INSPECTION REPORT

Poole LEA

23 April 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
Poole LEA

Contents

Summary

Detailed inspection findings

INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Poole Local Education Authority (LEA) is part of the Borough of Poole unitary authority, in south Dorset. It provides adult and community learning services to learners living in and around the borough through its adult learning service unit, Poole Adult Learning. The LEA offers courses from pre-entry level to level 4 in business administration, management and professional, information and communications technology (ICT), hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, hairdressing and beauty therapy, visual and performing arts and media, humanities, English, languages and communications, foundation studies, including English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) and family learning. It also offers courses in science and mathematics, land-based and construction, which were not inspected. Approximately three-quarters of this provision is accredited. Funding for these courses is provided by the Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole Learning and Skills Council (LSC). Approximately 5,000 learners followed courses during the academic year 2002-03, representing just over 7,500 enrolments, of which 63 per cent were identified as new learners.

2. Poole Adult Learning is part of the culture and community learning service unit of the unitary authority. The service was restructured in September 2002, and a number of discrete job roles were left unfilled until April 2003, including curriculum manager, quality manager, staff development manager, and head of learning. Nine managers currently co-ordinate the 12 curriculum areas offered, some under temporary arrangements. The current head of adult learning has been in post for just over a year, and a new head of the culture and community learning service unit took up their post at the start of the inspection.

3. The LEA provides courses in the borough's main adult education centre and over 40 other venues around Poole, including libraries, museums, community centres, churches, a police station, a golf centre, a yacht club and several schools. Family learning courses are running in 11 of the schools.

4. Members of minority ethnic groups make up 1.8 per cent of the residents of Poole, according to the 2001 census. Poole is ranked in 199th place out of 354 local authorities according to a range of deprivation indices developed by the government. The unemployment rate in Poole in March 2004 was 1.1 per cent, with just over a quarter of those unemployed aged 18-24. This compares with a national unemployment rate for March 2004 of 2.5 per cent. According to the 2001 census, 40 per cent of the local population are over 50 years old.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Business administration, management & professional

5. In 2002-03, 249 learners enrolled on business administration, management and

professional courses, representing approximately 4 per cent of the LEA's learner total. At the time of the inspection, 114 learners were enrolled on 11 part-time accredited courses, most of which are in teacher education courses. Learners can take a teachers' certificate at stage 1 or 2, a teacher trainer certificate in ICT, a classroom assistants' initial certificate, a teaching assistants' certificate at level 2, a teaching numeracy certificate at level 4, and a certificate in adult learning support. Business subjects include a book-keeping certificate and diploma, both at level 1, a certificate in accounting at level 2 and business studies at advanced subsidiary (AS) level. Many learners on the teaching courses are already employed as teachers at the main adult education centre. Ten part-time tutors deliver courses, supported by a programme co-ordinator.

Information & communications technology

6. In 2002-03, 1,402 learners enrolled on 172 ICT courses, representing approximately 20 per cent of the LEA's learner total. In 2003-04 so far 38 courses have been completed, with 631 learners making 786 enrolments. Twenty-three courses were operating throughout the borough at the time of the inspection, with 380 enrolments. Most courses lead to qualifications in information technology (IT) at levels 1 and 2. Many of these courses last for 20 hours, spread over 10 weeks. Some level 2 courses run two or three hours a week for a full year. Some sites offer free, short taster courses to introduce potential learners to computing and help them to decide which course to take. Courses are held during the day and in the evening at six community venues, including libraries, schools and adult education centres. Sixty-eight per cent of learners are women, and 37 per cent of learners are over 60 years of age. Thirteen part-time tutors are supported by a programme co-ordinator.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

7. In 2002-03, 875 learners took courses in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, representing approximately 15 per cent of the LEA's learner total. At the time of inspection 338 learners were enrolled on 30 courses, including yoga, pilates, cookery, floral sugarcraft, piping and icing, food hygiene and swimming. Some courses are targeted at specific groups, such as those aged over 60, men only and those with specific therapeutic needs. Most courses are not accredited, and require attendance of one or two hours a week for up to 10 weeks. Provision is offered during the day, evenings and at weekends in 12 different venues including community centres, schools and colleges. Most current learners are women and many are older adults. Thirteen part-time tutors work for between one and six hours a week.

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

8. Provision in hairdressing and beauty therapy includes courses in body massage, aromatherapy, nail treatments, Indian head massage, reflexology, anatomy and physiology, waxing and hairdressing. In 2002-03, 242 learners enrolled on courses, representing approximately 4 per cent of the LEA's learner total. At the time of the inspection 11 accredited courses were running, six in holistic therapy, three in beauty therapy and two in hairdressing. The LEA also offers several non-accredited courses and taster courses which act as an introduction to the accredited provision. Of the 190 learners enrolled at the time of the inspection, 3 per cent were men, and 2 per cent were from minority ethnic groups. Courses are run during the morning, afternoon and evening. All courses are run at the main adult education centre, which has specialist hairdressing and beauty therapy facilities. Most courses run for between 24 and 30 weeks a year. All tutors are employed part time and most work for between four and eight hours a week. A new part-time programme curriculum leader was appointed on a temporary basis in June 2003, and this post became permanent in January this year.

Visual & performing arts & media

9. In 2002-03 there were 955 visual and performing arts and media learners, representing about 16 per cent of the LEA's learner total. At the time of inspection, the LEA offered 11 accredited and 33 non-accredited courses, with 566 enrolled learners. Courses include arts subjects such as life drawing, portraits, painting in oils and watercolours; crafts such as upholstery, pottery and beadwork; music courses in instruments such as the guitar; and courses in ballroom dancing, photography and silversmithing. A special 'art start' project is aimed at young learners and provides courses in music, photography, web design and hairdressing. Most courses are offered in the main adult education centre with a smaller number offered in eight community sites including church halls and schools. The LEA offers several weekend workshop day courses throughout the year in subjects such as upholstery, painting in the park and art for beginners. Courses are offered at entry level through to level 3, and range in duration from six to 60 hours. Most learners are over 50 and women. Sixteen current learners are from minority ethnic groups. Some courses, such as photography and web design, lead to nationally recognised qualifications. All 29 tutors work part time.

Humanities

10. The LEA currently provides courses in psychology and archaeology at AS level, and psychology at general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) level. It also offers an eight-week non-accredited course on understanding the police at work, delivered by the local police force for members of the local community. This course accounts for two-thirds of the current total of 78 humanities learners and is joint-funded by the LSC. It has encouraged some members of the public to consider related careers in the police and other civic activities. All the humanities courses run for two to two and a half hours and take place during the evening. The two accredited course tutors work part time. The LEA also offers non-funded programmes in family history and local history, although no learners were enrolled on these courses at the time of the inspection. The LEA had 519 learners in 2002-03, representing about 9 per cent of its learner total and following GCSE courses in archaeology, classical civilisation, child development, sociology, history and law, as well as law at AS and advanced (A) level.

English, languages & communications

11. In 2002-03, 698 learners were taking courses in English, languages and communications, representing about 12 per cent of the LEA's learner total. At the time of the inspection, 450 learners were enrolled on 44 languages classes at six sites in the Poole area. Most classes run for two hours a week, apart from some one-hour classes run for a local employer and an A-level Spanish class which meets for two and a half hours. Accredited courses run for three terms, and non-accredited courses for 24 weeks. Approximately three-quarters of the courses are accredited. The LEA offers a wide range of courses in Spanish and French. At the time of the inspection, it also offered classes in German, Italian and Mandarin Chinese. The provision also includes a small number of English language and English literature GCSE classes, as well as British Sign Language classes. Around half of the accredited classes are portfolio-based awards at levels 1 or 2, with approximately 160 learners following these at the time of the inspection. The remainder of the accredited courses are GCSE or A-level classes. Of the current learners, 267 are men and 20 are from minority ethnic groups, mostly Chinese. The provision is managed by a programme manager and a programme co-ordinator, both of whom are employed part time, and have responsibility for other curriculum areas. Of the 18 part-time tutors, 15 teach foreign languages and three teach other courses. Ten of the foreign language tutors are native-speakers of the language they teach.

Foundation programmes

12. The LEA offers daytime and evening courses in literacy and numeracy and ESOL at its main adult education centre and a number of community venues across the borough. The literacy and numeracy team also offers additional learning support across the service. In 2002-03, 763 enrolments were made on foundation programmes, representing about 13 per cent of the LEA's learner total. At the time of the inspection, 506 learners were enrolled on literacy and numeracy courses and 98 on ESOL courses. Most classes are two hours a week, although some specific learning sessions run for one and a half hours, and the LEA currently offers one-hour sessions for learners who have little confidence. Most courses run for 34 weeks a year, and learners can join some of the courses at any point of the programme. At the time of the inspection, the LEA offered 30 literacy courses, including short courses and established courses, 10 numeracy courses and 10 ESOL courses. Learners can work toward a literacy or numeracy certificate. Many learners are currently studying towards national literacy and numeracy tests. The literacy and numeracy team has two co-ordinators, 32 part-time tutors and 20 volunteer tutors. The ESOL team has five tutors and five volunteers, working with a tutor/co-ordinator.

