

REINSPECTION REPORT

Suffolk LEA Reinspection

13 May 2005



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

SUFFOLK LEA REINSPECTION

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. Suffolk Adult and Community Learning Service (SACL) contracts with Suffolk Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for the provision of accredited and non-accredited adult and community learning in the area. Some of the provision, which is designed for specific target groups, is delivered directly by the adult and community learning service. The local education authority also has subcontracting arrangements with Suffolk, West Suffolk and Lowestoft Colleges and with five schools in the north of the county. SACL is based in the education directorate and is part of community education services. Courses are offered in 14 areas of learning, but some have very few enrolments. In 2003-04 there were over 37,000 enrolments and over 22,000 learners on courses distributed among approximately 450 centres.
2. The service is currently being restructured and only the senior managers have been appointed to permanent posts in the new structure. Adult and community learning is the responsibility of the head of service, who is supported by three senior managers with responsibility for curriculum, quality and inclusion and community development and resources. The remaining middle management posts will carry responsibility for either curriculum or geographical areas and are soon to be appointed.
3. Suffolk is a large, economically and socially diverse county. It is largely rural with three main centres of population in Ipswich, Bury St Edmunds and Lowestoft. Wards in Ipswich and Lowestoft are in the most deprived 10 per cent of wards nationally, as measured by the index of multiple deprivation.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

4. SACL offers programmes in sport and leisure, recreational cooking and basic food hygiene in over 100 venues throughout the county. These include further education colleges, residential homes, community centres, schools and village halls. Courses take place on weekdays, during the day and in the evening. SACL offers occasional weekend workshops. Courses include yoga, keep fit for the elderly, aerobics, basic and specialist cookery. Some courses are delivered directly by SACL and others are subcontracted to further education colleges and schools in the community. Most of the courses operate during academic terms and last for an average of 10 weeks. None of the sports-related courses leads to qualifications. There is only one accredited programme in cookery. Currently, 40 tutors are working part time on short-term contracts, most of them work between four and six hours each week. In 2003-04, 8,544 learners enrolled on 537 courses. Eighty-four per cent of the learners were women and 6 per cent were from minority ethnic groups. Three per cent of learners declared a disability in 2003-04. So far in 2004-05 this proportion has increased to almost 4 per cent. At the time of the inspection, there are 94 courses and 2,271 learners. Ninety per cent of learners are

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enrolled on sports courses and the remainder on hospitality courses.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	4
Number of inspection days	18
Number of learners interviewed	123
Number of staff interviewed	28
Number of subcontractors interviewed	8
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	25

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

5. At the previous inspection, SACL's leadership and management were found to be satisfactory as was its approach to equality of opportunity. Its arrangements for quality assurance were unsatisfactory. The provision was good in information and communications technology, foundation programmes and family learning, and satisfactory in visual and performing arts and media, and English, languages and communications. The provision in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel was unsatisfactory, and it remains unsatisfactory at the end of the reinspection process. SACL has been referred to Suffolk LSC for emergency action.

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	3
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	3

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

Foundation programmes	2
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	2

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	4
Contributory grades:	
Adult and community learning	4

AREAS OF LEARNING

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Grade 4

Programmes inspected	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Adult and community learning	2271	4

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

Strengths

- good retention rate
- good development of learners' health and well-being
- good personal support from tutors

Weaknesses

- much poor teaching and learning
- ineffective assessment and recording of learners' progress
- insufficient attention to safe working practices
- ineffective strategies to improve and develop the provision

Achievement and standards

6. At 87 per cent, the retention rate was identified as a strength in the previous inspection. By 2003-04 it had improved to 90 per cent. Achievement rates have also improved, and in 2003-04 were 89 per cent. However, achievement rates are judged against learning outcomes and in some courses these are unclear and difficult to assess. Learners in sports classes make good improvements to their health and well-being. Learners enrol on courses for a variety of reasons that include learning new skills, improving their fitness or health, increasing their mobility and maintaining social contacts. Many learners say that they have improved their suppleness or balance and are now able to manage stress more effectively. One learner can garden again and attributes this improvement to attending her class. Learners value the social benefits of their courses and say that they feel less lonely and isolated. A group of learners from different villages, who met for the first time through their yoga class, have now taken up swimming together and hire a local pool for a short session each week. Attendance during the inspection was low, at 76 per cent.

Quality of education and training

7. Support from tutors is good. Many of them have good inter-personal skills and develop very good relationships with learners. Tutors encourage learners to overcome obstacles and to continue attending their classes through the winter months. Many

tutors encourage learners to try other activities, or to take part in courses or events to broaden their understanding and enjoyment. Others bring books and magazines from their own collections for learners to borrow. Many tutors give good encouragement and support to individuals, for example one tutor had recently visited a learner at her home to check on her well-being.

8. The range of provision is generally satisfactory in meeting the needs and interests of existing learners. The geographical distribution is satisfactory, as is the provision of daytime courses. However, SACL has a restricted range of weekend classes and insufficient provision to attract under-represented learners. SACL does not provide classes over the summer period and some courses do not last for the full summer term. There are waiting lists for the more popular classes. SACL does not monitor attendance on a regular basis and does not have information about vacancies. Some learners complain that they were unable to enrol for over a year in a class that was undersubscribed. Initial information and guidance before enrolment is not consistent throughout the county. One subcontractor issues detailed course information enabling potential learners to make an informed choice. Information for courses elsewhere is less comprehensive. Some learners felt that they did not have sufficient information to enrol on some courses. SACL has offered a number of 'taster courses' but has not evaluated the resulting effect on enrolments.

