

INSPECTION REPORT

Merton LEA

22 October 2004



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

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

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

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

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

Overall judgement

Where the overall judgement is that the provision is adequate, only those aspects of the provision which are less than satisfactory will be reinspected.

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

- more than one third of published grades for occupational/curriculum areas, **or**
- leadership and management are judged to be less than satisfactory.

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

The final decision as to whether the provision is inadequate rests with the Chief Inspector of Adult Learning. A statement as to whether the provision is adequate or not is included in the summary section of the inspection report.

INSPECTION REPORT

Merton LEA

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Merton Local Education Authority (LEA) is contracted by the London South Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to provide adult and community learning services to urban communities throughout Merton. The LEA's adult education service (the service) is part of the community and cultural services section of Merton Council (the council). The service is a direct provider of adult and community learning funded through the LSC, with fees generated by learners and a range of other funds from local and national agencies. The provision includes non-accredited recreational courses and accredited programmes. The LEA's main strategic objective for adult learning is to provide an accessible, community-based adult learning service, which effectively meets the varied needs of local people.
2. Merton Adult Education is managed by the head of service, who reports to the head of community and cultural services, and works with six senior managers to plan and deliver the provision. The senior management team includes two community learning managers (one vacant post), two curriculum managers, one finance and management information system manager, one marketing and administration manager and one manager of crèche and after school provision. They manage a team of more than 250 staff, which includes 11 programme managers, two senior tutors and 187 part-time tutors. The two curriculum managers line manage all programme managers.
3. Merton is an outer London borough, situated in the south of London and is made up of five main areas. It has a diverse population of approximately 190,000 and is a largely prosperous borough. However, there are areas of significant deprivation and social exclusion, particularly in the east of the borough. Ten per cent of the local workforce has no qualifications, and more than 20 per cent of the population has poor literacy and numeracy skills. Almost 80 per cent of the workforce is employed in service industries such as hotels and restaurants, banking, education and health. According to the 2001 census, 25 per cent of the borough's population is from minority ethnic groups, compared with 9.1 per cent nationally.
4. Most courses take place at five main centres, and a significant number are offered at the service's main college site in the west of the borough. They range from one-day workshops to programmes lasting a full academic year. In 2003-04, there were 8,262 enrolments and 5,020 learners. Twenty-one per cent of learners were men, which is below the national average, and 17 per cent were from minority ethnic groups. Just over 25 per cent of learners on non-accredited courses were aged over 60 years.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Information & communications technology

5. In 2003-04, 400 learners were enrolled on information and communications

technology (ICT) programmes. At the time of the inspection, 242 learners were studying on 19 courses. Just over 25 per cent of learners are enrolled on the eight accredited courses, which take place over 30 weeks. Other courses for experienced computer users run for between four and 10 weeks and cover a range of interests such as digital imaging and web page design. Courses for beginners are held during the week and introduce learners to word processing, the internet and using software. Workshop sessions are available for all learners. Almost all the courses take place at the main college. Sixty-four per cent of learners are women and 13.5 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. Seven part-time tutors teach courses in this curriculum area, and they are managed by a part-time programme manager.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

6. At the time of the inspection, 264 learners are on sport and leisure courses, including yoga, aerobics, tai chi and golf. Most courses last between 10 and 30 weeks, taking place during the day and in the evening at venues including the main college, church halls and primary schools. All courses are non-accredited. Most courses are open to adults of all abilities, although some are for specific groups, such as fitness for adults over 60 and yoga for parents and babies. Eighty-five per cent of the learners are women, and 7 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. Thirty-five per cent of learners are aged over 60 years. Ten part-time tutors teach courses in sport and leisure, and they are managed by two part-time programme managers who share a full-time post and are also responsible for other curriculum areas.

Visual & performing arts & media

7. Visual and performing arts courses are the second largest area of adult and community learning in the service, with 690 learners enrolled on 47 arts and crafts courses at the time of the inspection. The numbers of learners on arts programmes are slightly higher than on crafts courses. Most learners follow non-accredited courses such as painting, pottery, upholstery, drawing and wood carving. Just over 10 per cent of the enrolments are on accredited programmes, all of which are craft based. A smaller number of performing arts courses are available, including classical guitar, singing, and freestyle dancing. Almost all the courses are held at the main college for between five and 30 weeks, during the daytime and evenings, including some Saturdays and holiday periods. Over 80 per cent of learners are women. Sixteen part-time tutors teach courses in visual and performing arts. They are managed by a part-time programme manager, who is also responsible for other curriculum areas.

English, languages & communications

8. In 2003-04, there were 1,136 enrolments on modern foreign language programmes and courses in English as a foreign language (EFL). At the time of the inspection, the service was providing 30 courses in modern foreign languages and 14 programmes in EFL for 811 learners. Many EFL learners are enrolled on more than one course. All modern foreign language, and most EFL, courses are taught over 25 weeks, and 80 per cent of the provision takes place at the main college. Various levels of courses are offered in French, Spanish, Italian and German. Most modern foreign language courses take place during the evening. Thirty-three per cent and 20 per cent of modern foreign language and EFL participants, respectively, are men. Ten per cent of learners on modern foreign language courses are from minority ethnic groups. EFL courses are taught by eight part-time tutors and modern foreign language programmes by 27 part-time tutors. A part-time programme manager is responsible for the provision.

Foundation programmes

9. The service's foundation programme is one of the largest areas in the service and predominantly consists of literacy and numeracy, independent living, and leisure and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses. At the time of the inspection, 694 learners are on foundation programmes. In 2004-05, the service has enrolled 357 learners on 34 ESOL courses at five venues and 87 learners on eight literacy and numeracy programmes. Just over 250 adults with learning difficulties and disabilities attend the 67 independent living and leisure courses in subjects such as cookery, art, creativity, popular culture and ICT, most of which are accredited. All learners on literacy and numeracy, and ESOL programmes are working towards a qualification. Many learners are enrolled on more than one course. Courses take place at a variety of community venues throughout the borough, including the main college, schools, day centres, social and sport centres, and community halls. Courses range from two-hour workshop sessions up to 30 weeks and learners usually attend for between two and four hours each week, during the day and evening. Forty-six per cent of learners on foundation programmes are from minority ethnic groups. Seven per cent of learners are aged over 60 years. Two full-time programme managers, and two part-time programme managers who share a full-time role, are responsible for the provision. There is also a part-time programme manager for family literacy, language and numeracy. They manage 16 tutors for ESOL courses, four literacy and numeracy tutors and 26 independent living and leisure tutors.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	14
Number of inspection days	88
Number of learner interviews	442
Number of staff interviews	170
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	15
Number of partner/external agency interviews	4
Number of visits	1

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

10. The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. More specifically, the LEA's leadership and management, and arrangements for equality of opportunity are unsatisfactory, and its quality assurance is very weak. The quality of provision is good in visual and performing arts and media, and satisfactory in English, languages and communication, but unsatisfactory in ICT, and hospitality, sport, leisure and travel. The quality of provision in foundation programmes is very weak.

GRADES

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

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

Information & communications technology		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Using IT</i> - Adult and community learning	242	4

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i> - Adult and community learning	264	4

Visual & performing arts & media		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts - Adult and community learning	374	2
Crafts - Adult and community learning	316	3
English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Languages - Adult and community learning	811	3
Foundation programmes		5
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
ESOL - Adult and community learning	357	5
Literacy and numeracy - Adult and community learning	87	4
Independent living and leisure skills - Adult and community learning	250	4

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

11. **Retention rates on all ICT courses are good.** In the last two years, the overall retention rate on long courses which lead to a qualification has been almost 80 per cent. In 2003-04, the retention rate on short programmes was 92 per cent. Learners on ICT courses develop satisfactory practical skills. Most are achieving their main goals, are increasing their confidence, and are interested in what they are doing.

12. **Retention rates on sport and leisure courses are good,** and have improved over the past two years. In 2003-04, the overall retention rate was 86 per cent. Most learners demonstrate improvements to their health and fitness on sport and leisure programmes. They value the benefits that regular exercise has on their general health and lives.

13. **The standard of learners' work in visual and performing arts is good.** In arts, it is very good. Learners combine high standards of technical competence with creative ability. They produce finished products to a good standard and approach their work confidently. Their personal goals are enriched through visits to workshops, museums, galleries and

exhibitions.