Family learning

13. In 2002-03, 242 learners enrolled on family learning courses, representing approximately 4 per cent of the LEA's learner total. At the time of the inspection, 89 learners were enrolled on nine courses running at 13 different venues across the borough. Courses include family numeracy, and 'keeping up with the children' courses which help parents support their children's learning. They range in length from 12 hours to 45 hours, and are supported by family literacy and numeracy workshops which run for two to three hours at a time. Most courses are offered during the daytime, and have crèche facilities. Some IT courses are run in the evenings to allow working parents to attend. Visual and performing arts courses are run on Saturdays. In March 2004, around 40 families from local schools attended a visual and performing arts activities day. Eight part-time tutors work on family learning courses, supported by a co-ordinator. A second member of staff manages 'Share', which is a national project for bringing families together to learn.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	13
Number of inspection days	65
Number of learner interviews	401
Number of staff interviews	105
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	41

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

14. The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the LEA's leadership and management are unsatisfactory. Its approach to equality of opportunity is satisfactory but its arrangements for quality assurance are very weak. The quality of provision is outstanding in family learning, good in ICT and foundation programmes, and satisfactory in business administration, management and professional, hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, and visual and performing arts and media. Provision is unsatisfactory in hairdressing and beauty therapy, humanities and English, languages and communications.

GRADES

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

Leadership and management	4
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	3
Quality assurance	5

Business administration, management & professional	3
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

Information & communications technology	2
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	2

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	3
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

Hairdressing & beauty therapy	4
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	4

Visual & performing arts & media	3
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

Humanities	4
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	4

English, languages & communications	4
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	4

Foundation programmes	2
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	2

Family learning	1
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	1

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

15. **Retention rates are very good in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel.** They have averaged around 90 per cent throughout 2001-02 and 2002-03. **Rates are also very good in foundation and in most family learning programmes.** Around 90 per cent of foundation learners are retained, and many family learning courses retain all of their learners.

16. **Retention rates are good in business administration, management and professional, especially in the teacher education courses.** Rates for all business administration courses have increased from 63 per cent in 2000-01 to 85 per cent in 2002-03. Retention rates are also good in ICT, at over 80 per cent for a basic computer literacy course. Rates are satisfactory in English, languages and communications. **Retention rates in visual and performing arts and media are good,** at 87 per cent.

17. **Retention rates are poor in hairdressing and beauty therapy,** with too many learners leaving courses early. **Retention rates are also poor in humanities,** where some courses have been cancelled because so many learners have withdrawn.

18. Approximately three-quarters of the courses offered by Poole LEA are accredited. **Achievement rates are very good for accredited courses in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel,** although most courses in this area are not accredited. **Achievement rates are also very good in visual and performing arts and media and in foundation courses, at 85 per cent, and in most family learning courses.** Over half of the family learning courses in 2002-03 recorded 100 per cent achievement.

19. **Achievement rates are good in ICT,** particularly on introductory level courses, at over 80 per cent. Achievement rates are satisfactory and improving in business administration, management and professional, **especially on the teacher education courses.**

20. **Achievement rates are consistently poor in hairdressing and beauty therapy,** averaging 50 per cent for the past three years. Few humanities learners successfully achieve their qualifications, although those who do take external exams achieve good results. **Achievement rates are weak in English, languages and communications,** averaging 57 per cent across all courses. Rates are unsatisfactory in a small number of family mathematics and literacy courses.

21. The standard of work produced by learners is good on almost all courses. **However, hair and beauty courses do not adopt appropriate commercial standards.** This contrasts with the holistic therapy courses, which display good commercial standards.

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
Business administration, management & professional	0	1	1	2	2	0	0	6
Information & communications technology	0	4	5	2	0	0	0	11
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	4	8	1	0	0	0	13
Hairdressing & beauty therapy	0	1	3	3	5	2	0	14
Visual & performing arts & media	1	4	9	4	1	0	0	19
Humanities	0	1	1	1	0	1	0	4
English, languages & communications	0	3	2	5	2	0	0	12
Foundation programmes	0	3	6	3	0	0	0	12
Family learning	1	1	3	1	0	0	0	6
Total	**2**	**22**	**38**	**22**	**10**	**3**	**0**	**97**

22. **Teaching and learning are good on most courses,** with individual tutors working well

to make their classes interesting and to meet learners' needs. Courses are generally planned well, and classes are taught in an interesting and lively way to engage and maintain learners' attention.

23. **A few modern foreign languages classes use too much translation into English,** with teachers too quick to translate everything into English rather than allow learners to try out their new skills. **Learners in some teacher education sessions do not have enough opportunity to participate in debate and discussion.**

24. **Teaching and learning on holistic therapy courses are good.** Tutors enable learners to develop good communication skills and attitudes. **However, tutors on hair and beauty courses do not model appropriate commercial standards.**

25. Most courses are adequately resourced. **Family learning courses in particular have good, up-to-date resources.** Accommodation is generally satisfactory, and accessible to wheelchair users. Most tutors are well qualified.

26. The LEA has no standard approach to initial assessment. Many tutors have devised their own systems for assessing whether learners are on the right course. These assessments rarely extend to checking whether learners have literacy, numeracy or language support needs, except in foundation programmes. **Initial assessment is inadequate in business administration, management and professional and visual and performing arts and media courses.** Where learners inform staff of their additional needs themselves, the support offered is generally good.

27. **Assessment and recording of learners' progress through their courses is not standardised, and is generally weak.** Most tutors have devised their own systems, and the amount of detail recorded varies greatly. Some tutors record only what they have taught rather than what learners have learnt. Other tutors do not record anything until the end of the course.

28. The pre-course advice and guidance provided by the LEA is not consistent in quality, **and is sometimes inadequate.** Information on which courses are actually running, how much work learners will have to do, and whether they need any prior experience is often inadequate. Reception staff in community venues sometimes do not have the necessary detailed information to answer learners' enquiries before enrolling.

Leadership and management

29. **Many areas of learning have significant weaknesses in leadership and management.** All the tutors are part-time employees. They receive insufficient support from Poole Adult Learning. Many of them are working in isolation, with few opportunities to share experiences and few procedures to guide them. The experience that learners get depends too much on individual tutors' ability and willingness to assess their needs.

30. **Poole Adult Learning has established good initiatives and links with a wide range of community organisations to bring in new learners.** It has successfully targeted many

programmes at particular groups or communities.

31. **Poole Adult Learning provides satisfactory support for learners and succeeds in removing barriers to participation.** However, it does not monitor or analyse how well these learners subsequently succeed on their programmes. **It collects data on learners' age, gender, ethnicity and disability, but does not analyse these to monitor participation or to plan improvements.** Its use of management information is poor. Retention and achievement rate data for learners completing in 2002-03 were not available to staff until early 2004.

32. **Quality assurance arrangements are inadequate.** Insufficient quality monitoring takes place, and what there is has not been followed by action to rectify weaknesses. **The LEA has been slow to implement planned improvements.** Learners' views are not collected in any systematic way to help guide course reviews. Course reviews themselves are not established. Only a third of the tutors have been observed teaching in the current academic year, and many of the resulting records do not clearly identify strengths to be shared or weaknesses to be overcome.

33. Self assessment is not an established process in Poole Adult Learning, and is not sufficiently self-critical.

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Leadership and management

Strengths
- strong and effective partnership arrangements
- very effective and productive initiatives to widen participation
- good support for individual learners' needs

Weaknesses
- poor use of management information
- poor management in many areas of learning
- slow implementation and monitoring of planned improvements
- insufficient promotion and monitoring of equality of opportunity
- inadequate quality assurance arrangements

Business administration, management & professional

Strengths

- good retention and attendance rates
- good achievement rates on teacher education courses
- good course and session planning
- very detailed and constructive feedback to teaching certificate learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient opportunities for learners' participation in some sessions
- inadequate initial assessment and recording of learners' needs
- poor quality assurance

Information & communications technology

Strengths

- good retention and achievement rates on many courses
- very good attendance and punctuality
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- weak curriculum management
- poor quality assurance

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Strengths

- very good retention and achievement rates
- good teaching and learning
- well-qualified and knowledgeable tutors

Weaknesses

- weak monitoring and recording of learners' progress
- poor pre-course information and enrolment procedures
- weak curriculum management
- ineffective evaluation of provision

Hairdressing & beauty therapy

Strengths

- good teaching and learning in holistic therapies
- good development of theoretical knowledge
- good range of courses

Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates on accredited courses
- poor commercial standards in hairdressing and beauty therapy
- poor assessment practice
- poor advice and guidance
- poor curriculum management

Visual & performing arts & media

Strengths

- good retention and achievement rates
- good teaching and learning
- good individual support for learners
- good range of provision

Weaknesses

- poor initial assessment
- inadequate recording of learners' progress
- poor quality assurance

Humanities

Strengths
- some outstanding achievement in GCSE archaeology
- good teaching and learning in psychology

Weaknesses
- poor retention rates on most accredited courses
- some poorly planned sessions in archaeology
- poor assessment practice in AS level archaeology
- poor curriculum management
- inadequate quality assurance arrangements

English, languages & communications

Strengths
- good achievement of personal learning goals
- good motivational teaching

Weaknesses
- over-use of translation into English in language classes
- weak achievement rates on accredited courses
- inadequate curriculum management

Foundation programmes

Strengths
- very good retention and achievement rates on most courses
- good teaching and learning
- good attention to risk management
- effective use of support staff
- effective partnership arrangements
- effective initiatives to engage hard-to-reach groups in ESOL

Weaknesses
- insufficient use of directed independent study in ESOL
- ineffective recording of learners' achievements

Family learning

Strengths

- outstanding retention and achievement rates on many courses
- very good teaching and learning
- good use of up-to-date resources
- particularly good development of new tutors
- productive use of partnership arrangements to widen participation

Weaknesses

- ineffective recording of learners' achievements

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT POOLE LEA:

