INSPECTION REPORT

North Lincolnshire Adult Education Service

19 November 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 1
grade 3	grade 2
grade 4	grade 3
grade 5	grade 4
grade 6	grade 5
grade 7	grade 5

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

North Lincolnshire Adult Education Service

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Adult and community learning in North Lincolnshire is provided on behalf of the local education authority by North Lincolnshire Adult Education Service (the service). North Lincolnshire Council was established as a unitary authority in 1996, on the abolition of Humberside Council. The area is largely agricultural, with market towns surrounded by many small villages, with the exception of Scunthorpe which has many manufacturing industries. The council is committed to a freestanding, community-based adult education service. The adult education service is long established and provides direct delivery of a wide range of community-based adult education opportunities across the whole of the council area. Courses are available in 13 areas of learning. The five areas of learning that were in the scope of the inspection were information and communications technology (ICT), hospitality, sport, leisure and recreation, visual and performing arts and media, English, languages and communications and foundation programmes. These five areas of learning represent 94 per cent of the total 19,030 enrolments in 2003-04. Recruitment has increased steadily since 2000-01, when 11,979 learners enrolled on courses. The provision has one administration base in Scunthorpe, seven adult education centres across North Lincolnshire and uses more than 100 other community-based venues throughout the year. The service works with a number of partners. There is no subcontracted provision.

2. The adult education service is managed by the head of adult and community learning. She is supported by a deputy, four general managers and two basic skills managers. Staff with co-ordinating roles are in place for family learning and e-learning. A team of senior tutors manage quality assurance, literacy, numeracy and language provision, multimedia, ICT and other curriculum areas. There are approximately 199 part-time tutors, an outreach team and three staff in the ICT support team. A service support manager has responsibility for 24 administrative and clerical staff, 24 crèche staff, maintenance and security staff. Approximately 40 trained volunteers and befrienders work with learners in classes to provide specific individual support for people with disabilities or additional learning needs.

3. The service's learning provision is funded by Humberside Learning and Skills Council. In October 2004 the unemployment rate for North Lincolnshire was 2 per cent compared with 2.1 per cent in England. The main areas of employment are the service industries and the production and construction industries. The 2001 census shows that the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups in North Lincolnshire is 2.5 per cent compared with 9 per cent nationally. In 2003, the proportion of school leavers achieving five or more general certificate of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above was 46.9 per cent compared with 52.9 per cent in England.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Information & communications technology

4. During 2003-04, 445 ICT courses were provided for 4,384 learners. Since September 2004, 1,186 learners have enrolled on 103 courses. Ten per cent of learners have a declared disability, 26 per cent were men and 1 per cent was from a minority ethnic group. At the time of inspection, there were 819 learners enrolled on 72 courses. A range of courses from beginners to intermediate level is offered, 83 per cent of which lead to qualifications. Courses range in length from one-day workshops to 36 weeks. Courses are offered at the six main centres, three of which are in Scunthorpe and three in outlying towns. The service also offers ICT provision at eight outreach centres, of which six are in Scunthorpe. Community venues include primary schools, libraries and drop-in centres in shopping precincts. A mobile facility visits a variety of community settings including the renal unit of the local hospital. The provision is delivered by 36 tutors, of whom 34 have teaching qualifications and eight have subject-specialist qualifications at level 4 or above.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

5. In 2003-04, 3,136 learners enrolled on hospitality, sport, leisure and travel courses. Since September 2004, 1,269 learners have enrolled on courses in this area of learning. Twelve per cent of these learners are men. Approximately 32 per cent of learners are over 60 years of age and less than 1 per cent is from a minority ethnic group. There are currently 70 courses running. These include a variety of yoga classes, tai chi, qi gong, badminton and ladies basketball. There is little cookery provision. Most courses are non-accredited. The only accredited course currently offered is sugarcraft at levels 1 and 2. Classes take place in the evening and the daytime, which cater for older learners. Courses run for between one and two hours each week and learners enrol for blocks of learning that vary from 10 to 12 weeks. Courses are delivered at the six main learning centres and from a variety of outreach centres such as local schools, church and community halls. The area is managed by two managers and the provision delivered by 23 tutors. Seventy-nine per cent of tutors have a teaching qualification and 58 per cent have a relevant subject-specific qualification.

Visual & performing arts & media

6. Visual and performing arts and media is the largest area of provision. During 2003-04, 6,168 learners enrolled. At the time of the inspection there were 2,314 enrolments on 145 courses. Courses include painting and drawing, watercolours, card making, pottery, wood carving, patchwork and quilting, lacemaking, media, digital photography, dance and guitar. There are courses in each area of visual and performing arts and media, but the three most significant areas are art, craft, and media and technology. Craft classes make up 57 per cent of the provision, art classes 23 per cent and media and technology 10 per cent. There are small numbers of dance and music classes. In the week of the inspection, courses were held at the six main centres, and 23 outreach centres across north Lincolnshire. Thirty-three classes are accredited at level 1 and 2. Most classes are two-hours' duration and run for between 10 and 30 weeks in the daytime and evening during the week. Learners enrol each term. Occasional full-day classes are held at weekends throughout the year. Eighty-two per cent of learners are women, 12 per cent disclose a disability and 1 per cent is from a minority ethnic group. Learners' ages range from 19 up to over 90 years old. Just over half are more than 60 years old. The programme area is co-ordinated by two curriculum leaders and taught by 40 part-time tutors, who teach between two and 16 hours each week. Thirteen tutors have degrees or level 4 qualifications. Twenty-two have a teaching qualification at level 3 and nine have a teaching qualification at level 4. Six staff have no qualifications and are working towards a teaching qualification.

English, languages & communications

7. The service offers classes in modern foreign languages including British sign language (BSL), and a GCSE in English and creative writing. Eighty-five per cent of the provision is modern foreign languages. At the time of the inspection 324 learners were enrolled, 284 in modern foreign languages classes and 40 in BSL classes. Twenty classes were running, of which 17 were in modern foreign languages and three were in BSL. No GCSE English or creative writing classes were running due to low enrolment numbers.

8. Language courses are available at the five main centres in French, German, Greek, Italian and Spanish. The availability of language classes at each centre varies according to local demand. Most classes are at beginner or near-beginner level. Modern foreign language courses are not accredited, but BSL courses lead to a nationally recognised qualification. Courses last for 10 weeks and run for three terms each year in the morning, at lunchtime, in the afternoon and in the evening. Learners attend for two hours each week. Most learners are white British, and only two learners are from a minority ethnic group. Sixty-seven per cent of learners are women. Fourteen part-time tutors work in this area, of whom 12 have a teaching qualification.

Foundation programmes

9. In 2003-04, there were 4,150 enrolments on foundation programmes. Since September 2004, the service has enrolled 1,699 learners on foundation programmes. Three hundred and thirty-nine learners enrolled on literacy courses, 229 on numeracy courses, and 468 on English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses. Three hundred and thirty-five learners with learning difficulties have enrolled on literacy, numeracy and language courses. Just below half of enrolments are by men. Learners can join courses at any time throughout the year and usually attend between one and three learning sessions a week. Learning sessions offer teaching in the contexts of work, everyday life, community settings and citizenship. The service offers discrete courses for learners with dyslexia. All learners work to achieve the learning goals agreed with them at the start of their programme of learning. Approximately 80 per cent of learners work towards nationally recognised qualifications in literacy, numeracy and ESOL at entry levels 1 to 3. National tests in literacy and numeracy are also available at levels 1 and 2. Classes are held at adult education centres and community venues throughout the area. Venues include council community centres, voluntary-sector community centres, schools, libraries, church halls, hostels, the probation service and local employers. Six full-time and 24 part-time tutors work at a range of locations. They are supported by 30 volunteer tutors.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	12
Number of inspection days	69
Number of learner interviews	712
Number of staff interviews	193
Number of employer interviews	2
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	24
Number of partner/external agency interviews	37
Number of visits	105

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

10. The quality of provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the service's leadership and management are good, its approach to equality of opportunity and quality assurance is satisfactory. The provision in foundation programmes is outstanding. In ICT, hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, visual and performing arts and media and English, languages and communications, the provision is satisfactory.