14. Retention rates for non-accredited visual and performing arts courses are good.

In 2003-04, almost 90 per cent of arts and crafts learners completed their courses. Retention rates on the small number of courses leading to a qualification are satisfactory, averaging 72 per cent in 2003-04.

15. Achievement rates for some accredited modern foreign language and EFL courses are good.

For example, in 2003-04, the achievement rates for general certificates of secondary education (GCSE) Italian and GCSE Spanish, were 85 per cent. Achievement rates for EFL courses in 2003-04 ranged from 62 per cent to 92 per cent. Retention rates are satisfactory.

16. Most learners on modern foreign language and EFL courses develop appropriate standards of work.

Almost all of the learners attain at least satisfactory skill levels in language learning, speaking, listening, reading and writing. They increase their confidence and most achieve the aim of being able to use a language for a variety of purposes.

17. Achievement rates on the small number of literacy and numeracy courses which lead to a qualification are very good.

In 2003-04, 83 per cent and 91 per cent of learners on literacy and numeracy courses, respectively, achieved qualifications. Many learners gain confidence in acquiring new skills and can identify the positive effects of learning on their lives.

18. Learners on independent living and leisure courses develop good social skills.

Tutors encourage learners to develop their verbal communication skills during classes and in their own time. Learners support each other well.

19. Achievement rates on ICT courses which lead to a qualification are poor.

In 2003-04, the overall achievement rate was 44 per cent.

20. Achievement rates for learners on ESOL courses are poor.

In 2003-04, only 27 per cent of the 360 learners achieved a qualification. The targets set for ESOL learners do not help them to develop personal and learning skills.

Quality of education and training

21. Ninety learning sessions were observed and graded, 72 of which were satisfactory or better.

22. Learners on ICT courses benefit from the good learning environments at all centres.

Classrooms are spacious and well furnished. Learners value the professional appearance of the facilities and the welcoming atmosphere at the main college. Hardware and software are up-to-date and tutors make good use of a wide range of modern technology.

23. **Teaching and learning are good in visual and performing arts.** Many of the tutors are specialists in their subject areas. They work closely with learners who have a wide range of abilities on individual projects. Learners are well motivated and work with enthusiasm and conviction. They are fully encouraged to explore and develop their own creative ideas.

24. **The facilities for visual and performing arts courses are good.** Learners value the good specialist accommodation which has recently been built, and the wide range of equipment. Good storage facilities ensure that learners do not have to carry large amounts of equipment or work to and from classrooms.

25. **The range of arts courses is good.** In addition to more traditional courses, the service runs specialist courses in life sculpture, life drawing and painting in oils. Many learners travel a significant distance to participate in these classes.

26. **The standard of teaching and learning on level 2 and 3 modern foreign language and EFL courses is good.** Lessons are planned well and tutors pay careful attention to the development of learners' listening and speaking skills in most sessions. Tutors set learners challenging tasks and use a wide variety of interesting resources to stimulate meaningful conversations. However, there is insufficient use of the target language on most entry and level 1 courses. Learners have insufficient opportunities to practise the language, and activities are not always linked to everyday situations which learners can relate to.

27. **The good range of ESOL courses is responsive to learners' needs.** Courses are offered at a wide range of levels, and take place at times which are very convenient for learners. Staff who are responsible for advice and guidance effectively match the abilities of new learners to the most appropriate course. **The geographical spread of independent living and leisure courses throughout the borough is good.** Classes take place in a wide range of community venues, which enables learners to attend courses in locations where they feel comfortable and confident.

28. The standard of teaching and learning in ICT is satisfactory. Tutors are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. Some learning sessions are planned and structured well. Tutors use their expertise effectively to demonstrate the use and applications of ICT. However, other sessions are planned inadequately. In some classes, insufficient emphasis is placed on the development of learners' keyboarding skills and the correction of learners' poor posture.

29. **The recording of learners' skills development on ICT courses is insufficiently detailed.** Learners complete records of their learning each week without any guidance from the tutor. The records do not show the dates when learners have achieved particular outcomes. Too little attention is given to agreeing learning targets with learners.

30. **There is an insufficient range of courses and venues in ICT.** Most courses are held at the main college, and there is no provision at any other community venues. There are only two evening classes, and some courses are timetabled to start at inappropriate times

which are not convenient for learners. The range of ICT courses is narrow and focuses too much on using information technology (IT). Too few courses are offered for learners who wish to widen their computing knowledge.

31. Teaching and learning standards in sport and leisure are unsatisfactory. Many sessions are poorly planned and do not take sufficient account of learners' individual abilities or goals. Poor exercise practices are not corrected, and a small number of tutors are not sufficiently aware of the purpose of particular exercises or the muscles involved.

32. Assessment practice in sport and leisure is weak. The initial assessment of learners' fitness and skills levels, and their reasons for joining sport and leisure classes, is poor. Many learners are not asked about their individual goals. They are not given individual feedback on their performance.

33. The range of courses in sport and leisure is poor. Many popular subjects are not offered. The service has not carried out sufficient research into the needs of the local community and the number of courses has decreased significantly over the past year.

34. There is insufficient formal recording of learners' progress on visual and performing arts courses. The service has introduced standard paperwork to record learners' individual learning plans and progress, but many tutors and learners do not use the forms.

35. Participation rates are poor for under-represented groups of learners in visual and performing arts. Most of the courses are held at the main college, with only a small number of community-based initiatives. Only 7 per cent of enrolments are from minority ethnic groups and only 19 per cent of learners are men. The service does not have a strategy to increase participation rates for these under-represented groups.

36. Pre-course information for non-accredited visual and performing arts courses is poor. Some learners enrol on courses which are not appropriate to their levels of ability and experience. Publicity materials do not contain sufficient information on the potential costs of additional equipment for the courses.

37. There is insufficient focus on meeting the needs of some modern foreign language and EFL learners. Some classes are too large and tutors find it difficult to deal with the requirements of all learners. Some learners are placed on inappropriate courses. Target-setting and the monitoring of learners' progress are weak in some sessions.

38. Standards of teaching and learning are poor on ESOL and independent living and leisure courses. Learning sessions are planned poorly and tutors use a narrow range of teaching methods. Many sessions are dull and uninspiring, and tutors do not use enough examples from learners' lives to help them understand the teaching. Teaching and learning on literacy and numeracy courses are satisfactory.

39. Resources on foundation programmes are poor. Some sessions take place in cramped classrooms. Inadequate use is made of interactive learning technology and specialist software on many courses. The range of learning resources is inadequate, and

does not stimulate learners' interest. Some resources are not aimed at adults.

40. **Target-setting for learners on ESOL courses is poor.** Information about learners is not used sufficiently to set detailed targets. Some individual learning plans are incomplete and are not updated regularly. The targets are too general to be used to accurately measure learners' progress or achievements.

41. **The arrangements for the assessment and recording of learners' progress are weak on ESOL and independent living and leisure courses.** ESOL learners do not receive sufficient feedback to enable them to measure their progress. Some learners do not fully understand what they need to do to achieve their learning outcomes. Procedures to record learners' progress on independent living and leisure courses are weak. Some individual learning plans record learners' completion of tasks, rather than their development of skills.

Leadership and management

42. **Good recent initiatives have taken place to improve the strategic direction of the service.** Senior managers within the LEA have recognised the need to make improvements to the adult and community learning provision, and have started to set a clear strategic direction to reinforce the objectives of the service. The LEA has put in place a coherent new management structure and successfully recruited new staff with relevant expertise. Managers now receive more regular support, and communications are starting to improve.

43. **The service rewards and motivates learners through a well-publicised learner of the year awards ceremony.** The wide range of categories recognise the different types of achievements made by adult learners, and not just the successful completion of qualifications. The mayor and other members of the council are invited to present learners with their certificates and prizes.

44. **The development of the ICT curriculum is inadequate.** No overall strategy exists to promote ICT learning to the community. **No specific targets are set for the sport and leisure provision.** There are no partnerships in place to extend the provision into the local community. **Management information on foundation programmes is incomplete** and does not accurately record learners' progress and achievements.

45. **The service's curriculum planning and management are poor in some parts of the provision.** Too many courses are cancelled or postponed in some curriculum areas. There is an insufficient range of courses and venues in ICT and sport and leisure, and some courses are restricted to certain times of the week. Too much of the provision relies on the availability of existing tutors. Links between curriculum areas are poor.