* the relaxed and friendly atmosphere and staff
* learning new skills and having fun
* the individual help and support from the tutor
* being able to work better with their own children
* the practical work and experiments
* being in a class of others in a similar position
* the range of courses offered during the day
* learning that is related to real-life or work situations
* the knowledgeable tutors

WHAT LEARNERS THINK POOLE LEA COULD IMPROVE:

* the enrolment procedures
* the access to tutors and course guidance on enrolment
* communicating the provision of crèche facilities and childcare, particularly in the evenings
* the quality of course information, including whether or not courses are running
* the provision of shorter courses with longer sessions
* the availability of concessions for senior citizens on all courses

KEY CHALLENGES FOR POOLE LEA:

- establish an effective framework for curriculum management
- establish mechanisms to ensure good practice is shared across the service
- develop and implement an effective quality improvement system
- improve the accuracy and use of management information
- ensure that staff and tutors understand and are able to apply systems and procedures
- continue to improve retention and achievement rates
- improve learners' understanding of equality of opportunity

Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

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

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

Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

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

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

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT   Grade 4

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- strong and effective partnership arrangements
- very effective and productive initiatives to widen participation
- good support for individual learners' needs

Weaknesses

- poor use of management information
- poor management in many areas of learning
- slow implementation and monitoring of planned improvements
- insufficient promotion and monitoring of equality of opportunity
- inadequate quality assurance arrangements

34. Poole Adult Learning has been through a period of considerable upheaval in the 18 months leading up to the inspection. Several key staff have left or been long-term sick and not been permanently replaced, and areas of learning have not been managed in a coherent way. Many important processes such as initial assessment, advice and guidance, monitoring of learners' progress, and analysis of retention and achievement rates are left to individual tutors or part-time managers. Variations in the quality of provision in some areas of learning are not investigated, and declining enrolment or achievement rates are not analysed to plan improvements. The experience that learners have is dependent on individual tutors or support staff, all of whom are part time, and many of whom are working in isolation. Senior managers are working hard to improve internal communications, and their approach is open and responsive. They work closely with staff in the main adult education centre, and welcome and encourage other staff involvement. However, communications with the other learning venues and tutors who work in them is sometimes inadequate.

35. Poole Adult Learning has developed good collaborative links with external partners to ensure that its provision meets the needs of learners and the local community. Through quick, responsive and flexible approaches, good links have been made with community schools, social services, voluntary sector organisations, libraries and museums. Poole Adult Learning has appointed community learning officers to promote adult learning in priority wards, and each year the service is increasing the wide range of established literacy and numeracy training programmes it offers. The management of literacy, numeracy and language support is satisfactory. Poole Adult Learning has recognised that learners' development of literacy and numeracy skills is good when effectively linked to innovative projects. The number of learners is increasing through the development of collaborative work with other providers and local businesses. In the

past year, the marketing team carried out good research on workforce development and promoted learning to employees of local businesses. Poole Adult Learning provides very effective new accredited and non-accredited opportunities by responding to employers' training needs, especially in languages and business courses. A pilot project where potential learners use the internet to enrol and access the programme and course information has had a 30 per cent success rate at the end of its first phase.

36. Management information is not produced in a sufficiently timely way to help staff. Retention and achievement rate data for learners completing courses in 2002-03 were not available until the middle of February 2004. Many programme co-ordinators try to establish accurate retention and achievement rates by using data from paper registers in their reports. Where this happens, no system is in place to check the accuracy of these records or to correct the centrally held data if problems are identified. Poole Adult Learning makes poor use of data to plan provision and support areas of learning. Not enough resources are allocated to ensure the effective collection and analysis of data. Data are not used systematically as a planning tool to establish trends. Poole Adult Learning does not routinely monitor diverse groups' participation, or progress towards achieving identified participation targets. It is starting to act on poor attendance on a weekly basis to improve retention rates. Information required for contract compliance is routinely collected and carefully audited. Data from external sources, including labour market information, are used to help management make decisions.

37. Management in many of the areas of learning is poor. Areas of learning do not plan and review their programmes coherently. From September 2002 until April 2003, Poole Adult Learning operated with significantly fewer managers than it had before this period. The key roles of curriculum management, quality assurance, staff development and managing learning were shared among existing management team members. Since April 2003, many managers and administrators have taken on additional responsibilities which are not aligned with their main job responsibility. For example, an examination officer also has responsibility for quality assurance, while an acting curriculum manager now manages one-third of the provision including areas of learning for which they have no specialist knowledge. The performance and development of staff is measured through a development interview, but only six managers and six administrators have been interviewed this year. Some part-time tutors on termly contracts who started teaching in January 2004 did not receive contracts of employment until nearly the end of the term.

38. Implementation and monitoring of planned improvements is slow. Measurable targets are identified in most of Poole Adult Learning's plans. However, many of the targets are unchallenging and recorded minutes do not make clear who is responsible for the identified action and when it should be completed by. Insufficient staged, comprehensive reviews of progress takes place for many of the plans, and actions are not reviewed at subsequent meetings. Staff are not aware of key targets and no interim milestones exist against which to monitor progress towards completing key actions. Some programme co-ordinators are unable to cope with the demand to work on so many high-priority targets and projects. In several cases, deadlines for completing teaching observations or collecting data have passed and success criteria have not been met.

Equality of opportunity   Contributory grade 3

39. Poole LEA has developed and enhanced links with local projects and social services to introduce new, disadvantaged and disabled learners into courses. Design of these courses and programmes is particularly responsive to the needs of the targeted learners and partners. Courses include ballroom dancing for the visually impaired, conservation awareness with literacy, numeracy and language skills and yoga for learners with multiple sclerosis. Over the past three years the number of learners with disabilities who have enrolled with the LEA has increased substantially, from 24 in 2000-01 to 300 so far in 2003-04. The LEA's learners' handbook is available on CD for visually impaired learners, and the complaints procedure and learning session evaluation forms have been produced in visual format for learners with poor literacy skills. Community learning officers are working to increase the number of learners from two deprived wards in the area. One officer has been particularly successful in introducing a group of Chinese learners into learning.

40. Support for learners is well managed and extensive. The access fund is promoted well in the recently produced learners' handbook, and is used well to pay for learners' fees, travel costs and care costs. Learners use a wide range of specially designed resources and technology where appropriate to improve their access to learning. Accessibility audits of learning centres have started. Where concerns have been identified, work to premises and resources has been prioritised and completed. Access arrangements at most centres are satisfactory. Vulnerable learners and learners with disabilities are supported well by a team of volunteer workers. The number of learners supported by these workers has increased from 12 to 40 over the past two years.

41. Learners' complaints are generally dealt with effectively. Complaints have been investigated thoroughly, and tutors changed or courses improved. The LEA keeps records of each complaint in a central location. However, insufficient monitoring of the process takes place.

42. The LEA's marketing materials are appropriate, and contain some images of learners from diverse backgrounds. Some materials are produced in the three main alternative languages used in the area: Cantonese, Bengali and Portuguese. The LEA has an equality and diversity action plan. However, it has been slow to implement many of the planned developments for tutor training, improving data collection and collecting feedback from learners about equality and diversity. Some initiatives have been introduced to increase participation by businesses, learners from deprived wards, and men. Twenty-eight per cent of learners enrolled in 2003-04 are men, which is a similar proportion to the previous year. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups has increased slightly in 2003-04 to 2.4 per cent. This is above the proportion of the local population with a minority ethnic background, measured by the 2001 census as 1.8 per cent.

43. Data are collected from learners at enrolment about their age, gender, ethnicity and disability. This information is rarely used in curriculum planning or strategies. Staff do not routinely monitor participation by diverse groups or their progress towards achieving identified participation targets.

Quality assurance   Contributory grade 5

44. Arrangements for assuring the quality of training are inadequate and incomplete. A very brief quality assurance framework outlines plans to assure the quality of adult and community learning on a monthly basis. This framework is not supported by a detailed quality assurance policy, and many areas of learning do not have any procedures or documents to support the activities listed in the plan. Poole Adult Learning plans to develop and implement policies and changes in working practices after the inspection. The quality officer has many job roles and has not yet been able to take up the position full time, as was planned. Many staff members are not aware that any quality assurance arrangements exist. Some tutors do not produce learning session plans or schemes of work, while others produce them to a very good standard. The information, guidance and initial assessment provided for learners varies from tutor to tutor, and in some cases is inadequate.

45. Arrangements to review and evaluate courses are inadequate, except in family learning. Some tutors evaluate their own courses, but do not share the results with the curriculum managers or other co-ordinators. Forms to collect learners' views are unnecessarily complicated and do not record useful information. With the exception of family learning, information is not analysed in detail to guide further planning. Managers and staff have started to use an agreed policy to evaluate teaching and learning. Staff members working towards a teaching qualification have had several ungraded observations. However, observations are infrequent, and only a third of tutors have been observed so far this year. Some observations have not complied with the written policy. Records of areas in which tutors need training are not detailed enough to be helpful. Observations that have been completed have not been moderated. Observations and feedback are not followed up enough, except in family learning. Improvements in areas of learning other than family learning have not followed observations.

46. Arrangements to meet internal verification requirements are satisfactory in all areas except hairdressing and beauty therapy.

47. With the exception of family learning, not enough sharing of good practice takes place. Family learning tutors take part in a shadowing scheme, observing colleagues to ensure that they are familiar with the resources and materials available. However, tutors in other areas of learning have too few chances to learn from the best practice of their colleagues. Good teaching materials are not consistently shared or applied across the provision. When good practice is shared, it is usually as a result of an individual tutor's initiative or commitment.