GRADES

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

Leadership and management		2
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality assurance		3

Information & communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT		
⁻ Adult and community learning	819	3

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Leisure, sport and recreation		
⁻ Adult and community learning	1269	3

Visual & performing arts & media		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts		
⁻ Adult and community learning	532	3
Crafts		
⁻ Adult and community learning	1319	3
Media and technology		
⁻ Adult and community learning	231	2

English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Languages		
⁻ Adult and community learning	324	3

Foundation programmes		1
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
ESOL - Adult and community learning	468	2
Literacy and numeracy - Adult and community learning	568	1

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

11. **Retention in foundation literacy and numeracy classes is very good, and in ICT and ESOL retention is good.** Retention rates are satisfactory in sport and recreation, visual and performing arts and media and languages. **Achievement rates are good in accredited sugarcraft programmes** and satisfactory for all other programmes.

12. **Many learners progress well to more advanced programmes in ICT and media.** In the current year, 31 per cent of ICT enrolments are from learners who have progressed to a higher level from the previous year. In media, many learners progress from taster courses to level 1 and then to level 2 courses in digital imaging. A few learners subsequently progress to other specialist courses at other institutions.

13. **Learners develop good levels of personal fitness and practical skills on most sport and leisure courses.** Older learners gain a wide range of physical benefits. **Learners on the accredited sugarcraft course achieve a high standard of practical work. Learners gain a wide range of personal and social benefits from attending classes in art, craft and media, and find new interests in their lives.** Increased confidence and self-esteem is expressed by many learners.

14. **Learners develop good technical skills in art, craft and media classes.** They apply these skills well. **New learners make good progress.** Many learners are able to talk confidently about their learning using appropriate professional and technical vocabulary.

15. **In languages, learners' development of basic language skills is good.** In all foreign language classes, they learn to speak, listen, read, and when appropriate, write in the target language. Most learners use the foreign language confidently, demonstrate good levels of fluency and apply their skills well outside lessons.

16. **Many learners benefit significantly from attending foundation courses.** They make good progress in developing their literacy, numeracy or language skills and are more independent.

Quality of education and training

17. **Teaching is good in sport and leisure, media, and literacy and numeracy. Sport and leisure tutors are generally confident, experienced and knowledgeable and manage classes well.** They have a good rapport with learners. Eighty-two per cent of lessons observed in media were good or better. Learning programmes are well planned and lessons are often well devised. They balance the need for essential skill development with engaging and productive activities. Learners benefit from particularly well-planned lessons in literacy and numeracy. Tutors are good at developing learners' skills using topics that are relevant to their everyday lives. They have a good understanding of learners' difficulties in grasping concepts and they provide clear explanations.

18. **In ESOL and languages teaching is satisfactory or better.** Most language tutors use a range of teaching methods to suit the needs of the learners. However, in some classes there is too much use of English. Tutors do not always make good use of appropriate learning materials. The range of teaching methods and practices in ICT is narrow. In any one class, it is rare to see more than one type of learning activity used. Learners work at the same pace. In taught parts of sessions the pace is often slow. There is insufficient development of individual creative and aesthetic skills in many art and craft classes. In some art classes there is insufficient use of primary source materials and too much copying from prints and postcards. In some craft classes learners use pre-printed patterns or commercially produced kits.

19. **Resources are good in media and foundation programmes.** In media there are two new multimedia centres. Tutors and learners have been involved in the planning of these centres. Hardware and software are of current professional standard. Teaching accommodation for foundation programmes is good. Some new or refurbished buildings are of high quality and provide a welcoming learning environment. All venues have appropriate areas for tutors to carry out confidential interviews with their learners. Learners benefit from a good range of learning resources, such as computers, journals, magazines and audiovisual resources. **The provision of ICT resources in main centres is good.** Fast computers run the latest version of application software and workstations are sufficiently spacious for learners. Resources for sport and leisure and languages are satisfactory. All venues visited were at least fit for purpose. Some are of a good standard and easily accessible to all. In languages audiovisual equipment is readily available in all learning centres and is used in most lessons. **Some art and craft rooms are inadequate and too small for the number of learners and the nature of the practical activity.** Learners are often restricted to working on small pieces of art and craft work.

20. Assessment of learners in literacy and numeracy is used effectively to monitor learners' progress and to contribute to their individual learning plans. Progress is well recorded by tutors and learners. Learning plans incorporate the results of initial assessments and interview records in literacy and numeracy. However, in ESOL, learning plans do not contain information on the specific skills individual learners need to improve. Assessment in other areas of learning is weak. **Initial assessment is**

unsystematic. There is an over-reliance on self-declaration on the enrolment form. In ICT, some tutors administer questionnaires but the results are not analysed or evaluated. In some cases, ICT learners are on the wrong level of course. There is inadequate monitoring and recording of learners' progress. Tutors use a range of different systems of varying quality. There are a few examples of good systems where comprehensive records are kept. These include profiles of learners and the use of individual learning plans as working documents. Where individual learning plans are produced, targets are often generic, not specific or timebound. There are examples where no records are kept at all. Tutors' assessment of learners is mostly informal and ongoing during classes, with good practice reinforced or learners corrected with constructive feedback. Some tutors have introduced various forms of self-assessment for learners, but many learners do not welcome what they see as unnecessary additional paperwork.

21. **There is good provision of courses to meet local needs across the whole of the service's provision.** The appointment of tutors with specialist outreach responsibility enables the provision of a range of imaginative outreach courses. These tutors take learning out into the community and support good access for learners who would not traditionally be involved in learning over a wide geographical area. Different partners contribute to community projects. Many new learners are recruited through the annual programme of taster sessions and days, Saturday workshops, drop-in sessions at local centres and the 'Art in the Park' event.

22. **Learners are well supported in courses in art and craft, languages and foundation programmes.** In art and craft and foundation programmes, learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well integrated with classes. The befriending system provides additional support in classes enabling tutors to concentrate on learning activities. Additional learning materials are available in Braille, large print or on coloured paper on request. Hearing loops are installed in the main adult education service centres. Tutors provide good support in the classroom. Language learners receive good tutorial support. Good rapport between learners and tutors allows effective communications about personal issues. Tutors are approachable and willing to give up their time outside classes. Learners on foundation programmes benefit from good individual support, and good advice and guidance when they join a programme. Additional support needs are effectively identified through the interview process in literacy and numeracy. However, in some areas of learning, identification and provision of additional learning support is dependent on tutors' knowledge and understanding of what support is available. In ICT, some specialist equipment has been provided such as tracker balls, large keyboards and monitors, and handouts on coloured paper or with larger fonts, but generally there is very little use of support workers in classes. Some tutors do not understand the process for referral, the need for specialist support for learners with additional learning needs or what equipment is available to them. **In sport, pre-exercise health screening for most learners is unsatisfactory.** Forms do not directly request health information that may be used by the tutor. They place responsibility on the learner to consult their general practitioner if they have health concerns and merely act as a disclaimer. Health screening forms have not been used for many sport and leisure classes. Individual tutors know their learners well and provide good personal support to help to make an effective learning environment.

Leadership and management

23. **The service has a good process for business and strategic planning.** There is good recognition of how the outcomes of business plan objectives affect learners. The service regularly and effectively monitors the successful achievement of objectives and the service is meeting priorities well. An extensive range of steering groups contribute well to the service's development and objectives.

24. **There has been a well-devised asset management plan that shows a clear and challenging strategy for building-development and refurbishment. Across the provision, there are some very high standards of accommodation.** The service's information learning technology (ILT) strategy has led to some very good ILT resources in most centres.

25. **Managers play a very strong role in local strategic partnerships.** This was a strength recognised in self-assessment. There is a particularly effective collaborative approach to ensure a cohesive provision is offered across North Lincolnshire. Managers work with a wide range of other providers, companies and organisations to meet their service objectives and attract new learners. Through partnerships, there has been productive identification of gaps in the provision and how these can be filled.

26. **The service has a particularly well-managed programme of staff development and training.** Staff development is prioritised, with an action plan that is linked to strategic objectives. New tutors receive a very good induction, incorporating shadowing, observation and mentor support. Staff development programmes are very responsive to staff development reviews, individual and service needs and feedback from staff. The appraisal process is supportive, with staff performance being reviewed and development targets set for the following year.

