

# REINSPECTION REPORT

## **Stockport LEA Reinspection**

**21 January 2005**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## Grading

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

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

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

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

## Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

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## REINSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Stockport local education authority (LEA) provides adult and community learning through direct provision delivered by the Stockport Continuing Education Service (SCES), which is part of the education services directorate of Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council. The LEA has service level agreements with three of the local colleges of further education to provide approximately 40 per cent of its adult and community learning provision. The strategic objectives include widening participation in learning, promoting equality of opportunity and raising skills by ensuring a broad and balanced curriculum.

2. The head of early years and continuing education services reports directly to the director for education services, who in turn reports to councillors and the chief executive through a number of key strategic committees. She is supported by the service managers for curriculum and quality, performance and development, and operations and resources. In addition there are curriculum managers for a number of curriculum areas and two part-time modern foreign language consultants. Learning centre managers are responsible for operational management. There are approximately 83 part-time tutors directly employed by SCES.

3. The LEA has contracts for adult and community learning with the Greater Manchester Learning and Skills Council. There is provision in all 14 areas of learning. The education service provides its direct provision through eight adult education centres and a variety of community outreach centres across the borough. There are currently over 1,600 learners in direct provision.

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

#### English, languages & communications

4. There are currently 880 learners on courses in English, languages and communications, of whom 340 are on directly provided courses and the remainder in subcontracted provision with three local colleges. There are 54 learners on British Sign Language (BSL) courses, 28 learners working towards a general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) in English and 42 learners are working towards a level 2 or 3 qualification in community interpreting. The remaining learners are all on non-accredited courses in Dutch, French, German, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish or Welsh. SCES offers courses in this area of learning at eight centres on seven of its own sites, in addition to the subcontracted college sites. SCES employs 18 part-time lecturers for its direct provision in this area this area of learning.

## ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	2
Number of inspection days	13
Number of learner interviews	26
Number of staff interviews	11
Number of subcontractor interviews	4
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	11
Number of visits	3

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. At the inspection in October 2003 Stockport LEA's leadership and management, equality of opportunity and quality assurance were satisfactory. Training in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, visual and performing arts and media, foundation programmes and family learning were good. Training in information and communications technology (ICT), hairdressing and beauty therapy, health, social care and public services and humanities was satisfactory. Training in English, languages and communications was unsatisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process all aspects of the provision were found to be satisfactory or better.

## GRADES

Grades awarded at previous inspection

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

<b>Information &amp; communications technology</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

<b>Hospitality, sport, leisure &amp; travel</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	2

<b>Hairdressing &amp; beauty therapy</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

<b>Health, social care &amp; public services</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

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<b>Visual &amp; performing arts &amp; media</b>	<b>2</b>
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	2

<b>Humanities</b>	<b>3</b>
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

<b>English, languages &amp; communications</b>	<b>4</b>
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	4

<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

## Grades awarded at reinspection

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

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

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### English, languages & communications

Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	880	3

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

#### Strengths

- high achievement rates in accredited provision
- good work by tutors to meet the needs and interests of individual learners
- good initiatives to remedy identified weaknesses

#### Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

### Achievement and standards

6. Achievement rates in accredited provision are high. Since the previous inspection GCSE English results have continued to be good with 89 per cent grades A-C for learners entering the examination in 2003 - 2004. In the same year, the pass rate for candidates for BSL examinations was 80 per cent and for community interpreting 89 per cent.

7. In most modern foreign language lessons learners' spoken language skills in pronunciation and intonation are at least satisfactory. In the best lessons they are very good, although some more mature students retain very Anglophone pronunciation and intonation. Reading and writing skills are also at least satisfactory with some very good written work. Some learners on the highest level courses demonstrate an excellent command of the foreign language and use the course as the means to maintain it. Learners satisfactorily achieve the course and their personal objectives.

### Quality of education and training

8. Tutors work well to meet the needs and interests of individual learners. In addition to the approach to lessons detailed in the previous report, particular attention is made to the needs of individuals. For example, learners on community interpreting courses, who are not literate in the languages they speak, are encouraged to make notes phonetically or to use a tape recorder provided in the classroom to make audio notes. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and remains at least satisfactory. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed and 68 per cent of lessons were graded good or better.