48. Poole Adult Learning produced its second self-assessment report for the inspection. Self-assessment is not an established part of its quality assurance process. The self-assessment report accurately described the context of the provision, but it does not make sufficiently critical analysis of the overall strengths and weaknesses of the provision. An accompanying development plan is detailed and identifies criteria against which to measure success, deadlines for completion and those staff responsible for

actions. However, it does not include any detail on how the actions are to be achieved, and some of the timescales are unrealistic.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Business administration, management & professional   Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	114	3

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good retention and attendance rates
- good achievement rates on teacher education courses
- good course and session planning
- very detailed and constructive feedback to teaching certificate learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient opportunities for learners' participation in some sessions
- inadequate initial assessment and recording of learners' needs
- poor quality assurance

Achievement and standards

49. Retention rates are good, particularly on the classroom and teaching assistants' courses, the stage one teaching certificate, the basic skills teaching certificate and the book-keeping courses. Overall retention rates have improved from 63 per cent in 2000-01 to 85 per cent in 2002-03. Attendance is also good on most courses and has remained at over 80 per cent for the year, with some classes having 100 per cent attendance.

50. Standards of work are good on teacher education courses. Portfolio evidence is well presented and often exceeds the requirements of the awarding body. Learners on the initial teaching certificate show sound evidence of research and wider reading in their work. Learners following a course in teaching literacy, numeracy and language skills are able to relate their experiences to theory, and show good understanding of learning strategies.

51. Achievement rates are satisfactory and improving. In 2002-03, overall achievement for the area of learning was 65 per cent, compared with 47 per cent in 2000-01 and 54 per cent in 2001-02. Achievement rates are good on stage one of the initial teaching certificate, at over 96 per cent in 2002-03, the book-keeping certificate, at 83 per cent in 2002-03, and the book-keeping diploma, at 90 per cent in the same year. However, achievement rates are poor on other courses, which cater for a quarter of learners. For example, in 2002-03 the achievement rate was 36 per cent for A-level business studies, 46 per cent for a level 2 certificate in administration, 39 per cent for level 1 book-

keeping, and 35 per cent for the stage two teaching certificate.

Quality of education and training

52. Course and learning session planning is good. Schemes of work are detailed and thorough and are linked clearly to assessment criteria. Learning session plans are developed for the whole course and are well presented, detailed and clear. The best plans include detailed consideration of learners' activity and resource needs, and enable well-structured sessions supported by appropriate resources.

53. Learners on the initial teacher training certificate course receive detailed and constructive feedback. Learners draft their work, and receive written feedback before making their final submission. This feedback is thorough, and assessors clearly indicate to learners how they have met the requirements of the specification or what they need to do to improve.

54. Accommodation and resources, including computer equipment, are satisfactory. Learners on the teaching certificate courses make effective use of a multimedia projector. The software for the computerised book-keeping course is installed in the learning centre, so that learners who do not have access to the software at home or in the office are not disadvantaged. All tutors have initial teaching qualifications and most have appropriate occupational qualifications.

55. Recording of learners' achievement is satisfactory. Unit achievement is signed off on standard forms, which are used to keep learners informed about how many units they have completed.

56. The range of provision is satisfactory. Teacher training courses meet the internal needs of the LEA, and most learners on the initial teaching certificate are teachers employed by the LEA. The course also recruits some external learners. A narrow range of business studies provision is available. Shorthand qualifications have been discontinued because of insufficient demand. The area of learning is responsive to local needs. A short book-keeping course has been run at a bank's offices to meet its employees' needs. A new course in teaching literacy, numeracy and language skills has been set up as a joint project with the adult education service for Bournemouth, using funds for capacity-building from the local LSC.

57. Too much teaching on some courses is tutor-centred and instructive rather than interactive, with learners given few opportunities to participate. In better sessions, a range of interactive learning strategies is used, which engages the learners. Learners work effectively in pairs and groups, and are able to use their experiences in work placements to help them to understand concepts. In weaker sessions, learners do not reflect on experiences gained in work placements, and are passive for much of the session. Tutors do not create opportunities for learners to learn at different speeds. Much of the learners' activity in these sessions consists of note-taking, sometimes from the whiteboard, but their note-taking skills are not assessed or developed systematically.

58. Initial assessment and recording of learners' support needs is inadequate. No systematic method exists to ensure that all learners' support needs are met. Some tutors have devised their own initial assessment records, which are based on learners' assessment of their own needs. Learners do not develop individual action plans as a result of these self-assessments, although some do seek support and are effectively provided for. However, no system exists for reviewing how successfully support needs have been met. Concerns with learners' literacy skills are not always picked up in feedback on their portfolio evidence.

Leadership and management

59. Quality assurance is poor. Insufficient observation of teaching and learning has taken place. Only one tutor has been observed working in this area of learning, although two others have been observed while training in other areas of learning. A new system of course reviews has been introduced this year, but courses which have already finished for this academic year have not been reviewed. No formal targets for retention and achievement rates have been set. Meetings are not formally minuted. Learners have good opportunities to evaluate their experience on the courses, but follow-up actions are informal and not recorded.

60. Internal verification is satisfactory. Internal verification procedures meet the awarding body requirements. Clear sampling plans are produced. Action points requested by verifiers are implemented. Verification records are clear and complete.

Information & communications technology   Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	631	2

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good retention and achievement rates on many courses
- very good attendance and punctuality
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- weak curriculum management
- poor quality assurance

Achievement and standards

61. Retention rates on many courses are good, which is identified in the self-assessment report. For example, the retention rate on the basic computer literacy course is over 80 per cent, and on other introductory courses at levels 1 and 2 retention rates are over 90 per cent.

62. Achievement rates for 2002-03 were good on the basic computer literacy course, at over 80 per cent, and were better still on other introductory courses at levels 1 and 2. This strength is identified in the self-assessment report. Learners on beginners' courses acquire good basic computing skills. They also gain confidence and are proud of their achievements. Many make good use of their newly acquired skills and progress to more advanced courses. The standard of work in taught sessions and in flexible learning workshops is good. Learners make good progress towards their individual goals, and their portfolios and files are well structured.

63. Attendance levels are very good, at 96 per cent across all courses. Punctuality was very good during the inspection.

Quality of education and training

64. The standard of teaching is good, with data projectors being used frequently for demonstrations to whole groups. Tutors have a good understanding of learners' abilities and preferred learning styles, and deal effectively with their learning needs. Learning sessions are planned well, but plans are often based on set tasks and do not adequately reflect the skills and knowledge that are learnt in the session. Learners are not always made aware at the start of sessions what skills they will be developing. Schemes of work

are often lists of topics. Many tutors help learners to produce an individual learning plan, but this is not done systematically, and some plans are not effective.

65. Learners make good progress and are enthusiastic about their learning. Many have returned to education after a long period away from it, and value their new learning. Courses are successfully designed to increase these learners' confidence in using a computer at an elementary level. For example, many learners who enrol with no knowledge of computers achieve sound, basic word processing skills. In one taster session observed, learners were able to scan and crop photographs confidently a short time after receiving a clear explanation and demonstration of the equipment and software. On other more advanced courses, learners follow a programme of challenging tasks and activities to increase their skills and knowledge. In these sessions, learners demonstrate an appropriate level of competence and are well motivated. For example, in one very good session the class was able to produce spreadsheets with complex formatting as well as inserted images and graphs. Learners gain sufficient skills to use computers independently at home, and this enables the tutors to give learners extra work to do outside the classes.

66. Equipment is satisfactory, and risk assessments are carried out on each computer room. A good range of assistive technology is available and is used well by physically disabled learners. Computer rooms have bright displays of learners' work and course information. Some of these rooms become too hot, and in some the computers are too close together, with insufficient room for learners' notes. Resources are restricted in some centres. For example, in one centre learners cannot use the software they need for the syllabus and have to use a different venue for part of the course. Some computers in other centres have hardware faults. All teaching staff have appropriate expertise in IT and have achieved, or are working towards, a teaching qualification.

67. Assessment is satisfactory. Some learners receive initial assessments but tutors design their own methods. These vary in effectiveness, as there is no systematic approach. Some learners complete a simple self-assessment of their IT skills at the start of the course, but literacy and numeracy skills support needs are not assessed. Learners' assessments are monitored well by tutors during their course. Assessment practice and internal verification are satisfactory.

68. A satisfactory range of courses is offered, including courses from entry level to level 2, as well as flexible learning opportunities and tasters. Portfolio-based courses are popular with learners, and retention rates on these courses are good. All learners are aware of progression opportunities when they complete their course.

69. Support for learners is satisfactory. Learners receive a comprehensive induction, which they remember, with good coverage of safe working practices for using computers. All learners receive a handbook. One good induction observed included working in pairs, which successfully introduced the learners to each other and to the tutor. However, learners are not given enough information and advice when choosing their course, and many encounter problems when enrolling. Monitoring of learners' progress is weak, particularly in the flexible learning centre, and does not include use of

targets or reference to the learners' individual learning plan or learning goals.

Leadership and management

70. Management of the curriculum area is weak. Management for the area has changed recently, and the current manager has other management responsibilities. All tutors are employed part time, and teach at several sites. Communications have improved following the recent changes, but much communication is informal and very few formal meetings with action-planning are held. Tutors work individually, designing their own schemes of work and procedures for initial assessment and progress monitoring. They spend time duplicating work already done elsewhere. Tutors do not receive performance reviews, and not enough staff development has taken place. Tutors do not have enough opportunities to share good practice, although occasionally they share materials.

