

REINSPECTION REPORT

Southwark LEA Reinspection

19 May 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. Southwark Adult Learning Services (SALS) is funded by the Central London Learning and Skills Council. It is now a business unit of the libraries and lifelong learning division, in the department of environment and leisure. At the time of the previous inspection, it was within the department of education and culture. SALS comprises three sub-units. Southwark Adult Education Service (SAES) provides adult and community learning and further education courses, which between them form almost 80 per cent of the provision. Approximately 33 per cent of this provision is further education courses. The other sub-units are Southwark Education and Training Advice for Adults, and the subcontracted provision, which is funded by the neighbourhood learning in deprived communities, and the centre for literary and primary education. Each of these areas has a manager who reports to the head of libraries and lifelong learning. SALS serves many very deprived areas, and prioritises provision for learners with poor literacy and numeracy skills, language training, and under-represented groups.

2. The five main curriculum areas offered are information technology (IT), visual and performing arts, social care, health and fitness and basic education including family language, literacy and numeracy (FLLN) and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). Each of these areas is managed by a curriculum co-ordinator who reports to the manager for SAES. Most of the provision is at level 1 or below. SAES's further education programmes offer courses up to level 2. Learners may progress to local colleges. Two learning centres are owned and managed by SALS, but courses are provided at a further 34 sites, including libraries and local schools.

3. Southwark is an inner London borough and has the twelfth highest level of deprivation in England and Wales. Unemployment rates, especially within minority ethnic groups, are high, at 5.2 per cent in February 2005 compared with a national average of 2.3 per cent and a London average of 3.3 per cent. The 2001 census shows that minority ethnic groups account for 37 per cent of the population of Southwark, compared with less than 10 per cent nationally. Twenty-seven per cent of adults in Southwark have poor basic literacy or numeracy skills.

4. So far this term, 893 learners have made 1,318 enrolments. This includes learners on performing arts and childcare programmes, which were not within the scope of the reinspection.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Information & communications technology

5. SALS currently offers 24 courses in information and communications technology (ICT) and has 204 enrolled learners. Women account for 63 per cent of learners and 57 per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups. Twenty-five per cent of learners are

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aged 60 or over. Nine of the courses are based at SALS's main learning centre. All but one of these are externally accredited computer literacy courses, and some are intended for complete beginners. These courses operate for 12 weeks during term time and consist of one two-and-a-half hour class each week.

6. SALS offers an examination-based qualification in IT, with one four-hour class each week. Most of the non-accredited provision is based in a library. These classes are all aimed at beginners and run for eight weeks. Another non-accredited class is provided for a client at the client's premises. Further education courses are provided in the daytime and only on weekdays. Since the previous inspection, a drop-in provision for introductory and level 1 individual learning has been made available at the SETAA open centre, during weekdays, evenings and weekends. A UK online centre at the main learning centre, which is staffed by regular tutors, is available for independent learning at specific times. SALS has seven part-time ICT tutors, managed by a full-time co-ordinator who reports to the adult education manager.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

7. SALS currently provides 19 non-accredited health and fitness-related courses. Fitness courses include yoga, keep fit, dance fitness and chair exercise. Two of the courses are aimed at family learners and six courses are for those aged 50 and over. One programme is specifically for those learners with health problems. Courses are offered at 11 venues including local education authority centres and other accommodation such as sports facilities, day centres, residential homes, and family and community centres throughout the area. Courses are currently offered over varying lengths of time, ranging from short summer courses of less than 10 weeks to courses recruited annually and operating for 36 weeks. This term there have been 248 enrolments by 227 learners. Just over 50 per cent of the learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Four per cent of learners are men and 30 per cent of learners have a disability. Most classes provide for mixed abilities. The curriculum manager, who is on a part-time contract, reports to the adult education manager and is responsible for curriculum and budgetary management and quality assurance. The curriculum manager also teaches on one programme. SALS currently has six part-time tutors, most of whom have a recognised teaching qualification.

Visual & performing arts & media

8. SALS currently provides 32 visual arts courses at two main sites and community-based locations throughout the borough. This term, 261 learners have made 303 enrolments. Of these, approximately 80 per cent are women, and 40 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. Teaching is carried out by 15 part-time tutors who are supported by three technicians. A full-time co-ordinator manages the programme who reports to the adult education manager. Courses cover a range of visual arts and crafts including pottery, wood crafts, art, clothes making, millinery, and upholstery. Classes are provided during the day, and seven evening classes are also offered. A summer programme is planned to include French polishing and Shaker workshops. Most courses are non-accredited.

