

# REINSPECTION REPORT

## **Leicestershire LEA Reinspection**

**30 September 2005**



ADULT LEARNING  
INSPECTORATE

## Grading

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

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

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

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

## Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

# REINSPECTION REPORT

## Leicestershire LEA Reinspection

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## REINSPECTION REPORT

### DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Leicestershire County Council provides adult and community learning through the Leicestershire adult learning service (the service). The service is situated within the education department of the county council. The director of education has overall responsibility, which he exercises through the assistant director for school, college and community support, who, in turn, line manages the principal adult learning officer. In 2004-05 the service provided 3,280 accredited and non-accredited learning programmes to 22,993 learners in 60 settings, including community colleges, primary schools, community centres, village halls, public houses, hospitals, care homes and voluntary sector organisations' premises. Mobile and peripatetic staff deliver training in areas where there are no suitable permanent premises. In addition to a small management team based at County Hall, the service employs a number of area learning managers and curriculum area managers to oversee the geographical and curriculum management aspects of the provision.
2. The service operates courses in all 14 of the pre-August 2005 areas of learning. Only 10 of these had enough learners to be inspected at the time of the previous inspection and a similar situation existed at the time of reinspection. Those areas which had been good or better at the previous inspection were not fully inspected and were not regraded.

### SCOPE OF PROVISION

#### Sciences & mathematics

3. Most of the classes are for the general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) in mathematics, with one AS/A2 level mathematics course and one short course in astronomy. Throughout 2004-05, 442 learners were enrolled on 46 courses at 19 sites, representing 2 per cent of Leicestershire's adult and community learning provision. At the time of reinspection, there were 326 learners in 25 classes. Most learners are between 19 and 39 years of age. Seventy-seven per cent of the learners are women. Six per cent of the learners are from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is similar to the profile of the local community. Since the previous inspection, the science provision has been reviewed and the current offer is restricted to astronomy. Within the skills for life area, which is implementing the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language, pre-GCSE mathematics courses are offered to those learners not ready to take the GCSE course. Courses are delivered by 18 part-time tutors at 19 school sites, mainly in the evenings. There is no weekend provision.

### **Land-based provision**

4. One hundred and thirty-four learners are currently enrolled in this area of learning. Of these, 122 are studying floristry and 12 are studying horticulture. Seven per cent of the learners are men, 4 per cent are from minority ethnic groups and 2 per cent have learning and/or physical disabilities. Six courses are operating in five centres throughout the county. A number of other main centres, with subsidiary out-stations, are available, but no learners were enrolled at the time of reinspection. Courses for 2005-06 are available as day or evening classes of 12 to 30 weeks' duration. Fourteen more courses are planned for later in the year and most of these will be one-day courses. Learners receive course information before the courses begin and can discuss the course with a manager or tutor before enrolling. Tutors and managers will advise and guide learners to more appropriate provision if the proposed course does not suit the learners' needs. The local careers service is also used if tutors are unable to provide prospective learners with appropriate advice and guidance. Progression to accredited courses and further education is available through the local, specialist land-based college.

### **Information & communications technology**

5. There are 1,670 learners enrolled on 154 information and communications technology (ICT) courses. Of these, 31 per cent of learners are men, with nearly 1 per cent of learners from minority ethnic communities. Thirty-two per cent are older learners. Just over 3 per cent of learners have a disability. In the 2004-05 academic year, 6,754 learners enrolled on ICT courses and of these just over 30 per cent were men. The range of courses includes introduction to information technology (IT), word processing, web design, digital photography, online auctions and database. The provision is delivered in 54 venues throughout the county, including a range of community venues and schools. Discrete, mobile ICT provision is offered throughout the county in a variety of local venues. These courses are offered primarily at entry level and level 1, with an increasing number of courses offered at level 2. Just over 46 per cent of the courses are internally or externally accredited. Courses operate during the day and evening with some weekend provision and generally last for between 10 and 60 hours. The county is divided into three areas in which an officer is responsible for ICT strategy. Each area has a manager and three co-ordinating ICT tutors. At the time of the reinspection, 62 tutors were involved in delivering courses.

### **Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**

6. During 2004-05, 5,998 learners took part in 296 courses. This represented 26 per cent of the service's total provision. Managers allocate the provision under the headings of fitness, sport and hospitality. At the time of the reinspection, the number of learners enrolled on courses was 2,117. The curriculum offered has been reduced by 50 per cent. The curriculum does include a very small number of hospitality courses, such as cake decorating and sugarcraft. The area of learning is managed by three curriculum managers, and a lead curriculum officer.

**Visual & performing arts & media**

7. The number of enrolments for 2005-06 is currently 1,985, representing 1,803 learners, compared with total enrolments of 4,296 in 2004-05. However, the visual and performing arts provision remains at 19 per cent of the service's whole provision. The number of courses currently planned for 2005-06 is 294, compared with 429 in 2004-05.

8. A range of classes is offered at 27 locations throughout the county, including community colleges, community centres, village and church halls. During reinspection week, 126 courses were offered, with classes operating throughout the week from Monday to Saturday. Three hundred and twenty-two learners are attending classes. A number of one-day courses are also planned to attract new learners. Most of the courses are non-accredited leisure classes, but five courses do offer externally accredited qualifications. Subjects offered include watercolour, mixed-media painting and design, drawing, pottery, embroidery, lace making, dressmaking, soft furnishings, jewellery making, photography, guitar playing, tap, belly and line dancing.

9. The current learner profile includes 40 learners with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities. Seventy-eight per cent of all learners are women and 3 per cent of the learners are from minority ethnic groups.

**English, languages & communications**

10. The service provided 297 courses in modern foreign languages, English, creative writing, and British Sign Language (BSL) and an internationally recognised communication programme for people with communication difficulties, with a total of 4,000 enrolments in 2004-2005. Modern foreign languages include Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Italian, Greek, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish and Punjabi. Over 80 per cent of the provision is accredited, with English offered at GCSE, AS and A2 levels, and many modern foreign languages courses are accredited through the Open College Network (OCN) from level 1 to 3. Most learners in modern foreign languages study French and Spanish. Nearly 80 per cent of the provision takes place in the evening, with courses ranging from eight to 32 weeks and delivered at around 26 different locations. At the time of reinspection, in week three of 2005-06, 160 courses were operating in modern foreign languages, attended by a total of 2,245 learners.

## Foundation programmes

11. The service offers literacy and numeracy courses, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) courses, and courses for adults with learning difficulties and disabilities. Courses are offered during the day and in the evening in a range of venues which includes community centres, schools, day centres and libraries. Learners can gain accredited qualifications. These include national literacy, numeracy and ESOL qualifications from entry level 1 to level 2. In programmes for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, some of them follow nationally accredited programmes.

12. Courses vary in length. Programmes for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities range from two to 16 hours each week for up to 38 weeks. There are also two full-time programmes for such learners. Literacy, numeracy and ESOL courses are mainly available for two hours each week for between 10 and 30 weeks.

13. The provision is managed by two curriculum managers, one manager for literacy and numeracy and ESOL, and one for programmes for learners with difficulties and disabilities, in each of the three geographical areas. These staff are supported by co-ordinators for each programme area.

14. During the most recent contract year, the service enrolled 2,082 learners. Currently, there are 330 learners on the literacy, numeracy and ESOL programmes and 502 learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. Fifty-nine per cent of learners on skills for life programmes are women and 14 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. Forty-four per cent of learners have some form of disability. There are 13 family learning language and/or numeracy programmes in schools or pre-school settings and three wider family learning programmes. Further programmes are planned for the following year.

## ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Number of inspectors                               | 18  |
| Number of inspection days                          | 82  |
| Number of learners interviewed                     | 516 |
| Number of staff interviewed                        | 193 |
| Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited | 129 |
| Number of partners/external agencies interviewed   | 13  |
| Number of visits                                   | 5   |

## OVERALL JUDGEMENT

15. At the previous inspection, leadership and management were very weak as were the arrangements for quality assurance. The approach to equality of opportunity was unsatisfactory. The provision in community development was outstanding, and it was good in family learning and humanities. Sciences and mathematics, floristry, arts, crafts, dance and music, English, languages, literacy and numeracy and other contributory area



programmes were all satisfactory. Using IT and ESOL programmes were unsatisfactory and the provision in leisure, sport and recreation was very weak. At the end of the reinspection process, all aspects of the provision were found to be satisfactory or better. The community development, family learning and humanities areas of learning were not regraded.

## GRADES

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

*Grades awarded at previous inspection*

| <b>Leadership and management</b> |  | <b>5</b> |
|----------------------------------|--|----------|
| Contributory grades:             |  |          |
| Equality of opportunity          |  | 4        |
| Quality assurance                |  | 5        |

| <b>Sciences &amp; mathematics</b>                    |                    | <b>3</b>           |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:                                  | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <b>Mathematics</b><br>- Adult and community learning | 504                | 3                  |

| <b>Land-based provision</b>                        |                    | <b>3</b>           |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:                                | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <b>Floristry</b><br>- Adult and community learning | 170                | 3                  |

| <b>Information &amp; communications technology</b> |                    | <b>4</b>           |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:                                | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <b>Using IT</b><br>- Adult and community learning  | 1688               | 4                  |

| <b>Hospitality, sport, leisure &amp; travel</b>                        |                    | <b>5</b>           |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:  | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <b>Leisure, sport and recreation</b><br>- Adult and community learning | 2990               | 5                  |

## LEICESTERSHIRE LEA REINSPECTION

| <b>Visual &amp; performing arts &amp; media</b> |                    | <b>3</b>           |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:                             | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <b>Arts</b><br>- Adult and community learning   | 1026               | 3                  |
| <b>Crafts</b><br>- Adult and community learning | 513                | 3                  |
| <b>Dance</b><br>- Adult and community learning  | 407                | 3                  |
| <b>Music</b><br>- Adult and community learning  | 140                | None               |

| <b>Humanities</b>   |                    | <b>2</b>           |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:   | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <b>Other contributory areas</b><br>- Adult and community learning | 229                | 2                  |

| <b>English, languages &amp; communications</b>     |                    | <b>3</b>           |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:                                | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <b>English</b><br>- Adult and community learning   | 203                | 3                  |
| <b>Languages</b><br>- Adult and community learning | 2335               | 3                  |

| <b>Foundation programmes</b>                                      |                    | <b>3</b>           |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:   | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <b>ESOL</b><br>- Adult and community learning                     | 112                | 4                  |
| <b>Literacy and numeracy</b><br>- Adult and community learning    | 354                | 3                  |
| <b>Other contributory areas</b><br>- Adult and community learning | 784                | 3                  |

| <b>Family learning</b>         |                    | <b>2</b>           |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:            | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| - Adult and community learning | 1244               | 2                  |

| <b>Community development</b>   |                    | <b>1</b>           |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:            | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| - Adult and community learning | 898                | 1                  |

