, numeracy and language skills on the family literacy, language and numeracy courses and their personal skills on the wider family learning programme. Learners interviewed spoke eloquently about the positive effect of the courses on their lives and their children. Learners were happy to contribute their views and feelings to inspectors, often in potentially intimidating large meetings. Many learners progress to different courses, while some are motivated to study further towards a career. For example, one learner is now pursuing a career in nursing and another is working towards becoming a classroom assistant. Many learners did not have the opportunity to gain any qualification earlier in their lives, and now feel ready for that challenge. In one case, a mother and daughter who joined the parenting programme together are now independently following further studies.

107. Learners' retention is good. At present, at least 80 per cent of learners who started their programme in September 2003 or January 2004 are still on their courses. Attainment and progress are also good. Eighty-seven per cent of learners have achieved approved qualifications in literacy or numeracy. On the parenting courses, 55 per cent of learners achieved Open College Network credits up to level 2.

## Quality of education and training

108. Teaching and learning are good. Teaching in over 70 per cent of the learning sessions observed by inspectors was judged to be better than satisfactory, with much that was very good and no teaching was less than satisfactory. Learning sessions are planned well and presented with some humour and discussion. Most schemes of work and session plans are clear and designed well. Tutors motivate learners through their own enthusiasm and interests. In a very good wider family learning session, learners worked on a community project on the Chinese New Year, which would culminate in an event for their village. The tutor skilfully involved all generations of learners, who were proud of their efforts to understand the festival and of their work to make banners, papier-mâché monkeys and blossoming trees. In a numeracy lesson for parents, most of whom had not studied fractions for many years, the tutor sensitively led learners to rediscover their skills, constantly encouraging and praising their work.

109. Staff are well qualified and knowledgeable. Some were school teachers and are experienced in working with children, and tutors teaching the parenting courses are parents themselves. Working environments are good, although some furniture in schools is too small for adults. Learners have access to good learning materials which the LEA has produced. They do not always have access to computers and multimedia resources in the many different locations, although the department has a good base resource at the Castle Hill centre.

110. A particularly wide range of flexible provision is offered, including accredited and non-accredited provision. The LEA has piloted a range of different courses to attract new learners, including some in the early evenings and at weekends. As part of a national project, new provision is also being piloted in such areas as financial literacy for families and work-based family literacy, language and numeracy. Some courses are particularly targeted at fathers. The courses are mostly situated in schools and community settings ideally suited to the needs of learners, although it is difficult for working parents to attend many of these courses.

111. The diagnosis of individual learning needs is sometimes unsatisfactory. An initial assessment process exists but is not always effectively linked to individual learning plans. In most cases, learners' needs are not known until identified by tutors during their classes. This is often after the early stages of learners' courses, and insufficient attention is paid to planning teaching to meeting learners' individual or additional learning needs in a small number of sessions. Ongoing assessment is also not sufficiently developed and is not consistently used to support individual learning plans. However, tutors and learners have a clear view of learners' progress and what they need to do next. Learners receive good individual support from tutors, who unflinchingly make themselves available to talk with their learners.

## Leadership and management

112. Staff collaborate effectively to plan projects and activities. Good attempts are made at communicating with all tutors, but the provision is widely spread geographically, and these attempts are not always successful. County-wide tutors' meetings and staff development sessions are aimed at all tutors. Most tutors attend. Local organisers and project workers have been employed recently to support staff across the many different locations. The LEA has formed very effective partnerships and staff have worked well to develop links, both locally and nationally, with schools, health centres, a national pilot project to extend family literacy, languages and numeracy, and a government programme to achieve better outcomes for children.

113. Equality of opportunity is practised and is clearly and effectively promoted. Insufficient formal monitoring of the implementation of equal opportunities policies takes place; however, and equality-related data are not analysed in detail.

114. The self-assessment report is accurate. Most of its judgements matched those of the inspectors. However, overall quality assurance is incomplete. The effectiveness of the family learning programmes is not evaluated in depth, little analysis of key data takes place and the internal scheme of learning session observations is very new. A well-established support group visits learning sessions to support tutors, and a mentoring system to support new parenting tutors is in place.