Foundation programmes

9. Currently, 309 learners have made 419 enrolments on 21 intensive skills for life, the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language programmes, located in the main learning centres and in community venues. These include nine literacy and three numeracy classes, ranging from pre-entry to level 2, and nine ESOL classes from entry level 1 to level 2. Courses are offered during the day, and in the evening. Twenty one-day taster sessions have been provided this term. All learners are initially assessed to ensure that they are placed on the right programmes. All learners from entry level 2 to level 1 have been entered for accreditation. The area is managed by a full-time co-ordinator who reports to the adult education manager, and is supported by three fractional and six part-time agency staff.

10. In addition, 83 parents and carers are currently enrolled on FLNN courses located in local primary schools, and 83 children join them for afternoon activities. There are nine literacy and three numeracy classes. The provision is managed by a full-time co-ordinator and delivered by nine part-time tutors employed by the centre for literacy and primary education. All learners have the opportunity to submit portfolios for accreditation at level 1 in calculations, reading, writing, speaking and listening.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	6
Number of inspection days	17
Number of learners interviewed	48
Number of staff interviewed	31
Number of subcontractors interviewed	2
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	16
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	2
Number of visits	4

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

11. The previous inspection in February 2004 found that SALS's leadership and management and arrangements for quality assurance were unsatisfactory. Equality of opportunity was satisfactory. The provision in ICT, hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, visual and performing arts and media, and foundation programmes was satisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, all aspects of the provision were found to be satisfactory.

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GRADES

Grades awarded at previous inspection

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	4

Information & communications technology	3
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

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

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

Foundation programmes	3
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

Grades awarded at reinspection

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

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

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

12. SALS now records achievement of individual learning goals as described on the individual learning plans, in order to produce more accurate achievement data for non-accredited courses. In many cases this is providing very useful data and information to monitor the specific achievements of individual learners' needs and aspirations. Most learners achieve many of their personal goals.

13. Retention rates remain at least satisfactory and many courses continue to have good retention rates.

Quality of education and training

14. Standards of teaching and learning remain satisfactory overall, with 64 per cent of lessons being judged good or better.

15. Individual learning plans, a weakness in the previous inspection, are now detailed and reviewed frequently. They provide an effective method of monitoring learners' progress on accredited and non-accredited courses in visual and performing arts and media, ICT and sport and leisure. Individual learning plans are used as active documents, and entries are made as and when progress takes place, in addition to the planned review points. Learners and tutors are now able to reflect effectively on the progress that has been made. All tutors have received thorough training in the implementation of individual learning plans. The plans are internally and externally monitored frequently and regularly.

16. The range of programmes, a weakness in all areas in the previous inspection, is now satisfactory, offering evening, weekend and drop-in provision and a six-week summer programme. In visual and performing arts and media, seven new evening classes have been introduced successfully covering African fashion, ceramics, life drawing, start drawing now, millinery, woodwork and upholstery. Partnerships have been developed with national museums to encourage interest in the visual arts and participation in the courses offered within the community. Drop-in day, evening and weekend ICT classes are now easily accessible at SETAA's premises.

17. Health screening in sports and leisure lessons, a weakness in the previous inspection, is now satisfactory. All learners in this area now complete a health screen, which is carefully monitored by the curriculum co-ordinator.

18. **Arrangements are inadequate for the identification of, and support for, literacy, numeracy, and language skills** in visual and performing arts and media. The initial assessment process focuses on the learners' specialist skills in order to identify individual

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starting points and measure progress over the period of study. No learners have had additional learning needs identified, or received support for literacy, numeracy and language skills. The available support is not integrated sufficiently with learning activities. The literacy and numeracy teaching skills training for staff which was identified in the post-inspection action plan has not taken place.

19. Achievement of progress for learners in foundation programmes does not focus sufficiently on specific short-term goals. Many targets are long term and cover a wide range of skills. Monitoring of progress is not recorded sufficiently in individual learning plans. Additional learning needs are not identified and supported adequately.

20. The progress of learners on courses is well monitored, but not enough progression routes are signposted for those learners wishing to move to level 2 courses in other areas. Recent activities in the Southwark learning network are designed to overcome this problem.