*Grades awarded at reinspection*

| <b>Leadership and management</b> |  | <b>2</b> |
|----------------------------------|--|----------|
| Contributory grades:             |  |          |
| Equality of opportunity          |  | 3        |
| Quality assurance                |  | 3        |

| <b>Sciences &amp; mathematics</b>                    |                    | <b>3</b>           |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:                                  | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <b>Mathematics</b><br>- Adult and community learning | 326                | 3                  |

| <b>Land-based provision</b>                        |                    | <b>2</b>           |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:                                | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <b>Floristry</b><br>- Adult and community learning | 134                | 2                  |

| <b>Information &amp; communications technology</b> |                    | <b>3</b>           |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:                                | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <b>Using IT</b><br>- Adult and community learning  | 1670               | 3                  |

## LEICESTERSHIRE LEA REINSPECTION

| <b>Hospitality, sport, leisure &amp; travel</b>                        |                    | <b>3</b>           |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:  | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <b>Leisure, sport and recreation</b><br>- Adult and community learning | 2117               | 3                  |

| <b>Visual &amp; performing arts &amp; media</b> |                    | <b>3</b>           |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:                             | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <b>Arts</b><br>- Adult and community learning   | 179                | 3                  |
| <b>Crafts</b><br>- Adult and community learning | 122                | 3                  |
| <b>Dance</b><br>- Adult and community learning  | 21                 | 3                  |

| <b>English, languages &amp; communications</b>     |                    | <b>2</b>           |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:                                | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <b>English</b><br>- Adult and community learning   | 228                | 2                  |
| <b>Languages</b><br>- Adult and community learning | 2017               | 2                  |

| <b>Foundation programmes</b>                                      |                    | <b>2</b>           |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:   | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <b>ESOL</b><br>- Adult and community learning                     | 118                | 3                  |
| <b>Literacy and numeracy</b><br>- Adult and community learning    | 212                | 3                  |
| <b>Other contributory areas</b><br>- Adult and community learning | 502                | 2                  |

## KEY FINDINGS

### Achievement and standards

16. **There are good pass rates on GCSE mathematics courses.** Of the learners reaching the end of their courses in 2004-05, 79 per cent achieved their target qualification. The GCSE pass rate at grade C or above is particularly good, at 64 per cent.

17. **Achievements in English and languages are good.** Pass rates for learners who complete their courses are very good. In 2004-05, 90 per cent of learners were successful at the end of their courses.

18. **There is good skills development in the ICT, land-based, leisure, sport and recreation provisions. Learners in visual and performing arts demonstrate a good standard of work and make significant personal gains.**

19. **Retention on GCSE mathematics courses is poor.** Retention has declined since the previous inspection. It was 82 per cent in 2002-03, but declined to 63 per cent in 2004-05. The retention of learners on GCSE courses varies. Retention on some courses was 100 per cent, but on seven courses it fell below 50 per cent.

### Quality of education and training

20. **Standards of teaching on land-based programmes and programmes for learners with difficulties and disabilities are good. There is also much good teaching in mathematics and sport and leisure.** Mathematics tutors plan their lessons well and have clear objectives for what their learners should achieve. Many lessons have a lively pace. Tutors are enthusiastic and knowledgeable and introduce their work in plain, clear language. On land-based courses, tutors use a wide variety of methods appropriate to the learners' needs, and encourage design, creativity, colour, texture and seasonal awareness. Tutors' demonstrations set a very good standard and learners are encouraged to aim for a similar standard. In sport and leisure, tutors now stimulate and promote learning through a range of challenging activities in classes. Group work and partner work feature in the better classes and learners learn from, and are critical of, one another. Much of the teaching and learning in programmes for learners with difficulties and disabilities is good, and some is outstanding. Tutors plan realistic learning activities to which learners respond with enthusiasm. Literacy and numeracy activities are designed so that development in these areas is a natural extension of the practical activities.

21. **Support for individual learners' needs in arts, crafts and dance classes, and literacy, numeracy and ESOL is good.** Many arts, crafts and dance classes are conducted as workshops, with individual tuition reflecting the learners' level of ability. In literacy, numeracy and ESOL classes there is effective lesson planning for differentiation in mixed level groups, and tutors are free to offer support on an individual basis to those learners who need most help.

22. **Resources for floristry are good.** The accommodation used for classes is good. It is light and airy with spacious working areas that suit the practical nature of the classes. Tables are at a good height for this work. Tutors enhance the flowers and plant materials that the learners supply, with other material of their own.

23. **A wide range of courses and venues meets learners' needs in ICT.** The service provides a good range of courses throughout the county in a wide range of venues. The

mobile computing section also visits old people's homes, care centres and outlying centres. Specific courses are targeted at the over-50s and for those learners who are wary of computers. At the larger centres, learners are able to progress from introductory courses through to more advanced ones. New courses are introduced to meet the changes in IT.

**24. In the English and languages provision, a good range of courses and levels meets the needs of a variety of learners** and provides progression routes in all the main languages offered. In each geographical area, levels range from beginner to intermediate or advanced level, enabling many new learners to achieve the higher stages of the programme. Less popular languages are offered according to demand. English is offered at GCSE, AS and A2 level. Creative writing courses are also offered.

**25. Initial assessments and the setting of individual targets are good in all areas of foundation learning.** Tutors use individual learning plans to agree and set challenging targets in consultation with learners. They monitor progress against these targets at regular intervals and maintain a dialogue with learners throughout the process. Learners and, where appropriate, carers have a clear idea of what they are to achieve. In programmes for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, progress is monitored frequently and regularly. There is an individual weekly review of each learner's response to sessions and a general progress review at least once each term.

**26. The service's links with external agencies in the literacy and numeracy area are good.** These links include partnerships with other learning providers, social services and the National Health Service, Jobcentre Plus and the library service. The partnerships ensure that the full range of learners' support needs is met. A more strategic approach to curriculum planning is beginning to develop in each of the three areas.

**27. There is too much unsatisfactory teaching in ICT.** Fourteen per cent of the lessons observed at inspection were unsatisfactory. In the weaker lessons, preparation and planning were poor with insufficient consideration of the different needs of learners. Exercises are often not sufficiently challenging for learners and some of them spent periods of time with nothing to do. In some classes, there are not enough activities for learners. There is too much working from worksheets and very little interaction with the tutor. Demonstrations by the tutor are often too quick for learners to follow and there is insufficient checking of their understanding.

**28. Some of the lesson planning in English and languages is poor.** In some cases, plans consist of a list of tasks and resources that focus on the tutor's role and do not put the learner at the centre of the process. The plans do not provide a balanced selection of activities to promote skills development and tutors do not make the most of learning opportunities for their classes.

**29. In some modern foreign languages lessons the tutor and the learners do not make sufficient use of the target language.** In these lessons, tutors resort to English for even the most basic instructions and learners are often reluctant to interact in the language being taught. Their confidence levels are significantly below the requirements for this

type of course.

30. **The range of science and mathematics courses is restricted.** The mathematics provision is almost entirely GCSE courses. This meets the needs of some of the local community, but there are no short courses in mathematics. The science provision has been reviewed since the previous inspection and is currently restricted to astronomy. Most of the courses are offered in the evenings. There is very little daytime provision and no courses are offered at the weekends.

31. **The new quality improvement systems and procedures introduced this year for the land-based provision have not been fully implemented.** The new observation system for teaching and learning has not begun yet, although staff training has taken place. The new tutor handbook is not fully understood by all staff and some parts of it are not being used.

32. **Targets for the recruitment of under-represented groups in land-based provision are too low.** The targets for men, members of minority ethnic groups and learners with learning difficulties and disabilities are below the levels already being achieved.

33. **There is insufficient specific staff development in ICT.** Although there has been effective generic staff development concerning new developments, specific ICT training has not been prioritised and a clear need for this has been identified from classroom observations. In some lessons, tutors do not have sufficient knowledge of the software of the operating systems being used and are unable to answer learners' questions. Most tutors have teaching qualifications, but some do not have ICT-specific qualifications.

34. **There are not enough progression routes or accredited courses in leisure, sport and recreation.** A lot of the provision is at level 1, but learners are of mixed abilities. There has been some planned programme loss, with approximately 50 per cent of courses being closed. There is a bias towards yoga and other 'low impact' activities. Not enough activities target the recruitment of men.

35. **The progression opportunities in arts, crafts and dance are restricted.** The number of classes has been reduced to 68 per cent of the number at the time of the previous inspection, but the extent of the provision later in the year is unknown. There is still a good range of arts and crafts classes, but there is no structure to encourage learners to aim for further self-development. Some learners attend beginners' classes for many years, and although they are building on their skills, they do not have sufficient routes for progression to higher levels.

36. **The range of provision available to literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners is inadequate.** The main mode of literacy, numeracy and ESOL learning is through weekly, two-hour classes. The learners interviewed express a desire for more intensive classes to enable them to progress more quickly. There is insufficient planned learning to link language skills to other learning areas, or learning which develops work-related skills. Many learning centres only offer one mixed-level ESOL class.

37. **Some of the accommodation for literacy, numeracy and ESOL classes is inadequate.** In one venue, learning is impeded by constant noise from young people in the community college.

### **Leadership and management**

38. **Support for tutors in science and mathematics and leisure, sport and recreation is good,** and they acknowledge this support, particularly from managers. A tutors' handbook, induction materials, personal skills assessments and reviews for learners have been introduced this year. Several tutors are making use of the newly introduced learning platform which enables them to share their teaching and assessment materials. Tutors welcome the recently introduced specialist-subject meetings and are appreciative of the opportunities for staff development. Regular newsletters to all tutors and newsletters specific to areas of learning keep tutors well informed about all changes and news. Regular training, and attendance at conferences and seminars, as well as smaller training sessions and meetings for individuals, contribute to the development of tutors' confidence and commitment to the new processes. Informal and formal observations of teaching provide feedback to tutors about their performances and actions for improvement. Tutors' contracts include a significant proportion of non-contact hours to enable them to access training and to complete their required administration duties.

39. **Change management in ICT and foundation programmes is good.** There has been extensive, planned and effective curriculum development in the foundation area of learning. Curriculum working parties have considered each stage of the learning process. Changes in curriculum management have been introduced and have been well managed. The ICT curriculum has been thoroughly restructured since the previous inspection. The new staffing structure has enabled tutors to feel better supported and understood by specialists in their own field. The changes planned and implemented have been introduced in a manner that has gained the support of the staff. Staff training in the new processes has been well managed and the new systems are already having an effect on learners. The tutors' handbook is providing a good reference tool for tutors in guiding curriculum improvements and administration. An intensive ESOL training programme supported the development of curriculum-specific skills. During the process of change, communications have been consistently good, being maintained through meetings and newsletters. Tutors have been involved in planning for curriculum change and in the design of new documents for the adult education service and for the foundation area of learning in particular.