27. Internal communication is satisfactory, with regular staff meetings. Staff are well-informed about developments in the service and changes to programmes and the curriculum. Minutes of some meetings are not always fully recorded.

28. The service has a well-established and satisfactory management information system. Data about trends in retention, achievement and satisfaction rates are readily accessible and used by senior management. The service sets challenging service targets for enrolment, retention, achievement and learner satisfaction rates which they consistently achieve or exceed. There is no setting of targets for retention and achievement for each area of learning or centre, apart from on foundation programmes.

29. **There are particularly successful measures in place to widen participation in learning for new and under-represented groups of learners.** The service has a clear strategy and targets. Provision of community-based learning is good for individuals who are hard to reach or would not usually consider classes. A number of successful equality and diversity theme groups have been set up covering a range of socially inclusive projects. This has affected every area of learning. Staff development and training in equality and

diversity is satisfactory for staff but information is not always promoted to learners. There is insufficient clear information on equality and diversity for learners. Learners are made aware of their entitlement to additional support but there is no handbook for learners. The service has identified this need and has begun to take action to resolve the matter. The new handbook piloted in ICT has no mention of equality and diversity. Equality of opportunity is not adequately covered during learners' induction or sufficiently reinforced during learning sessions. The induction for tutors and the handbook covers the role of equality and diversity but too little monitoring of this takes place.

30. **The service has good initiatives for responding promptly and effectively to learners' problems.** Learners complete an evaluation questionnaire at the beginning and end of their course. The results are analysed by managers, who make determined attempts to resolve problems to the learners' satisfaction.

31. **The use of quality assurance to promote the continuous improvement of many aspects of the provision is weak.** New tutors are observed very soon after they start working for the service but the process for observing established tutors' teaching is unsystematic. In many areas of learning, there is too little use of subject specialists conducting the observations. There is unsystematic use of observation by staff to monitor other aspects of the provision, like course files and paperwork. The grades awarded by observers for learning sessions are very high and few opportunities for development are recommended. The service has identified this need and has begun to take action to resolve the matter. There is insufficient guidance for tutors about how to complete induction, initial assessment, individual learning plans and learners' progress reviews. There is insufficient sharing of best practice across areas of learning.

32. **The self-assessment process is well established, but ineffective in identifying key strengths and weaknesses.** Many of the strengths cited in the report were no more than normal practice. In a few areas of learning, there is too little staff involvement in self-assessment. Many grades given by inspectors were lower than those in the self-assessment report.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good strategic and business planning process
- good strategy for the development of accommodation and resources
- very productive work with partners
- well-planned and managed staff development and support
- particularly successful measures to widen participation in learning
- very effective management action to improve the provision

Weaknesses

- poor promotion of equality of opportunity to learners
- weak use of quality assurance to promote continuous improvement

Information & communications technology

Using IT

Strengths

- good retention and progression rates
- good provision of courses to meet local needs
- well-managed aspects of ICT provision

Weaknesses

- narrow range of teaching methods and practices
- unsystematic initial assessment
- inadequate monitoring and recording of learners' progress

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Leisure, sport and recreation

Strengths

- good development of personal fitness and practical skills on most courses
- good teaching
- extensive provision of fitness courses in local community venues

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring and assessment of learners' progress
- unsatisfactory pre-exercise health screening for most learners
- inadequate quality assurance

Visual & performing arts & media

Arts

Strengths

- wide range of personal and social benefits
- good development of technical skills
- particularly effective outreach programme
- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient development of individual creativity
- some inadequate accommodation
- weak assessment

Crafts

Strengths

- wide range of personal and social benefits
- good development of technical skills
- particularly effective outreach programme
- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient development of individual creativity
- some inadequate accommodation
- weak assessment

Media and technology

Strengths

- wide range of personal and social benefits
- good development of technical skills
- particularly effective outreach programme
- good teaching
- good resources

Weaknesses

- some ineffective assessment

English, languages & communications

Languages

Strengths

- good attainment of basic language skills
- good language tutorial support

Weaknesses

- weak assessment
- inadequate quality assurance

Foundation programmes

ESOL

Strengths

- good retention rates
- good accommodation and resources
- good monitoring of learners' progress
- highly responsive provision meeting the needs of the community
- good guidance and support
- good management of the provision

Weaknesses

- weak use of assessment information and individual targets to plan teaching and learning

Literacy and numeracy

Strengths

- very good retention rates
- good teaching
- good accommodation and resources
- good monitoring of learners' progress
- highly responsive provision meeting the needs of the community
- particularly well-implemented initial assessment and guidance
- very good management of provision

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses were identified

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE ADULT EDUCATION SERVICE:

- wonderful tutors - 'it's more like team work'
- good teaching
- 'working at my own pace'
- 'giving me the confidence to learn'
- the location and times of classes
- new equipment and well-lit rooms
- 'the classes are friendly and relaxed, but a good learning environment'
- meeting new people - 'a lifeline for lonely people'
- learning to use a computer in non-ICT classes

WHAT LEARNERS THINK NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE ADULT EDUCATION SERVICE COULD IMPROVE:

- better internet access
- access to a library of resources for independent study
- the length of sessions - 'there's not enough time'
- the room layout in some ICT rooms
- the availability of essential equipment in craft classes
- more structure to ICT lessons
- separate beginners classes in crafts
- more intensive provision in ESOL
- the long queues for drinks - 'they cause congestion and leave too little time'

KEY CHALLENGES FOR NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE ADULT EDUCATION SERVICE:

- improve quality assurance
- improve promotion of equality of opportunity
- improve sharing of best practice
- adapt council policies to make them relevant to the provision
- improve and monitor assessment and support
- continue to maintain and improve learner satisfaction, retention and achievement rates

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 2

Strengths
- good strategic and business planning process
- good strategy for the development of accommodation and resources
- very productive work with partners
- well-planned and managed staff development and support
- particularly successful measures to widen participation in learning
- very effective management action to improve the provision

Weaknesses
- poor promotion of equality of opportunity to learners
- weak use of quality assurance to promote continuous improvement

33. The service has a good process for business and strategic planning. The business plan has very detailed objectives that clearly identify responsibility, deadlines and effect. There is good recognition of how the outcomes of business plan objectives affect learners. Many of the intended outcomes are related to learners, for example, increases in the number of learners, achievement and retention rates, learner support and access to support and new curriculum areas and courses. The service regularly and effectively monitors the successful achievement of objectives. Challenging service targets for increased recruitment have been exceeded. Recruitment increased by nearly 60 per cent between 2000-01 and 2003-04. The service is meeting the council's priorities well. The council's achievement of targets for lifelong learning and improving literacy, numeracy and language skills in the local community is particularly well supported by the service's basic skills action plan. An extensive range of steering groups contribute well to the service's development and objectives.

34. There has been a well-devised asset management plan that shows a clear and challenging strategy for building development and refurbishment. The service has ensured a strong link between the plan and local policies and service objectives. Across the provision, there are some very high standards of accommodation. The service's ILT strategy has led to some very good ILT resources in most centres. A successful initiative to introduce technicians at each main centre has supported tutors and learners in using computers in the classroom. One new centre is well placed next to an industrial estate. The service has already started to make good links with local industry.

35. The service's managers play a very strong role in local strategic partnerships. This was a strength recognised in the self-assessment report. There is a particularly effective collaborative approach to ensure a cohesive provision is offered across north Lincolnshire. The service's managers have initiated many collaborative activities with

local providers, including the jointly produced brochure that has all the area's adult and community learning provision in one publication. Managers work with a wide range of companies and organisations to meet their service objectives and attract new learners. Local organisations, including voluntary organisations, use the service's training for staff training. Through partnerships, there has been productive identification of gaps in the provision and how these can be filled. At individual curriculum level, staff from early years sit on the local workforce development task group to identify workforce needs in the area. The service works with partners to monitor what learners want and are swift to bring about change for the community. The service has effective communication with partners to ensure that learners are not disadvantaged when courses cannot be offered or finish.

