

REINSPECTION REPORT

Redcar and Cleveland Adult Learning Service Reinspection

20 May 2005



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

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

- *grade 1 - 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

Redcar and Cleveland Adult Learning Service Reinspection

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REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Redcar and Cleveland Adult Learning Service (RCALS) is part of the lifelong learning service within the education directorate of Redcar and Cleveland borough council (the council). It provides training in construction, information and communications technology (ICT), hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, visual and performing arts and media, humanities, English, languages and communication, foundation programmes and family learning. At the previous inspection, training in construction, ICT, humanities and family learning was found to be satisfactory. Just under 50 per cent of the training provided takes place in these areas, with ICT as the largest area. None of these areas were inspected in depth during this reinspection, but some observations of teaching and interviews with learners and staff took place within ICT. Standards have been at least maintained in all these areas.

2. RCALS receives most of its funding through Tees Valley Learning and Skills Council, with some additional funding for specific projects from the Single Regeneration Budget, rural development programme and the new opportunities fund. RCALS aims to provide a wide range of relevant and affordable courses in accessible, safe and convenient locations. According to the 2001 census, the proportion of people from minority ethnic groups in Redcar and Cleveland is just over 1 per cent, compared with the national average of 9.1 per cent.

3. The service is managed by a head of service who reports to the acting assistant director of education for lifelong learning in the council. He is supported by five curriculum organisers, two adult learning centre managers, and an information and advice organiser. Some of the curriculum organisers are responsible for more than one area of learning. Administration, management information and receptionist services, and building maintenance services are provided by strategic partners.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

4. Since September 2004, 307 learners have enrolled on 26 courses, 19 of which are sport and leisure courses such as yoga and gentle exercise. The seven remaining courses are hospitality programmes. Of these, five are accredited. There are currently 134 learners on seven sports and leisure and seven hospitality courses. Courses take place during the day and evening at 12 venues including adult education centres, schools and community centres. No weekend provision is offered. Most courses last for 10 weeks. There are some courses for specific groups. Many classes are mixed ability. Eighty-eight per cent of learners are women, 11 per cent are registered as disabled, 2 per cent are from minority ethnic groups, and 38 per cent are aged over 60. Approximately 60 per cent of learners receive fee concessions. There are 12 part-time tutors, mostly working between two and six hours a week. The programme is managed by one organiser, with

part-time responsibility for this area of provision, and one part-time co-ordinator.

Visual & performing arts & media

5. Since September 2004, there have been 1234 enrolments on visual and performing arts and media courses. There are currently 446 learners on 56 courses in art, craft, and dance. Twenty-one learners are enrolled on four accredited courses. The courses take place at 19 community venues across the borough. Courses last for 10 weeks and take place three times a year in the morning, afternoon and evening for two hours each week. Some five-week courses are provided during the summer. Just over three-quarters of learners are over 50 years of age and 81 per cent are women. One per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups. Twelve per cent of learners have a disability. There are 28 part-time tutors. Most courses are provided for a wide range of ability levels, with some courses aimed at beginner or intermediate learners.

English, languages & communications

6. Since September 2004, there have been 539 enrolments on 26 courses including English, French, Italian, Spanish and British Sign Language (BSL). Italian is offered at level 1, French and Spanish from level 1 to level 3, and BSL at levels 1 and 2. Three hundred and ninety enrolments have been for accredited courses. There are currently 124 learners on English and modern foreign language courses and 55 on BSL courses. Training takes place in the day and evening at eight venues in the borough. All classes run for two hours over 30 weeks and enrolments are made at 10-week intervals. Seventy-one per cent of learners are women. This area of learning is currently managed by the head of service, supported by a language specialist, paid on a sessional basis. There are 11 part-time tutors, two of whom are trained to carry out observations of teaching and learning.

Foundation programmes

7. Since September 2004, there have been 833 enrolment on foundation courses. There are currently 391 learners on courses including English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), literacy and numeracy, and independent living and leisure skills for adults with learning difficulties or disabilities. Sixty-five per cent of learners are women, 30 per cent are from minority ethnic groups and 21 per cent have a disability. Learners come from a wide range of backgrounds, including asylum seekers with graduate and professional qualifications, low-paid workers and people who have been unemployed for long periods. Some learners are referred by agencies such as the probation service, hospitals, doctors, social services and care homes.