40. **Quality assurance is not well developed in the land-based, ICT, and leisure, sport and recreation provisions.** The quality improvement systems built into the new initiatives are not established and it is too soon to be able to judge the effects that they may have. Currently, the systems that support quality improvement, such as a clear understanding of the learners' pre-existing skills and learners' individual goals, are established and are working. Some classroom observations have taken place to check and improve standards, but so far have not had sufficient effect on the service's provision. Learners' feedback is not analysed systematically and reported to managers and tutors to help them to introduce improvements to the quality of the provision.



41. **Decisive management has driven improvements.** Two weeks after publication of the previous inspection report, the council approved the plan to reorganise the adult learning service. This plan had previously been the subject of extensive debate for a number of years.

42. **Communications are now good.** The service has identified good communications as being central to its strategy for change, and has made considerable improvements. Staff and partners have appreciated the time taken by senior managers to visit learning centres throughout the county to explain the actions being taken, and to listen to feedback. There has been good, phased, involvement of staff throughout the service in understanding and contributing to improvements.

43. **The provider uses a very effective range of measures to widen participation by local communities.** This was also a strength at the previous inspection. Specific projects are aimed at widening participation by members of minority ethnic groups, people with disabilities and men.

44. **Good initiatives have been taken to establish effective quality improvement.** These include the tutor/staff handbook, an extensive volume, professionally produced, which sets out in detail the systematic processes for quality improvement, and provides managers and tutors with standardised procedures and documents. All tutors have been trained in using the handbook which is now widely used and understood. Other initiatives include a revised observation of teaching and learning scheme.

## Leadership and management

### Strengths

- decisive management to drive improvement
- good communications
- very effective range of measures to widen participation
- good initiatives to establish quality improvement
- comprehensive and effective tutor/staff handbook

### Weaknesses

- insufficient appraisal opportunities for tutors
- incomplete implementation of quality assurance procedures

## **Sciences & mathematics**

### ***Mathematics***

#### *Strengths*

- good pass rates on GCSE mathematics courses
- good standards of teaching and learning
- good support for tutors

#### *Weaknesses*

- poor retention on GCSE mathematics courses
- restricted range of courses
- inappropriate courses for some learners

## **Land-based provision**

### ***Floristry***

#### *Strengths*

- good development of learners' skills
- good standards of teaching and learning
- good resources

#### *Weaknesses*

- incomplete implementation of quality improvement procedures
- weak target-setting for recruitment of under-represented groups

## **Information & communications technology**

### ***Using IT***

#### *Strengths*

- good development of skills
- wide range of courses and venues to meet learners' needs
- good management of change

#### *Weaknesses*

- too much unsatisfactory teaching
- insufficiently established quality assurance
- insufficient specific ICT staff development

## **Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**

### ***Leisure, sport and recreation***

#### *Strengths*

- good range of skills acquired by learners
- much good teaching
- good support for tutors

#### *Weaknesses*

- restricted range of programmes offered
- incomplete quality monitoring system

## **Visual & performing arts & media**

### **Arts**

#### *Strengths*

- good standards in learners' work
- significant personal gains for learners
- good support for individual learners' needs

#### *Weaknesses*

- restricted progression opportunities
- weak individual target-setting
- insufficient application of quality assurance procedures

### **Crafts**

#### *Strengths*

- good standards in learners' work
- significant personal gains for learners
- good support for individual learners' needs

#### *Weaknesses*

- restricted progression opportunities
- weak individual target-setting
- insufficient application of quality assurance procedures

### **Dance**

#### *Strengths*

- good standards in learners' work
- significant personal gains for learners
- good support for individual learners' needs

#### *Weaknesses*

- restricted progression opportunities
- weak individual target-setting
- insufficient application of quality assurance procedures

## **English, languages & communications**

### ***English***

#### *Strengths*

- good achievement rates
- good range of courses and levels
- good curriculum management

#### *Weaknesses*

- poor lesson planning in some cases

### ***Languages***

#### *Strengths*

- good achievement rates
- good range of courses and levels
- good curriculum management

#### *Weaknesses*

- poor lesson planning in some areas
- insufficient use of the taught language in some lessons

## **Foundation programmes**

### ***ESOL***

#### *Strengths*

- good support for individual learners
- good use of initial assessments and individual learning plans
- particularly effective change management

#### *Weaknesses*

- inadequate range of provision
- poor accommodation for some learners

### ***Literacy and numeracy***

#### *Strengths*

- good support for individual learners
- good use of target-setting for learners
- good links with external agencies

#### *Weaknesses*

- inadequate range of provision

### ***Other contributory areas***

#### *Strengths*

- good standards of teaching
- good support for learners
- very effective curriculum management

#### *Weaknesses*

- no key weaknesses were identified

## 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 |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| <b>Provider</b>                     | <b>Provider</b>                                   | 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  |
| <b>Learner</b>                      | <b>Learner</b>                                    | Includes those learning by participating in community projects, as well as those on courses. Learning, however, will be planned, with intended outcomes.  |
| <b>Teacher / trainer</b>            | <b>Tutor</b>                                      | Person teaching adult learners or guiding or facilitating their learning.   |
|                                     | <b>Mentor</b>                                     | Person providing individual, additional support, guidance and advice to learners to help them achieve their learning goals.   |
| <b>Learning goals</b>               | <b>Main learning goals</b>                        | 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. |
|                                     | <b>Secondary learning goals</b>                   | These may include planned-for gains in self-confidence, and inter-personal skills. These should also be included in learning plans where appropriate.   |
| <b>Personal and learning skills</b> | <b>Personal and learning skills</b>               | 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   |
|--|---|
| <b>Unanticipated, or unintended learning outcome</b> | 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.  |
| <b>Subject-based programme</b>                       | 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.   |
| <b>Issue-based programme</b>                         | 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. |
| <b>Outreach provision</b>                            | 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.   |
| <b>Neighbourhood-based work</b>                      | 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.  |
| <b>Community regeneration</b>                        | 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.   |



| <b>Relating the term to Adult and Community Learning</b> |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Community capacity building</b>                       | 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.  |
| <b>Active citizenship</b>                                | The process whereby people recognise the power they have to improve the quality of life for others and make a conscious effort to do so: the process whereby people recognise the power of organisations and institutions to act in the interests of the common good and exercise their influence to ensure that they do so. Adult learning contributes to active citizenship. |

## DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDING

### LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

#### Strengths

- decisive management to drive improvement
- good communications
- very effective range of measures to widen participation
- good initiatives to establish quality improvement
- comprehensive and effective tutor/staff handbook

#### Weaknesses

- insufficient appraisal opportunities for tutors
- incomplete implementation of quality assurance procedures

45. At the previous inspection, leadership and management were judged to be very weak. The service has made considerable progress since then in resolving the multiple weaknesses identified at that time. In the areas of learning reinspected, the provision has improved in five cases, and has been maintained in the remaining two. All areas are now satisfactory or better. In leadership and management, eight key weaknesses were identified at the previous inspection. Wide-ranging improvements have been made to rectify all these weakness, and most are now judged satisfactory or better. The service has demonstrated its capacity to improve particularly well.

46. The service's management has been decisive in driving improvement. Only two weeks after publication of the previous inspection report, the council approved the plan to reorganise the adult learning service. This plan had previously been the subject of extensive debate for a number of years. Strategic management, judged to be very poor at the previous inspection, has improved significantly and is now good. An appropriate decision was taken regarding staffing, with new posts being created to strengthen the management of the service. All previous management posts were subject to change and thorough recruitment strategies were established.

47. Curriculum management, also judged to be very poor at the previous inspection, is now satisfactory. Well-considered actions have been instigated to develop a new, coherent, curriculum throughout the service. Curriculum development groups have carried out a comprehensive review, and made changes which respond to local learners' needs, and national priorities, including the skills for life and family learning strategies. Some of the curriculum changes were ready for the beginning of the 2005-06 period, but the service recognises that there is still extensive work to be done. Local curriculum management, previously judged to be a weakness in most areas of learning, is now satisfactory or better in all the areas reinspected. Management of change has been particularly effective throughout what has been a very unsettling year for the service.

The provider has been largely successful in ensuring ownership of the changes which have taken place. It is, however, too soon to judge the full effects of the actions taken so far.

48. Communications, judged ineffective at the previous inspection, are now good. The service has identified good communications as being central to its strategy for change, and has achieved considerable improvements in this area. Staff and partners have appreciated the time taken by senior managers to visit learning centres throughout the county to explain the actions being taken, and to listen to feedback. There has been good, phased, involvement of staff throughout the service in understanding and contributing to improvements. Frequent, regular meetings to brief and support managers have been held throughout the year. Most tutors have attended briefings and staff development sessions staged throughout the county. The service is currently developing an appropriate ICT-based 'learning network' to support all staff. This has the potential to provide a further effective communication strand.

49. The service's collection of data is now satisfactory. The provider recognises the need for relevant data to support its monitoring and planning functions. A new ICT-based management information system has been purchased. There is now the capability to analyse and present information relating to the provider's and learners' performances. However, the collection of data from learning centres has only been a systematic process since September 2005. It is too soon to be able to judge the effectiveness of these arrangements.

50. The management of resources is satisfactory. The service has enhanced its capability to manage change and support improvements. Staff are generally well qualified in their specialist areas, and most tutors hold at least basic teaching qualifications. The service is well supported by an administrative team which has also seen substantial changes during the past year. There has been an adequate investment in physical resources, and the service has assumed direct responsibility for managing them. Accommodation is satisfactory overall. The service recognises that it does not have the data to fully cost its provision, although the new management information system will provide this capability during the coming year.

51. At the previous inspection, inadequate staff training and development was a key weakness. The service has made progress in this area, but there are still not enough appraisal opportunities for tutors. Very little structured appraisal of tutors' individual performances and development needs has taken place in the past year. Plans exist to introduce performance and development reviews for managers from November 2005, and for tutors from January 2006. The service has conducted some observations of teaching and learning. In 2004-05, 20 per cent of tutors, mainly new recruits or those considered to be 'at risk' had their teaching observed and received feedback. Staff training and development is now satisfactory. The service has chosen to concentrate much of its training resources on ensuring that all relevant parties have adequate knowledge of its new service procedures, and that staff are informed of the progress of change. Most staff have attended development events staged throughout the county. The service provides free accredited basic teacher training. Currently, 78 per cent of

tutors hold a recognised teaching qualification. The training of observers, and of those responsible for personal development records, has been carried out during the past year, and the service now has the capacity to ensure that it meets its targets for teaching and learning and performance and development reviews during the period 2005 to 2006. The full effects of the service's staff training and development strategy cannot be judged at present.

