

REINSPECTION REPORT

Swindon LEA Reinspection

10 February 2005



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

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

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

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

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Swindon Borough Council (SBC) became a unitary authority in 1997. SBC provides adult and community learning programmes in information and communications technology, hospitality, sport and leisure, hairdressing and beauty therapy, health, social care and public services, visual and performing arts, humanities and English and modern foreign languages, family learning and community development. Most courses are not accredited. Courses are currently offered at 28 learning centres around Swindon. At the time of the previous inspection, hospitality, sport, leisure and travel was judged to be unsatisfactory.

2. SBC's adult and community learning provision is managed by the Swindon Learning Partnership (SLP). The SLP is now based in the housing department of Swindon Borough Council. The manager of SLP reports to the head of the housing department. The adult and community learning provision is funded through contracts with the Wiltshire and Swindon Learning and Skills Council. Adult and community learning provision is mainly subcontracted to two local colleges.

3. According to the 2001 census, the proportion of Swindon's population from minority ethnic groups is 4.8 per cent, compared with 8.7 per cent for England as a whole. The unemployment rate for Swindon in December 2004 was 1.7 per cent, compared with 2.1 per cent for England as a whole.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

4. SBC contracts with two local colleges to provide courses in hospitality, sport and leisure. In 2003-04, there were 1,329 enrolments. The range of courses includes tai chi, yoga, fitness, archery, bridge, pole dancing, cake decoration and recreational cookery classes. These courses operate for a period of six to 12 weeks. Most courses run for 10 weeks over three terms of the year. Ninety per cent of the provision takes place during weekday evenings, Monday to Thursday. Lessons last from one to two hours and take place in a range of venues across the borough, including colleges, community centres and schools. Many of the classes are for mixed-ability learners. Some courses offer progression opportunities from beginner levels to advanced levels. All courses are non-accredited. There are 20 part-time tutors in this area of learning.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	3
Number of inspection days	15
Number of learner interviews	112
Number of staff interviews	25
Number of subcontractor interviews	6
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	15
Number of visits	26

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. The overall quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically the provision in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel is good.

GRADES

Grades awarded at previous inspection

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

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

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	4
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	4

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

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

Family learning	2
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	2

Grades awarded at reinspection

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

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

AREAS OF LEARNING

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Grade 2

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	374	2

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

Strengths

- good acquisition of skills and knowledge
- good teaching of practical skills
- particularly effective monitoring and recording of learners' progress in catering
- good development of improvement arrangements

Weaknesses

- ineffective mechanisms for the identification and monitoring of learners' progress in sport and exercise classes
- insufficiently co-ordinated planning of subcontracted college provision

Achievement and standards

6. Learners acquire a good level of skills and knowledge. In exercise, fitness, tai chi and yoga classes, learners develop and enhance skills in performing exercises to music, improve posture, balance and co-ordination. They learn about the principles of fitness and how to exercise safely. Learners develop an understanding of the philosophy and origins of yoga and Tai chi. They use blocks, belts and blankets to enable them to perform postures to a good standard and to cater for the different ability levels.

7. In cookery, learners develop a good and useful standard of food preparation skills to use at home. Learners have a good knowledge of new and alternative dishes from around the world and how to prepare them. Learners are proficient in the use of knives and other kitchen equipment. Their knowledge of unusual foods and different tools to use in the kitchen is considerable broader than when they started the course. The lessons are also very effective in promoting good hygiene practices. In cake decoration, they are able to produce intricate work and develop good presentation skills. Learners develop confidence and competence and many of the skills learnt in exercise and cookery classes enhance their every day lives.

Quality of education and training

8. The teaching of practical skills is good. The standard of teaching has improved significantly since the previous inspection. At reinspection, the grade profile is 85 per cent good or better, 15 per cent satisfactory, with no unsatisfactory lessons, compared with 19 per cent unsatisfactory teaching at the previous inspection.