8. Nineteen venues are used for foundation provision. Courses run from 10 weeks, with 20 guided learning hours, to 30 weeks with 60 guided learning hours. The range of provision is from pre-entry level to level 2. There are 63 courses that run during the day and six courses in the evening. Eight courses are non-accredited. One full-time tutor and 17 part-time tutors are supported by five part-time learning support assistants. Two part-time staff are responsible for curriculum management.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	12
Number of inspection days	63
Number of learners interviewed	299
Number of staff interviewed	103
Number of subcontractors interviewed	1
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	23
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	20
Number of visits	3

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

9. The ALI's previous inspection identified that provision in construction, ICT, humanities and family learning was satisfactory. Training in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, visual and performing arts and media, English, languages and communications and foundation programmes was unsatisfactory. Leadership and management and quality assurance were unsatisfactory and equality of opportunity was satisfactory. At the end of the reinspection process, all aspects of the provision were found to be satisfactory or better.

GRADES

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

Grades awarded at previous inspection

Leadership and management		4
Contributory grades:		
Equality of opportunity		3
Quality assurance		4

Construction		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Construction crafts - Adult and community learning	147	3

Information & communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT - Adult and community learning	558	3

REDCAR AND CLEVELAND ADULT LEARNING SERVICE REINSPECTION

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i> - Adult and community learning	260	4

Visual & performing arts & media		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Arts</i> - Adult and community learning	282	3
<i>Crafts</i> - Adult and community learning	366	4
<i>Dance</i> - Adult and community learning	149	4

Humanities		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>History and genealogy</i> - Adult and community learning	85	3

English, languages & communications		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Languages</i> - Adult and community learning	246	4
<i>Other contributory areas</i> - Adult and community learning	111	3

Foundation programmes		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>ESOL</i> - Adult and community learning	187	4
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i> - Adult and community learning	210	4
<i>Independent living and leisure skills</i> - Adult and community learning	70	3

REDCAR AND CLEVELAND ADULT LEARNING SERVICE REINSPECTION

Family learning		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
- Adult and community learning	253	3

Grades awarded at reinspection

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

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Hospitality and catering - Adult and community learning	36	2
Leisure, sport and recreation - Adult and community learning	98	3

Visual & performing arts & media		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts - Adult and community learning	159	2
Crafts - Adult and community learning	204	2
Dance - Adult and community learning	83	2

English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Languages - Adult and community learning	124	3
Other contributory areas - Adult and community learning	55	2

REDCAR AND CLEVELAND ADULT LEARNING SERVICE REINSPECTION

Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
ESOL - Adult and community learning	158	3
Literacy and numeracy - Adult and community learning	176	3
Independent living and leisure skills - Adult and community learning	57	2

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

10. **Learners attain good skills in all areas of learning.** In hospitality, they learn how to prepare healthier meals for themselves and their families. In sport, many gain improvements in manual dexterity, mobility and general health. In visual and performing arts and media, learners produce work to particularly high standard. Beginners progress very quickly and all learners gain the self-confidence to present their work to the public. In modern foreign languages, learners make good use of the target language and learn about the culture of the country where the language originated. In BSL, many become proficient signers and learn to converse confidently with deaf people. In foundation programmes, learners all gain improved self-confidence and self-esteem and are given good practical help to manage their everyday lives.

11. Retention, achievement and attendance rates are generally satisfactory in all areas of learning and are improving in modern foreign languages, hospitality and foundation programmes. However, attendance rates are low on independent living and leisure skills courses.

Quality of education and training

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Total
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	2	5	4	0	11
Visual & performing arts & media	3	10	5	0	18
English, languages & communications	4	5	1	2	12
Foundation programmes	0	9	7	0	16
Total	9	29	17	2	57

12. **Teaching is good in hospitality.** Lessons are well planned and provide appropriate learning activities for individual learners. There are good arrangements to help learners

with physical disabilities or learning difficulties to participate fully in classes, with other learners. Tutors in sport give good attention to individual learners' needs and exercises are well matched to learners' fitness levels and learning aims.