### **Equality of opportunity**

### **Contributory grade 3**

52. The service uses a very effective range of measures to widen participation by local communities. This was recognised at the previous inspection and in the provider's self-assessment report. Much of this work is done through the areas of community development and family learning which were graded outstanding and good, respectively, in 2004 and have not been regraded during reinspection. Widening participation is in line with the county council's corporate objectives and its corporate equality action plan, which sets targets to improve its equal opportunities provision. The new three-year development plan has realistic targets to increase participation by under-represented groups, particularly minority ethnic groups, people with disabilities and men. Overall recruitment figures for the two former groups match their representation in the local population, but men are under-represented in this context. In some areas, such as arts, crafts and dance, and leisure, sport and recreation, representation from these groups falls well short of the overall figure, and in land-based programmes the targets for recruitment of these groups are below the current representation. Successful projects previously reported continue to attract adults with learning difficulties, disabilities, literacy, numeracy and language needs, and those with mental health issues. Very effective partnership working with a wide range of other council departments, other providers, and local organisations, helps the service to reach these target groups.

53. The service has a comprehensive equal opportunities policy, which complements the council's overall policy. Since the previous inspection, the service has applied this revised policy effectively to all aspects of the adult and community learning provision. A senior manager has been appointed with responsibility for both quality and equality matters. There is also an equality and diversity working group drawn from the service. This group has produced a county-wide handbook for learners and has contributed to the new tutors' handbook. This is a highly valued staff resource which gives guidance on equality and diversity issues.

54. The promotion of equality of opportunity to staff and learners is now satisfactory. This was previously a weakness. Equality and diversity training is now mandatory for all staff. All managers and almost all tutors have attended training. Follow-up action is being taken to provide additional individual, or small group training for the remainder. Equality of opportunity is one aspect of the observation of teaching and learning programme. It is an item on the forms used for all observations. In addition, there is a planned programme of themed observations which focus on equality of opportunity. Equality of opportunity is covered at learners' inductions and there are reminders in the new learners' handbook. The new course brochures contain some positive imagery with pictures of learners representing a variety of minority ethnic groups and ages. The staff

handbook includes advice and the necessary paperwork for requesting any additional needs including literacy, numeracy or language support, or equipment such as hearing loops. Learners' handbooks are available in a variety of community languages, large print and Braille, and there are audio versions. Course brochures detailing the provision for prospective learners with additional learning needs use simple language and a system of symbols common to all organisations in the county working with this target group. The service now has a satisfactory, centralised complaints procedure. The council has appointed a quality and equality officer responsible for monitoring racial incidents.

55. The provider can now make appropriate use of data to monitor the effectiveness of equality of opportunity. Previously there was a weakness of insufficient use of data in this context. Since the previous inspection, the provider has acquired and commissioned appropriate computer hardware and software to enable it to collect and analyse data effectively. Standard reports have been set up which enable managers to monitor enrolment, retention and achievement by gender, ethnic grouping, age and disability, or any combination thereof. The data can be broken down by area of learning, down to class level, or geographically. It is too soon since the restructuring of the service to carry out any meaningful analyses, or to identify trends. The service has set targets and trained administrative staff to identify the missing equal opportunities data.

56. There are regular access audits to identify accessibility for people with disabilities. The service contributes towards the cost of any resultant building work in shared-use council-owned premises, and finances any work required for those premises for which it is solely responsible. These premises are satisfactory for people with impaired mobility. Some of the premises owned by partner organisations do not have adequate facilities for people with disabilities. Equipment to assist learners with sensory impairments is made available when required.

57. The service has a comprehensive and well-documented strategy for the provision of literacy, numeracy and language support. This is detailed in the tutors' handbook. The strategy lists the type of support available and the procedure for requesting it.

### **Quality assurance**

### **Contributory grade 3**

58. At the previous inspection, quality improvement was judged to be poor. Since then the service has made significant progress in resolving the many weaknesses identified at that time. There are still aspects which need improvement, and it is too soon to judge the overall effectiveness of the new quality improvement processes.

59. The service has taken good initiatives to establish effective quality improvement. Central to these initiatives is the tutor/staff handbook, an extensive volume, professionally produced, which sets out in detail the systematic processes for quality improvement, and provides managers and tutors with standardised procedures and documents. All tutors have been trained to use it, and the handbook is now widely used and understood. Further support has been provided through regular visits to learning centres and ongoing training in recognising and recording progress and achievement in non-accredited learning (RARPA). Fifteen per cent of the tutors have attended this

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training so far. It is too soon to judge the overall effectiveness of the handbook, but early activities, such as induction and initial assessment, have been identified as strengths in two curriculum areas.

60. The programme for the observation of teaching and learning has a target of 100 per cent by the end of the academic year 2006. There was a late start in 2004-05 and only 20 per cent of observations have been completed. Each curriculum manager has a schedule of observations, most of which will be carried out by curriculum specialists trained by an external consultant. The target is ambitious and achievable. All new staff are observed in their first term of teaching. New observation arrangements are more judgemental and have the capacity to deliver a more accurate grading profile. Moderation meetings are valued by observers and support the accuracy of the judgements. Two curriculum areas have an improved teaching and learning grade profile this year.

61. The reliability of information about retention and achievement was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection and considerable improvements have been made. Retention and achievement information is now available and reported on a monthly basis. Managers are beginning to use data effectively to monitor and contribute to improvement.

62. There is broad confidence in the reliability of the self-assessment report. At the previous inspection, the report was judged to be too descriptive and not sufficiently self-critical. For the most recent report, contributions were received from curriculum development groups and curriculum managers. Staff are more involved and more familiar with the report.

63. Quality improvement procedures have not been fully implemented. Some staff are using their own lesson planning documents and the system is not sufficiently developed to allow managers' approval of these changes to be recorded. Staff's understanding of the activities risk form varies. Initial skills assessments are inconsistent. Some tutors are uncertain what they need to do. Monitoring visits are to be carried out on a six-monthly basis and key performance indicators have been identified and are monitored monthly. However, there is currently no mechanism for the centralised recording of monitoring activities.

64. Action plans arising from observations are not always followed through and their progress is not monitored sufficiently. Responsibilities for monitoring are not well defined and the process is unclear.

65. Some managers are uncertain as to how data can be used to best effect in curriculum planning and reviews, and feel that they need more training. This is recognised in the self-assessment report. The 2005-06 targets for retention and achievement were set with very little consultation. In one curriculum area, staff do not feel sufficiently involved in the process. Targets for gender and ethnicity are not set consistently.

66. For the period 2004-05, the tutor course report was simplified and reduced in size, but remained a lengthy document. Completion rates were low, and the quality variable. There were insufficient continuous evaluations and reviews. Learners' views were not considered sufficiently and not used effectively to improve the quality of the courses. This weakness was understated in the self-assessment report. The additional learner surveys conducted in Adult Learners' Week, although more celebratory than evaluative, were, however, subject to greater scrutiny. Course reports contribute to a curriculum report which in turn is used in the self-assessment report. Detailed development plans show that the provider is aware of the need to review this aspect of the quality cycle.

67. The final consultation and validation stage of the self-assessment report was inadequate. Inspectors recognised that the report had been brought forward because of the inspection. Individual curriculum reports do not, on a consistent basis, include results from learner surveys or target dates for the completion of actions. In one area self-assessment report, the rate of return of tutor course reports is listed as a weakness and a strength. Some weaknesses are understated, and in one area, the good management of change is not recognised as a strength.

## AREAS OF LEARNING

### Sciences & mathematics

| Sciences & mathematics                               |                    | 3                  |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:                                  | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <b>Mathematics</b><br>- Adult and community learning | 326                | 3                  |

### **Mathematics**

#### *Strengths*

- good pass rates on GCSE mathematics courses
- good standards of teaching and learning
- good support for tutors

#### *Weaknesses*

- poor retention on GCSE mathematics courses
- restricted range of courses
- inappropriate courses for some learners

### **Achievement and standards**

68. Learners' achievements, recognised as a strength at the previous inspection, remain good. Of the learners reaching the end of their courses in 2004-05, 79 per cent achieved their target qualifications. The GCSE pass rate at grade C or above is particularly good, at 64 per cent.

69. Learners are gaining confidence at a personal level and academically. They value the induction process which effectively reintroduces many of them to study. Many learners are very well motivated and eager to learn. They clearly enjoy the challenge of the work and are keen to make progress. Learners are eager to achieve a good GCSE grade to improve their job prospects or to proceed to higher education. Peer support is very effective in many lessons. Learners on the astronomy course confidently discussed their observations of the night sky within their group. In the better mathematics lessons the learners were keen to discuss the basic concepts of number to solve everyday problems.

70. Retention has declined since the previous inspection. It was 82 per cent in 2002-03, but declined to 63 per cent in 2004-05. Retention on GCSE courses is variable. On some courses it was 100 per cent, but on seven courses it fell below 50 per cent.



## Quality of education and training

71. Much of the teaching in this area of learning is good. Tutors plan their lessons well and have clear objectives of what their learners should achieve. Many lessons have a lively pace. Tutors are enthusiastic and knowledgeable and introduce their work in plain, easily understood language. A small number of the lessons were inadequate. The better lessons provide a wide range of teaching and learning activities. In the astronomy lesson the learners were encouraged to role-play the orbit of the moon around the sun. In several mathematics lessons, learners problem-solved in groups, taking it in turns to feed back the method of solving the problem. Learners were encouraged to visualise mathematical problems, break them down into easier steps and relate them to everyday situations. Learners in the astronomy lesson were encouraged to participate in observations across the country and to join a variety of clubs and societies.

72. Learners' progress is assessed and monitored frequently. Homework is set regularly to enable learners to practise their skills. The work is marked promptly. Learners know what needs to be done to improve their work. The initial assessment of learners' skills is usually carried out from a personal skills assessment, which comprises only a self-assessment using a simple set of topics. Some tutors have introduced their own diagnostic tests, with mixed success.

73. Tutors prepare informative course leaflets to a standard format. These provide information about the course, its duration, and progression opportunities. There is also a named telephone contact for further information.

74. The induction process has been reviewed this year and learners speak highly of the experience. Learners are developing links with the skills for life tutors and are able to transfer to pre-GCSE courses which enable them to follow more individualised learning programmes.

75. Subject support for learners in class is satisfactory. Learners' progress is monitored closely and they are provided with effective individual support when required. Informal support is also available from some tutors by telephone and for half an hour before the lessons begin. Lessons are restricted to two hours each week for 33 weeks. There is no drop in mathematics workshop. Learners said that they would welcome a helpline or mathematics surgery to discuss problems between lessons and also to provide revision support before external examinations.

76. Many learners receive satisfactory guidance. Some are interviewed before entry to the course, but this practice is not consistent in some learning centres.