71. Quality assurance is poor. The IT self-assessment report identifies many of the strengths and weaknesses found on inspection, but does not deal with any weaknesses found in the management and quality assurance of the area. Staff have insufficient understanding of strategy, targets, self-assessment and development plans and quality assurance systems generally. The list of actions from the self-assessment report is not comprehensive enough, with no definition of timescales, responsibilities, criteria against which to measure success, or monitoring arrangements. Staff are not aware of this plan, and not enough monitoring of progress on planned actions takes place. Not enough formal use is made of learners' questionnaires. Some course reviews are completed without using these questionnaires, or do not take account of significant issues.

72. Equality of opportunity is recognised in most learning sessions and support is provided to meet learners' identified needs. This support includes the provision of assistive technology, such as specialist software for learners with poor dexterity, and signers for learners with impaired hearing.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel
Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	338	3

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- very good retention and achievement rates
- good teaching and learning
- well-qualified and knowledgeable tutors

Weaknesses

- weak monitoring and recording of learners' progress
- poor pre-course information and enrolment procedures
- weak curriculum management
- ineffective evaluation of provision

Achievement and standards

73. Retention and achievement rates are very good at around 90 per cent, and have remained stable throughout 2001-02 and 2002-03. Learners produce a good standard of work in sessions, and those with little or no previous experience make particularly good progress. Learners improve their knowledge, skills and abilities at appropriate levels. Many learners significantly improve their mental and physical well-being. Learners on therapeutic yoga programmes develop an improved positive mental attitude after meeting other learners who have similar medical conditions.

74. Attendance is satisfactory. In the sessions observed during inspection, the overall attendance rate was 67 per cent. Some of the courses offered, such as therapeutic yoga and 60-plus yoga, have a large proportion of learners who have medical conditions which prevent them from attending every week. Attendance rates on these courses sometimes drop below 50 per cent.

Quality of education and training

75. Teaching and learning are good. Sessions are well planned, structured and professionally run. Tutors are enthusiastic, supportive and aware of individual learners' needs. Activities during sessions are adapted to suit learners with physical constraints. For example, learners in yoga are given seated variations to standing poses. Learning in mixed-ability groups is managed well. Tutors use a variety of teaching methods, such as demonstrations, verbal explanation, and individual, paired and group working. They pay good attention to checking and correcting individuals' positioning and posture during

exercises. Sessions are relaxed and informal, and the learning environment is effective.

76. Tutors are well qualified and have up-to-date subject knowledge. All tutors hold relevant industry qualifications and many also have, or are working towards, a generic teaching qualification. Many tutors have broadened their subject knowledge by taking further training to provide courses for specific learner groups, such as yoga in pregnancy and cardiac rehabilitation. Many tutors are members of the professional body for their subject area and take part in continuing professional development activities. Some tutors have attended courses offered by the LEA, such as health and safety, risk assessment and manual handling.

77. Satisfactory support is available to enable learners with special needs to access courses. Support includes a sign interpreter, a peer or co-learner to work alongside, essential skills tuition and financial support for tuition fees, childcare or transport costs. Courses are accessible to all learners.

78. Accommodation is satisfactory. Most sites are well maintained, of a good standard and appropriate for the sessions being taught. In some centres, the accommodation cannot support the number of learners enrolled on the programmes. Five sessions are held at sites where the only access is up steps, and although learners with disabilities and restricted mobility attend these sessions, it is not easy for them to do so.

79. Monitoring and recording of learners' progress is weak. In many cases no formal initial assessment is carried out, beyond a health check. Where tutors apply their own informal assessment, it is not used to develop individual learning plans or session plans. Individual learning goals are not always sufficiently identified and few short-term targets are set. Learners' progress is monitored informally on a continuous basis by tutors throughout the sessions, but records of progress vary considerably in quality. Standardised recording forms have been produced but are yet to be fully established and used by all tutors. Many tutors have designed their own methods of monitoring and recording learners' progress. Records of progress are often incomplete and are produced only at the end of the course. Learners do not always receive adequate feedback on their progress.

80. Pre-course information and enrolment procedures for learners are poor. Course brochures contain titles and levels of courses together with dates, times and venues. Course titles often do not reflect the correct level of the course. Course information sheets specify who the course is aimed at. In many cases, courses described as intermediate do not require learners to have any previous experience. The enrolment process is changed frequently and is not fully understood by learners and tutors. Different courses have different enrolment procedures. For example, learners on some yoga courses do not have to re-enrol each term as they do for other courses. Course administration is poor, with instances of learners' payments not being banked until after the course has finished. Learners experience difficulty in securing a place on popular courses.

Leadership and management

81. No coherent strategy or targets to develop new provision are in place. The programme co-ordinator and curriculum manager have only recently taken on their roles, and both have part-time responsibility for this area of learning alongside many other responsibilities and involvements in the LEA. Planning does not effectively attract learners onto courses set up specifically for them. Insufficient research is carried out into learning needs in the community beyond those of learners already engaged in courses at the LEA. Many learners have expressed dissatisfaction with recent curriculum changes, such as course length and timing and the cancellation of classes. Communication between LEA programme co-ordinators, staff, tutors and learners is poor. Learners are often confused about what courses are to be run. Over the past term, 36 per cent of courses were cancelled. Changes to courses and the programme are not always relayed to centre administrators, tutors or learners before the session. Tutors work in isolation with no opportunities to share good practice across programme and curriculum areas. No meetings or tutor visits take place, and contact with tutors is informal through correspondence. Tutors' performance is expected to be reviewed through session observations, but the support tutors receive for their development is inadequate. Key LEA staff members have multiple responsibilities and large workloads, and tutors find it difficult to discuss courses and gain information.

82. The evaluation of provision is ineffective. Learners' views and findings from tutors' course evaluations are rarely obtained. Learners' course evaluation questionnaires have been devised but are not used by all tutors. Some tutors have devised course evaluation questionnaires for their own use, but this information is rarely shared with others. Information on course evaluation is not systematically provided to programme co-ordinators. The learners' course evaluation questionnaires are analysed by the LEA marketing officer and a report is produced. However, these questionnaires do not collect subject-specialist information about courses and the learning that has taken place.

Hairdressing & beauty therapy   Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	190	4

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good teaching and learning in holistic therapies
- good development of theoretical knowledge
- good range of courses

Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates on accredited courses
- poor commercial standards in hairdressing and beauty therapy
- poor assessment practice
- poor advice and guidance
- poor curriculum management

Achievement and standards

83. Achievement rates on accredited courses are poor, at approximately 50 per cent across the courses over the past three years. Some achievement rates are much lower, for example 33 per cent for the certificate in anatomy, physiology and massage, and 40 per cent for the level 2 qualification in hairdressing. Accredited courses currently account for about half of the total provision in this area. Attendance and punctuality are poor on many courses, and many learners withdraw from courses early. Many learners have been absent for significant periods. Learners receive insufficient assessment opportunities and insufficient support to help them achieve their learning goals. Monitoring of learners' progress is poor, and no formal progress reviews to record achievement are carried out.

84. Commercial standards in the hairdressing and beauty therapy classes are poor. Not enough attention is paid to a professional image and conduct. Work ethics are poor, and many learning sessions start late as learners and some tutors are late in arriving.

Quality of education and training

85. Teaching and learning are good in holistic therapies, and tutors enable learners to develop good commercial skills and attitudes. Work areas are professionally prepared and learners are appropriately dressed to project a professional image. The standard of client care is excellent in holistic therapies, and learners provide good home care advice to complement the treatments. A strong emphasis is placed on client confidentiality, and

standards of hygiene and the attention paid to health and safety is good. Tutors are very knowledgeable and professionally qualified.

86. Theoretical knowledge is developed well, with learners using this knowledge to support their diagnosis of clients. Tutors often bring in their own resources to enhance theory teaching. Learners respond well to questioning, both in theory and practical sessions, and most are confident enough to engage in discussion. Tutors send work and exercises to learners' homes if they miss a session so that they can catch up. Theory work is effectively linked to practical lessons, and tutors make regular reference to what learners have learnt and how this relates to their course and learning goals. In hairdressing, support packs have been bought that help learners to understand specific concepts.

87. The range of provision is good. All courses have taster days attached to them, to enable learners to try the course before making a final decision to enrol. Hairdressing learners can progress from a beginners' course to level 1 and level 2 courses. The 'art start' programme in hairdressing also offers a level 2 course designed for learners not traditionally involved in education. Holistic therapy courses include reflexology, aromatherapy, Indian head massage, body massage and anatomy and physiology. Beauty therapy courses include depilation, nail treatments and nail art. Other courses offered include skin care, postural exercises and colour analysis. Many of these courses are offered during the day, evening and weekends to widen accessibility.

88. Accommodation in the two training salons is satisfactory and both salons have recently been refurbished. Support for learners is also satisfactory. Learners are able to contact their tutors for support through e-mail as well as in the centres. Support for learners on the 'art start' programme with literacy, numeracy or language needs is satisfactory.

89. Assessment practice is poor, with no formal process in place for recording learners' progress. Some assessments are performed on fellow learners and only one learner has a work placement to broaden knowledge of the industry and further enhance assessment opportunities. Not all assessment records are signed and dated, and records are not audited to check this. Assessment books from the awarding body are in short supply, and assessment has been delayed for many learners. Learners are not familiar with the assessment criteria for the unit they are studying.

90. Advice and guidance are inadequate, and many learners have unrealistic expectations of what they will achieve. Some learners have enrolled on courses and later transferred when they became aware of the demands of the course. Initial assessment is not linked to continuous assessment, and some learners do not know what their learning goals are or how they can be met. In some cases learners are studying on courses that are not appropriate for their existing level of attainment.