46. **Target-setting is weak at all levels of the service.** Some of the targets set by the LEA for adult learning are insufficiently detailed, and do not adequately define the role of the adult education service within the borough. Long-term strategic objectives are not supported by specific measurable targets which can be regularly monitored. Target-

MERTON LEA

setting and action-planning at senior management meetings are poor. Senior managers do not carry out sufficient formal reviews of targets set for key performance measures such as enrolments, attendance and retention rates.

47. Insufficient learning support is available to meet the individual needs of many learners. The service does not have a strategy for managing literacy, numeracy and language support. Staff do not have a consistent approach to supporting learners with additional needs. Many learners do not receive sufficient literacy, numeracy and language skills support. Teaching strategies do not take into account the diverse learning styles and abilities of learners. The service does not analyse participation, retention and achievement rates for different groups of learners to identify those who are most likely to achieve their qualifications, and those who are most at risk of leaving early.

48. There is insufficient promotion and awareness of equality of opportunity and diversity throughout the service. Some staff have not received sufficient training in equality. Tutors in some learning sessions use too many examples from English culture and religion. The service does not offer any community languages courses, and course information is not available in any of the minority languages. There is no meditation or prayer room at the main college. Course information and publicity materials contain too few images of men.

49. The arrangements for quality assurance are inadequate. Insufficient monitoring and review of the teaching and learning takes place in management meetings. Course reviews are not yet sufficiently well established to ensure a culture of continuous improvement. New paperwork for lesson plans, schemes of work and individual learning plans are not used effectively in many curriculum areas. Classroom observations are not thorough enough. Insufficient focus is placed on the effect of teaching practices on learning. It is not clear how the feedback from learners and tutors is analysed and used as part of the curriculum reviews which take place each term. The arrangements for internal verification are incomplete.

50. Staff in most parts of the service are not involved enough in the self-assessment process. The grades in the self-assessment report did not match those given by inspectors. Insufficient emphasis is placed on the significance of learners' achievements and the quality of teaching and learning. Many of the strengths identified in the report are no more than normal practice.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good recent initiatives to improve the strategic direction of the service
- good celebration of a diverse range of learners' achievements

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory curriculum planning and management in some areas of the service
- weak target-setting

- insufficient learning support to meet the individual needs of many learners
- insufficient promotion and awareness of equality and diversity
- inadequate arrangements for quality assurance

Information & communications technology

Using IT

Strengths

- good retention rates on all courses
- good learning environments

Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates on accredited courses
- insufficiently detailed recording of learners' skills development
- insufficient range of courses and venues
- inadequate curriculum development

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Leisure, sport and recreation

Strengths

- good and improving retention rates

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory teaching and learning
- weak assessment practice
- poor curriculum offer
- weak curriculum management

Visual & performing arts & media

Arts

Strengths

- very good standard of technical and creative work
- good retention rates on non-accredited courses
- particularly good teaching and learning
- good specialist teaching accommodation and facilities
- good range of courses

Weaknesses

- insufficient formal recording of learners' progress
- insufficient participation by under-represented groups
- poor pre-course information for non-accredited courses
- poor communications between managers and tutors

Crafts

Strengths

- good standard of technical work
- good retention rates on non-accredited courses
- good teaching and learning
- good specialist teaching accommodation and facilities

Weaknesses

- insufficient formal recording of learners' progress
- insufficient participation by under-represented groups
- poor pre-course information for non-accredited courses
- poor communications between managers and tutors

English, languages & communications

Languages

Strengths

- good achievement rates on some accredited courses
- good teaching and learning on level 2 and 3 courses

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of the target language in most entry and level 1 classes
- insufficient focus on meeting the needs of some learners

Foundation programmes

ESOL

Strengths

- responsive curriculum design

Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates
- poor teaching and learning
- inadequate use of resources
- poor target-setting for learners
- weak assessment of individual learners' progress
- insufficient focus on equality of opportunity

Literacy and numeracy

Strengths

- very good achievement rates on accredited courses

Weaknesses

- inadequate resources
- unsatisfactory curriculum management

Independent living and leisure skills

Strengths

- good development of learners' social skills
- good geographical spread of courses across the borough

Weaknesses

- poor teaching and learning
- poor resources
- inadequate initial assessment
- weak formal recording of learners' progress
- weak curriculum management

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT MERTON LEA:

- the supportive and friendly staff – ‘it is brilliant to learn and have fun in a relaxed atmosphere’
- the interaction with other learners – ‘learning with like-minded people’
- the main college campus
- learning in small groups – ‘everyone is included in the class’
- how easy it is to enrol on courses

WHAT LEARNERS THINK MERTON LEA COULD IMPROVE:

- car parking at the main college
- the procedures for making complaints
- the cost of some courses
- the amount of paperwork – ‘we want fewer forms to fill in’
- the directions and signposts to some classrooms
- the learning resources available – ‘better access to computers’
- the opportunities to study courses which do not lead to a qualification – ‘I wish to learn without the pressure of taking exams’

KEY CHALLENGES FOR MERTON LEA:

- continue the development of initiatives to improve the strategic direction of the service
- improve the planning and management of the curriculum in some subject areas
- implement an effective quality assurance framework
- introduce more rigorous assessment and verification practices
- attract more adults into learning from under-represented groups in the local community
- implement a strategy for literacy, numeracy and language support
- ensure there is a greater focus on meeting the individual needs of learners
- improve target-setting at all levels within the service

Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

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

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

Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

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

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

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 4

Strengths

- good recent initiatives to improve the strategic direction of the service
- good celebration of a diverse range of learners' achievements

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory curriculum planning and management in some areas of the service
- weak target-setting
- insufficient learning support to meet the individual needs of many learners
- insufficient promotion and awareness of equality and diversity
- inadequate arrangements for quality assurance

51. Good recent initiatives have taken place to improve the strategic direction of the service. The LEA has decided to retain direct control of adult and community learning to ensure that it will be able to improve its profile throughout the borough. Senior managers within the LEA have recognised the need to make improvements to the adult and community learning provision, and have started to set a clear strategic direction to reinforce the objectives of the service. The service has started to use a wider range of community venues to deliver some courses and has made significant progress in the introduction of family learning programmes to attract excluded and under-represented groups of adults back into learning. The LEA has put in place a coherent new management structure to improve the accountability of managers. The roles and responsibilities of managers have been reviewed and revised. The service has made a number of new appointments and successfully recruited new staff with relevant expertise. They include a management information systems officer, a careers information officer and an additional learning support officer. Good use has been made of external consultants' expertise to review the adult education service and to identify improvements needed. A recent report on managers' roles which was funded by the LSC includes a detailed action plan to improve the relationships between managers at all levels in the organisation. Curriculum and programme managers now receive more regular support from the senior management team and communications are starting to improve.

52. The management of resources is generally satisfactory, although wide variations exist in how well resources are used in curriculum areas. The service has made a significant investment to improve the learning environment at the main college; in particular the new accommodation for visual and performing arts courses and the access for learners with restricted mobility. Tutors appreciate the provision of an upgraded staff resource room. Teaching and public areas are maintained well and the standard of decoration is good. Accommodation at outreach centres is satisfactory, although changes in the arrangements to share classrooms with the local college have caused difficulties for staff

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and learners on ESOL courses. New audio and presentation equipment has recently been purchased, and the service's ICT facilities have improved. However, some staff are not aware of the resources available and have not received training in how to use them. Some classrooms are not appropriate for the activities being carried out. The quality of learning resources is poor on foundation programmes.

53. Communications within the service are satisfactory, but show wide variations across curriculum areas and at different levels within the organisation. The service has recognised tutors' concerns during a period of change, and has taken appropriate actions to improve communications with staff. Regular staff meetings are held in most curriculum areas, although they are not always well attended by part-time tutors. A staff forum has been introduced, which has been used to implement new conditions of service for all staff. However, communications between managers and tutors are poor in visual and performing arts. Many tutors have not felt sufficiently involved in important decisions, such as the introduction of new paperwork for learners.

54. The arrangements for staff development and training are satisfactory. Most tutors are experienced and well qualified, but some staff do not have enough appropriate knowledge of interactive learning technology. Almost 70 per cent of tutors hold a teaching qualification, and the service plans to increase this figure in the next year. Appraisals for senior managers are poor and part-time tutors do not receive a formal appraisal of their performance. The outcomes of classroom observations are not used to identify tutors' training needs.