77. The range of courses is restricted. The mathematics provision is almost entirely for GCSE attainment. This meets the needs of some of the local community. There are no short courses in mathematics. The science provision has been reviewed since the previous inspection and the offer is currently restricted to astronomy. There are plans to offer modular science courses to widen participation by members of the community, but these plans have not been implemented. Most of the courses are offered in the

evenings. There is insufficient daytime provision and no courses are offered at the weekends.

78. Some learners are on inappropriate course levels. At some learning centres, learners were enrolled on the GCSE mathematics course when the pre-GCSE 'Move on' course would have been more appropriate. These learners were enrolled before the skills for life managers were appointed and had not had a guidance interview. In some learning centres the learners received guidance during their first lessons. They sampled the work through taster sessions which enabled them to choose between GCSE or the pre-GCSE 'Move On' courses. However, this practice is not applied consistently in all centres.

### **Leadership and management**

79. The accommodation is satisfactory. Almost all of the courses are delivered from community colleges which are suitable for adult learners. Resources are sufficient to meet the needs of the learners, but very little use is made of information and learning technologies. Accessibility to computers and specialist software is restricted in some of the schools. Mathematical modelling software is not available to improve the learning experience. Tutors are well qualified and hold teaching qualifications. They have received ICT training to update their skills but it is recognised that some need further development.

80. Tutors feel well supported. They welcome the support that they receive from managers. Standardised, quality assurance procedures are being implemented. A tutors' handbook, induction materials, personal skills assessments and learners' progress reviews have been introduced this year. Tutors are using the new recording procedures and are generally committed to bringing about improvements in quality. Several tutors are making use of the newly introduced learning platform which enables tutors to share their teaching and assessment materials. Tutors welcome the recently introduced specialist-subject meetings and appreciate the opportunities for staff development.

81. The newly formed management team is committed to providing very good-quality courses which meet the needs of the community. An effective teacher observation scheme is supported by staff development opportunities. Links to staff appraisals are only just being developed. Learners evaluate the service offered and these evaluations are used in the course review process, which in turn is used in the self-assessment process for the area.

82. The quality of the data, recognised as a key weakness at the previous inspection, is now satisfactory. Data is now available for the learner intake by disability, ethnic background and gender. Success data is increasingly being used to monitor the quality of provision and to bring about improvements.

83. The principles of equality of opportunity are included in the induction process and reinforced in lessons. Tutors pay good attention to the needs of individual learners. Learners are respected as equals in the learning process.

## Land-based provision

| Land-based provision                               |                    | 2                  |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:                                | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <b>Floristry</b><br>- Adult and community learning | 134                | 2                  |

### **Floristry**

#### *Strengths*

- good development of learners' skills
- good standards of teaching and learning
- good resources

#### *Weaknesses*

- incomplete implementation of quality improvement procedures
- weak target-setting for recruitment of under-represented groups

## Achievement and standards

84. Learners with no previous experience make good progress and are quickly able to produce arrangements to a very good standard. They then quickly move on to more complex techniques. Learners talk enthusiastically of the progress they have made and are motivated by their acquisition of new skills. They improve their confidence and self-esteem. More confident learners use their skills for the benefit of their families, friends and the community. For example, one learner has enrolled to improve her skills so that she will be more confident in creating decorations for her local church. Retention is satisfactory, with 90 per cent of learners retained in 2004-05. Accreditation is not available in this area and achievements are recorded using progress and achievement monitoring forms. This system has been introduced for this academic year and it is too soon to judge its effects.

## Quality of education and training

85. Learning sessions are well managed, creating a safe environment for learning and for learners taking their first steps back into education. Tutors are sympathetic to the needs of the learners and make every effort to ensure that they are comfortable within the classroom environment. Learners are challenged to reach their full potential, and learn to examine and develop their own personal perceptions of the subject. They are encouraged to share their work and ideas with their peers. Learners have good working relationships with the tutors and are supported and encouraged. No learners in this area have been identified as having additional learning support needs, although systems do ensure that learners who identify problems will be helped.

86. Tutors use a wide variety of teaching methods appropriate to the learners' needs, and encourage design, creativity, colour, texture and seasonal awareness. Tutors' demonstrations set very good standards and learners are encouraged to aim for a similar standard. Good use is made of well-prepared handouts, reference books and samples of the tutors' own work. Tutors help learners where necessary during practical sessions, but allow the learners to express themselves through their work. On completion of the various arrangements, good use is made of peer and tutor assessments and ideas are freely exchanged in this forum. Lessons are well planned, although in many cases, tutors are not yet using the new session-planning documents.

87. The accommodation used for land-based classes is good. It is light and airy with spacious working areas that suit the practical nature of the classes. Tables are at a good height for this work. Tutors add to the flowers and plant materials that the learners supply, with materials of their own. Most learning centres have adequate parking facilities and access for learners with restricted mobility is particularly good.

88. Assessment and monitoring of learners' progress was weak at the previous inspection. Since then, the service has established a new system based on RARPA. Initial assessments have taken place and learners' starting points and previous experiences have been recorded. Because it is a new system it is too soon to judge its overall effectiveness.

89. The range and timing of courses was seen as a weakness at the previous inspection. Courses in the current directory provide a wider geographical spread and daytime and weekend courses. Many of these courses have already recruited sufficient learners.

### **Leadership and management**

90. Following restructuring, the curriculum is now managed centrally and a number of new procedures have been introduced to ensure consistency throughout the county. Managers meet on a regular basis to review targets and discuss problems. Targets are set annually and data is now available to ensure that these are reviewed. Tutors are invited to a termly staff conference to help them understand the new management and procedures. Communications with tutors have improved since the previous inspection.

91. The new quality improvement systems and procedures introduced this year are not fully implemented. The new observation of teaching and learning system has not begun, although staff training has taken place. The tutors' handbook is not fully understood by all staff and some parts of it are not being used. Schemes of work have been completed, but in one case it is used as a record of work done and not a planning document. One tutor does not use lesson plans. The new pre-course information sheets were not supplied for two courses until after they had begun. Learners on these two courses were unaware of the extra costs involved and any equipment that they had to supply.

92. Targets for the recruitment of under-represented groups are weak. The targets for

men, learners from minority ethnic groups, and learners with learning difficulties and disabilities are low and are below the numbers already being achieved. The initial inspection identified insufficient promotion of equality of opportunity. Since then, the learners' handbook has been produced which details the complaints procedure and the learners' rights and responsibilities. Tutors have also received training through the staff conference in the promotion of equality of opportunity.

93. The staff in this area are well qualified occupationally and have many years of industrial experience. Only 50 per cent of the staff hold teaching qualifications.

94. The self-assessment report for this area is accurate. It details the strengths and main weakness identified at inspection and is a good attempt to examine the provision critically.

## Information & communications technology

| Information & communications technology           |                    | 3                  |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:                               | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <b>Using IT</b><br>- Adult and community learning | 1670               | 3                  |

### Using IT

#### Strengths

- good development of skills
- wide range of courses and venues to meet learners' needs
- good management of change

#### Weaknesses

- too much unsatisfactory teaching
- insufficiently established quality assurance
- insufficient specific ICT staff development

## Achievement and standards

95. Learners on level 1 and level 2 courses have good practical skills. This strength was recognised at the previous inspection and in the self-assessment report. Most learners who were new to computing are able to use the keyboard with confidence and have good mouse control skills, particularly when using drawing applications. Learners on digital photography courses have good skills when manipulating photographs, cropping and resizing pictures, altering the depth of colour and changing colour variations. Learners record their achievements in diaries and are proud of the skills they are developing. Attendance at the lessons observed was satisfactory, at 83 per cent. Learners progress from introductory entry-level courses to externally accredited courses at levels 1 and 2. A large number of older learners who would not normally have access to ICT are now using it and are progressing to other courses. Some learners use their skills in the community. For example, one learner uses his skills to produce a community group newsletter. Some learners use their skills at work. Other self-employed learners are using the skills they are learning to improve their businesses. Learners enjoy their lessons and many have attended courses at the learning centres in previous years. There is good progression from entry-level courses to levels 1 and 2 and from general courses to specific software applications, for example from word processing to desktop publishing.

96. On all courses, including those without formal assessments, learners demonstrate good skills. Of those which are formally assessed, currently 42 per cent have satisfactory retention and pass rates.

## Quality of education and training

97. The service provides a good range of courses throughout the county in a wide range of venues. This was a strength in the previous inspection and was recognised as a strength in the self-assessment report. Community colleges are used as the main venues, but the provision is also distributed throughout the county in village halls and libraries. The mobile computing section also visits homes for the elderly, care centres and outlying centres. Specific courses are targeted at the over-50s and for those wary of computers. One learning centre obtained lottery funding for the development of ICT learning facilities for those with learning difficulties. Learners are able to progress from introductory courses through to more advanced ones at the larger centres. New courses are introduced to meet the changes in IT, including those for digital photography and using the internet for communications, research and online auctions.

98. Many learners use the courses in their daily lives, particularly in helping with their children's work at school. Other, more elderly learners value both the new skills they acquire and the social aspects of the courses. In one learning centre there is a dedicated communal area for ICT learners, with drinks facilities. This is a useful meeting point for learners to exchange experiences in using their new skills. Some learners are using the skills that they have gained on the courses in employment or in preparation for employment. Others are using their skills in desktop publishing to write attractive church magazines, local travel guides and promotional leaflets. One learner is using his new skills to produce business cards.

99. Where learners are seeking qualifications, there are opportunities, but where this would inhibit learners or where it would be inappropriate, courses are provided simply to improve their skills. The new structure introduced to the service is attempting to judge the learners' progress and the success of courses more accurately. This new system is not established yet.

100. Most learning centres give appropriate attention to health and safety matters. However, a small number of workshops are overcrowded and there are trailing cables.

101. Resources are satisfactory. All learners are using current software and operating systems and the equipment is well maintained in most learning centres. Some rooms have automatic temperature control and some have height-adjustable chairs. Classes are small, with no more than 14 learners in each class. In some classrooms, learners have restricted space to store their work.

102. Recording of learners' progress is satisfactory. They record their achievements in a diary and tutors record progress towards course goals. Moderation of learners' work is satisfactory.

103. Support for learners, including initial assessment, is satisfactory. Learners complete a skills check for the module they are following and identify their level of skill against a range of appropriate criteria. However, there is no consistency in the way that this

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document is completed. Some learners are asked to tick the appropriate box while others are asked to insert a date. Learners new to the service are interviewed by the local ICT co-ordinator before starting the course. No diagnostic testing is carried out to test learners' literacy and numeracy needs, but learners complete an initial assessment form with either their tutor or the course administrator and any individual support needs are highlighted. No ICT learner is currently assessed as requiring additional learning support. Most tutors are aware of learners' individual needs and offer assistance where appropriate during lessons. Equipment such as tracker balls and specialist keyboards can be made available for learners with specific needs. At a learning in the community ICT workshop in a local library, the tutor was helped by a community support worker. One tutor has been trained by the Royal National Institute for the Blind. A Braille printer has recently been purchased. In one instance, a learner with restricted mobility was allowed to park in a restricted area to enable them easy access to the classroom, and a classroom was allocated that allowed an easy emergency exit. Most learners receive satisfactory pre-enrolment advice, but some learners were on inappropriate courses. The induction covers the information, advice and guidance available to learners. Crèche facilities are available at some venues during the daytime.