Leadership and management

91. Curriculum management is poor. Poor attendance and punctuality are not adequately managed, and sessions often start late. Staff are inadequately supported, and have insufficient opportunities to share good practice or establish standard procedures for managing their courses. Staff performance is not managed or monitored. The internal verification process is inadequate. Many of the assessors working on beauty therapy and holistic therapy courses do not have appropriate assessor qualifications or enough experience to work without support. Staff members regularly communicate informally, but discussions are not recorded to ensure actions are taken. Action plans developed from observations of teaching and learning are not monitored enough. The self-assessment process does not involve all staff, and staff are unaware of the development plan. The self-assessment report does not accurately identify the weaknesses found at inspection. Some activities identified as strengths in the self-assessment report have yet to be implemented.

Visual & performing arts & media   Grade 3

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	566	3

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good retention and achievement rates
- good teaching and learning
- good individual support for learners
- good range of provision

Weaknesses

- poor initial assessment
- inadequate recording of learners' progress
- poor quality assurance

Achievement and standards

92. Retention and achievement rates are good, at 87 per cent and 85 per cent respectively, and have improved over the past two years. Learners' work shows good development of technical skills. Beginners make good progress and learners who are returning to courses continue to learn new techniques and processes, for example in art and craft sessions. Practical work is of a good standard. Tutors effectively develop learners' skills and build on their previous knowledge. Learners are well motivated, and are enthusiastic about their learning and their increased self-confidence. Learners are encouraged to work on their own personal projects in practical subjects and to improve their own range of skills. Attainment is good and most learners achieve their learning goals. A number of classes are of mixed ability and more experienced learners encourage and inspire new learners. Learners take turns to display their artwork in the learning centre. Learners and tutors exhibit their work in Dorset's open art exhibition, which is a celebration of the visual arts.

Quality of education and training

93. Teaching and learning are good. In the better sessions, tutors respond well to learners' needs, are well organised and encourage learning by questioning and the use of practical examples. Tutors provide effective individual support to learners, and individual coaching during practical subjects is good. An observed 'art start' class in music successfully attracted disaffected young people back into education. The class environment was of a professional standard, attendance was excellent and the teaching was excellent. Tutors on accredited and non-accredited courses have good subject

knowledge and give learners confidence. Many learners identify the development of new skills and meeting people as their most important aims. Tutors successfully manage sessions to engage beginners and more experienced learners in the same group. Attendance and punctuality are good.

94. Learners with disabilities and previously identified learning needs receive good support. For example, a ballroom dancing class for the visually impaired encourages learners to support each other and develop independence. The learning centre has a portable loop system for the hearing impaired. Poole Adult Learning runs a specially designed 'linking' scheme to encourage learners not traditionally involved in education into the centre. A volunteer supports one particular learner by bringing them along to the class and acting as a buddy during the session. The mentor working alongside the tutor in the 'art start' groups provides effective support for disaffected young people. The pottery session for those with learning needs and disabilities provides a welcoming and supportive environment. Learners with restricted mobility have access to appropriate rooms in the centre and community venues. Information and guidance on courses offered are satisfactory.

95. Resources are satisfactory. Learners have access to a good range of equipment, such as a dark room for photography and specialist equipment for upholstery. Many tutors supply their own materials, such as art materials and tools for making jewellery. Tutors are appropriately qualified in their subject specialism and most have a teaching qualification. Some rooms are uninspiring and untidy, with equipment stacked at the sides of the room. The pottery room used for learners with learning difficulties and for wheelchair users is particularly small for the number of learners and their carers.

96. The range of provision is good. The LEA has offered 132 visual and performing arts and media courses since September 2003, in a variety of subjects and modes of attendance, including day, evening and weekends. The one- and two-day courses offered at weekends and in the summer act as taster sessions to encourage new learners to enrol. Courses are held throughout the borough in a range of venues including libraries, museums, social service day centres, respite trust centres, an art institute, schools and local businesses, where training for employees is offered. The 'art start' project is particularly successful at attracting disaffected young people between the ages of 18 and 21 who have no previous qualifications. Programmes are offered in photography, music, hairdressing and web design, with a target of enabling 36 learners a year to achieve a qualification at level 2 or above. Qualified tutors have the support of a learning mentor in the sessions. These mentors are qualified in the subject area and have been trained in mentoring skills. The young people relate to the mentors, who provide valuable support and encouragement. Individual learning plans are used and the recording of progress is effective in supporting learning. All equipment and resources, including, for example, bus fares to the centres and light snacks, are provided to ensure the learners are able to attend. Many of these learners are achieving their learning goals for the first time, and their self-confidence is increased. The learners are encouraged to progress onto further training or helped to obtain employment. For example, all the learners in the photography course progressed to a foundation art or photography course at a local college, and one learner on the music technology course left to take up

employment.

97. Tutors refer learners to the support tutor if they request or are identified as having literacy, numeracy or language skills support needs. In practice, the initial assessment of learners is the responsibility of the tutor. This is rarely carried out, however, and few learners whose additional needs are identified at initial assessment take up any support.

98. The monitoring and recording of learners' progress is inadequate. Many tutors devise their own forms and methods of monitoring, and some do not provide sufficient feedback to learners. Target-setting for learners is also limited to tutor-devised systems, and insufficient use is made of individual learning plans. Assessment on many courses takes place at the end of the course, and learners are unable to monitor their own progress. Learners are frequently unaware of what they needed to do to complete the course successfully. Some learners on accredited programmes are unaware of the work needed to achieve the qualification.

Leadership and management

99. Quality assurance of the curriculum area is poor. Teaching observations take place but these are not used to identify training needs, professional development or performance management. Tutors work in isolation, and are not encouraged or supported to share good practice. The management information system produces information in an accessible format, and is not used by the curriculum manager to plan improvements. Tutors' meetings are held but action-planning does not follow, and timescales and targets are not monitored. Course reviews and learners' evaluations of courses are noted, but not all tutors contribute to this process. The self-assessment report identifies some key strengths and weakness but does not make enough detailed evaluations. The action plan does not indicate how improvements will be brought about.

100. Since January 2004, the LEA has carried out some standardisation of course files, including schemes of work, learning session plans and forms to record assessment of learners' progress. These have been circulated to tutors but have yet to affect provision across the curriculum area.

Humanities   Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	76	4

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- some outstanding achievement in GCSE archaeology
- good teaching and learning in psychology

Weaknesses

- poor retention rates on most accredited courses
- some poorly planned sessions in archaeology
- poor assessment practice in AS level archaeology
- poor curriculum management
- inadequate quality assurance arrangements

Achievement and standards

101. One GCSE archaeology learner received the best mark given by the awarding body in the 2003 summer examinations. The same learner was also awarded a prize for achievement by a national society for archaeology. Two other learners from the group came second and third nationally in the same examination series, gaining an A* grade. All learners who complete courses in archaeology and sit the exam pass it successfully, with grades of C or above. Achievement in psychology is good for those learners who complete the course and take the examinations, with 75 per cent of A/AS level psychology learners and 80 per cent of GCSE psychology learners gaining grades of C or above. However, numbers of learners are very small.

102. Retention rates are poor on most accredited courses, and numbers of learners are small. For example, this year the GCSE archaeology course closed in February 2004, with only one of the seven learners who enrolled attending classes and only two left on the register.

Quality of education and training

103. Standards of teaching and learning in psychology are good. Sessions are well planned and paced over two-hour or two and a half-hour sessions. Tutor and learners have good relationships. An imaginative mix of activities is offered to engage groups, and good use is made of clearly written handouts. Effective revision strategies are modelled and deployed and learners show good understanding and attainment. They use the technical language of the subject area appropriately and debates and discussions

are good. Learners are encouraged to test out each other's learning and understanding through group exercises. Individual support is given to less confident learners. Homework is marked thoroughly and returned promptly. Feedback is detailed, and examination coursework is marked thoroughly.

104. Resources in humanities are satisfactory. Current tutors are appropriately qualified, with professional and teaching qualifications. Accommodation is spacious and equipped with whiteboard, video and photocopying facilities. The humanities area of learning has a small annual budget for the purchase of books and software for tutors and learners to use. It has also acquired a lump sum through the prize awarded to an archaeology learner last year. So far this budget has not been spent and the two part-time tutors are not aware of this resource.

105. Teaching and learning in archaeology are unsatisfactory. Planning and preparation are poor, insufficient checking of learning takes place, teaching materials are poorly produced and tutors do not interact enough with learners. These weaknesses were identified during internal observations of teaching sessions, and the acting programme co-ordinator and curriculum manager are working together with the tutor to improve the situation. However, planned improvements to the quality of the teaching have not yet had an effect.

106. Assessment of learners' coursework in AS level archaeology is poor. For the past two years, feedback from the awarding body has highlighted problems such as over-grading, inappropriate marking, inclusion of irrelevant material, failure to meet specifications and failure to follow administrative guidelines. Invitations to attend standardisation meetings at the awarding body have not been taken up.

Leadership and management

107. The area of learning has had no acting programme co-ordinator for most of 2003 and no acting curriculum manager for most of the 2003 autumn term. The current managers fill the roles on a part-time basis, which restricts their opportunities for contact with the part-time tutors. The acting programme co-ordinator has provided positive and constructive informal communications and support for tutors and the quality of teaching is beginning to improve. However, classes are not systematically planned to meet learners' demands or needs. Retention rates have been poor on most accredited courses in humanities for several years, but possible causes have not been investigated. Enrolments dropped markedly in September 2003, with several popular courses failing to recruit and some being cancelled early on during the year after falling numbers and poor retention. For example, the local history course closed in November 2003 with only three learners attending, and GCSE archaeology closed in February 2004. Tutors receive insufficient in-house training or development, apart from the annual induction sessions at the beginning of each year, health and safety training, and briefings to prepare tutors for the inspection. Tutors have not shared good practice enough. For example, one tutor has been an exam board marker for several years but does not share her experience with another tutor who has been experiencing problems meeting exam board requirements.