55. The service's curriculum planning and management are poor in some parts of the provision. Too many courses are cancelled or postponed in some curriculum areas, and numbers of learners are low for ICT, sport and leisure, and literacy and numeracy courses. There is an insufficient range of courses and venues in ICT and sport and leisure, but the choice of arts courses is good. The range of modern foreign language, EFL and crafts courses is satisfactory. The provision in some subject areas is restricted to certain parts of the borough. There is inadequate provision at certain times of the week in some curriculum areas, making it difficult for learners to choose courses to suit their needs. The management of many aspects of the curriculum in ICT, sport and leisure and foundation programmes is poor. Curriculum management is generally satisfactory in visual and performing arts, modern foreign languages and EFL. The service has carried out a curriculum review, but the main focus was on reviewing the viability of existing courses, rather than a systematic analysis of provision to meet the needs of the local community. Too much of the provision relies on the availability of existing tutors. Links between different curriculum areas are poor, and there is insufficient sharing of good practice.

56. Target-setting is weak at all levels of the service. Some of the targets set by the LEA for adult learning are insufficiently detailed, and do not adequately define the role of the service within the borough. Adult and community learning targets, which are identified in the service's strategic and development plans, are imprecise. Long-term strategic objectives are not supported by specific, measurable targets which can be regularly monitored. Target-setting and action-planning at senior management meetings are poor.

Where actions are identified, they are not always followed up at subsequent meetings. Senior managers do not carry out sufficient formal reviews of targets for key performance measures such as enrolments, attendance, and retention rates. Target-setting for senior managers at appraisal is poor. They are not set challenging targets for improving their area of responsibility. Target-setting is weak in many curriculum areas, including ICT, sport and leisure and foundation programmes.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 4

57. The head of service has overall responsibility for equality and diversity in adult learning programmes. The service uses the council's equal opportunities policies and procedures, which apply to staff and learners. The equality and diversity policy has recently been updated to reflect changes in legislation. The service has made satisfactory progress towards meeting the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001, and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Learners with restricted mobility have satisfactory access to most of the adult and community learning venues throughout the borough. The service's accommodation strategy includes planned adaptations to improve access at outreach centres. Access is good at the main college, which has recently been refurbished with ramps, automatic doors and lifts to all floors. Most learners have a satisfactory knowledge of the service's complaints procedure, and most complaints are dealt with promptly. The service's fees policy is publicised well, although some learners are insufficiently aware that they can pay their course fees each term. Just over 40 per cent of learners received assistance with paying their fees in 2003-04, and this figure has risen to more than 50 per cent in 2004-05 so far. More than 100 learners with children use the well-run crèche facilities. The percentage of learners from minority ethnic groups is similar to that for the borough as a whole, but only just over 20 per cent of learners are men. The composition of the staff team broadly reflects the profile of the local population, but there are very few male tutors.

58. The service rewards and motivates learners through a well-publicised learner of the year awards ceremony. The wide range of awards categories recognises the different types of achievement made by adult learners, and not just the successful completion of qualifications. There are categories for older learners, learners who progress into employment, learners who overcome significant personal barriers to take their first steps back into learning and learners who make outstanding progress. Learners' good attendance, team work and enthusiasm are also recognised by the service, as is tutors' work which is judged to be outstanding. The mayor and other members of the council are invited to present learners with their certificates and prizes. Learners prepare imaginative and good arts, crafts and floral displays for the event, and cater for refreshments. Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities have a separate awards ceremony which celebrates significant milestones in their progress such as shopping or cooking on their own. Learners' improved literacy skills are highlighted in a local newsletter which is edited by one of the service's literacy tutors. Attractive displays of learners' work are used around the main college site to celebrate the day-to-day achievements of learners on most courses.

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59. The service has a satisfactory range of initiatives with other organisations to widen participation for under-represented groups in the local community. The service has started to work with local schools and other community partners to develop family learning workshops. In 2003-04, 270 adults and almost 250 children enrolled on these courses. However, progress towards recruiting these learners onto longer family learning courses is slow. The service has a number of useful links with other departments in the council, the local general further education college, and organisations representing people with learning difficulties and disabilities. Too few ICT, sport and leisure, and visual and performing arts courses take place in the community, and initiatives to target learners in deprived areas of the borough are insufficiently developed. There are no community learning or community development programmes. However, the service has identified this gap in its provision, and recently employed an external consultant to map its courses across the borough and identify the potential to widen participation.

60. Insufficient learning support is available to meet the individual needs of many learners. The service does not have a strategy for managing literacy, numeracy and language support. Staff do not have a consistent approach to supporting learners with additional needs. Many learners do not receive sufficient literacy, numeracy and language skills support. The service does not employ enough literacy and numeracy tutors or learning support assistants to support learners appropriately in the classroom. Insufficient accreditation of prior learning takes place on many courses. In many of the sessions graded by inspectors during the inspection, teaching strategies did not take into account sufficiently the diverse learning styles and abilities of learners. Too much reliance is placed on paper-based resources, which disadvantages learners with reading difficulties. Insufficient use is made of adaptive technology to assist learners with visual or hearing impairments. At some venues, learners do not have enough access to appropriate advice and guidance. The standard of pre-course information is poor for learners in visual and performing arts, and independent living and leisure. The service does not analyse participation, retention and achievement rates for different groups of learners to identify those learners who are most likely to succeed in achieving their qualifications, and those who are most at risk of leaving early.

61. There is insufficient promotion and awareness of equality and diversity throughout the service. Some staff have received training on aspects of equal opportunities legislation, but insufficient training has taken place on other aspects of equality and diversity, such as its reinforcement within the curriculum and supporting the diverse needs of learners. Many tutors produce their own teaching and learning materials, but the service does not have a system for checking whether they comply with the council's equal opportunities policies or current legislation. In some of the classes, which contain learners from different minority ethnic groups, tutors use too many examples of English culture and religion. Despite the presence of a significant proportion of adults from minority ethnic groups in the local population, the service does not offer any community language courses and course information is not available in any of the minority languages. There is no meditation or prayer room at the main college. Course information and publicity leaflets do not always effectively promote the council's social inclusion agenda, and contain too few images of men. Information on support in the learners' handbook is written in small print and is hard to read. The service is now

making attempts to raise staff awareness of equality of opportunity by putting it on the agenda at all meetings, and staff have received useful guidelines on how to support learners with a range of learning difficulties and disabilities.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 5

62. The arrangements to ensure the quality of teaching and learning on adult and community learning courses are inadequate. The service's community learning manager is responsible for quality assurance and has started to implement a quality assurance framework, which is currently under development. The framework outlines the quality assurance activities and responsibilities for all areas of the service, but does not clearly identify how the activities are linked together, or how they contribute to the curriculum review, self-assessment and development planning processes. Insufficient monitoring and reviewing of the quality of teaching and learning takes place in management meetings. Actions identified do not always have specific deadlines and are not routinely checked at subsequent meetings to ensure they have been implemented. Course reviews are not yet sufficiently well established to ensure a culture of continuous improvement in teaching and learning.

63. In 2003-04, the service introduced a range of comprehensive new paperwork for tutors, which includes templates for lesson plans, schemes of work and individual learning plans. Managers have worked hard to promote the recognition of learning outcomes on non-accredited courses. However, the guidelines which accompany the new paperwork contain some inappropriate language and do not encourage an inclusive approach from staff towards the use of the new templates. Staff have not been sufficiently involved in the development of the new paperwork. Although programme managers have carried out an audit to check whether tutors are using the correct forms, insufficient emphasis is placed on monitoring how effectively the paperwork is used to set targets for learners and monitor their progress. Inspectors found that the use of this paperwork is inconsistent. Some staff are not sure how to use the new forms, and course files do not always contain up-to-date learners' records. The identification of individual learning goals and the recording of learners' progress are poor in many curriculum areas. There are no written procedures for some important parts of the provision such as initial assessment, induction, and advice and guidance. Staff in ICT have a poor awareness of initial assessment procedures, and no initial assessment of fitness levels is carried out on sport and leisure courses.