Leadership and management

21. **Clear strategic leadership is still a strength.** It originates with the council and managers. The provision is well focused on providing first step education, and widening participation in the area. All leaders and managers have a clear view of how the work of SALS links with local and national objectives.

22. **The performance management of staff, which was satisfactory in the previous inspection, is now a strength.** All staff have targets, which are carefully monitored. Performance-related pay is closely linked to these targets, and action is taken swiftly when problems arise.

23. **Retention and achievement rates, for which there are challenging but realistic targets, are now carefully monitored in relation to equality of opportunity. The results are analysed** to ensure that distinct groups achieve similar performances in retention and achievement.

24. All weaknesses from the previous inspection have been resolved satisfactorily in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel. Most weaknesses have been at least partially resolved in the other three areas.

25. **The arrangements for quality improvement have been developed significantly.** A comprehensive tutor pack has been introduced. This is used well, and has improved the consistency of planning and the delivery of courses in all areas. A review of partnerships has taken place to ensure that all subcontractors are able to meet service level agreements. Five venues and one subcontract are no longer used by SALS.

26. **Successful strategies are helping to widen participation.** This year, 72 per cent of learners are new to SALS. The provider adheres to a policy of not providing projects and activities for the same groups year on year, but targeting new learners. The provision is creating new partnerships with schools and community venues to widen participation.

27. **Subcontracted provision is still monitored inadequately.** Although the framework for service level agreements is in place, it has not had sufficient effect on the provision for learners.

28. **Good practice, which was observed in every curriculum area, is not shared sufficiently** between programme areas, and the three different strands of SALS's provision. Internal verifiers do not meet to share good assessment practice or to confirm assessment standards.

29. **Learners' understanding of what constitutes harassment and bullying is not developed sufficiently.** Although inspectors saw no discriminatory behaviour, induction materials do not provide clear information about what constitutes bullying and harassment, or individuals' rights and responsibilities with regard to each other. This is significant in a provision which is focused on providing first step education.

30. The self-assessment report identifies actions to maintain strengths and improve weaknesses. Inspectors' findings matched many of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the report. SALS does not have a detailed development plan based on actions for improvement identified in the self-assessment report.

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

Leadership and management

Strengths

- clear strategic leadership
- strong performance management of staff
- good use of targets to improve retention and achievement
- successful strategies to widen participation
- comprehensive analysis of equal opportunities data
- effective quality improvement arrangements by Southwark Adult Education Service

Weaknesses

- inadequate management of additional learning support needs
- insufficient development of learners' understanding of anti-harassment and anti-bullying measures
- insufficient monitoring of subcontracted provision
- insufficient sharing of 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.

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 3

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

Strengths

- clear strategic leadership
- strong performance management of staff
- good use of targets to improve retention and achievement
- successful strategies to widen participation
- comprehensive analysis of equal opportunities data
- effective quality improvement arrangements by Southwark Adult Education Service

Weaknesses

- inadequate management of additional learning support needs
- insufficient development of learners' understanding of anti-harassment and anti-bullying measures
- insufficient monitoring of subcontracted provision
- insufficient sharing of good practice

31. Leadership and management are now satisfactory. SALS provides clear strategic leadership to improve and promote wider participation in learning. The council's leadership has a good understanding of the importance of the contribution made by adult and community learning to the well-being and employment potential of residents in the borough. SALS's strategic objectives carefully target its provision towards identified priority groups, including under-represented minority ethnic groups, unemployed people, lone parents and those who need support with their literacy, numeracy and language skills. The overriding strategy clearly focuses on delivering first step education up to and including level 1 and preparing learners to move to level 2 with other providers. The development plans for 2003-05 and 2005-08 reflect local and national priorities. A wide and appropriate range of targets are used to measure outcomes, including success rates and use of internal progression routes by learners. The plans do not include any baseline data against which to measure progress in reaching the priority groups, or interim measures or milestones to monitor progress towards the targets in the plans.

32. SALS's development plan identifies that by 2008, 45 per cent of the provision will provide first steps for learning programmes, 45 per cent of programmes will be in dedicated subject areas, and 10 per cent of programmes will be discrete provision for learners with learning difficulties. Recent changes in provision reflect these priorities and SALS is making satisfactory progress in achieving them. Strategic objectives are translated into annual business plans. SALS uses a wide range of useful performance

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indicators to assess the effectiveness of their response to the annual business plan. A detailed review of performance is completed each year. A number of innovative projects have been introduced to reach under-represented groups of learners in targeted wards. SALS is working to secure more accessible facilities throughout the borough. It has recently developed appropriate strategies covering e-learning, family learning and skills for life. Each strategy is supported with detailed action plans. Since the previous inspection, SALS has introduced a marketing strategy. It is too soon to assess the effectiveness of this strategy.