13. In visual and performing arts, tutors use a good range of appropriate teaching methods. There is some outstanding teaching in all parts of the curriculum. Tutors make very good use of resources and visual aids, record learners' progress thoroughly and agree relevant objectives for individual learners. Learners with health problems or disabilities participate fully in the teaching sessions.

14. Teaching is particularly effective in some classes. Learning sessions are very well planned and tutors use a very good range of teaching methods to ensure learners participate in conversation, questioning, reading, writing and presentation. An excellent class website is available for learners to use. Teaching on BSL courses is consistently good and learners are provided with good opportunities to practise their skills in everyday situations.

15. Teaching is good in independent living and leisure skills courses. There is careful initial assessment and lessons are well planned to reflect learners' individual needs. Much of the teaching is based on well-chosen project work which is highly relevant to learners' everyday lives.

16. In all foundation programmes, learning materials and topics are well chosen from real-life situations. Learners are taught how to succeed in situations ranging from shopping to taking driving tests to applying for employment, according to their personal needs and ambitions.

17. In hospitality and sport, and visual and performing arts, the range of learning opportunities is insufficient. The number of courses provided has been reduced significantly in 2004-05. In sport, the only courses on offer are yoga and gentle exercise classes. There are no accredited sports courses, no weekend provision for either sport or hospitality, and training takes place at only a few venues. Some pre-course information about the level and content of course is inaccurate. Men are significantly under-represented on sports courses. In visual and performing arts, courses in subjects such as jewellery, decoupage, circle dancing and circus skills are only provided in the autumn and winter terms.

18. In modern foreign languages, there is some unsatisfactory teaching. In a few classes, learners do not get sufficient opportunity to practise their speaking and listening skills and their progress is not effectively monitored by their tutors. Too much time is given to paper-based teaching activities.

19. Learners on foundation programmes do not receive sufficient initial advice and guidance about their courses. Course information sheets are available, but are not widely distributed or explained to learners. Some learners seeking UK citizenship are not given enough information about how to meet the requirement for a successful application.

20. **There are too few evening classes in literacy and numeracy and ESOL.** Similarly the these courses take place only at a few venues and some learners have long, difficult journeys to reach them.

Leadership and management

21. **RCALS manages its stakeholders and partners very effectively to improve the curriculum.** It has highly productive partnerships with organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors, which it uses to make sure its courses are useful and relevant to local communities. It consults effectively with its own staff and learners about how to improve its training. All staff fully understand their roles and responsibilities and how they contribute to the overall aims of the service.

22. **RCALS has very effective strategies to widen participation.** It makes particularly effective use of courses in family learning, ICT and foundations programmes to provide attractive training opportunities in deprived neighbourhoods. It provides good access to learning for people with mobility or learning difficulties. There are good resources available to help people who have physical difficulties, such as materials in Braille for people with visual impairments. RCALS's staff have been given effective training in providing support to people with dyslexia or hearing difficulties. RCALS has good use of neighbourhood schools and other sites in the community to provide easy access to learning.

23. **In most areas of learning, RCALS has very effective arrangements for observing teaching and learning to improve the experience of learners.** Tutors are given useful feedback and action plans are well designed to help them improve. However, these arrangements have not yet been fully implemented in modern foreign languages.

24. RCALS has a satisfactory strategy for providing additional support for learners who need help with literacy, numeracy or language.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good management of partners and stakeholders to plan and improve the curriculum
- particularly effective strategies to widen participation
- thorough action to improve teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of data to monitor performance

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality and catering

Strengths

- good attainment of skills
- much good teaching
- particularly effective observation of teaching and learning
- effective actions to attract hard-to-reach learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient range of learning opportunities

Leisure, sport and recreation

Strengths

- good attainment of skills
- good attention to individual needs in lessons
- particularly effective observation of teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient range of learning opportunities
- under-representation of men on sports courses

Visual & performing arts & media

Arts

Strengths

- particularly high standard of learners' work
- very effective confidence gains by learners
- good range of teaching methods
- particularly effective action to improve teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient range of courses in the summer term

Crafts

Strengths

- particularly high standard of learners' work
- very effective confidence gains by learners
- good range of teaching methods
- particularly effective action to improve teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient range of courses in the summer term

Dance

Strengths

- particularly high standard of learners' work
- very effective confidence gains by learners
- good range of teaching methods
- particularly effective action to improve teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient range of courses in the summer term