108. Humanities learners do not receive satisfactory initial advice and guidance. Few learners attend taster sessions before enrolling on courses, and few take up the offer of individual interviews with tutors. Some learners are unaware of the workload of the course they have enrolled on. Others are not aware of the progression opportunities available. Many classes are visited by a literacy, numeracy and language skills specialist near the beginning of the course, and learners are offered support with literacy and numeracy, if they or their tutors think they need it. However, initial interviews or skills tests used by tutors are not standardised or recorded, and no clear link is made between the outcome of these assessments and the provision of additional support for learners.

109. Insufficient policies and procedures are in place to ensure the quality of teaching and learning in humanities. The formal course review process has not been used. Evaluations of learners' experience are carried out but are not always analysed to improve performance. Tutors' performance and learners' outcomes are not systematically measured. No central mechanism exists for monitoring and recording learners' progress on individual programmes, other than the regular register checks carried out by administrators and the final exam or module results. Teaching observations are carried out to monitor teaching standards, but these are infrequent and the grades awarded are not moderated. Tutors have had insufficient involvement in the self-assessment process and some have not seen the final self-assessment report for their area of learning.

English, languages & communications   Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	450	4

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- good achievement of personal learning goals
- good motivational teaching

Weaknesses

- over-use of translation into English in language classes
- weak achievement rates on accredited courses
- inadequate curriculum management

Achievement and standards

110. Learners achieve their personal goals well. All tutors systematically record each learner's reasons for studying the language, and make good efforts to ensure course and learning session contents meet those needs. This is established practice. In one case, a learner runs a small business in Spain renovating properties, and the tutor ensures that class and homework activities include topics relevant for his purposes. Most learners are making good progress in learning new vocabulary.

111. Retention rates are satisfactory at 71 per cent across all courses. Achievement rates, however, are weak at 57 per cent, and some are poor, particularly on accredited courses. Eight of the 10 learners on the French GCSE course in 2002-03 achieved their qualification, and six of the 10 learners on A-level Spanish were successful. However, in the same year only 31 per cent of learners achieved their Spanish GCSE, 42 per cent their English A-level and 47 per cent their Italian GCSE. Some achievement rates are improving but others have declined over the past three years, particularly that for English GCSE which has fallen from 75 per cent in 2000-01 to 58 per cent in 2002-03. A good proportion of learners on foreign language courses move to more advanced courses, often making good progress from beginner to high-intermediate level in a couple of years. Punctuality during the inspection was exceptionally good, with most learners arriving well before class start times, and a number of classes getting under way several minutes early.

Quality of education and training

112. In most classes tutors have very good relationships with their learners and establish classroom environments conducive to study and learning. Learners are keen to study. Punctuality is good and classes get under way briskly. Many classes choose not to have a break, because they want to make the most of their two hours with the tutor. It is common for tutors and learners to arrive early or to stay after class to discuss with the tutor, homework or aspects of the language under study.

113. Resources overall are satisfactory. Tutors use up-to-date course materials, as well as a wide range of supplementary materials, many of which they make themselves to a good standard. Tutors use audio tapes regularly, and some use video recorders, as well as computers to access the internet. One tutor has created some useful online study materials. Tutors can access a central bank of language materials at the main adult education centre, but this is not well maintained or updated. A number of tutors are unaware of the availability of video recorders or computers, while others use their own tape recorders rather than go through the inconvenient arrangements to book those from the centre.

114. Internal verification on the portfolio-based accredited courses is satisfactory. The verifier has received appropriate training from the awarding body and has also had good support from a previous verifier. Sampling procedures are effective and all the paperwork is fully completed and up to date. Some of the tutor/assessors, however, do not fully understand the system, and some learners are unclear of the procedures regarding their portfolios.

115. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Learners receive good informal support from tutors and ancillary staff once they have started on their courses. However, some learners find the initial information given in the course guide to be misleading or not detailed enough by, for example, not showing the name of the tutor. Some learners have experienced difficulty getting on to a suitable course.

116. Tutors' awareness of literacy, numeracy and language support arrangements is satisfactory. About half of the tutors have completed or are in the process of completing a basic qualification which has raised their awareness of support matters, and all new tutors will be required to receive this training. A system is in place to refer learners with additional needs, and in recent months, two languages learners have been referred for additional support using this system. However, assessment of learners' existing skills varies in effectiveness. Some assessment is inadequate and a number of learners have been placed in inappropriate classes, including accredited classes when they do not wish to achieve a qualification.

117. Most tutors in modern foreign language classes speak English often, and are too quick to translate everything for the learners, including the presentation of new vocabulary. In some intermediate and advanced classes, learners use English to discuss new vocabulary from the target language, rather than using the target language itself to

practise. In one class, for example, intermediate students were asking 'what does this mean?' or 'how do you spell that?' in English, when they were capable of asking such questions in the target language. Another intermediate group asked in English whether a particular item of food was eaten 'hot or cold'.

Leadership and management

118. The area of learning has had staff absences and unfilled posts. An interim co-ordinator is currently running the languages courses and another area of the curriculum on a 12 hours-a-week contract, until a new part-time co-ordinator starts shortly. The LEA has also recently changed awarding bodies. The difficulties caused by this change have not been well managed. Tutors have insufficient understanding of the new arrangements. Some have insufficient awareness of the resources available for use with learners, and only a few make use of the videos and computers that are available. Very little formal sharing of good practice takes place between the tutors even though many tutors have been with the LEA for many years, know each other well, and share materials and ideas informally.

119. Quality assurance is satisfactory. Over the past year, almost all the languages tutors have been observed, and in several cases, improvements in teaching have followed. Self-assessment is well established in the languages area of learning, and includes feedback from learners. Tutors are aware of the self-assessment process and contribute informally and formally through the annual feedback mechanisms. However, systematic monitoring of the quality of provision is weak. Very little use is made of data or target-setting. The self-assessment report is not self-critical enough. It overstates some strengths and does not identify other strengths and weaknesses in the provision.

120. The approach to equality of opportunity in languages is satisfactory. Equality is included in course inductions and most learners are aware of the LEA's policies and procedures. Most staff are also aware of procedures and some have attended awareness-raising events. Learners understand the complaints procedures well, and several have used them to complain about administrative matters, usually with satisfactory outcomes. Access to premises is good and facilities for learners with disabilities are satisfactory, including special tables for wheelchair access in all classrooms at the main adult education centre.

Foundation programmes   Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	604	2

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- very good retention and achievement rates on most courses
- good teaching and learning
- good attention to risk management
- effective use of support staff
- effective partnership arrangements
- effective initiatives to engage hard-to-reach groups in ESOL

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of directed independent study in ESOL
- ineffective recording of learners' achievements

Achievement and standards

121. Retention rates on most courses are very good, at over 90 per cent, as are achievement rates at 85 per cent. Most learners are working towards some form of accreditation. Many learners in 2002-03 were entered for the national literacy and numeracy tests at level 1, 2 and entry level. Out of 126 entries, 122 learners were successful in achieving the qualification. The standard of work produced by learners is consistently good. On most literacy and numeracy courses learners make good progress. Learners develop and maintain personal and learning skills and are able to complete tasks successfully. For example, one learner in a literacy class has gained her first ever qualification and is now working towards a GCSE in English. A significant number of ESOL learners progress to other courses, with six in the past year moving on to office skills courses, five moving on to other accredited courses offered by the LEA and one starting a nursing degree at a local university. Another learner was promoted at work because of the improvement in her English. Attendance is satisfactory and punctuality is good.

Quality of education and training

122. Teaching and learning are good. Courses are effectively planned and managed. Taught sessions have clear aims and objectives, and use a good range of teaching strategies and resources to maintain learners' interest and participation. The learning activities are appropriate to the needs of individual learners. In one class observed, learners were using IT to improve and maintain their literacy and numeracy skills. The

learners were able to describe in detail how they were using the internet to find and use dictionaries to check text for spelling mistakes. Learners develop new knowledge and skills, while gaining in confidence and self-esteem. A learner in a numeracy class had gained sufficient confidence in metric measurements to be able to use them effectively in everyday situations. The ESOL programme co-ordinator personally assesses all new learners and monitors them closely until they have settled into their classes. Learners with very poor English skills are provided with an interpreter. Learners with special needs, such as those with hearing impairments, are provided with appropriate additional support.

123. Attention to risk management is good in foundation courses. Staff at the LEA, partner organisations and other external organisations involved carry out detailed risk assessments before the start of every course. The assessments identify any hazards relating to the accommodation, resources, learners or the course itself. This information is used to inform staff and learners of any potential risks. Staff use this information effectively. For example, in one school, the lighting leading from the car park to the classroom was not very effective and posed a potential risk to learners if they left in the dark. Learners were advised to park in an area nearer to the classroom.

124. Volunteer tutor-support staff are used effectively. All ESOL courses have a volunteer working alongside the tutor to provide individual coaching and help with interpreting for new learners. Volunteers have a clear understanding of what they are required to do in each session. They often work on their own initiative and offer clear guidance and encouragement to learners, enabling them to be successful with literacy and numeracy tasks. In a numeracy session observed, a volunteer successfully helped a learner to achieve tasks related to exam preparation. In many cases volunteers arrive before the start of the class to identify their role for that session. The volunteers also stay after the end of the session to discuss learners' progress with the tutor.