64. The service aims to observe part-time tutors in the classroom once every two years to monitor their performance and give them feedback, but the process is not thorough enough. In many curriculum areas, the number of observations carried out in 2003-04 did not meet the target set by the service. A detailed staff handbook has been produced which clearly explains the procedures to be used for the observation of teaching and learning. The service is taking part in a pilot scheme in south London involving five adult and community learning providers to improve the consistency of lesson observations and to encourage more accurate grading. However, in many curriculum areas, the action plans arising from classroom observations are not detailed enough, and insufficient focus is placed on the effect of teaching practices on learning. In many instances, the

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comments made by observers do not reflect the grades given for the sessions. No system exists to moderate the grades given or to use the outcomes of observations to identify staff development needs. In some cases, tutors wait for several weeks to receive any written feedback following observations of their teaching. The overall profile of grades given by the service for learning sessions differs substantially from the grades given by inspectors. The good practices in some curriculum areas are not adequately shared throughout the service. Managers have now identified the need to give more support to teaching staff and have recently appointed a number of senior tutors to carry out this role.

65. The views of learners are gathered at the end of all programmes. Feedback is generally very positive and most learners are able to identify a number of aspects of their course which they have enjoyed. Tutors carry out reviews of their own courses, and many of them have a self-critical approach to identifying the positive and the less successful aspects of their teaching. However, it is not clear how the feedback from learners or tutors is analysed and used as part of the termly reviews for each curriculum area. The service does not respond adequately to ideas and concerns raised by some tutors. A learners' forum has recently been introduced where learners are invited to a series of events to share their views of the service with staff. However, they are poorly attended and learners are not sufficiently aware of their purpose. The service does not give prompt feedback to learners on the concerns they have raised at these events.

66. The arrangements for internal verification and moderation of assessment practices are incomplete. The service does not have a policy or detailed procedure for internal verification. Inspectors were unable to see detailed sampling plans or internal verification records in some curriculum areas. Assessment practices are weak in almost all parts of the provision. The service has identified this weakness and has recently appointed an internal verification manager to co-ordinate the verification and moderation of assessment on all accredited and non-accredited courses.

67. The service has produced three self-assessment reports, and wrote its most recent report in September 2004 for the inspection. Until recently, the service has not been sufficiently self-critical. The views of staff and learners are not adequately used to identify strengths and weaknesses. The 2002-03 report contains no strengths or weaknesses for leadership and management or for some significant areas of the provision. Many of the strengths identified in the report are no more than normal practice, and the grades given by the service do not accurately reflect the balance of strengths and weaknesses. Many significant weaknesses are not identified in the report.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information & communications technology

Information & communications technology		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT - Adult and community learning	242	4

Using IT

Strengths

- good retention rates on all courses
- good learning environments

Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates on accredited courses
- insufficiently detailed recording of learners' skills development
- insufficient range of courses and venues
- inadequate curriculum development

Achievement and standards

68. Retention rates on all courses are good. In the last two years, the overall retention rate on accredited courses which run for 30 weeks, has been almost 80 per cent. On five- to 10-week courses, the retention rate in 2003-04 was 92 per cent. Attendance rates average almost 80 per cent. Tutors regularly follow up unexplained absences and use the service's procedures to withdraw learners who have not attended for three weeks without an explanation.

69. Learners on ICT courses develop satisfactory practical skills. Most learners are achieving their main goals, are increasing their confidence and are interested in what they are doing. Learners on some programmes negotiate the content of their course to reflect their own personal interests, for example sending attachments with e-mails and inserting pictures in documents.

70. Achievement rates on accredited courses are poor. In 2003-04, the overall achievement rate was 44 per cent, although this was a considerable improvement over the previous year when only 25 per cent of learners achieved their qualification.

Quality of education and training

71. Learners benefit from the good learning environments at all centres. Classrooms are spacious and furnished well. Interesting and appropriate information is displayed on walls. Learners value the professional appearance of the facilities and the welcoming atmosphere at the main college. Hardware and software are up to date and include flat and large screen monitors. However, some equipment is unreliable and delays are sometimes caused by the absence of technical support. Tutors make good use of a wide range of modern teaching technology, including data projectors and pointers. Learners with restricted mobility have access to a good range of adaptive technology. Some classrooms have furniture and equipment which can be adapted for use by learners with restricted mobility. Tutors are appropriately qualified and have good specialist ICT skills.

72. The standard of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Seventy per cent of the teaching sessions observed by inspectors were satisfactory. Tutors are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. Some lessons are planned and structured well, and tutors use their expertise effectively to demonstrate the use and applications of ICT. In these lessons, tutors use a wide range of teaching strategies, such as lectures, demonstrations, discussion, and paired group work. In one lesson observed by inspectors, the tutor used an imaginative word match game to reinforce learning about file management. Learners support each other well. However, in the poorer sessions, teaching and learning are often characterised by insufficient planning of learning sessions, with not enough attention given to learning outcomes. In some classes, insufficient emphasis is given to the development of keyboarding skills and the correction of learners' poor posture.

73. Support for learners is satisfactory. Initial advice and guidance are appropriate for learners who want to enrol on accredited courses. A senior tutor has specific responsibility for advice, guidance and initial assessment. Learners receive appropriate levels of support from tutors. They ensure that learners have the necessary information on availability of childcare facilities and the learning support fund. In one lesson observed by inspectors, a learner with a hearing impairment was provided with useful notes about the content of the class, and was given the notes in advance of the next lesson.

74. The recording of learners' skills development on ICT courses is insufficiently detailed. Individual learning plans do not contain the results of learners' initial literacy and numeracy assessments. Learners complete records of their learning each week without any guidance from the tutor. The records do not show the dates when learners have achieved particular outcomes. Too little attention is given to negotiating and recording learning targets with individual learners. Learners often gain additional skills in lessons, such as improved mouse dexterity, or faster location of files and folders, but these outcomes are not recorded in learning plans. Managers do not make adequate use of learning outcomes to assess the effectiveness of courses, or to plan for the development of programmes and staff training.

75. There is an insufficient range of courses and venues in ICT. Of the 17 courses taking place at the time of the inspection, 15 were offered at the main college. Provision is not

held in any community settings across the borough. There are only two evening classes, and some courses are timetabled to start at inappropriate times, which are not convenient for learners. The range of courses is narrow, and is only available up to level 2. Many tutors do not have the appropriate qualifications to teach higher-level courses. The choice of accredited courses is poor and learners are expected to complete the full qualification. Unit accreditation is not available. Courses focus on using IT, and too few courses are offered to support learners who wish to widen their computing knowledge or use newly acquired skills in their daily lives.

Leadership and management

76. The development of the ICT curriculum is inadequate. No overall strategy exists to promote ICT learning to the community. Very little market research is carried out to ascertain the needs and interests of local people. Data is collected on different groups of learners but this is not used to assist in the planning and development of the curriculum. Most courses are offered on the basis of the needs of existing learners or what has been offered previously.

77. Under-represented groups, such as men and adults from minority ethnic groups, are not targeted by the service. Partnership working with community-based organisations is poor. Some publicity material used to promote ICT courses does not acknowledge the existence of people within the local community who have diverse religious and cultural beliefs.

78. Quality assurance arrangements are incomplete. Insufficient accurate and regular data is available to enable managers to make clear decisions about the effectiveness of particular courses. Good initiatives to improve the quality of provision, such as the detailed reviews of the curriculum carried out each term, have not been maintained. Very little sharing of good practice takes place. Classroom observations are not carried out on a sufficiently regular basis to effectively monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Internal verification and moderation arrangements are satisfactory. Tutors do not have an appraisal, and action plans arising from classroom observations are not used to help develop staff training.

79. The self-assessment process for ICT is ineffective. Staff are not sufficiently involved in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum area, and have a poor awareness of the most recent self-assessment report. The report is not sufficiently self-critical. It does not clearly identify the strengths and weaknesses for ICT, and the planned actions are not linked to any specific weaknesses. The grade given by inspectors for the area of learning was lower than the grade given by the service.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i> - Adult and community learning	264	4

Leisure, sport and recreation

Strengths

- good and improving retention rates

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory teaching and learning
- weak assessment practice
- poor curriculum offer
- weak curriculum management

Achievement and standards

80. Retention rates on sport and leisure courses are good, and have improved over the past two years. In 2003-04, the overall retention rate was 86 per cent. This has steadily improved from 77 per cent in 2001-02 and 82 per cent in 2002-03. Retention rates are particularly good on courses for older learners who sometimes experience injury or illness, or who take time away from their studies for holidays. Attendance rates are satisfactory and averaged 78 per cent during the inspection, and 76 per cent for 2003-04.