36. The service has a particularly well-managed programme of staff development and training. Staff development is prioritised, with an action plan that is linked to strategic objectives. New tutors receive a very good induction, including work shadowing, lesson observations and mentor support. Staff development programmes are very responsive to staff development reviews, individual and service needs and staff feedback. Staff development is well planned and delivered. Staff participate in a wide range of activities, including regular and relevant equality and diversity training. Recent training to support the service's e-learning strategy has already affected foundation programmes through tutors' use of computers for individual learning programmes. Staff development extends to volunteers, and there are many examples of volunteers progressing to be tutors. The effectiveness of trained volunteers in classes was particularly noted on visual arts and craft courses. The appraisal process is effective in monitoring staff performance and identifying development needs. The appraisal process is supportive, with staff performance being reviewed and development targets set for the following year.

37. Internal communication is generally satisfactory, with regular staff meetings. Staff are well informed about developments in the service and changes to programmes and the curriculum. Minutes of some meetings are not always fully recorded.

38. The service has a literacy, numeracy and language improvement plan, which includes aims and an action plan for developing staff, courses and qualifications in literacy, numeracy and language support. All learners who request support are referred to the service's foundation programmes tutors. Literacy, numeracy and language programmes are well managed.

39. The service has a well-established and satisfactory management information system. Data about trends in retention, achievement and satisfaction rates are readily accessible and used by senior management. The service sets challenging, overall service targets for enrolment, retention, achievement and learner satisfaction rates. The service consistently achieves or exceeds these targets. The senior management team regularly monitors enrolment and retention rates. There is no setting of targets for retention and achievement for each area of learning or for each centre, apart from on foundation programmes.

Equality of opportunity   Contributory grade 3

40. There are particularly successful measures in place to widen participation in learning for new and under-represented groups of learners. The service has a clear strategy and targets for this. Provision of community-based learning is good for individuals who are hard to reach or would not usually consider classes. A number of successful equality and diversity theme groups have been set up to cover a range of socially inclusive projects. Current groups include access and diversity, family learning and information advice and guidance. Numerous events effectively encourage learners to participate in adult education. These include a wide range of taster sessions and a countywide event linked to family learning and the adult learning week. Good links are maintained with local associations and organisations to develop new courses and provide relevant learning opportunities for disadvantaged groups. Rural provision has increased significantly from 80 outreach centres in 2001-02 to 105 in the current academic year.

41. The service has made numerous successful bids for funding to provide additional support for learners. Daytime crèche facilities are available in the main centres and funding is available for childcare in other centres. The service has a clearly stated fee-remission policy for adults who attend learning in the priority curriculum areas and wards of deprivation and for learners who have a disability or are in receipt of specific benefits. A purpose-built adult education centre opened in September 2004 in one of the most deprived areas of the county. The service provides a good range of aids and adaptations to enable access to learning. In most cases the needs of individual learners are effectively assessed and dealt with. In ICT there is a wide range of equipment for learners with learning disabilities and of difficulties such as, larger keyboards and monitors. Main centres are equipped with induction loop systems to support people with a hearing impairment. Portable loop units are available and used in outreach centres.

42. Accommodation is fully accessible, with the exception of one centre. There are plans to overcome this with new premises being built in the next 10 months. All main centres have improved access for learners with restricted mobility. The service has responded well to the requirements of legislation and accommodation is generally fully compliant. An appropriate range of course literature is available in community languages and Braille. Information can also be either signed or read to learners. The service has made good progress towards meeting the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Special Education Needs and Disability Act 2001, and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000.

43. The collection and use of data is satisfactory. The service collects data on learners' gender, ethnicity and disabilities, which it matches to the profile of the community and uses to set targets. Analysis is carried out to identify the participation of particular groups for planning and making improvements to widen participation in learning.

44. Literacy, numeracy and language support is well developed for foundation programmes, but is insufficiently developed in some other areas of learning. Careful attention is given to the needs of individual learners and classroom support for most learners is satisfactory. However, in some areas of learning, additional support needs are not adequately identified. There is a good range of resources to support learners, but not

all tutors are aware of what resources are available. Some tutors do not understand the procedure to obtain additional support for learners in their classes.

45. A complaints procedure is in place, although it is managed locally at each centre or by tutors. The service has no system to evaluate and analyse the level of complaints or trends that may occur.

46. The service does not promote equality of opportunity adequately to learners. Staff development and training in equality and diversity is satisfactory for staff but information is not always promoted to learners. There is insufficient clear information on equality and diversity for learners. The draft equality and diversity policy is the council's policy. The language in this policy is too complex for most learners. Learners' awareness of equality of opportunity is often restricted to an understanding of direct discrimination on the grounds of sex, race or ethnicity. Learners are made aware of their entitlement to additional support but there is no handbook for learners. The new handbook piloted in ICT has no mention of equality and diversity. Equality of opportunity is not adequately covered during learners' induction or sufficiently reinforced during learning sessions. There is insufficient attention to diversity in some session planning and little use of any equality and diversity development or promotion in classes. The induction and handbook for tutors covers the role of equality and diversity but too little monitoring of this takes place.

Quality assurance   Contributory grade 3

47. The service has good initiatives for responding promptly and effectively to learners' issues. Learners complete an evaluation questionnaire at the beginning and end of their course. The results are analysed by managers, who make determined attempts to resolve problems to learners' satisfaction. This has included making changes to course times and length, introducing new courses, arranging for additional or different resources and speaking with teachers about classroom management. Managers ensure learners' satisfaction through informal meetings with groups of learners and requests in learner suggestion boxes. Complaints are dealt with promptly and effectively by managers. Learners show a high level of satisfaction with their courses and programmes. Staff have good opportunities for suggesting improvements and devising new systems, initiatives and guidance through the wide range of steering groups and area of learning team meetings.

48. The service has continued to improve retention, achievement and learner satisfaction rates over the past three years in most areas of learning. Where problems are identified, such as those with achievement rates on foundation programmes, there has been much closer monitoring of the area and a dedicated action plan for improvement. The quality assurance group regularly monitors progress towards achieving targets on the development plan. Managers regularly monitor registers informally to identify trends, patterns and potential problems with courses.

49. Arrangements for internal verification and moderation are generally satisfactory. Teams of internal verifiers and assessors meet regularly for standardisation meetings.

However, internal verification is not always effective in identifying issues with assessment.

50. The use of quality assurance to promote continuous improvement of many aspects of the provision is weak. This weakness was partially recognised in the self-assessment report. New tutors are observed very soon after they start working for the service but the process for observing established tutors' teaching is unsystematic. There is no overall strategy or sampling plan. In many areas of learning, there is too little use of subject specialists conducting the observations. There is insufficient observation of teaching in many areas of learning, including those with large numbers of staff and learners. Some staff are very thorough in completing paperwork but others do not fully record everything they observe. The use of observation to monitor other aspects of the provision, like course files and paperwork is unsystematic. The grades awarded by observers for learning sessions are very high and few opportunities for development are recommended. The service has identified this need and has begun to take action to resolve the matter. The service has produced helpful guidance for tutors for many aspects of their work, including managing courses, service-wide processes, course literature and classroom management. There is insufficient guidance for tutors about how to complete induction, initial assessment, individual learning plans and learners' progress reviews. In many areas of learning there is weak completion of these aspects of learners' programmes. Managers do not formally monitor the quality of learners' paperwork including individual learning plans and initial assessment records. Feedback from learners is analysed across the service and for each centre, but is not routinely used to identify trends or problems. Analysis is not completed across areas of learning to identify curriculum issues and trends. There is insufficient sharing of best practice across areas of learning. In one area of learning, staff complete a thorough written course review, but this process has not been implemented in other areas of learning.

51. The self-assessment process is well established, but ineffective in identifying key strengths and weaknesses. Many of the strengths cited in the self-assessment report were no more than normal practice. Inspectors identified few of the weaknesses identified in the self-assessment report, but identified other weaknesses that had been overlooked. In a few areas of learning, staff are not sufficiently involved in the self-assessment process. Many grades given by inspectors were lower than those in the self-assessment report.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information & communications technology

Information & communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT ⁻ Adult and community learning	819	3

Using IT

Strengths

- good retention and progression rates
- good provision of courses to meet local needs
- well-managed aspects of ICT provision

Weaknesses

- narrow range of teaching methods and practices
- unsystematic initial assessment
- inadequate monitoring and recording of learners' progress

Achievement and standards

52. Retention rates are good. Overall retention rates were 88 per cent in 2000-01, 94 per cent in 2001-02, 94 per cent in 2002-03 and 93 per cent in 2003-04. Many learners progress well to more advanced courses offered by the service. In the current year, 31 per cent of enrolments are from learners who have progressed to a more advanced course than they had taken in the previous year.