9. The standard of facilities and resources is satisfactory and learners value the fact that classes are held in local venues. Many say that they could not travel further. Sports-related classes are held at a range of community centres, some of which provide good-quality accommodation. In those classes observed, most floor surfaces were good and room sizes were suitable for the size of the groups. Lighting and ventilation were satisfactory. Parking at some venues is difficult and signage is inadequate. Some yoga classes are held in noisy areas and suffer from interruptions. SACL does not provide equipment for sports and fitness courses. Some of the accommodation used for cookery classes is poor. A basic food hygiene course takes place in the bar area of a community hall where learners can clearly hear the noise from the adjacent crèche. In one practical cookery class, six learners have only two working domestic ovens. Learners work at tables that are too low. Plans are in place to improve these facilities.

10. Standards of teaching and learning are poor in many classes. At the previous inspection 59 per cent of classes were judged to be good or better and 15 per cent were unsatisfactory. At the reinspection, 20 per cent were good or better and 26 per cent unsatisfactory. In the better classes, tutors give clear instructions and explanations and learners understand the benefits of particular practices. Some tutors provide written information to encourage learners to develop exercise routines to practise at home. The standard of demonstrations is generally poor. Tutors face the learners and many have difficulty in copying the tutor's performance. Tutors do not give learners sufficient individual help. In the weaker classes, tutors do not explain movements and techniques accurately or in sufficient detail for learners with different levels of experience or ability. Tutors use a restricted range of teaching methods and do not break down sequences adequately for learners. Tutors ask learners to repeat exercises or moves, but do not correct learners' poor techniques or positions. Many tutors do not emphasise key

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learning points. A few tutors prepare detailed lesson plans and schemes of work, but many prepare only outline plans and simply repeat lessons from term to term. Recently, SACL has held tutor workshops to discuss and improve lesson planning.

11. Many tutors do not assess and record learners' progress effectively. Some do not identify learning outcomes, and many outcomes that are recorded are not measurable. Initial assessment is unsatisfactory. Since the previous inspection SACL has introduced health screening forms which all learners now complete. This was a weakness in the previous inspection, but has now been resolved. However, tutors do not routinely assess learners' fitness levels and experience. Few use the health screening information to plan or modify their programmes to meet individual needs. SACL does not assess learners' basic literacy, numeracy or language needs. Most tutors do not set challenging targets for learners or plan sufficiently for individual learning needs. Most tutors do not systematically assess learners' progress and learners do not evaluate their own performances. Feedback to learners is inadequate.

12. SACL's attention to safe working practices is unsatisfactory. Since the previous inspection, SACL has asked tutors to complete a risk assessment of facilities before each class. Not all tutors do this, and many of them are not sufficiently aware of health and safety issues. In a number of the sessions observed by inspectors, tutors did not check either the facilities or the health and fitness of their learners before starting the session. In some classes, learners' clothing, shoes and bags were left on the floor around the room. Many tutors are unable to see most of the learners during the session and do not monitor them adequately. Learners practise too closely to walls, chairs, doorways and other objects such as heaters. In some sessions, tutors teach unsafe and potentially harmful exercises, and do not correct unsafe practises. SACL does not routinely test tutors' audio equipment. Many learners attending yoga or exercise classes use a blanket instead of an exercise mat. A blanket does not provide sufficient support, comfort, warmth or stability. One learner chewed gum throughout an exercise session. Many learners have medical conditions, such as high blood pressure, angina or diabetes. SACL does not monitor access to emergency first aid. Many tutors work in remote centres, outside normal working hours and without a caretaker on site, and do not hold current first aid qualifications.

Leadership and management

13. At the time of the previous inspection, curriculum management was inadequate. The service is being restructured and the line of accountability and responsibility is now clearer. However, SACL does not have strategies effective enough to improve and develop the provision. SACL has a curriculum planning schedule, but this is a recent innovation. Since the previous inspection, SACL has made some changes in the curriculum to meet the county's identified priorities but much which is planned is based on the availability of tutors and accommodation.

14. Communications between staff developing directly delivered provision and subcontractors are not developed sufficiently and are poor in some areas. Progression opportunities are restricted and SACL does not monitor the progression of learners

between providers. Learners are not routinely supplied with details of progression opportunities in local colleges. Managers receive enrolment and retention data, but they are not using it effectively to plan provision. Learners' attendance is not monitored and analysed and SACL does not manage waiting lists, review reasons for course failure or identify trends. SACL has not carried out a sufficient needs analysis to support the planning of programmes and does not have targets for widening participation. In 2003-04, 19 per cent of learners were men and 6 per cent were from minority ethnic groups. So far in 2004-05, only 16 per cent of enrolments are by men and just over 3 per cent are by learners from minority ethnic backgrounds. SACL does not collect and use sufficient feedback from learners and tutors to be able to evaluate and develop the curriculum. Subcontractors complete their own evaluations but there is no systematic county-wide analysis. There is no continuity of courses throughout the year. Classes follow the academic terms and do not operate during the summer. Some courses in schools finish very early in the term to accommodate examinations. Learners are not offered alternative venues, or an extension to the term, and most learners are not able to maintain their fitness levels.

15. SACL does not monitor teaching, learning and assessment adequately. Observations of teaching and learning are ineffective. During the reinspection, inspectors gave grades significantly lower than those in the observation profile for the area of learning. Most observations are carried out by non-specialists. Some scheduled observations have not taken place. Some tutors have not been observed for several years. Observers do not clearly identify tutors' development needs and observations do not lead to a monitored action plan. SACL does not have a complete list of tutors' qualifications. Recently, SACL has provided some effective workshops for staff to develop their skills, but there are not enough opportunities for them to 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.

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.