81. Most learners demonstrate improvements to their health and fitness on sport and leisure courses. They value the benefits that regular exercise has on their general health and daily lives, such as improved sleep patterns, enhanced mobility and flexibility, and increases in muscular strength. In yoga classes, learners improve their ability to deal with stress. Learners on courses in golf benefit from increases in self-confidence and skill after just a short time. However, in some fitness classes, learners' postures and exercise performance are insufficiently developed.

Quality of education and training

82. The resources on sport and leisure courses are satisfactory. Learners are provided with good fitness equipment such as exercise mats and resistance tubing. Learning resources are appropriate and encourage independent practice. Learners on courses in golf benefit from the use of a driving range, golf course and well-maintained equipment. The classrooms at community venues are appropriate for the activities which take place. However, the gym at the main college is cluttered, and is used as a storage area for

unused equipment. It is too cold for the exercise activities which are held there. Some of the classrooms used for yoga at the main college are too small to accommodate the numbers of learners. Tutors are suitably qualified and regularly update their professional expertise.

83. Support for learners is satisfactory. Advice from administration staff at enrolment provides learners with sufficient information for them to make a well-informed choice from the courses available. Leaflets and other promotional materials are appropriate. Learners appreciate the benefits of participating in activities led by supportive and friendly tutors.

84. Teaching and learning standards in sport and leisure are unsatisfactory. Teaching was unsatisfactory, or worse, in over 30 per cent of the lessons observed by inspectors. Many lessons are poorly planned and do not take sufficient account of learners' individual abilities or goals. In the poorer learning sessions, the content of the session is not always appropriate to meet the needs of the learners, and some learners are insufficiently challenged. In these sessions, poor exercise practices are not corrected to enhance performance and learning. The range of teaching strategies used is poor, and tutors frequently participate too much in activities instead of supervising the class. A small number of tutors are not sufficiently aware of the purpose of particular exercises or the muscles involved.

85. Assessment practice is weak. The initial assessment of learners' fitness and skill levels and their reasons for joining sport and leisure classes is poor. However, learners complete a pre-activity questionnaire to assess their readiness for a particular activity, and tutors are aware of individual learners' medical conditions and injuries. Target-setting for learners is poor. Many learners are not asked about their individual goals or why they want to attend sessions. In many learning sessions, there is insufficient observation of learners by tutors and insufficient correction of their exercise techniques. Learners are not given individual feedback on their performance. In a small number of sessions, learners' technique is checked and corrected, and they receive positive evaluations of their individual performance.

86. The curriculum offer in sport and leisure is poor. Many popular subjects are not offered, and the only sports course available is golf. The service has not carried out sufficient research into the needs of the local community or what provision is offered by other sports and fitness providers. The number of courses has decreased significantly over the past year. The service has experienced difficulties in finding suitable accommodation and recruiting appropriately qualified tutors. New progression routes have been introduced this year to include courses at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels.

Leadership and management

87. Curriculum management is weak. The management information system is incomplete and programme managers do not always receive data in sufficient time to assess the performance of courses or the provision overall. No specific targets are set for

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the curriculum area. The number of cancelled classes has been reduced significantly this year, but managers have difficulty in covering classes when tutors are absent from work. Staff development activities allow tutors to update their professional expertise, but events are not always well attended, and some tutors are unaware of the budget which is available for training. Attendance at staff meetings is poor and good practice is not shared sufficiently to bring about continuous improvements in the curriculum area.

88. The arrangements to quality assure sport and leisure courses are incomplete. Learners' and tutors' views are gathered at the end of all courses, but the feedback is not used systematically to evaluate the success of the provision. In 2003-04, just over 60 per cent of tutors were observed in the classroom. However, the feedback given to tutors is insufficiently detailed and actions are not always identified or used to plan for appropriate staff development.

89. There are no partnerships to extend the provision into the local community and meet the needs of under-represented groups of adults. Very few learners are men, and the service does not have any specific targets to increase their participation. The service has planned a number of family learning activities, which involve sport and leisure in an effort to widen participation, but it is too early to judge the impact of these initiatives on the profile of learners enrolling for courses. Most tutors have attended staff development on recent changes to disability and anti-discrimination legislation, and have received information on how to develop learning materials for learners with different abilities and learning styles.

90. The most recent self-assessment report for sport and leisure is insufficiently detailed and does not evaluate the reasons for the strengths and weaknesses identified. Some of the strengths are no more than normal practice, and important weaknesses such as unsatisfactory teaching and learning, and weak assessment practices are not identified. Some staff have a poor awareness of the self-assessment process. The grade given by inspectors for the area of learning was lower than the grade given by the service.

Visual & performing arts & media

Visual & performing arts & media		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts - Adult and community learning	374	2
Crafts - Adult and community learning	316	3

Arts

Strengths

- very good standard of technical and creative work
- good retention rates on non-accredited courses
- particularly good teaching and learning
- good specialist teaching accommodation and facilities
- good range of courses

Weaknesses

- insufficient formal recording of learners' progress
- insufficient participation by under-represented groups
- poor pre-course information for non-accredited courses
- poor communications between managers and tutors

Crafts

Strengths

- good standard of technical work
- good retention rates on non-accredited courses
- good teaching and learning
- good specialist teaching accommodation and facilities

Weaknesses

- insufficient formal recording of learners' progress
- insufficient participation by under-represented groups
- poor pre-course information for non-accredited courses
- poor communications between managers and tutors

Achievement and standards

91. The standard of technical and creative work in visual and performing arts is good. In arts, it is very good. Learners on arts courses combine good technical competence with

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creative ability, particularly in sculpture, life drawing and oil painting classes. Learners in a sculpture class show a good understanding of form, proportion and anatomy in their clay models. Learners in a life drawing class confidently use different media such as charcoal, pastels, oil and pencil, and are keen to experiment with unfamiliar drawing techniques. In upholstery classes, learners carry out a wide range of challenging tasks such as re-caning, renewing springs, re-upholstery and piping. Some upholstery learners are developing their skills for commercial use outside the classroom, as this skill is in short supply in the local area. Learners approach their work confidently, and are very articulate in their critiques of their own, and others' work. Their personal goals are enriched through visits to workshops, museums, galleries and exhibitions.

92. Retention rates are good for non-accredited visual and performing arts courses. Most of the provision in this curriculum area is non-accredited. In 2003-04, almost 90 per cent of arts and crafts learners were retained. Retention rates have improved steadily each year from 2001-02, when they were 77 per cent and 81 per cent, respectively, for arts and crafts. Retention rates on the small number of accredited courses are satisfactory, averaging 72 per cent in 2003-04.

93. Achievement rates on accredited crafts courses have been poor for the past two years, but the service has now discontinued this area of its provision. In 2003-04, none of the 61 learners on nine accredited programmes, including interior design, photography, pottery and upholstery, has achieved a qualification. In 2002-03, just under 20 per cent of the 106 learners on 11 craft courses gained a certificate.

Quality of education and training

94. Teaching and learning are good in visual and performing arts. Almost 80 per cent of the teaching sessions observed by inspectors were good or better. In arts classes, it was 100 per cent. Many learners are engaged in individual project work and tutors work very closely with learners who have a wide range of abilities. Many of the tutors are specialists in their subject areas and are well qualified. Learners are well motivated and work with enthusiasm and conviction. They are fully encouraged to explore and develop their creative ideas, particularly in sculpture, life drawing, pottery, painting and stained glass classes. Tutors give constructive feedback to learners and nurture a safe, but challenging, working environment. Staff inspire learners by showing them examples of their own work and demonstrating the skills of their trade.

95. Learners use good specialist teaching accommodation and facilities. A new arts studio has been built at the main college site which incorporates good storage facilities, window blinds for the life drawing class, adjustable easels, sinks and portable lamps. A new, purpose-built pottery centre is well equipped with pottery wheels, a kiln, good storage facilities and spacious work surfaces. Learners value the good accommodation and wide-ranging equipment. Most classes are accessible to learners with restricted mobility. The good storage facilities ensure that learners do not have to carry large amounts of equipment or work to and from classrooms. However, there is a shortage of space in a small number of classrooms, including those used for upholstery and sewing.

96. The range of arts courses is good. Many are available at different levels from beginner to advanced. In addition to more traditional courses, the service runs specialist courses in life sculpture, life drawing and painting with oils. Many learners travel a significant distance from other parts of London to participate in these classes. The range of crafts courses is satisfactory in most disciplines.