9. SCES has good initiatives to remedy weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. SCES has run in-service training on the use of the target language in modern foreign languages classes to stop the excessive use of English, which was previously a key weakness. Most tutors observed now use the target language, resorting appropriately to English on rare occasions for complex explanations. However, a minority still use too much English in their lessons. Assessment practices in modern foreign languages were previously unsatisfactory. Following in-service training and advice from modern foreign languages consultants most tutors now satisfactorily assess learners' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills separately. SCES introduced a learners' logbook at the start of this academic year in which tutors encourage learners to record the learning outcomes from each session and, following periodic reviews, to record assessments of progress against their individual and course objectives. It is too early to judge the full impact of the logbooks on either the learners' awareness of their progress or SCES's ability to meaningfully evaluate learners' progress or tutors' effectiveness. The logbook is generic to all adult and community learning provision and is to be replaced in modern foreign languages by one designed specifically for language training.

10. Resources for lessons and courses continue to be appropriate. Staff qualifications, textbooks, and audio and video equipment are available and are of a satisfactory standard. Some tutors make good use of audio and video equipment. At the previous inspection, ICT was not used in lessons. This is still the case, although one of the in-service training sessions provided immediately before the reinspection had focused on this area and although well received by tutors it is too early to judge the impact on their teaching.

11. Opportunities for progression in modern foreign languages are now satisfactory. SCES and its subcontracted colleges provide complementary language courses with no duplication of provision at the same time. SCES responds effectively to demand. Learners of the more popular languages are able to progress from beginners level through a number of stages to advanced courses. Learners may also choose lateral progression in languages by learning another language from the courses available. SCES is currently evaluating its language level descriptor systems in order to standardise its provision and further facilitate learners' progression in the adult and community learning provision and into accredited provision in local colleges at an appropriate level. It is too early to judge the effectiveness of this initiative.

12. Information provided to learners is satisfactory. In August each year households in the borough receive a newspaper from SCES. A supplement within this newspaper contains articles on education and training opportunities and details of the subjects available, the venues, days and times. An advice line operated by SCES, provides initial advice and guidance and staff give potential learners contact numbers for course tutors to enable them to discuss the details of each course. There is impartial referral between providers. Support for learners in English is good. The GCSE course is a progression route for learners who have progressed from SCES's literacy programmes. These learners continue to receive high levels of language and pastoral support during individual and group tutorials. Language support for learners on the community interpreting courses is

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satisfactory. Many of these learners have progressed from SCES's programmes in English for speakers of other languages and are unfamiliar with medical and other technical terms which they may encounter as interpreters. Appropriate bi-lingual and specialist dictionaries are made available during the course.

13. Literacy, numeracy and language support are not specifically provided in modern foreign language lessons. Learners identified as having literacy and numeracy support needs during the course are directed to SCES's foundation programmes.

### **Leadership and management**

14. Programme management is now satisfactory. Following the unsatisfactory grading at the inspection in October 2003, SCES's commissioned a review of its modern foreign languages provision by an outside consultant. As a temporary measure, two part-time modern foreign languages consultants seconded from a local language college are satisfactorily managing the provision. SCES plans to appoint a full-time modern foreign languages specialist curriculum manager with a clear job description and responsibilities for this area before the start of the next academic year.

15. Since their appointment, the modern foreign languages consultants have assessed the provision and conducted three in-service training sessions for SCES's modern foreign languages tutors. These sessions have also been open to tutors employed by the subcontractors. They have issued guidance on lesson observations for modern foreign languages and started a programme of observations of SCES's provision, extended to joint observations with college personnel of the subcontracted provision. In addition, the consultants are evaluating potential accreditation systems. It is too early to judge the full impact of these actions.

16. The draft self-assessment report for 2003-04 in this area has been produced collaboratively. It is critical and identifies additional weaknesses, which the associated development plan deals with, including realistic timescales and milestones.

## Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

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

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

## Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

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

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	Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning
<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.