33. SAES's staff performance management and appraisal programme provides a strong basis with which to improve performance. The annual performance management scheme, with six-monthly monitoring, is linked effectively to staff remuneration packages. Core performance measures included in the scheme are detailed and comprehensive, covering sickness absence, timekeeping, attendance at meetings and timely submission of reports. Additional performance measures for managers closely reflect job descriptions. The progress of identified actions is well monitored in the annual business plan and the post-inspection action plan. The results of observations of teaching and learning are linked well with the performance appraisals of teachers. Annual performance appraisals are integrated effectively with staff development. Tutors who receive a grade for their observed teaching of satisfactory or less are required to agree an individual action plan to improve the quality of their teaching. SALS places a strong emphasis on staff training. Part-time staff are paid to attend approved training sessions. Learning plan priorities are linked adequately to business objectives. SAES sets a challenging target of 95 per cent of tutors having qualified teacher status by 2007-08. Good progress is already being made in achieving this target.

34. The use of target-setting throughout SALS is satisfactory. SAES makes good use of targets to improve or maintain high levels of retention and achievement. Good management information systems have been developed to provide accurate and timely information about a number of key performance indicators. This data is used more analytically since the previous inspection. Data is used effectively to set demanding targets for enrolment, retention, achievement and other key performance indicators, in order to assess the performance of different groups of learners. The adult education manager sets curriculum co-ordinators these targets based on previous performance and other benchmarks. Performance is reviewed regularly and where it falls below targets, well-considered remedial actions are taken. In most areas of learning, actions to improve attendance are effective. The recording and understanding of the progress made by learners on leaving their learning programmes is inadequate. Target-setting on non-SAES programmes is not developed sufficiently.

35. The management of support for additional learning needs is inadequate. Individual curriculum co-ordinators are responsible for the initial assessment of additional needs. Initial assessments are thorough in ICT, but not in visual and performing arts and media. Identified additional learning needs are not recorded effectively on many individual learning plans. In-class support for learners with additional learning needs on foundation programmes is inadequate. The development of literacy, numeracy and language skills is not integrated sufficiently with the curriculum. Not all curriculum co-ordinators are

aware of how to identify or refer learners with specific learning needs such as those having dyslexia. However, referral arrangements are adequate for learners accessing support through SETAA's or SAES's student services. Staff training in literacy and numeracy teaching did not take place as planned, although arrangements are being made to rectify this situation.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

36. SALS has further improved its strategies to widen participation, which were a strength in the previous inspection. The provider has maintained successful, specific targeting of hard-to-reach groups, including minority ethnic groups, people with no level 2 qualifications, unemployed men, and those with skills for life, and literacy and numeracy needs. Courses are free to priority groups, and fee remissions have remained at 80 per cent this year. The target of 50 per cent for new learners has been exceeded and is 72 per cent for this year. SALS adheres to its policy of not repeating provision for the same group of learners. For example, a very successful family learning activity at a national art gallery will only be repeated if it is targeted at new learners. SALS now offers provision in a wider variety of venues, including libraries and schools, and is seeking to extend these opportunities to reach more areas of the community. Classes are now also offered in the evening, and at weekends. Summer courses are being organised.

37. SALS's analysis of equal opportunities data is now comprehensive. The previous inspection found that collection of this data was good, but that it was not monitored sufficiently. SALS regularly analyses the data to identify trends in recruitment, retention and achievement. Data is collected frequently and regularly in the provision directly managed by SALS. Analysis indicates that different groups do not normally show significant differences, but any concerns are investigated by managers. Systems now exist to collect data from the subcontracted provision, but it is too soon to judge the effectiveness of this. Men are under-represented in the provision, although some specific projects such as a football club project and a planned summer programme on men's health are in place to address this issue. A member of SALS's staff carried out a detailed research project identifying obstacles to access by men, and the findings are taken into account when any provision targeted at men is planned.