97. There is insufficient formal recording of learners' progress on visual and performing arts courses. The service has attempted to introduce standard paperwork for individual learning plans and to record progress, but many tutors have ignored this initiative. Some tutors use their own recording systems, many of which do not show targets for learners. Tutors and learners do not appreciate the importance of the paperwork. The use of internal verification procedures to monitor assessment practices is inconsistent. Internal verification is satisfactory on some courses where good links have been developed with external verifiers, but poorly co-ordinated and incomplete in other areas of the provision.

98. Participation rates are poor for under-represented groups of learners in visual and performing arts. Most of the courses are held at the main college, with only a small number of community-based initiatives. Only 7 per cent of enrolments on arts and crafts courses are by learners from minority ethnic groups. At the time of the inspection, only 4 per cent of arts learners are from minority ethnic groups and 19 per cent are men. The service does not have a strategy to increase participation rates for these under-represented groups.

99. Pre-course information for non-accredited courses is poor. Some learners enrol on courses that are not appropriate for their levels of ability and experience. Publicity materials do not contain sufficient information on the potential costs of additional equipment which learners are likely to have to purchase. Many learners do not receive this information until they attend their first class. Some learners have expressed their dissatisfaction with incomplete or inaccurate information in end-of-course reviews. The prospectus does not clearly identify the opportunity for learners to pay their course fees each term, rather than annually.

Leadership and management

100. The leadership and management of visual and performing arts have undergone considerable change over the past 12 months. The service has identified that the management arrangements need to improve in this curriculum area. The service has appointed a programme manager who works on a part-time basis, and who shares the role temporarily with a colleague from another department. Managers are seeking to recruit a permanent replacement for this temporary appointment. The new programme manager has started to implement new initiatives to widen participation, improve progression routes, monitor learners' progress and develop external partnerships, but it is too early to judge the impact of these changes as yet.

101. Communication between managers and tutors is poor. Staff do not fully understand management roles and responsibilities and are unclear about the strategic

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direction of the curriculum area. Tutors are frustrated by poor communications, and some do not feel that their ideas and concerns are fully noted or responded to. Staff do not feel sufficiently involved in the development of new paperwork for learners. Staff meetings are poorly attended, with only half the tutors, or less, in attendance. The purpose of the meetings is not clearly identified.

102. The quality assurance arrangements for crafts courses are incomplete. Progress has been slow towards meeting the targets set for the classroom observation of tutors. Staff who have been observed do not always receive feedback on their performance, or suggestions on how to improve their teaching practice. Learners' feedback is gathered but not analysed or used effectively to identify trends in teaching and learning. However, the standard of teaching and learning in crafts is good.

103. The self-assessment report for visual and performing arts identifies some of the strengths, but understates the positive impact of some parts of the provision, most notably the good development of learners' skills, and the good teaching and learning. No weaknesses are identified in the report. The grade given by inspectors for the curriculum area was better than that identified by the service.

English, languages & communications

English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Languages - Adult and community learning	811	3

Languages

Strengths

- good achievement rates on some accredited courses
- good teaching and learning on level 2 and 3 courses

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of the target language in most entry and level 1 classes
- insufficient focus on meeting the needs of some learners

Achievement and standards

104. Achievement rates for some accredited courses are good. For example, in 2003-04, the achievement rates for GCSE Italian and GCSE Spanish were 85 per cent. Achievement rates for EFL courses in 2003-04 ranged from 62 per cent to 92 per cent. These modern foreign language and EFL courses account for a significant proportion of the provision in this curriculum area. Many learners who start on non-accredited beginner courses, progress onto courses which lead to a qualification.

105. Most learners develop appropriate standards of work. Almost all of the learners attain at least satisfactory levels of competence in language learning, speaking, listening, reading and writing. They increase their confidence and most achieve the aim of being able to use the target language for a variety of purposes, such as communicating with friends and family members, and travel abroad. Other learners, particularly those on EFL courses, express satisfaction that they are able to use their learning for study and work purposes.

106. Retention rates are satisfactory. In 2003-04, the retention rates for accredited and non-accredited modern foreign language courses were 93 per cent and 66 per cent, respectively. Retention rates on accredited and non-accredited EFL courses were 87 per cent and 91 per cent, respectively.

Quality of education and training

107. The standard of teaching and learning on level 2 and 3 courses is good. Almost all of the good or better teaching observed by inspectors in modern foreign languages and EFL was on intermediate and advanced level courses. Lessons are planned well and form part of a structured scheme of work. Tutors pay careful attention to the development of learners' listening and speaking skills in most classes. Tutors set learners challenging tasks and use a wide variety of interesting resources to stimulate meaningful conversations. Learners contribute well during pair and group work, and tutors use effective strategies to reinforce previous learning.

108. Accommodation at the main college is satisfactory. Classrooms are bright and furnished well. Learners appreciate the good arrangements for purchasing refreshments. However, the acoustics in most classrooms are poor. Learners have difficulty in hearing the tutor and each other. Good use is made of compact discs and audio tapes, although some tape recorders are of poor quality. Learners have insufficient access to ICT and the internet at the main college. Learning resources are appropriate but the college does not have a central area where learners can carry out independent learning using the textbooks, dictionaries and multimedia which are available.

109. The range of modern foreign language and EFL courses is satisfactory. The choice in the most popular courses, such as French and Spanish, is good and ranges from beginner to advanced level. Learners' feedback is analysed and used to identify improvements to the course offer. However, very few community language courses are available. The service is planning to widen the choice of languages to reflect the needs of the local community more accurately, and to meet the demand for business language courses.

110. Guidance and support for learners are satisfactory. Learners have access to an appropriate range of sources of information about courses, including the service's website. Detailed course content sheets are available for all programmes. Learners on EFL courses take part in regular advice and guidance sessions where their oral and written English skills are assessed. Learners on all courses praise the supportive learning environments created by most tutors.

111. There is insufficient use of the target language in most modern foreign language entry and level 1 courses. In many of the satisfactory and unsatisfactory learning sessions observed by inspectors at these levels, tutors do not use appropriate strategies to ensure maximum use of the target language. Learners have insufficient opportunities to practise the language and receive feedback on their performance. Activities are not always linked to everyday situations which the learners can relate to.

112. There is insufficient focus on meeting the needs of some learners. Some classes are too large, and tutors find it difficult to deal with the requirements of all learners. Some learners are placed on inappropriate courses. Their language skills are not assessed before they join programmes. In the poorer learning sessions, target-setting is weak and learners' progress is not monitored adequately. The lack of measurable targets

particularly affects learners on non-accredited courses who do not wish to have their language skills recognised by an external awarding body. Tutors are trying to use the new learning paperwork developed by the service, but it is not valued by all staff.

Leadership and management

113. The day-to-day operational management of the languages department is effective. Communications between managers and tutors are good. Staff meetings which are held every term are used to review courses and plan provision. These meetings are reasonably well attended and opportunities exist for tutors to share good practice. Staff have a good relationship with a neighbouring borough's adult education service to rationalise the languages provision and to run staff development events. Training for staff is satisfactory, but incomplete records of tutors' qualifications prevent managers from being able to accurately assess staff development needs.

114. The arrangements for quality assurance are satisfactory. Managers have made considerable progress in implementing a system of classroom observations, and met the service's target of observing 50 per cent of tutors in 2003-04. New staff are inducted carefully into their roles and their teaching is observed during their first term of employment. However, some tutors have worked for the service for a considerable period of time without being observed. Observation reports are detailed and contain some useful recommendations for tutors' development, but variations in the quality of teaching are wide. Staff did not have sufficient input into the development of new paperwork for learners. Potentially useful management data is unreliable.

115. The self-assessment report identifies the strengths in learners' achievements, but does not give sufficient emphasis to the strengths and weaknesses identified in the quality of teaching and learning. Some of the strengths are no more than normal practice, and the service does not identify any weaknesses for the curriculum area. The grade given by inspectors was lower than that given by the service.