English, languages & communications

Languages

Strengths

- good gains in confidence and development of learners' skills
- particularly effective teaching in some classes

Weaknesses

- slow implementation of action plans from observations of teaching and learning

Other contributory areas

Strengths

- good gains in confidence and development of learners' skills
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- slow implementation of action plans from observations of teaching and learning

Foundation programmes

ESOL

Strengths

- good development of learners' skills and confidence
- good use of contextualised teaching materials
- effective use of partnerships to provide relevant courses

Weaknesses

- insufficient initial advice and guidance
- insufficient classes in the evening

Literacy and numeracy

Strengths

- good development of learners' skills and confidence
- good use of contextualised teaching materials
- effective use of partnerships to provide relevant courses

Weaknesses

- insufficient initial advice and guidance
- insufficient classes in the evening

Independent living and leisure skills

Strengths

- good development of learners' skills and confidence
- good teaching and learning
- good use of contextualised teaching materials
- effective use of partnerships to provide relevant courses

Weaknesses

- insufficient initial advice and guidance

Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

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

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

Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

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

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

DETAILED REINSPECTION FINDING

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 2

Strengths

- good management of partners and stakeholders to plan and improve the curriculum
- particularly effective strategies to widen participation
- thorough action to improve teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of data to monitor performance

25. Management of partners and stakeholders to plan and improve the curriculum is good. Good partnership working was identified as a strength at the previous inspection and has continued to be given high priority. Highly productive partnerships have been established in the public, private, and voluntary sectors to provide relevant targeted learning programmes. RCALS supports many community projects created through these partnerships. For example, community groups have established partnership with RCALS to target priority areas, such as deprived wards or neighbourhoods. Links with voluntary and community organisations are maintained and used effectively. For example, the service works closely with a local extended schools project. Courses such as family learning and parenting skills make a significant positive impact on the lives of parents and children in the area.

26. Staff are fully consulted about the direction of the service and senior managers are very actively involved in rectifying the weaknesses found during the previous inspection. Roles and responsibilities are well defined, with clear management and reporting structures. A variety of appropriate meetings take place across the service to ensure communication is regular and effective. Particular care is taken to ensure that all staff are aware of the changes being made and their personal roles in implementing them. They fully understand how their contribution and course fits into the current and future priorities of the service. The senior management team now meets each week to monitor progress. Actions needed are supported by management at all levels and are clearly recorded and monitored. Tutors in each curriculum area now meet on a quarterly basis and share good practice. Their meetings are well organised, well attended, meaningful and have a clear focus on improving their curriculum area.

27. RCALS has improved the management of the provision significantly since the previous inspection. Curriculum management is no longer a weakness. The service is currently being reorganised and restructured. Senior posts are being created to implement the improvement agenda and national and local priorities for adult education and lifelong learning in the borough. A strategic decision was made to reduce the provision in some areas. Some areas of learning are currently being reviewed. The

service is meeting with local educational providers to identify those most appropriate to provide some of the higher-level accredited courses.

28. Management of resources to support learning is effective. Improvements have been made in the supply and availability of ICT equipment since the previous inspection. Over 60 different venues have been used over the past year and access is good overall. Specialist resources and adaptations are readily available. A crèche is provided six times a week at the main site and learners also have access to private nursery care and childminding. Use of financial resources to support learning is satisfactory. Health and safety management, including appropriate risk assessment of accommodation and activities, is satisfactory.

29. Arrangements for providing additional learning support for literacy, numeracy and the use of language are now satisfactory. A relevant skills for life strategy has been introduced, which is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. Improved individual learning plans help tutors identify and record learners' individual needs and, if necessary, refer them to the skills for life team. The member of staff responsible for providing learners with detailed information, advice and guidance about learning and work has been absent for some time. However, satisfactory short-term alternative arrangements have been made in most areas of learning to refer eligible learners who require in-depth advice to relevant external organisations.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 2

30. RCALS has particularly effective strategies to widen participation. As identified at the previous inspection, RCALS plans its services very effectively to meet the needs of the local community. It now also provides clear strategic aims for courses in subjects such as literacy and numeracy, ICT and family learning, to improve learners' employability skills, their health, or their motivation to participate positively in society. These aims relate directly to appropriate council priorities to improve, for example, employment and crime rates in the most deprived neighbourhoods in Redcar and Cleveland. RCALS has well-established learning centres in key locations, such as primary schools, to ensure good access to the provision for the local community. There is good co-operation between RCALS and schools to share resources and co-ordinate activities to meet community needs. RCALS makes good use of a wide range of venues to provide courses in response to identified local needs. For example, it provides ICT courses in high street venues that provide general employability advice. It also provides specific courses for people with learning difficulties at venues arranged and recommended by relevant support groups. RCALS uses its good working relationships with community groups to ensure that tutors fully understand the needs of particular groups of vulnerable learners.