104. In the better lessons, resources are used well and a variety of teaching and learning methods is used, which engages and challenges the learners. Good use is made of open questions to check learners' understanding. Small group work is used effectively. In one lesson with learners who were new to computing, the technology was used innovatively in a quiz to check learners' understanding of the work covered during the previous week. The learners all enjoyed the quiz and it was a lively start to the lesson.

105. At the previous inspection, teaching and learning were satisfactory. However, the amount of unsatisfactory teaching has increased. This weakness has not been identified in the self-assessment report. Fourteen per cent of the lessons observed were unsatisfactory, compared with 9 per cent in the previous inspection. In the weaker lessons, preparation and planning were poor, with little consideration for differentiation. Exercises are often not sufficiently challenging for learners and some learners spend periods of time with nothing to do. In some classes, there are not enough activities for learners. There is too much working from worksheets with very little interaction with the tutor. Demonstrations by the tutor are often too quick for learners to follow and learners' understanding is not checked sufficiently. Resources are used poorly in some lessons. Learners are often given worksheets with no supporting handouts. Learners are often bewildered and confused. Organisation and classroom management is poor in some lessons. In one lesson, learners were kept waiting for 40 minutes to log on while the tutor dealt with newcomers. In some lessons, tutors do not have sufficient knowledge of the software of the operating system being used and are unable to answer learners' questions. In one lesson where the learners were using laptop computers, they saved unfinished work on the laptop computer and not on an external storage device. The laptop computers are used by a number of learners during the week.



## Leadership and management

106. The service has achieved good management of change. Curriculum management was a weakness in the previous inspection. Changes in curriculum management have been introduced and have been well managed. The ICT curriculum has been thoroughly restructured since the previous inspection. The new staffing structure has enabled tutors to feel better supported and understood by specialists in their own field. Local, unco-ordinated initiatives have been replaced by a co-ordinated central focus. Marketing, recruitment, initial guidance, the recording of progress, and the sharing of resources and communications have all improved since the previous report. The changes planned and implemented have been introduced in a manner that has gained the support of the staff. Staff training in the new processes has been well managed and the new systems are already having an effect on learners. If learners cannot find a suitable course at one centre, they are referred to another. Tutor materials and expertise are shared effectively on the dedicated adult and community learning intranet. Tutor expertise is shared more effectively with tutors working over a wider geographic area. Opportunities for learners are publicised more effectively by the three area adult learning prospectuses. The tutors' handbook is a good source for tutors in guiding curriculum improvement and administration. Specialist resources and accommodation devoted to ICT vary widely between learning centres, but are generally satisfactory. Learners have a satisfactory understanding of equality of opportunity issues, but it is not reinforced throughout the learning courses. Equality of opportunity matters are dealt with satisfactorily.

107. The implementation of the quality improvement system is incomplete. The quality improvement systems built into the new initiatives have not been established and it is too soon to judge the effect that they may have. Currently, the systems that support quality improvement, such as a clear understanding of the learners' existing skills and their individual goals, are in place and are working. The service recognises that the quality improvement system needs thorough monitoring and strategic management. Plans are in place to implement these elements more fully. Some classroom observation has taken place to check and improve standards, but has not had sufficient effect on the provision. Staff meet regularly at various levels to discuss changes and the implementation of new systems. These meetings are well signposted and minutes are released on the intranet.

108. There is not enough specific ICT staff development. Although there has been effective staff development on generic new developments, specific ICT training has not been prioritised and a clear need for this has been identified by classroom observations. Most tutors have teaching qualifications, but some do not have ICT-specific qualifications. Few staff have had any substantial county-funded ICT training in the past year, apart from internal briefings and a 'How to run a Workshop' morning. This weakness is recognised in the self-assessment report.

**Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel**

| <b>Hospitality, sport, leisure &amp; travel</b>                               |                    | <b>3</b>           |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:   | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <b><i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i></b><br>- Adult and community learning | 2117               | 3                  |

***Leisure, sport and recreation****Strengths*

- good range of skills acquired by learners
- much good teaching
- good support for tutors

*Weaknesses*

- restricted range of programmes offered
- incomplete quality monitoring system

**Achievement and standards**

109. In many classes, learners achieve a good level of performance and demonstrate the acquisition of a wide range of physical skills. These include skills such as breath control and balance, as well as the development of body awareness and concentration in yoga and tai chi. Learners demonstrate very good levels of strength and co-ordination in exercise and keep-fit classes. Some elderly learners demonstrate levels of fitness to a very good standard. Learners' performance in tai chi, and step and dance sequences in exercise to music, is good. One learner explained how he was using tai chi that he had learnt in his work as a sports development officer.

110. Learners in a gentle exercise class for over-50s reported significant improvements in their strength and mobility. One learner with a back condition indicated that Pilates has improved their ability to perform everyday tasks. Learners express the view that they have acquired skills that improve their lifestyle, self-confidence and mobility. For example, one learner over 50 years of age has ridden a bicycle for the first time. Learners also make new friends, which helps to reduce their social isolation, take part in new activities, and gain a better understanding of the benefits of exercise to their own health. Attendance is satisfactory and was 79 per cent in the classes observed.

## Quality of education and training

111. Inspectors observed much good teaching. The previous inspection identified teaching and learning as a weakness. Tutors now stimulate and promote learning through a range of challenging activities in classes. Group work and partner work feature in the better classes and learners learn from, and are critical of, one another. One tutor used wobble boards to improve balance and co-ordination in an over-50s class. Visualisation techniques prepare older learners for the possibility of avoiding injuries caused by falling. The best teaching provision uses effective planning to ensure that all learners are able to gain the maximum benefit. Tutors create a good rapport with learners. Handouts support the learners and provide useful information to help learners practice in their own time. In other lessons, the management of teaching practice was weak. Not all of the learners used their time well. In these lessons, too much whole-group teaching left some learners uninvolved.

112. Assessment and monitoring of progress are satisfactory. New systems exist for initial assessment and for the assessment and monitoring of progress. A pre-activity readiness questionnaire determines health issues to be taken into account in lesson planning. Most tutors use these questionnaires. However, the late completion of these forms on the first night of each class, reduces their usefulness in planning the early part of programmes for individuals. Some yoga, Pilates and tai chi tutors report difficulties in identifying learning outcomes for their subjects. The previous inspection report identified the assessment and monitoring of progress as a weakness.

113. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Most rooms are light, warm and spacious enough for classes. Access is good for those with particular needs. Some rooms, however, are not ideal for classes. Rooms are too small for the number of learners and there is insufficient privacy in some cases. One badminton hall had defective lights and obstructions hanging over the courts. A central stock of resources is available for tutors to use, which is sufficient for most classes.

114. Guidance and support for learners is satisfactory. They complete an induction to their course at the beginning of the first session. Learning outcomes are agreed, health screening is completed, and policies such as appeals and health and safety are discussed. Learners are fully involved in identifying their own additional support needs at induction, and during the enrolment process. No learners are currently receiving literacy, numeracy or language support for their courses in sport and leisure. Tutors' correction of learners performances is satisfactory, and in some classes it is very effective.

115. The range of programmes is restricted. There are not enough progression routes or accredited courses. A lot of the provision is at level 1, but classes are of mixed ability. There has been approximately a 50 per cent planned reduction in courses and a bias exists towards yoga, and other 'low impact' activities. Not enough activities target men as learners. Opportunities for learners in the east of the county are very restricted. The needs of the local community or market trends have not been analysed sufficiently. There are some long breaks between sessions, especially in the summer. The physical

gains made by learners depend on regular, frequent attendance.

## **Leadership and management**

116. Support for tutors is good. A range of processes provides them with effective support and guidance, particularly in relation to the recent changes to the programmes. Regular newsletters to all tutors and area of learning newsletters keep tutors well informed with all changes and news. Regular training events and conferences and seminars are held as well as smaller training sessions and individual meetings. Most tutors can access the online learning platform. Informal and formal observations of teaching provide feedback about performances and actions for improvement. A range of training opportunities is available for ongoing staff development. Tutors' contracts include a significant proportion of non-contact hours to allow them access to training and to complete their administration duties.

117. Curriculum management is satisfactory. A strategy and three-year development plan details the key steps in the reorganisation of this area of learning. The plan identifies key local priorities, such as increasing participation by men, extending targets for participation by the over-50 age group, and increasing the links between the curriculum and lifestyles, and family learning. The plan includes some detail regarding the achievement of key stages in the three-year process and recognises that significant changes will not take place until the 2006-07 period.

118. Recent changes include completion of a curriculum audit and review, and staff structure reorganisation, including the recruitment of staff to key posts. A significant number of classes, identified as not meeting the new priorities, have been transferred to other schemes with an interest in the programmes.

119. Curriculum planning identifies the target areas of increased rural provision, the provision for men, first steps learning, and beginners' and improvers' classes. However, the plan is not sufficiently detailed, particularly in relation to how these objectives will be achieved. There are no clear links to other local and national initiatives or agendas such as health, citizenship and volunteering, although plans have been made to link with primary care trusts to establish a system of exercise programmes.

120. Documents used for the observation of teaching and learning are suitable, although staff have used a range of different versions in recent times. Tutors do not countersign the documents regularly to agree identified actions and the outcomes of the observations.

121. Tutors have a poor understanding of the use and purpose of activity risk assessments. They often confuse them with facility hazard identification, rather than the risks and hazards of their actual activity. Many staff are using their own versions of lesson plans, and schemes of work, and have modified their assessment and monitoring of learners' progress. This activity is not being formally monitored by managers. Some reviews of personal plans take place, but these are not recorded and retained in the course folder.

122. The reviews of lesson plans and schemes of work do not always identify weak practice. A number of lesson plans seen by inspectors were lists of activities and did not comment on assessment strategy or focus on the individual needs of learners. In one case, a member of staff was using his scheme of work as his lesson plan and did not understand their separate functions.

123. The formal reviews of tutors' course folders occur too late in the programmes to identify issues and weaknesses in sufficient time for tutors to resolve problems for their classes.