9. The better lessons in sport, cookery and leisure are well planned, structured and challenging. Learners are kept engaged and motivated through a range of activities. The tutors are well qualified, enthusiastic and professional. The tutors and the learners have good working relationships. There is very good peer support between learners. The lessons encourage teamwork and effectively develop social skills and confidence. Most learners progress to higher levels. Attendance is satisfactory in sports lessons and very good in cookery classes. Most courses have learners of mixed ability. The tutors effectively plan these lessons and use a range of teaching methods. Tutors effectively use good handouts, and in cookery, learners have access to a wide range of books for reference and planning of menus. In some sessions, tutors do not use a good range of teaching methods. There are insufficient checks on learners' understanding and not enough attention to their individual learning needs.

10. There is particularly effective monitoring of learners' progress in catering. Individual learning plans are used to set targets at the beginning of the course. Each week the learners review their targets and set new ones as appropriate. These targets become more challenging as learners progress. An overall review is held at the end of the course to identify achievements and match these with learners' previous goals. Learners usually exceed their previous targets and are encouraged to progress to the next level. As part of the review process, learners are required to develop their own range of dishes and review what they have liked or disliked. Course evaluations are completed and these are used effectively to monitor the learners' progress and the effectiveness of the course.

11. Since the previous inspection, resources have significantly improved and are now satisfactory. In some smaller outreach centres, the equipment in kitchens is not adequate. Tutors are vocationally qualified and most have recognised teaching qualifications. The range of courses is generally satisfactory to meet the needs and interests of existing learners. There is a good geographical spread of venues at times of the day and days of the week that learners want.

12. Initial information and advice before enrolment is adequate. Advice and guidance is available from each of the main adult and community learning centres, community centres, schools, libraries and the service website. Learning ambassadors and outreach workers provide information within local communities. Each college has its own information, advice and guidance centre. Some taster classes are offered.

13. There are ineffective mechanisms for identifying and monitoring learners' progress in sport and leisure courses. On most courses, tutors identify group-learning goals rather

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than individually negotiated learning goals. Most group goals are prescribed by the tutors based upon what they think learners will achieve. There is insufficient initial discussion with individual learners to identify their goals. There is too much use of informal assessment methods. In most observed lessons, there is not enough formal monitoring of learners' progress. Summative assessment is weak and is not systematically used to measure to what extent personal goals have been achieved or used to identify new learning goals. Pre-exercise screening questionnaires, a weakness in the previous report, are now used on all exercise courses and relevant information regarding learners' health and fitness is passed on to the course tutors. Not all tutors use this information to inform their lesson planning, to modify exercises or differentiate activities according to individuals' capabilities.

Leadership and management

14. The provider has developed good improvement arrangements. SBC has regular improvement meetings. It has appointed an improvement co-ordinator who has effectively developed a quality assurance cycle, although this is not yet fully established. The self-assessment report is detailed and broadly in line with inspectors' findings. There is a clear development plan outlining actions, responsibilities, timescales and review dates. Subcontractors' management for adult and community learning has been restructured since the previous inspection. Lines of accountabilities and responsibilities are now clearer. There has been a significant increase in lessons observations and a review and reorganisation of tutors and their capabilities. Teaching and learning have improved significantly. SBC has successfully audited all learning centres against the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The appointment of 11 community learning ambassadors has proved highly effective in widening participation of adults involved in adult and community learning.

15. The planning of subcontracted college provision is insufficiently co-ordinated. The area has no overall directory of all courses available within the borough. There is no single point of reference detailing all adult and community learning provision. Communication between the two subcontracted colleges is ineffective in planning the whole adult and community learning curriculum to meet the needs of learners. There is some overlap in courses. Data is not used effectively to improve planning. There are not enough targets set for the area of learning in terms of participation of under-represented groups. For example, minority ethnic participation in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel in 2003-04 was 1.9 per cent, compared with 4.8 per cent in the population of Swindon and 4.7 per cent in the provision as a whole. There is insufficient use of learner and tutor feedback. Colleges complete their own evaluations but there is no systematic overall evaluation. There is no analysis or review of discontinued curricular provision to identify causes of course closures. There is little continuity of courses over the year. Courses are offered during the academic terms and many of the benefits attained from exercise classes are diminished as a result. Tutors do not regularly meet to identify and share good practice.

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.

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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.