53. Achievement is satisfactory. In 2002-03, 65 per cent of learners achieved their qualification and in 2003-04, 73 per cent of learners achieved their qualification. Learners' work is appropriate and they generally make progress at a satisfactory rate. However, some better learners make slow progress. Attendance and punctuality at learning sessions is satisfactory. The attendance rate at classes visited during the inspection averaged 76 per cent.

Quality of education and training

54. There is good provision of courses to meet local needs. The appointment of tutors with specialist outreach responsibility enables the provision of a range of imaginative outreach courses. These tutors take learning out into the community and provide good access for learners who would not traditionally participate in learning. For example,

patients at a renal dialysis unit learn desktop publishing skills while receiving their treatment. Good partnership arrangements have provided access to a mobile unit which is taken to a wide range of community venues including pubs and a farmers' market. Some learners who attend community-based taster courses in the mobile unit progress to longer courses at the learning centres. A morning class in a local primary school runs at the request of young mothers with children at the school. This class is in its third year and learners have progressed from beginners to intermediate level. The service responds well to local needs. Classes are arranged at times which fit with childcare responsibilities and one class is now at a revised time to that originally planned to fit with learners' shift patterns. Where courses are oversubscribed, an additional session has been arranged. A desktop publishing course requested by learners runs at an outreach centre.

55. The resources are satisfactory. The provision of ICT resources in the main learning centres is good. Fast computers run the latest version of application software and workstations are sufficiently spacious for learners. Webcams, scanners and colour printing facilities are widely available and many learners have copy stands. Data projectors or interactive whiteboards are available to enable learners to view tutors' demonstrations of the required operations. However, there are minor but significant problems in many centres which the service is dealing with. In two centres, the internet connection is insufficiently fast to enable the teaching of relevant modules. In several rooms, the projectors are poorly set up so that learners cannot readily see what is being demonstrated. Some rooms have insufficient space to allow the tutor to move freely around the room to assist learners, and there is insufficient working space for learners. There are inadequacies in outreach centres which reduce the quality of the learning experience. These include cramped rooms, insufficient workspace and some use of primary school furniture. Handouts are generally satisfactory but some have too much text and insufficient diagrams or screen-shots. Staff are mostly suitably qualified and experienced, although one has no ICT course-specific qualification and another is still working towards a level 3 teaching qualification.

56. Teaching is satisfactory, with 10 per cent of classes observed judged to be less than satisfactory. In the better learning sessions, learners work industriously and questions are used to involve learners in the session and to monitor their understanding. There are some good examples of the use of e-learning online quizzes to monitor learners' understanding.

57. The range of teaching methods and practices is narrow. Within any one class, it is rare to see more than one type of learning activity used. Learners work at the same pace. While tutors demonstrate or explain a particular topic from a handout, learners sit at their workstations and carry out the activity simultaneously. In taught parts of sessions the pace is often slow. More able learners wait while others catch up. Tutors do not often plan or cater for learners' different abilities. In multi-modular courses, learners are channelled towards a standard order or set of modules, without reference to their abilities or interests. Exercises are repetitive and often too simple. They focus on the course outcome and rarely cater for learners' interests or those of the local community. Ineffective use is made of the range of teaching resources available. For example, glare and small text was observed in presentation projections. Learners find such presentations

difficult to follow. The quality of lesson planning is inconsistent. Planned activities are mainly for class groups and not individualised to meet learners' needs. A range of planning documentation is being used. The degree to which planning documents are completed varies. Lesson plans and schemes of work are often checklists. Generally, where methods of assessment are planned, they are often vague, rarely timebound, individualised or varied.

58. Initial assessment is unsystematic. The service relies too heavily on learners declaring their learning needs in the enrolment form. Some tutors administer questionnaires but the results are not analysed or evaluated. Where initial assessment tools make some reference to identifying learners' prior achievement of ICT skills, they are very basic, insufficiently detailed and not course specific. Where carried out, initial assessment outcomes are not analysed early enough to make changes. In some cases learners are still on the wrong level of course. Identification and provision of additional learning support is dependent on individual tutors' knowledge and understanding of what is available. In some cases specialist equipment has been provided such as tracker balls, large keyboards and monitors, and handouts on coloured paper or with larger fonts. However, there is very little use of support workers in classes. Some tutors do not understand the process for referral, the need for specialist support for learners with additional learning needs or what equipment is available to them. In some cases, learners had identified a need for additional support or specialist equipment, but this is not provided in classes. In other cases, tutors delay referring learners for support for some months.

59. There is inadequate monitoring and recording of learners' progress. Tutors use a range of different systems of varying quality. There are a few examples of good systems where comprehensive records are kept. These include profiles of learners and the use of individual learning plans as working documents. However, too frequently, learners have not submitted completed exercises and no assessment has taken place. In some classes learners use self-assessment checklists to tick against each item as it is completed, but this is not shared with the tutor. In other classes tutors keep records, but they are not shared with learners. Learners are not always aware of the progress they have made towards their learning outcomes. No personal goals are set or reviewed. In the few cases where individual learning plans are produced, targets are often generic, not specific or timebound. There are examples where no records are kept at all.

Leadership and management

60. The management of the provision relating to the support tutors are given to do their jobs is good. All full-time and a substantial number of part-time tutors are provided with laptop computers and colour printers to enable them to keep up to date with the latest versions of the application software that is used by learners. Tutors develop and provide handouts and exercises which relate directly to the software. There is a wide range of staff development opportunities of which tutors make good use. Tutors support each other by means of effective formal and informal networks. Such groups have produced CD-ROMs containing shared resources for standard courses. Good technical support is provided for four tutors to keep information technology (IT) rooms well-maintained

physically and electronically. Computers have obsolete data removed regularly to ensure their optimum use. Tutors feel well-supported by managers and receive rapid, helpful responses to telephone calls and e-mails. They also value the administrative support they and the learners receive.

61. The observation of teaching is irregular, infrequent and mostly informal. It is often carried out by non-specialists and the grades given are higher than those given by inspectors. There is insufficient analysis of learners' feedback or complaints to identify trends to make improvements. There is no analysis of data relating to learners who leave courses without completing their qualification. Regular meetings are held which tutors find helpful for their own development. Suggestions made by tutors are acted upon by managers. However, where minutes of meetings are recorded, they do not assign responsibility for actions or allocate timescales. All external awarding bodies' requirements are met fully. There are effective systems for internal verification and external verifiers' reports are extremely favourable. The self-assessment process does not sufficiently involve tutors and is insufficiently thorough.

62. All ICT rooms are fully accessible to wheelchair users, with one exception for which plans exist. One example of good practice exists where patients at a renal dialysis unit learn desktop publishing skills by producing a newsletter about the unit. This has received national acclaim. However, tutors do not take sufficient opportunities to promote equality and diversity in lessons and exercise material.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Leisure, sport and recreation - Adult and community learning	1269	3

Leisure, sport and recreation

Strengths

- good development of personal fitness and practical skills on most courses
- good teaching
- extensive provision of fitness courses in local community venues

Weaknesses

- insufficient monitoring and assessment of learners' progress
- unsatisfactory pre-exercise health screening for most learners
- inadequate quality assurance

Achievement and standards

63. Learners develop good levels of personal fitness and practical skills on most courses. Learners in yoga and gentle exercise classes gain a wide range of physical benefits, especially older learners. In one particular yoga class, learners refer to many associated benefits they gain from the class. These include improvements in strength and suppleness, mobility of the lower back, pain relief from arthritis, breathing and posture. In a gentle fitness class, older learners are encouraged to continue regular attendance by their doctor to maintain the clear benefits the class has on their overall health. In tai chi, intermediate and more advanced learners work effectively together in one class, using supervised individual practise time to work on separate sequences and then join together for whole group practise. They demonstrate a particularly high level of skill and technique. Learners in the accredited sugarcraft course achieve a high standard of practical work. Their well-structured portfolios contain good visual evidence of their work. Level 1 and 2 learners work together in the same class. The different levels of attainment is clear.