**Visual & performing arts & media**

| Visual & performing arts & media                |                    | 3                  |
|---|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:                             | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <b>Arts</b><br>- Adult and community learning   | 179                | 3                  |
| <b>Crafts</b><br>- Adult and community learning | 122                | 3                  |
| <b>Dance</b><br>- Adult and community learning  | 21                 | 3                  |

**Arts***Strengths*

- good standards in learners' work
- significant personal gains for learners
- good support for individual learners' needs

*Weaknesses*

- restricted progression opportunities
- weak individual target-setting
- insufficient application of quality assurance procedures

**Crafts***Strengths*

- good standards in learners' work
- significant personal gains for learners
- good support for individual learners' needs

*Weaknesses*

- restricted progression opportunities
- weak individual target-setting
- insufficient application of quality assurance procedures

## **Dance**

### *Strengths*

- good standards in learners' work
- significant personal gains for learners
- good support for individual learners' needs

### *Weaknesses*

- restricted progression opportunities
- weak individual target-setting
- insufficient application of quality assurance procedures

## **Achievement and standards**

124. As noted in the previous inspection, many learners produce a very good standard of innovative creative work. Learners often work on self-selected projects, well supported by good tutors who provide stimulating resources. In a pottery class, learners who maintained that they joined 'just for fun' in fact grew very excited researching into the history of pottery and sculptors. In a lace-making class, very good work plans and patterns for a new style of lace were produced in larger sizes for visually impaired learners.

125. There are considerable personal gains for learners, not only in the sense of achievement through the work that they complete but in social contacts, and in some cases in setting up their own businesses or improving the work that they already do with newly learnt skills. Several learners have received interesting commissions, most notably a learner in the embroidery class, who is making stoles for a Polish priest. In an upholstery class, a Regency sofa is being restored using mainly traditional methods. Learners from one embroidery class also regularly exhibit work at prestigious international venues.

## **Quality of education and training**

126. Learners continue to receive good support. Many classes are conducted as workshops, with individual tuition designed for the learners' level of ability. Many learners have been with the tutors for several years. Most teaching is good or better. Two of the classes observed were outstanding. All tutors have schemes of work and lesson plans. Many of these are detailed and imaginative and the tutors inspire learners with their enthusiasm and love of their subjects. The less successful lessons do not have clear learning objectives and progress is carelessly recorded. All tutors are trained to deal sensitively with learners who might have learning difficulties, or who may need literacy, numeracy and language skills support. In one class, a learner with mobility difficulties always had a parking place reserved for her. Another learner was provided with an adjustable easel. The service has a comprehensive collection of aids for learners who are dyslexic, or who may suffer from epilepsy, mobility problems, or visual or aural

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impairments. Access for learners with disabilities is good on all sites.

127. Accommodation and resources are much improved since the previous inspection and are now satisfactory. Most classes take place in well-lit, comfortable and well-equipped rooms. There are still some venues, however, which are unsuitable. One church hall had identified health and safety issues regarding lone working and the moving of equipment. However, there is an active health and safety committee which responds to matters raised by risk assessment surveys. Most tutors are well qualified and experienced in their specialised subjects.

128. Learners are well guided in their choice of courses, but choice is inevitably restricted by the recent reduction in the number of courses. Course leaflets clearly outline the content and benefits of courses as well as costs and the resources to be provided by the learners. Learners may contact either administrative staff or tutors for further details.

129. Target-setting for individuals is weak. Some learners are not encouraged to fill in their personal learning plans in any detail, or to aim higher than modest plans to 'try to do better' or to buy new pencils. Some learning aims are not sufficiently challenging for the skills and experience of the learners. The same targets are set for beginners and advanced learners in the same classes.

130. The recent rationalisation of the provision has reduced classes to 68 per cent of those at the time of the previous inspection, but the extent of the provision later in the year is unknown. The provider still has a good range of arts and crafts classes, but there is no structure to encourage learners to aim for further development. As was noted at the previous inspection, many learners are working at a higher level than courses suggest. Some learners attend beginners' classes for many years, and, although building on their skills, have restricted progression routes to higher levels. There are very few performing arts classes. In one subject area, experienced and novice learners are in the same or adjoining rooms, and the tutor has to alternate between the groups. This is stressful for the tutor and unsatisfactory for the learners.

### **Leadership and management**

131. Since the previous inspection there have been significant improvements in the management of the provision. The area of learning is now managed centrally, and there is a more consistent approach to the delivery of the courses. A comprehensive tutors' handbook has been introduced and circulated to all staff. Training events, conferences and a staff intranet have improved communications and help to share good practice. Curriculum audits and reviews have been completed. Courses identified as being insufficiently challenging have been withdrawn, or transferred to the local community. Some investment has been made to improve resources. A curriculum development group has been established to consider the introduction of new courses and to manage the delivery of existing ones.



132. Arrangements for quality assurance have been significantly improved, but they have not been fully implemented and have yet to fully impact on the provision. Learners' feedback is not analysed systematically and reported to managers and tutors to help improvements to the quality of the provision. Target-setting is weak. Clear targets for improvement are not shared with staff. The previous inspection identified the absence of a strategy to deal with the problems of insufficient participation by members of minority ethnic groups, and an imbalance in the representation of men, women and people with disabilities. The participation of members of minority ethnic groups is significantly lower than the profile of the local community, at 2.2 per cent and 5.9 per cent, respectively. The provider has no specific target to improve this situation. Data officers have been introduced to improve the collection of data and the analysis of performance over time. The self-assessment report includes most of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the previous inspection. There were no opportunities to evaluate the literacy and numeracy provision within the classes observed.

**English, languages & communications**

| <b>English, languages &amp; communications</b>     |                    | <b>2</b>           |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:                                | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <b>English</b><br>- Adult and community learning   | 228                | 2                  |
| <b>Languages</b><br>- Adult and community learning | 2017               | 2                  |

**English***Strengths*

- good achievement rates
- good range of courses and levels
- good curriculum management

*Weaknesses*

- poor lesson planning in some cases

**Languages***Strengths*

- good achievement rates
- good range of courses and levels
- good curriculum management

*Weaknesses*

- poor lesson planning in some areas
- insufficient use of the taught language in some lessons

**Achievement and standards**

133. Achievement is good overall. Learners enjoy their lessons and make good progress. Pass rates for learners who complete their course are very good. In 2004-05, 90 per cent of learners were successful at the end of their courses.

134. There has been an upward trend in the number of learners registering for modern foreign languages in the past two years. Previously, retention was a strength in English and modern foreign languages. Retention was very good on most A-level programmes and the less commonly taught languages courses. Now retention is satisfactory overall. Retention on BSL level 2 courses and GCSE English is low. Strategies have been designed to resolve this problem and learners are given information at induction about the demands of the course. Attendance and punctuality are generally good, with 86.25

per cent attendance in the classes observed during the inspection.

135. Most learners develop the skills they need from their programmes of study. In modern foreign languages they learn to speak, listen, read and, when appropriate, write in the language they are studying. In a BSL lesson, learners were able to sign sentences and stories effectively, using appropriate body language and facial expression.

136. Learners' spoken language in most foreign language learning sessions is at least satisfactory in terms of pronunciation, intonation and vocabulary. In the best lessons, it is very good. Where tutors use more English in their communications with learners, however, learners' fluency is impaired.

137. Learners of foreign languages are satisfied with the progress they make in communicating in the taught language. In the best lessons, learners are able to communicate effectively and to a very good standard. For example, in an advanced class, learners were able to discuss historical and cultural topics in some depth, using the foreign language with confidence, spontaneity and a high degree of accuracy.

### **Quality of education and training**

138. There are examples of outstanding practice in modern foreign languages and English lessons that provide stimulating and valuable learning opportunities for all learners. In the best lessons, tutors use a wide range of good-quality resources that stimulate learners and encourage their interest in the subject being taught. In these lessons, impeccable planning and classroom management and inspiring and challenging teaching contribute to the learning experience of all learners, enabling them to gain a wide range of skills and confidence. For example, in a French language lesson the learners were carrying out a group-work activity where they had to predict issues likely to occur in the following listening activity and present their outcomes to the rest of the class. Their ability and enthusiasm allowed them to perform well above the level required as they debated among themselves, competently, in the target language. The tutor monitored their performance in an unobtrusive manner, and skilfully let the learners take control of the activity and become more and more involved in the discussion. Each individual was able to participate and make a valuable contribution to the final outcomes. In a BSL beginners' lesson, learners were given plenty of opportunities to practise signing in a variety of ways, including pairwork, chainwork and interaction with the tutor, throughout the lesson. The tutor's supportive attitude, and impeccable teaching techniques encouraged an atmosphere of extremely effective learning. After just two sessions, learners displayed an impressive ability to use a variety of signs to describe themselves, members of their families, and other people. This is far beyond what would normally be expected at this stage in the programme.

139. Particularly good guidance and support is given to GCSE English learners before and after beginning a course. They receive guidance by telephone to check the suitability of the course, and then initial assessment at the beginning of the course identifies their strengths and weaknesses. Additional learning support is provided

wherever needed.

140. A good range of courses and levels meets the needs of a variety of learners and provides progression routes in all the main languages offered. In each geographical area levels offered range from beginner to intermediate or advanced level, enabling many learners to achieve the higher levels of the programme. The less popular languages are offered according to demand. Modern Greek has increased in popularity and is now offered at three different levels to meet the progression needs of existing learners. English is offered at GCSE, AS and A2 level.

141. The initial assessment of learners' abilities and individual needs is thorough and is supplemented by tutor-devised processes to meet the needs of a particular class or group of learners. For example, one questionnaire probed the learners' interest, enthusiasm and competence in ICT to enable the selection of appropriate teaching materials.

142. Standards of teaching and learning remain satisfactory overall, as in the previous inspection. Learners perform well in lessons. All tutors are very supportive and create a relaxed and friendly class atmosphere that encourages good relationships between learners, and with their tutor.

143. Generally, the guidance and support offered to learners is satisfactory. In modern foreign languages, learners comment positively about the information and advice available before enrolment.

144. The quality and effectiveness of lesson plans are variable. In some cases, plans are a simple list of tasks and resources that focus on the tutor's role and do not put the learner at the centre of the process. These plans do not provide a balanced selection of activities to promote skills development and tutors do not make the most of learning opportunities for their class.

145. In some modern foreign languages lessons, the tutor and the learners do not use the target language sufficiently. In these lessons, tutors resort to English for even the most basic of instructions. Learners are often reluctant to interact in the language being taught and have very little confidence.

146. Despite the availability of a wide range of teaching resources and equipment, some tutors rely heavily on paper-based handouts, worksheets and whiteboards. The use of visual aids such as flash cards, posters or overhead transparencies is restricted to the best lessons.

### **Leadership and management**

147. Leadership and management have improved a great deal since the previous inspection. Effective communication channels have been established. The service's restructuring and curriculum redevelopment have been conducted through extensive

consultations with stakeholders. The effects of these measures can be seen in the commitment to, and ownership of, the new structures and procedures by those charged with applying them. Tutors report that they feel part of a team with a shared involvement in the new structures. This extends beyond their learning centre and subject group and includes their locality and the county as a whole. Languages tutors are particularly enthusiastic about the learning platform, which they use to share and exchange ideas, and as a reference point.