38. The provider has satisfactory arrangements for regular reviews and action-planning to support the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, and compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The free crèches, which are provided in the main learning centres and in the outreach provision for family learning, comply with appropriate child protection legislation. A member of staff is the named child protection officer and she ensures that staff are aware of their responsibilities in relation to child protection. A prayer room and a Buddhist peace garden are available at one of the main sites.

39. Recently, SALS has purchased equipment to produce Braille signs throughout one of the main sites. The learning centre also has a computer package to produce simplified text for those with reading difficulties, and a newsletter is now available in this format. Most areas are accessible to the learners and staff having restricted mobility, although no

access is available to upstairs rooms in one outreach centre.

40. Learners and staff are aware of the complaints procedure, and a clear record is kept of complaints and outcomes of actions to resolve them. Processes now exist to monitor equal opportunities data and policies in the subcontracted provision.

41. SALS has an adequate equal opportunities policy. Learners are aware of their rights and responsibilities in general terms. However, their understanding of anti-bullying and harassment measures is not developed sufficiently. Bullying and harassment are not specifically mentioned in induction materials, and no explanation is given about what constitutes bullying and harassing behaviour. This is of particular importance as the target group for SALS is first step learners, many of whom are vulnerable.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

42. SAES has effective quality improvement arrangements. It has a well-established and effective annual cycle of internal observations of teaching which is moderated appropriately each year to ensure that rigorous standards are maintained. The staff performance management scheme and staff training are used effectively to improve the quality of teaching and learning. SAES has introduced the use of individual learning plan, which was a weakness in the previous inspection, to improve the management of learning and the recording of accredited and non-accredited learning. Tutors are encouraged to improve their use of individual learning plans with learners by retrospective performance payment on successful completion of each plan. As part of the quality assurance programme, managers regularly moderate standards observed in using the individual learning plans. In foundation programmes, learners' progress is not monitored adequately, and short-term targets are not specific enough.

43. In January 2005, SAES produced a new quality assurance handbook that was distributed to tutors. This contains clear guidance about the use of standard documents. Consistency in completing these documents has improved. Managers are responsible for carrying out regular reviews of tutors' use of this handbook. In ICT, the co-ordinator has produced a detailed review schedule. Monitoring arrangements are not fully established in all areas of learning. SAES consults widely with learners and partners and reports on actions to bring about improvements. It has engaged external consultants to critically assess each curriculum area with the aim of improving the quality of provision.

44. SALS has made steady progress to ensure that quality improvement arrangements cover all aspects of the provision. This was a weakness identified in the previous inspection. Since the appointment of a quality and contracts manager, a number of key documents relating to quality assurance have been drafted and are awaiting approval by the management team. These include a quality assurance framework, a quality improvement manual, and a quality improvement cycle. A quality assurance handbook for subcontractors is being drafted.

45. The post-inspection action plan has been used satisfactorily to introduce a programme of change within the provision. Many of the key weaknesses identified in

the previous inspection report have been improved to satisfactory standards. SALS's self-assessment report for 2004-05 was based on detailed reviews by different parts of the organisation. These reviews were produced in a number of formats of varying quality. Managers were involved in the self-assessment process, but the involvement of part-time staff varied in different parts of the provision and in some areas staff were not involved at all. The report provides a satisfactory commentary on the provision.

46. Inspectors' findings matched many of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report and gave the same grade for leadership and management as the report. The self-assessment report identifies actions to maintain strengths and to improve on weaknesses. These identified actions have not been used in a detailed development plan.

47. The subcontracted provision is not monitored sufficiently. This weakness was identified in the previous inspection. The regulation of the subcontracted provision has been improved by the introduction of service level agreements. Regular meetings are now held with subcontractors to monitor compliance with the agreements. However, this is a recent development, and it is too soon to be able to judge the impact on the quality of provision. An improved service level agreement has been prepared for the next contract year which includes greater expectations of subcontractors. At the time of the reinspection not all subcontractors had signed their agreements for 2004-05. Although the service level agreements contain key performance indicators on enrolment and retention rates, SALS does not have adequate data to be able to monitor these indicators effectively. Arrangements to monitor the quality of subcontracted provision, including standards of teaching and learning, are not complete. However, since the previous inspection, some action has taken place based on quality monitoring. One unsatisfactory subcontract has been terminated and the use of some unsuitable venues been discontinued.

48. Staff do not have sufficient opportunities to share and identify good practice in order to improve the quality of the provision, or ensure consistency in quality standards. Internal verifiers do not meet to share good assessment practice or to confirm assessment standards.