64. Achievement rates on the accredited provision are good at 92 per cent. Retention rates are satisfactory. Most courses last for 10 or 12 weeks. Attendance is satisfactory at 78 per cent in observed classes.

Quality of education and training

65. Teaching is good. Tutors are generally confident, experienced and knowledgeable and manage classes well. They have a good rapport with learners. In most classes explanations and demonstrations are good with good linking of technical terminology to broaden learners' knowledge and understanding. In both gentle fitness and yoga classes learners are encouraged to correctly identify and refer to muscle groups being used. Alternative exercises are routinely given to accommodate different ability levels in the same class and to ensure that all learners exercise safely. Individual support and correction of technique is generally provided for individual learners. Some tutors supplement their lessons with well-produced handouts to support learning and provide a basis for working at home. Tutors provide a high level of challenge for learners on more advanced courses. However, formal lesson planning and production of schemes of work is inconsistent. Teaching in a small number of classes was unsatisfactory and too little learning took place in these lessons.

66. Extensive provision of courses in local community venues enables learners to access exercise and fitness classes over a wide geographical area. This is largely achieved by concentrating provision on yoga, tai chi and gentle fitness classes. These are activities which can be more easily adapted to local community venues than high impact exercise sessions or sporting activities. Badminton and women's basketball are offered at venues away from the main adult and community centres of Scunthorpe. Suitable progression routes have been developed in qi gong, tai chi and sugarcraft. Occasionally courses are extended to run into the summer at the request of learners. The range of courses is satisfactory, although learners currently have few opportunities to follow catering courses with the service.

67. Resources are satisfactory. All venues visited were at least fit for purpose. Some are of a good standard and easily accessible to all. For example, a newly-built school hall is used as one outreach centre. It has under-floor heating and is ideal for yoga classes. Staff are generally experienced and knowledgeable. Staff records are complete and up to date, recording recent professional updating. Some staff do not have a subject-specific qualification. In the community venues, tutors mostly provide their own resources to support learning. Printed handouts were generally of a good standard but in some instances had to be purchased by learners.

68. Learners' progress is insufficiently monitored and assessed. A few tutors are attempting to keep individual or group records of learners' progress and there are some examples of good practice. Meticulous initial assessment and continuous assessment records are kept for women's basketball to help provide regular verbal feedback on progress. However, in most classes too little initial assessment takes place to identify learners' starting points on the programme. In many cases this assessment is little more than a comment on the learner agreement about why the learner has joined the class. Some tutors have too little information at the beginning of the course to plan an effective scheme of work. Tutors' assessment of learners is mostly informal and ongoing during classes with good practice reinforced or learners corrected with constructive feedback. Some tutors have introduced various forms of self-assessment for learners, but many

learners do not welcome what they see as unnecessary additional paperwork for non-vocational courses.

69. Pre-exercise health screening for most learners is unsatisfactory. Good health and safety practice is reinforced at the start of many lessons and basic induction onto programmes was satisfactory. There are individual examples of good practice where tutors have designed their own form to collect health information. However, some forms do not directly request health information that may be used by the tutor. They place responsibility on the learner to consult their general practitioner if they have health concerns and merely act as a disclaimer. Health screening forms have not been implemented in many sport and leisure classes. Most tutors have made themselves aware of any relevant medical conditions their learners have, but managers do not have this information. Information is not available in the event of staff change or illness. Individual tutors know their learners well and provide good personal support to help to make an effective learning environment.

Leadership and management

70. Operational management of the curriculum area is satisfactory. The two managers responsible for the curriculum are not subject specialists but lead the area with enthusiasm. Managers work hard to establish effective lines of communication with part-time tutors. Curriculum area meetings are minuted, but attendance is poor. A structured staff appraisal system is in place and part-time tutors are able to access support for their continued professional development.

71. The provision for equal opportunities is satisfactory. Access to buildings for people with restricted mobility is good. Some learners with particular needs attend yoga and gentle exercise classes and integrate well, in some instances aided by a support worker. Qi gong is currently being discretely offered to residents at a residential home. Clients at a mental health daycare centre have accessed a gentle exercise class in the past. There is a significant imbalance of enrolments between male and female learners.

72. Quality assurance arrangements are inadequate. There have been few observations of teaching and only two have been completed for 2003-04. Observations do not clearly indicate actions and areas for tutors' development. The observations have not been carried out by a curriculum specialist and some grading is too high. The self-assessment report fails to give a clear judgement on strengths and weaknesses for the curriculum area. The summary of strengths and weaknesses is vague. This summary is not linked to judgements from evaluation of key questions in the Common Inspection Framework. Tutors were not involved in the self-assessment process. There is currently no system in place for the risk assessment of activities as well as buildings or to formally involve subject-specialist tutors in this process. Few tutors are currently qualified first aiders. A significant number of exercise classes are in isolated locations.

Visual & performing arts & media

Visual & performing arts & media		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts		
⁻ Adult and community learning	532	3
Crafts		
⁻ Adult and community learning	1319	3
Media and technology		
⁻ Adult and community learning	231	2

Arts

Strengths

- wide range of personal and social benefits
- good development of technical skills
- particularly effective outreach programme
- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient development of individual creativity
- some inadequate accommodation
- weak assessment

Crafts

Strengths

- wide range of personal and social benefits
- good development of technical skills
- particularly effective outreach programme
- good support for learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient development of individual creativity
- some inadequate accommodation
- weak assessment

Media and technology

Strengths

- wide range of personal and social benefits
- good development of technical skills
- particularly effective outreach programme
- good teaching
- good resources

Weaknesses

- some ineffective assessment

Achievement and standards

73. Learners gain a wide range of personal and social benefits from attending classes in art, craft and media. Increased confidence and self-esteem is expressed by many learners including some who are recently bereaved, retired or recovering from illness. A good programme of visits to relevant events and exhibitions is planned by tutors and learners as an integral part of the learning process. Learners use their skills to produce art and craft work for their families and to support local charities. Some use their new skills and confidence to support the learning of others, both in the class and at home. One archaeologist was making Saxon-inspired pottery for use in talks at local schools. In media, some learners with learning disabilities produced a video about the difficulties they face using public transport. The video is now used in training events for bus drivers.

74. Learners develop good technical skills in art, craft and media classes. They apply these skills well. For example, pottery learners use a wide variety of techniques such as slabbing, moulding, coiling and throwing to create functional pottery and sculptural pieces. In wood carving, learners gain skills in using specialist hand and power tools on selected woods. They create three-dimensional and relief sculptures in a variety of contemporary and historical styles. Many learners reinforce and extend what they have done in class by working at home. In a card-making class some learners have reached a commercial standard and sell their cards. In another class learners develop combined skills in card making and IT. New learners make good progress. For example one pottery learner was producing large-scale pots, combining different techniques, after only eight weeks in the class. Many learners are able to talk confidently about their learning using appropriate professional and technical vocabulary.

75. In media, many learners progress from taster courses to level 1 and level 2 courses in digital imaging. A few learners subsequently progress to other specialist courses in other institutions. However, no formal records are kept of progression in or beyond the adult education service.

76. Retention and achievement rates are satisfactory. Between 2000 and 2004, there has been a growth in accredited provision, particularly in media. In 2003-04, 96 per cent of enrolments in art and crafts were on non-accredited courses. In media, 88 per cent of

enrolments are on accredited courses. Retention has remained at over 95 per cent for the past three years, with the exception of accredited programmes in art and crafts where retention is 83 per cent. Achievement rates for accredited courses have increased in the past two years. Achievement rates for media in 2003-04 are high at 98 per cent, though 95 per cent of enrolments were for short courses.

Quality of education and training

77. Outreach programmes are particularly effective. Different partners contribute to community video projects. New learners devise and produce programmes that communicate their particular concerns. Completed videos are shown on local cable television and are used for educational or training purposes. Study United is an innovative family learning programme based at the local football ground. Disaffected school pupils design logos on the computer with their parents and print onto tee shirts. Parents are encouraged to develop their own learning further. Many new learners are recruited through the annual programme of taster sessions and days, Saturday workshops, drop-in sessions at local centres and the 'Art in the Park' event. Effective partnership working supports art and craft activities that build confidence in new learners and learners that would not traditionally be involved in learning. Good relationships with family learning and outreach workers ensure that the programme is responsive to learners' needs. One dressmaking class for Asian women is successfully run alongside ESOL classes.