148. Staff development is good. Tutors have taken advantage of the professional development opportunities offered through the service. Many have attended training on adult learning service initiatives such as the learning platform and the Asset Languages Scheme, and some have been supported in attending independent training from external providers.

149. The service has effective quality improvement measures. Reliable data is now available and is being used effectively by managers.

150. The observation of teaching and learning is carried out by subject specialists and focuses on identifying strengths and areas for development. For instance, observations revealed some unsatisfactory teaching. An action plan was drawn up that included peer observations of good practice and co-tutoring, together with a programme of support and further observations.

151. Partnerships have been established or reinforced with a range of organisations including the City of Leicester, Loughborough and Leicester Universities, and the Economic Partnership.

152. Resources are good. Accommodation is generally of a good standard, with suitable layouts and equipment. Recent investment has been made in equipment such as CD players with headphones. Modern foreign languages learners' needs are now met more effectively. Tutors can borrow laptop computers from the adult learning service for extended periods and many tutors have access to equipment in the classrooms where they teach.

153. The conclusions of the self-assessment report generally matched those of the inspection teams. However, some strengths and weaknesses had been overlooked.

154. The service's awareness of health and safety issues is satisfactory. Tutors state that their new handbook and recent communication with the central service team have improved awareness and remedial action in this area.

155. The level of awareness of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. For example, one class was relocated to ensure access for a learner with restricted mobility, and a print-enlarging machine has been used to produce material for a partially sighted learner. Tutors consider wider issues in the selection of their teaching materials. For example, one modern languages tutor uses material recorded by French speakers from countries other than France, to widen learners' familiarity with the diversity of the French-speaking

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community.

## Foundation programmes

| Foundation programmes  |                    | 2                  |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| Contributory areas:  | Number of learners | Contributory grade |
| <b><i>ESOL</i></b><br>- Adult and community learning                     | 118                | 3                  |
| <b><i>Literacy and numeracy</i></b><br>- Adult and community learning    | 212                | 3                  |
| <b><i>Other contributory areas</i></b><br>- Adult and community learning | 502                | 2                  |

### ***ESOL***

#### *Strengths*

- good support for individual learners
- good use of initial assessments and individual learning plans
- particularly effective change management

#### *Weaknesses*

- inadequate range of provision
- poor accommodation for some learners

### ***Literacy and numeracy***

#### *Strengths*

- good support for individual learners
- good use of target-setting for learners
- good links with external agencies

#### *Weaknesses*

- inadequate range of provision

### ***Other contributory areas***

#### *Strengths*

- good standards of teaching
- good support for learners
- very effective curriculum management

#### *Weaknesses*

- no key weaknesses were identified

## **Achievement and standards**

156. Foundation learners' achievement are satisfactory. Some learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have reached a good level of achievement. During the most recent contract year for this area of learning, 87 per cent of learners achieved their learning goals. This was an increase on the previous year's proportion of 80 per cent. Video tapes made by learners with learning difficulties have been shown to local primary schools and one video was shown on regional television. Learners make tangible progress. A learner with learning difficulties can now use public transport to get to his class.

157. Achievements are satisfactory on ESOL, and literacy and numeracy courses. Pass rates were good last year for the 106 learners who took national tests in ESOL and literacy and numeracy skills. In programmes for learners with learning difficulties, 71 per cent of learners gained OCN units and 13 learners achieved a certificate in basic food hygiene. Attendance is very good and retention rates are good at nearly 90 per cent for all foundation programmes.

158. Learners progress into volunteering, supported employment, further education or mainstream adult education. A learner who began studying in a family learning group has progressed through GCSE courses to an access course. Progression data is not currently maintained by the provider.

## **Quality of education and training**

159. Much of the teaching and learning in programmes for learners with difficulties and/or disabilities is good, and some is outstanding. Tutors plan realistic learning activities to which learners respond with enthusiasm. Challenging learning environments include a working café, a vegetable garden, a community allotment, and an animal sanctuary. Learners following a programme to promote independent living, routinely cook their own lunches. In the best lessons for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, literacy and numeracy activities have been established so that development in these areas is a natural extension of the practical activity. Tutors challenge learners at all levels. Such challenges range from learners with multiple and profound difficulties being encouraged to choose their own lunches, to learners in an exercise class practising counting to ensure that numeracy skills are developed alongside physical co-ordination.

160. Learners in literacy, numeracy and ESOL classes receive good, individual support. Effective lesson planning in mixed-level groups allows tutors to offer support on an individual basis to those learners who need most help. ESOL learners' first languages are sometimes used in the early stages of the courses to help the less confident learners to settle in.

161. Initial assessments and the setting of individual targets are good in all areas of foundation learning. Target-setting was identified as a weakness at the previous



inspection. Tutors now use individual learning plans to agree and set challenging targets in consultation with learners. Learners' progress against these targets is monitored at regular intervals and tutors maintain a dialogue with learners throughout the process. Learners and, where appropriate, carers have a clear idea of what they are to achieve. In programmes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, progress is monitored frequently and regularly. There is an individual weekly review of each learner's response to lessons and a general progress review at least once each term.

162. Good links exist with external agencies in the literacy and numeracy skills area. The provider has partnerships with organisations which include other learning providers, social services and the National Health Service, Jobcentre Plus and the library service. These partnerships ensure the full range of learners' support needs is met and the partnerships are beginning to establish a more strategic approach to curriculum planning in each of the three geographical areas.

163. Learners are well supported. Most of the programmes for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have support workers. These staff have received training in their roles and there are written guidelines to reinforce this training. Support workers understand that learners' literacy and numeracy skills can be most effectively developed from everyday occurrences, and they encourage learners to discuss what they are doing and to use their numeracy skills when appropriate. Where specific support is required, as in the case of learners requiring personal care or assistance with mobility, specific training is given to tutors and support staff. External organisations are used effectively. The local health authority has conducted training sessions for staff in the safe administration of medicines and in feeding techniques.

164. Resources throughout the area of learning are satisfactory. The provider has an appropriate range of learning aids for literacy, numeracy and language development. Tutors have access to resource bases, but may have to travel to collect resources if they work in outreach centres. ESOL tutors have access to a range of print, audio-visual and CD-ROM resources at the main resource base in the northern area. Some resources have been placed on the learning platform, but the potential of this method of storing teaching resources remains relatively undeveloped.

165. The curriculum in literacy and numeracy is supplemented satisfactorily. In one area, a joint project with the library service has introduced a 'book box' to the class. One learner who had never read Shakespeare before read a version of *The Tempest* and wrote a review of it. An outing was arranged to see the play, with 30 friends and family taking part.

166. The need for specific programmes for learners with difficulties and/or disabilities has been extensively analysed. The Transitions project has been established in the north of the county to meet the needs of learners with complex health needs. An accredited course in food hygiene is offered in response to requests from local day centres.

167. Guidance and support for literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners is satisfactory. Tutors give informal advice and guidance about progression routes into other adult

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education classes, or into further education. There is evidence that this advice is successful in helping some learners to progress. The area organisations have links to nextstep advisers, and one of the new skills for life co-ordinators is also a nextstep adviser. The service is not currently accredited for the provision of information, advice and guidance.

168. Standards of teaching and learning in literacy, numeracy and ESOL classes are satisfactory. There has been a significant improvement in standards of teaching in ESOL lessons since the previous inspection. Lessons are at least satisfactory and some are good. Well-planned lessons meet learners' identified needs, interests and ambitions. The lessons help learners to develop the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. Tutors use varied and appropriate methodology in situations which are made relevant for learners. The good lessons challenge learners and motivate them to achieve new skills. Record-keeping by learners and tutors is good.

169. Tutors do not use a sufficiently wide range of visual and audio-visual aids in some classes to convey meaning and to allow for teaching at different levels within the same group. Some lessons feature too much talking by the tutor and too few opportunities for learners to practise the spoken language. The more able learners in the ESOL programme are not sufficiently challenged by some lessons.

170. Some of the accommodation in literacy, numeracy and ESOL classes is inadequate. In one venue, learning is impeded by constant noise from young people in the community college. Most teaching areas for learners with learning difficulties/or and disabilities are conducive to learning. They are large enough and generally well decorated with stimulating displays. The accommodation is well lit and comfortable.

171. The range of provision available to literacy, numeracy and ESOL learners is inadequate. The main facility for literacy, numeracy and ESOL learning is through weekly, two-hour classes. The learners interviewed would like more intensive classes so they may make progress more quickly. There are not enough links between learning language skills and other learning areas, or to work-related skills. Many learning centres only offer one mixed-level ESOL class. In one learning centre, more courses could have been provided, but there was no crèche facility for parents and families who could not make their own childcare arrangements. There are a number short duration projects, including one concerning employability, which include literacy and numeracy skills as part of the curriculum.

### **Leadership and management**

172. The service has achieved extensive, planned and effective curriculum development in the foundation area since the previous inspection. Staff have a clear understanding of the aims and objectives underlying their curriculum area and are committed to the use of systematic guidelines to ensure that these aims are put into practise effectively. Curriculum working parties have considered each stage of the learning process. There is now a written statement of curriculum aims and clear and agreed guidelines for carrying

out fundamental activities such as initial and formative assessments and progress reviews.

173. A successful staff mentor initiative in the learning difficulties area is about to be extended. A learning support manager was appointed earlier this year for each of the three geographical areas. Local needs can now be identified more effectively and staff have an additional source of specialist advice and guidance.

174. Change has been managed particularly effectively. An intensive ESOL training programme supported the development of curriculum skills. The ESOL development worker worked with individual tutors to provide support and training. Tutors say they now have much more confidence in their skills and abilities. During the process of change, communications have been consistently good, through meetings and newsletters. Tutors have been involved in planning for curriculum change and in the design of new documents for the service and for the foundation area in particular. Team morale is very good. There is now a strong team spirit in all programmes, enthusiasm about the future, and a commitment to continuous improvement.

175. The informal programme of tutor appraisals and observations of teaching and learning which supported skills development has now been replaced by the new whole-organisation system. The new quality assurance system is being implemented satisfactorily by managers and tutors in the foundation area, but it is relatively new and untested.

176. Equal opportunities arrangements are satisfactory. Some teaching rooms have visual displays which represent the diversity of the community's learners. ESOL learners' own languages are used to help them understand documents and leaflets, and are also used to help induct them and make them feel at ease at the beginning of their courses. The ESOL tutor workforce reflects the diversity of the learner population. All foundation tutors are trained in equal opportunities awareness as part of a county initiative. Resources are appropriate for this diverse group of learners.