125. The resources for foundation courses are satisfactory. Tutors and learners make good use of the wide range of reading books, dictionaries, thesauruses, games, numeracy equipment, computers and video and audio equipment. Most resources are held at the main site and tutors in other centres have to either bring in their own or arrange to borrow and transport them from the centre themselves. Accommodation at the main site is satisfactory for storage, but some of the external venues used for literacy and numeracy teaching are not.

126. Initial assessment is satisfactory. All learners who enrol have an initial assessment. The results of the assessment are used to ensure that the learners are placed on a programme at the appropriate level, and to help develop their individual learning plan. Learners can spend up to four weeks preparing to learn before being appropriately placed. The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators are working with a neighbouring adult education provider to develop an appropriate initial assessment which learners can take before they enrol.

127. Learners receive satisfactory information and guidance to enable them to make an informed choice about whether they wish to attend a course for the first time or to go on

to further studies.

128. The range of courses offered is satisfactory. Some ESOL courses are designed to target specific groups of learners not traditionally involved in learning. Course content in the remainder of the foundation classes reflects the demands of national standards for adult literacy and numeracy as well as the particular needs and interests of the learners who enrol. Good progression opportunities encourage learners to move from pre-entry level through to GCSE courses in literacy and numeracy, and from ESOL courses onto courses in other areas of learning.

129. Tutors in ESOL classes do not make sufficient use of assignments and exercises for learners to work on outside the taught sessions. Few learners develop effective self-study habits and most do not have sufficient opportunity to practise their language skills. Tutors do not view self-study as an integral part of the course. A small bank of materials for independent study is available for learners to borrow and take home, but few make use of it. Learners themselves are frustrated that little homework is set.

130. Recording of learners' achievement is ineffective across the area of learning. Learners' progress is recorded well on the established ESOL programmes, but some of the progress records on other ESOL programmes are superficial and not effective. Learners on literacy and numeracy programmes are encouraged at the end of each session to identify what they have learnt. Many are not able to do so, even with the help of the tutor. Tutors record what they have taught in a session, and what tasks the learners have completed, but not what they have learnt. This means that learners can be set inappropriate targets for the next session. In literacy courses, learners record that they have learnt to read or to write sentences, but not how they have achieved this.

Leadership and management

131. The LEA has effective partnership arrangements with a number of organisations in the community. Literacy and numeracy classes are offered in partnership with organisations such as the local social services department, schools and day-care centres. A number of courses such as recycling, conservation awareness and 'improve your English', are offered in venues made available by partner organisations. Several established programmes such as photography, creative writing, administration level 1 office skills, aromatherapy and local history, incorporate literacy and numeracy development.

132. Initiatives to attract new learners to the ESOL provision are effective. Over the past 18 months, the programme co-ordinator has been working very closely with a representative from the Chinese community to engage workers from the Chinese restaurants in the area. This initiative has included creating marketing material written partially in Chinese and actively promoting it in Chinese supermarkets and Chinese doctors' surgeries. Classes are run at times when the restaurants are closed, and are based around traditional skills such as needlework and floristry for women and carpentry for men. Following the success of this initiative, the programme co-ordinator is working with a representative from the Bangladeshi community to engage learners from Indian

restaurants. There are also plans to make similar provision for Portuguese catering workers.

133. The literacy and numeracy team meets every term, and detailed minutes of the meetings are kept. Literacy and numeracy staff communicate effectively, as do the ESOL tutors and their co-ordinator, although much of this communication is informal.

134. Arrangements for quality assurance are satisfactory. Observations of teaching and learning are taking place regularly, and continual improvement is taking place. Tutors who have recently been observed have identified what training they would like to attend, and are being supported to attend it. They have received specific and targeted training. Recent staff development activities have introduced tutors to the concepts around equality and diversity. Tutors have effectively put this new awareness into practice in the classroom. Course reviews have recently been introduced and are beginning to support future planning. Co-ordinators have little confidence in the central information system, and plan and monitor existing and future activities. The self-assessment report identifies most of the strengths found during the inspection, but does not identify any weakness. It is not sufficiently detailed and does not include enough evidence to support some of its findings.

Family learning   Grade 1

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	89	1

The following strengths and weaknesses were identified during this inspection:

Strengths

- outstanding retention and achievement rates on many courses
- very good teaching and learning
- good use of up-to-date resources
- particularly good development of new tutors
- productive use of partnership arrangements to widen participation

Weaknesses

- ineffective recording of learners' achievements

Achievement and standards

135. Retention and achievement rates were outstanding in 2002-03, at 100 per cent for 16 out of the 28 courses offered. Retention and achievement rates for most other courses are very good, at 88 per cent and 86 per cent respectively. Retention and achievement rates are not as high for a few mathematics courses. The standard of work produced by learners is consistently very good. Learners develop confidence and learning strategies to achieve tasks successfully, in structured lessons and in working with their children. For example, learners in one observed class demonstrated increased confidence in helping their children with numeracy tasks and were enthusiastic about sharing their knowledge and experiences. Attendance and punctuality are good. On the longer courses, 63 learners have worked towards accreditation.

Quality of education and training

136. Teaching and learning are very good. The planning is particularly thorough and detailed. Taught sessions have clear aims and objectives, which are clearly understood by learners. Tutors work closely and effectively with the children's schoolteacher to meet the needs of parents and children. Learners in one class observed were helping their children with numbers, using toys. The parents helped their child using strategies learnt in previous lessons. Teaching is very supportive and encourages learners to successfully apply their knowledge and skills, as well as increase their confidence and self-esteem. It instils a desire to continue learning. Learners in a 'keeping up with the children' class wanted to go on to other courses to learn more strategies for helping their children. In a science class observed, learners were very enthusiastic about the course and said it was great fun and that their children were learning a lot with them. Many said that without

these courses, they and their children would be struggling. One parent said that her child had learnt a lot from using an interactive science website all through the school holiday, after hearing about it in a session.

137. Resources are good, kept up to date, and are readily available for all staff and learners to use. Tutors use them particularly effectively to guide productive learning. Learners are skilfully encouraged to use books, games and other resources to give them a clear understanding of how they and their children learn. Tutors use good-quality resources in taught sessions. A 'loan box' of games and books available to borrow was introduced this year to encourage learners and their children to play games and read together at home. This has proved to be very successful, and the system is to be expanded to all courses. Tutors are appropriately qualified. Most of the courses are in schools and the accommodation is satisfactory.

138. Staff carry out detailed risk assessments before the start of every course. Assessments identify hazards arising from the accommodation, resources, and the course itself. Staff use the results of these assessments to manage the risks effectively. For example, a number of hazards were identified in a partnership school including electrical hazards, lone working, hazardous substances, manual handling and slips, trips or falls. Poole Adult Learning's staff made a note of the control measures already in place and suggested what further actions should be taken. The assessments ensured that safe working practices were in place at the start of the course and that hazards would be monitored during the course.

139. Initial assessment is satisfactory. All learners on the 12-hour and 24-hour courses are assessed to identify their literacy and numeracy skills levels and plan any support required. Learners on short courses are offered an assessment if they want it.

140. Learners receive satisfactory information and guidance. Parents are invited to attend courses through partnership agencies such as schools or directly through family learning promotional activities. Tutors use an effective enrolment procedure during the short courses. Learners are fully informed about their course and further courses and the type of support that is available, such as crèche facilities and additional learning support. This year, approximately 70 free childcare or crèche places have been provided.

141. Recording of learners' achievements and progress on accredited courses is ineffective. Tutors record what they have taught rather than what learners have actually learnt. For example, one learner recorded that they had learnt how to play numeracy games. The record did not include any details of the skills that had been learnt while the activity had been occurring. The tutor had not added any further comments on the skills learnt, making it difficult for the learner to build on this progress. Learners do not always understand how achieving targets they have been set will improve their skills.

Leadership and management

142. Poole Adult Learning develops its new family learning tutors particularly well. Many of the courses are supported by both a tutor and a 'shadower'. The aim of shadowing is to ensure that tutors who are new to family learning are familiar with the running of courses before they teach them. The shadower attends at least one course before they teach the same course. This ensures that they are familiar with the approach and the resources. Shadowers take an active and important role in the sessions. In one taught session observed, the shadower helped with session planning and resource development. The shadower also worked closely with the parents and the children to help them learn effectively together.

143. Particularly productive partnership working has enabled Poole Adult Learning to offer a wide range of programmes in different contexts and to attract a good proportion of new learners. The wider family learning programme this year includes IT for parents, a programme designed to raise the self-esteem of parents and children, a series of workshops in visual and performing arts, a family stress reduction course and classes to help parents and children keep up with first school science. Courses are being offered in the evenings and at weekends this year, and the number of men on wider family learning courses has increased to 16 per cent. Courses are organised with partners such as first, middle and combined schools, Dorset music service and libraries. The courses on offer include workshops in visual and performing arts and painting a seaside mural in a refuge for young women and their babies.

144. Regular informal meetings are held between the co-ordinator and the staff, and communication is satisfactory. Literacy and numeracy teams meet three times a year, and these meetings are well documented. Staff regularly attend specific and targeted development activities to increase their skills and knowledge.

145. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory in family learning. The regular learning session observations are linked to appraisal. Course reviews have been completed for most courses and are used to guide future planning. The self-assessment report includes family learning in the overall foundation provision and the course reviews contributed to its production.