78. Learners are well supported in their art and craft studies. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well accommodated in classes. The befriending system provides additional support in classes enabling tutors to concentrate on learning activities. Additional learning materials are available in Braille, large print or on coloured paper on request. Hearing loops are installed in the main centres. Learners on accredited courses benefit from financial help with buying specialist materials when appropriate. Those learners on non-accredited courses can apply for additional support or a fee waiver which is means tested. All tutors in the area of learning provide good-quality support in the classroom.

79. Teaching in media is good. Of those media lessons observed, 82 per cent were judged to be good or better. Learning programmes are well planned and lessons are often well devised. They balance the need for essential skill development with engaging and productive activities. Learners highlight the support they receive from patient and knowledgeable tutors. Learners are enthusiastic about and committed to their learning. In most classes there is an atmosphere of good-humoured, purposeful activity. Simulated professional projects are used well to enhance the learners' experience. For example, one group of learners designed a logo for a local firm of solicitors. The firm awarded prizes to the best three designs and the logo was put into production. In many accredited programmes learners are producing portfolios of their work. In the best classes, learners critically review their work, identify areas for improvement and extend their skills and knowledge by applying what they have learnt to new situations. In one multimedia class, learners are piloting an innovative online portfolio. Peer learning and

celebration of success are insufficiently developed.

80. Resources in media are good. There are two new multimedia centres. Tutors and learners have been involved in the planning of these centres. Hardware and software are of current professional standard. There is a programme to purchase new equipment. There is good technical support and nominated tutors have responsibility for managing and developing specific media suites. Some staff have current professional experience and there is an effective programme of staff development.

81. Most teaching in art and craft classes is satisfactory. Classes are generally well planned and some provide challenging learning activities. Many tutors give good practical demonstrations to support learning. In the best art classes, learners gain the basic elements and principles of drawing and painting before progressing on to composition, portraiture, landscapes and still-life paintings. In one pencil drawing class, new learners had made significant progress through basic mark making and experimentation with line, tone and form, to doing a portrait of a class member in week six of the course.

82. There is insufficient development of individual creative and aesthetic skills in many art and craft classes. There is too much emphasis on working from pre-printed designs in many classes. In some art classes there is insufficient use of first-hand observation from primary source material and too much copying from prints and postcards. In some craft classes learners mainly use pre-printed patterns or commercially produced kits. There is insufficient focus on the basic elements and principles of design such as the use of colour, line, tone, form and texture. Some learners who have attended for a number of years are not sufficiently challenged to extend their skills.

83. Resources are generally satisfactory for art and craft with purpose-built pottery studios and a fully equipped woodworking studio at one centre. However, some art and craft rooms are inadequate and too small for the number of learners and the nature of the practical activity. Learners are often restricted to working on small pieces of art and craft work. In one curtain-making class the tables were too low and too small for the activity, and learners were unable to lay out their fabrics for cutting and inserting linings accurately. One general-purpose classroom being used for art does not have a sink or source of water. Buildings are risk assessed, but there is no risk assessment of the rooms used for art and craft in respect of the different specialist activities that take place in them. Some staff do not have subject-specific qualifications at level 3 or 4.

84. Assessment practices are weak in art and craft. In some classes, initial assessment succeeds in assessing learners' previous subject experience and perceived skill levels, but this does not significantly affect programme design or delivery. Most learners' responses to initial assessment are superficial and give no insight into individual learning needs. Learners' personal learning goals are vague. Many individual learning plans list activities rather than stated learning goals or outcomes. Tutor comments, when used, are usually insufficiently evaluative. They record that learners have completed agreed tasks rather than what they have learnt and what progress has been made. Learners are insufficiently challenged to critically review their own progress. Verbal feedback on skills development

is generally good. Some tutors are piloting more challenging assessment schemes, but these are not shared. Some assessment in media is ineffective. On accredited courses the development of portfolios is variable. In some cases portfolio development and formative assessment is insufficient for the stage of the course. Learners do not receive feedback about their progress at a sufficiently early stage in the course to help their learning and development.

Leadership and management

85. Curriculum management is satisfactory. Positive leadership and innovative curriculum development support the management of media. There is an active programme of resource development. The promotion of media to other curriculum areas is good. For example there are many examples of the use of digital cameras to record learning activities and completed projects. Support for staff is good. Curriculum co-ordinators have regular meetings with the adult education managers who are responsible for planning the curriculum provided and the resourcing required at each centre, but no minutes of these meetings are kept. Regular curriculum meetings are held for all part-time staff, but attendance is not a contractual requirement for these members of staff.

86. A system for observation of teaching is in place and all new tutors are scheduled to be observed in their first term of teaching. However, observations are not always carried out by subject specialists. There is no formal procedure to standardise or moderate the observation records. Records of observation are insufficiently evaluative or developmental. Observation grades are generally higher than those given by inspectors.

87. All but one of the centres are accessible to wheelchair users, and there are plans to provide access at this centre.

English, languages & communications

English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Languages - Adult and community learning	324	3

Languages

Strengths

- good attainment of basic language skills
- good language tutorial support

Weaknesses

- weak assessment
- inadequate quality assurance

Achievement and standards

88. Learners' attainment of basic language skills is good. Most learners benefit from their courses and develop the language skills they need. In all foreign language classes, they learn to speak, listen, read and when appropriate, write in the target language. Learners have good mastery of basic vocabulary, grammar and phrases on beginners' courses. Most learners use their foreign language confidently, demonstrate good levels of fluency and apply their skills well outside lessons. For example, many learners who visit France regularly use French with increased confidence and are able to be more specific when ordering food and requesting payment. Some learners already use their skills in their jobs and others want to improve their career prospects. Learners work well together and enjoy their courses.

89. Retention and achievement rates for this area of learning are satisfactory. In 2003-04, the overall retention rate was 87 per cent and the achievement rate was 54 per cent.

Quality of education and training

90. Learners receive good language tutorial support from their tutors which helps their learning. The good rapport between learners and tutors allows effective communications about personal issues. Tutors are approachable and willing to give up their time outside classes. Learners bring in a blank cassette and their native French tutor records new phrases and radio programmes onto the cassettes each week. Particularly effective arrangements are in place when learners are absent. Tutors send handouts and other work directly to the learners by e-mail, and ensure that learners collect handouts for absent learners through a 'buddy system'. Tutors tell learners about relevant cultural

events and restaurants in the area where they can develop their language skills and cultural understanding. Some learners teach the target language to their children or grandchildren at home. Tutors support this informal family learning by providing children's books from the relevant country. Tutors prepare handouts and booklets in clear, large fonts for older learners.

91. Teaching is satisfactory or better. Most tutors use a range of teaching methods to suit the needs of the learners. In the better lessons, tutors and learners use the target language extensively during role-play and listening comprehension activities. Tutors effectively use small group and pair work. Learning is well organised. More able learners support less able learners in paired activities. Tutors circulate widely and regularly monitor learning and pronunciation, to ensure accuracy. Some tutors make good use of visual aids, for example, one makes good use of language patterns on different cards, to introduce beginners to the concept of gender. Another gives a visual representation of the intonation of French questions, in which the voice goes up at the end of the sentence. Tutors and learners bring authentic materials from the foreign country to classes. However, in other classes there is too much use of English. Tutors do not always make good use of appropriate learning materials and there is too much reliance on handouts in some lessons. Differentiated and extension activities are not evident in lessons. Although ICT suites exist in all learning centres, no language lessons are taught in ICT suites.

92. Resources are satisfactory. Learning centres range from purpose-built accommodation to school premises. There are some good displays of foreign cultural interest. Audio-visual equipment is readily available in all learning centres and is used in most lessons. Tutors are generally well qualified in their subject area and most have a teaching qualification. Some tutors are native speakers of the language they teach. Learners benefit from the range of expertise tutors bring to their work.