Foundation programmes

Foundation programmes		5
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>ESOL</i> - Adult and community learning	357	5
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i> - Adult and community learning	87	4
<i>Independent living and leisure skills</i> - Adult and community learning	250	4

ESOL*Strengths*

- responsive curriculum design

Weaknesses

- poor achievement rates
- poor teaching and learning
- inadequate use of resources
- poor target-setting for learners
- weak assessment of individual learners' progress
- insufficient focus on equality of opportunity

Literacy and numeracy*Strengths*

- very good achievement rates on accredited courses

Weaknesses

- inadequate resources
- unsatisfactory curriculum management

Independent living and leisure skills

Strengths

- good development of learners' social skills
- good geographical spread of courses across the borough

Weaknesses

- poor teaching and learning
- poor resources
- inadequate initial assessment
- weak formal recording of learners' progress
- weak curriculum management

Achievement and standards

116. Achievement rates on the small number of accredited literacy and numeracy courses are very good. In 2003-04, 83 per cent and 91 per cent of learners on literacy and numeracy courses, respectively, achieved qualifications at entry level and level 1. Many learners have little or no experience of formal education, and gain confidence in acquiring new skills. Those interviewed can identify the positive effects of learning on their everyday lives. Some learners on literacy courses also achieve ICT qualifications which help them to progress onto higher-level programmes.

117. Learners on independent living and leisure courses develop good social skills. Tutors encourage learners to develop their verbal communication skills during learning sessions and in their own time. Learners' challenging behaviour is managed effectively by tutors, and learners support each other well. A group of learners meet socially on a regular basis and their friendships provide additional opportunities to practise and develop their conversational skills.

118. The standard of learners' work on foundation programmes is satisfactory. Learners on literacy and numeracy courses are well motivated and are proud of their achievements. In 2003-04, just over 30 per cent of literacy and numeracy learners progressed to higher-level courses. On accredited independent living and leisure courses, just over 90 per cent of the learners achieved the learning outcomes. However, they do not find many of the outcomes sufficiently challenging. The targets set for groups of ESOL learners do not help learners develop their individual personal and learning skills. Insufficient reliable information is available to measure the progress made by ESOL learners.

119. Achievement rates for learners on ESOL courses are poor. In 2003-04, only 27 per cent of the 360 learners on accredited courses achieved a qualification. The monitoring of learners' progress on non-accredited ESOL courses is inadequate.

Quality of education and training

120. The good range of ESOL courses is responsive to learners' needs. Different groups of learners are attracted to different locations and types of provision. Courses are offered at a wide range of levels, and take place at times that are very convenient for learners. Staff who are responsible for advice and guidance effectively match the abilities of new learners to the most appropriate class. Short, intensive courses allow learners to gain the necessary language skills quickly so they can progress onto vocational courses.

121. The geographical spread of independent living and leisure courses throughout the borough is good. Classes take place in a wide range of community venues, including day centres and schools. This enables learners to attend courses in locations where they feel comfortable and confident. The proximity of courses to local communities is particularly appreciated by those learners who are unable to travel. Where courses are held in partner organisations' venues, tutors use the skills and expertise of the staff to provide personal care for learners and specialist equipment. The range of literacy and numeracy courses is satisfactory. The service has worked in partnership with some employers to improve literacy and numeracy skills within the local workforce. Although introductory numeracy courses held in local schools have attracted new learners, most literacy and numeracy programmes are under-subscribed and insufficient use is made of community venues.

122. Support for learners' personal and learning needs is satisfactory. All new learners attend advice and guidance interviews at the start of their course to help them identify their support needs. In some cases, this support is particularly responsive to meet the needs of learners where courses are arranged at short notice. Learners' attendance and punctuality are monitored appropriately. Procedures which are sensitive to the needs of adult learners are used to investigate absenteeism. Learners with children have access to good crèche facilities in some centres. Tutors who have sign language qualifications help deaf learners and provide good resources, such as large keyboards and handouts in large print, for learners with additional physical or sensory needs. However, learners on independent living and leisure courses do not receive sufficient support in class, and adaptive technology is not used sufficiently on many courses.

123. Standards of teaching and learning are poor on ESOL and independent living and leisure courses. More than 30 per cent of the lessons observed by inspectors in these two areas of learning were unsatisfactory or worse. Teaching and learning on literacy and numeracy courses are satisfactory. In the learning sessions which are satisfactory, or less than satisfactory, planning is poor and tutors use a narrow range of teaching strategies. Too much reliance is placed on the use of worksheets as an aid to learning. Tutors frequently fail to identify individual learning styles and some learners are not sufficiently challenged to achieve higher standards of work. Insufficient use is made of group work. In ESOL classes, learners all work at the same rate, and their speaking skills are insufficiently developed. Many lessons are dull and uninspiring, and tutors do not use enough examples from learners' lives to help them understand the teaching. In the good learning sessions, tutors carefully check learners' understanding and monitor learning outcomes. Tutors encourage learners to continue with their studies outside the

classroom and homework is assessed promptly.

124. Resources are poor. Some courses take place in cramped classrooms which are used to store furniture. Tutors often have insufficient workspace in which to prepare lessons. Inadequate use is made of interactive technology and specialist software in many learning sessions. Some of the accommodation used for ESOL courses has poor acoustics. The range of learning resources is inadequate, and does not stimulate learners' interest. Access to resources at community venues for independent study, such as textbooks and the internet, is poor. Wall space in classrooms is not used sufficiently to display learners' work. Teaching resources are not checked sufficiently to ensure equality of opportunity and, in some cases, materials are used that only focus on certain religions and faiths. Some of the resources are not suitable for adults. Most tutors have appropriate qualifications. In literacy and numeracy, their experience is linked well to the content of each course. However, some independent living and leisure tutors have insufficient specialist knowledge, and many tutors on ESOL courses have not been trained to use interactive learning technology.

125. Target-setting for learners on ESOL courses is poor. Tutors experience delays in receiving information about learners from their interviews and initial assessments. The information is not used sufficiently to set learners detailed targets in their individual learning plans. Some individual learning plans are incomplete and are not regularly updated. The targets are too general to be used to accurately measure learners' progress or achievements.

126. The arrangements for the assessment and recording of learners' progress are weak on ESOL and independent living and leisure courses. ESOL learners do not receive sufficient feedback to enable them to measure their progress. Some learners do not fully understand what they need to do to achieve their learning outcomes, and tutors do not link learners' progress to their personal learning goals. Procedures to record learners' progress on independent living and leisure courses are weak. Many individual learning plans are not completed, and learners who attend more than one course do not have combined learning plans that bring together their different targets. Some plans record learners' completion of tasks, rather than their development of skills.

Leadership and management

127. The leadership and management of foundation programmes are poor. ESOL and independent living and leisure tutors do not receive sufficient staff development. Not enough importance is placed on training staff on equality and diversity issues, teaching and learning strategies and improving their subject knowledge. The professional development of literacy and numeracy staff is satisfactory. Many of the literacy and numeracy courses which should have started at the beginning of the 2004-05 academic year have been postponed. Twenty-nine per cent of the learners, who are currently enrolled on literacy and numeracy courses, are not receiving any training. Procedures to maintain these learners' interest and motivation are poor. Although the reliability of data is starting to improve, management information is incomplete and does not accurately record learners' progress and achievements. Staff are unclear about definitions of

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retention and achievement.

128. Quality assurance arrangements are inadequate. Staff are not sufficiently aware of the importance of quality assurance procedures. The service does not carry out enough lesson observations for foundation programmes, and has not identified some significant weaknesses in teaching and learning on many courses. The outcomes of observations are not used sufficiently to plan staff development and training. Staff do not have enough opportunities to meet and share good practice. Although focus groups have been set up for learners to gather feedback, they are poorly attended and learners do not fully understand their purpose. Learners' comments and recommendations are not used to bring about continuous improvements. Internal verification records for accredited independent living and leisure courses were unavailable at the time of the inspection, and tutors have a poor understanding of internal moderation processes.

129. There is insufficient focus on equality of opportunity on ESOL courses. Many tutors have a poor understanding of equality and diversity. Teaching materials do not reflect the diverse nature of the local community and contain very few visual images of learners from different minority ethnic groups. A small number of tutors have a poor awareness of how inappropriate examples from a specific religion or culture affect learners' understanding of some subjects. Very few publicity materials exist in languages other than English, although the service is starting to develop multi-lingual promotional materials. Targets have not yet been agreed to recruit under-represented groups of learners, such as men, into ESOL courses.

130. The self-assessment report for foundation programmes does not identify the significant weaknesses in teaching and learning, resources and curriculum management. Much of the report is too descriptive and does not assess the impact of actions on the quality of the learners' experience. Staff are not sufficiently involved in the self-assessment process and have a poor awareness of the strengths and weakness of the curriculum area. Where programme managers have identified strengths and weaknesses for foundation programmes, these have not been used in the most recent report. The grade given by the inspectors for the area of learning was significantly lower than that given by the service.