31. RCALS provides particularly good access to learning for people with mobility difficulties. It responds rapidly to requests from representatives of local disability access groups for the installation of adaptations and takes good advice on priorities for improvement. For example, it has installed automatic doors in its main learning centres and has reorganised the layout of classrooms to ensure good access for people with

restricted mobility. Where access to some outreach centres is not adequate, appropriate alternative arrangements are made. RCALS also seeks and acts on advice about adapting teaching facilities. For example, it has made modifications to the design of kitchens to allow easier access for disabled learners to healthy eating and related programmes. RCALS makes effective use of a learner support fund to provide free childcare and other support services. Since September 2004, over 700 learners have used this service. Braille handouts and teaching materials have been provided for learners with visual impairments. In some classes, learners with physical disabilities have been particularly well integrated with mainstream teaching. For example, in craft and performing arts classes, wheelchair users are able to take part in all the learning activities.

32. Since the previous inspection, the council has updated its equality of opportunity and diversity policies. RCALS has produced clear, relevant guides to these policies in the tutor and learner handbooks. It has responded positively to the legislative requirements. As at the previous inspection, it has good procedures to ensure the best use of funds. The learner handbook is now also available in Braille. RCALS has provided ample staff training to raise awareness of issues such as dyslexia and deafness. Promotion of equality of opportunity is no longer a weakness.

32. RCALS monitors enrolments to its courses by gender, ethnicity and disability to ensure that its learners represent the local population. For example, it has identified that there are not enough men on its learning programmes. However, co-ordinated action has yet to take place to rectify this.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 3

34. RCALS has taken thorough action to improve teaching and learning. The arrangements for observation of teaching, which were found to be a weakness at the previous inspection, have been reviewed and completely overhauled. Specialist tutors and senior managers have received effective training in how to conduct observations of teaching and learning and give feedback to tutors. Significant improvements have been made in the quality of teaching and learning. The new arrangements were introduced in November 2004 and since then 95 observations have taken place. The observation reports are detailed and good feedback is given to tutors. An effective action plan is developed by the observer and is carefully monitored to ensure that the action are completed. The grades awarded are moderated and feedback on any changes is given to the observers. In most areas of learning, the grades awarded by the internal system closely matched those given by inspectors. However, in modern languages, the system is not yet fully effective. Written feedback to tutors is not sufficiently detailed and action plans for improvement are not monitored effectively.

35. Feedback from learners and staff is collected through a good range of methods, including focus groups and questionnaires. A representative learner group meets twice a year to discuss and evaluate aspects of the provision, including new paperwork for tutors and learners. Staff and learner focus groups are used to check the effectiveness of key documents such as course information, individual learning plans and self-assessment reports. Effective initiatives generated from these meetings are implemented promptly.

Learners are given individual feedback on the success of their suggestions.

36. Since the previous inspection, a quality assurance group, which includes members of the senior management team, has been established to review and improve the quality assurance arrangements. Effective use is made of good practices from elsewhere in the adult and community learning sector. For example, RCALS is adopting an effective system to identify and record achievement in non-accredited learning.

37. Assessment, moderation and verification procedures for accredited learning, which were weak at the previous inspection, are now satisfactory. Key staff meet regularly to share good practice in assessment and verification, and appropriate staff training has been arranged by the relevant awarding bodies.

38. There is a satisfactory range of policies and procedures covering the key aspects of the learning process. They are reviewed on an annual basis. Some staff have been trained in auditing skills and monitor adherence to these policies and procedures. Self-assessment is now an established part of the quality assurance procedures. Tutors are asked to complete a self-assessment form for their area of learning and their comments are fully taken into account when the self-assessment report is produced. All tutors have the opportunity to comment on the draft before publication. Each occupational area has a set of strengths and weaknesses that broadly reflect those found by inspectors. A development plan supports the self-assessment report with clear actions and timescales for improvement.