93. The range of courses is satisfactory. Most courses are for beginners, and learners can progress onto accredited courses at the local college. The service's language provision takes account of the other courses and levels that are available in the area but there is no systematic strategy or plan for the delivery of languages in the area. The geographical spread and location of centres provides good local access for learners in community centres and schools. Courses take place at a number of different times throughout the day and evening, to fit in with learners' childcare and work commitments. All languages taught are European. There are no community language classes available.

94. Assessment is weak. There is no formal pre-course interview or assessment before enrolment. Insufficient use is made of initial assessment to develop individual learning plans. The setting of personal learning goals is ineffective. Many individual learning plans contain a list of activities to be covered and do not contain measurable or challenging targets. Learners are not always able to identify what they need to do to improve. Although individual learning plans are discussed during the course of programmes, they are rarely adjusted as learning goals change. Assessment, monitoring and recording of learners' progress is weak. Although homework is regularly set and marked to help

learners improve their language skills, tutors do not always record the detailed verbal feedback that they give to learners.

Leadership and management

95. Operational management is satisfactory. Regular staff meetings provide a useful forum for discussion and development. Managers and tutors work effectively on new collaborative projects with the local specialist language college. For example, plans to develop new vocational language courses for business users and family learning courses have recently been established. Learners' use of the IT facilities and interactive software at the specialist college is central to this project. However, it is too new to have had a significant effect on curriculum management and development planning.

96. Quality assurance is inadequate. Tutors do not fully understand the arrangements for quality assurance. Weak use is made of individual learning plans, target-setting and recording learners' progress. Teaching is not observed regularly. Language classes are not always observed by trained linguists. The grades given to observed classes are higher than those given by inspectors. Tutors are insufficiently involved in the self-assessment process. The self-assessment report is insufficiently evaluative and does not identify key weaknesses identified by inspectors. Some of the strengths in the self-assessment report are normal practice.

Foundation programmes

Foundation programmes		1
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
ESOL		
‑ Adult and community learning	468	2
Literacy and numeracy		
‑ Adult and community learning	568	1

ESOL

Strengths

- good retention rates
- good accommodation and resources
- good monitoring of learners' progress
- highly responsive provision meeting the needs of the community
- good guidance and support
- good management of the provision

Weaknesses

- weak use of assessment information and individual targets to plan teaching and learning

Literacy and numeracy

Strengths

- very good retention rates
- good teaching
- good accommodation and resources
- good monitoring of learners' progress
- highly responsive provision meeting the needs of the community
- particularly well-implemented initial assessment and guidance
- very good management of provision

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses were identified

Achievement and standards

97. Many learners benefit significantly from attending foundation programme courses. They make good progress in developing their literacy, numeracy or language skills and become more independent. For example, learners on literacy and numeracy courses

improve their accuracy in spelling, decoding words and doing calculations. They are more confident in carrying out tasks involving literacy in front of other people, such as helping their children with homework, reading manuals at work and understanding weights and measures. Many learners on ESOL courses significantly improve their pronunciation, accuracy in grammar and command of vocabulary, appropriate to the level of their course. Most learners improve their ability to communicate more effectively in English in situations critical to their economic and social wellbeing.

98. Retention in literacy and numeracy is very good and in ESOL it is good. Ninety-two per cent of literacy and numeracy learners and 84 per cent of ESOL learners completed their courses in 2003-04. This is a significant improvement from 2002-03 when 81 per cent of literacy and numeracy learners and 68 per cent of ESOL learners completed their courses. Retention rates have increased steadily for both aspects of provision in the past. Achievement rates for literacy and numeracy learners is 44 per cent and for ESOL learners is 38 per cent. This is satisfactory.

Quality of education and training

99. Literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes take a high priority in the service's development and business plans. The service provides a particularly wide range of courses that are effectively planned to widen participation in learning. Managers work effectively in collaboration with external organisations and community groups to identify significant groups of potential learners when setting up new courses. Many programmes are located in areas of high deprivation. Staff carefully consider the most suitable times and venues when scheduling courses and offer a wide range of levels of learning in literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes in most learning sites. Most groups are mixed level and are inclusive for learners with learning difficulties. Specialist courses for learners with dyslexia provide good individualised learning programmes for learners requiring specific support for work, education and training. Many learners with dyslexia receive good support for their work on other courses offered by the service.

100. Learners on foundation programmes benefit from good individual support. Learners receive good advice and guidance when they join a programme. Clear procedures support learners' progression from ESOL into mainstream literacy classes. Additional support needs are effectively identified through the interview process in literacy and numeracy. Teaching and administrative staff have very good local knowledge and use this well to provide learners with effective personal support. Good links with local specialist agencies are effectively used to refer learners requiring more specialist support. Tutors and administrative staff make monitoring learners' attendance on all courses a high priority. They are particularly sensitive as they follow up poor attendance and many learners are successfully encouraged to continue their programmes.

101. Learners benefit from particularly well-planned lessons in literacy and numeracy. Tutors are good at developing learners' skills by using topics that are relevant to their everyday lives. They have a good understanding of learners' difficulties in grasping

concepts and they provide clear explanations. Teaching methods are skilfully adapted to help learners fully understand the concepts and methods they are learning. In literacy and numeracy classes, learners are well aware of their individual targets and what they need to do to improve their skills. They receive detailed and accurate feedback on their progress towards their learning goals. Most learners participate well in learning activities and benefit from the opportunities to communicate in different contexts. Teaching in literacy and numeracy is good, and in ESOL it is satisfactory or better. There were no unsatisfactory learning sessions observed during the inspection in this area of learning.

102. Teaching accommodation is good. Some new or refurbished buildings are of high quality and provide a welcoming learning environment. All venues have appropriate areas for tutors to carry out confidential interviews with their learners. Learners benefit from a good range of learning resources, such as computers, journals, magazines and audiovisual resources. Tutors make good use of the internet to develop independent learning. All ICT equipment is up to date and well maintained. Up-to-date teaching and learning resources are available at all sites and are well used. Most teaching staff are suitably qualified and most have appropriate teaching experience in their subjects. However, most ESOL tutors do not have the expertise required to plan individualised, rather than group learning, or to record learners' achievements appropriately.

103. Most learners make good progress in improving their levels of literacy, numeracy and language skills, and their progress is well recorded by tutors and learners. Learning plans incorporate the results of initial assessments and interview records in literacy and numeracy. However, in ESOL, learning plans do not contain information on the specific skills individual learners need to improve. Most plans in ESOL do not contain adequate detail on learners' long-term targets or the most appropriate contexts that tutors need to consider when planning learning activities.

Leadership and management

104. The management of literacy and numeracy programmes is very good and the management of ESOL is good. Foundation programmes have a high profile at the service. Members of the senior management team have specific responsibility for this area of work and represent the service in local and national initiatives. For example, senior staff have been invited to develop and deliver national teaching qualifications in a consortium with local university. Strategic direction is strong. Good service-wide and local plans effectively implement national and local strategies. Managers have developed particularly good partnerships with schools, local and national health trusts, the probation service, local communities and employers. They use these links well to develop learning programmes for new learners in adult and community learning. A number of very effective projects with local employers successfully help employees develop skills for work. Managers have identified the need to place more emphasis on helping learners progress to other learning opportunities, employment or participate more in their communities. A good induction process for new staff includes mentorship and co-tutoring. Most staff have taken part in training in the national curriculum in literacy, numeracy or ESOL. Tutors teaching on foundation programmes, volunteer tutors and volunteer support workers have good opportunities to develop their skills. Participation

in relevant training and development is good.

105. The service has successfully widened participation in learning. It promotes equality and diversity and gives learners good opportunities to develop to their potential. Many learning activities promote cultural awareness effectively and most arrangements for courses show respect for learners' cultural and religious backgrounds. Most staff and some part-time tutors have received suitable training in equality of opportunity and disabilities.

106. Specialists in foundation programmes observe most tutors' teaching at least once a year. Combined with the annual review, this process successfully identifies tutors' training needs. New tutors benefit from working with a mentor or co-tutor. Many tutors share good practice through a swap shop, where tutors are asked to describe best practice they have identified in their teaching and how it has affected their learners. This information is widely shared through good lines of communication such as e-mails and memos. Most staff make a useful contribution to the self-assessment report. However, the self-assessment report tends to be more descriptive than evaluative.