39. RCALS makes insufficient use of data to monitor performance. Management reports about attendance, retention and achievement rates are not written well. For example, some statistics quoted as retention in the self-assessment report are attendance rates. Similarly, some performance measures quoted as achievement rates in management reports are exam pass rates. This data is widely misinterpreted and managers and tutors do not regard it as reliable. It does not provide a meaningful basis on which to monitor trends, set targets or make well-informed decisions.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Hospitality and catering - Adult and community learning	36	2
Leisure, sport and recreation - Adult and community learning	98	3

Hospitality and catering

Strengths

- good attainment of skills
- much good teaching
- particularly effective observation of teaching and learning
- effective actions to attract hard-to-reach learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient range of learning opportunities

Leisure, sport and recreation

Strengths

- good attainment of skills
- good attention to individual needs in lessons
- particularly effective observation of teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient range of learning opportunities
- under-representation of men on sports courses

Achievement and standards

40. Learners attain good skills. Most learners make good progress towards their learning aims and develop good practical abilities. They work confidently and independently and fully understand their progress and the health benefits of their chosen course. For example, one learner on a healthy eating course has improved his child's medical condition through the provision of a better diet. In sport, one learner has considerably improved her mobility. Learners show a significant increase in self-confidence. For example, one learner with poor cooking skills was able to prepare a Christmas menu for her family. A small group of male learners is working on a book of the recipes they have

cooked during their course.

41. Retention and achievement rates are satisfactory. On accredited courses, most learners who remain on the course for the full duration achieve their qualification. On non-accredited courses learners achieve most of their learning goals. Attendance rates are also satisfactory.

Quality of education and training

42. Teaching is good in hospitality. Of those learning sessions observed by inspectors, 80 per cent were graded as good or better and no sessions were graded as unsatisfactory. Tutors have excellent working relationships with learners. Lessons are well planned and structured. Tutors plan lessons effectively and provide appropriate learning activities to meet learners' individual needs. Learners are encouraged to work independently and are provided with adequate individual support when required. Tutors make very good use of demonstrations. They use a good range of teaching methods including class demonstrations and group and individual coaching. Handouts are clear and well written.

43. In sport, there is good attention to learners' individual learning needs. Tutors fully understand learners' individual health issues and modify their lesson plans accordingly. Exercises are demonstrated appropriately, with suggestions for less strenuous or technically demanding postures and movements, and more challenging extensions for those with more experience. However, some handouts are unclear and not well written.

44. Revised individual learning plans have been recently introduced throughout the area of learning. They are generally used effectively to identify learners' prior knowledge and achievements and to monitor their progress. Arrangements are now satisfactory for supporting learners who need additional help with their literacy and numeracy skills. Learners are asked at enrolment if they have any literacy and numeracy needs. Some learners have already started attending literacy and numeracy classes. For example, on one course specifically for fathers, three learners are booked to start a literacy course specifically for them. However, take-up rates are still quite low for some courses.

45. Resources are satisfactory overall. Most tutors are appropriately experienced and qualified and have excellent practical skills. Classrooms are adequate and have sufficient facilities. However, in one healthy eating course the kitchen is too small to accommodate the whole learner group. For accredited courses there are satisfactory arrangements for assessment and internal verification or moderation.

46. Since the previous inspection, RCALS has significantly reduced the number of courses in sport and hospitality. There is now an insufficient range of courses to meet local needs. Too few venues are in use to meet RCALS's strategic aims of providing readily accessible courses to local communities, and there is no provision in some areas. There are not enough options for learners at different levels and too few progression routes. There is insufficient pre-courses information about the level, content and location

of individual courses. On sports programmes, some learners have enrolled on inappropriate options for their level of expertise. Some learners have been on the same course for many years and there are insufficient current opportunities for new learners.

47. Men are particularly under-represented on sports courses. The current range of courses comprises only yoga and gentle exercise programmes. RCALS has identified this weakness, but currently has no plans to rectify the gender imbalance or to provide more appropriate courses for men.

Leadership and management

48. RCALS takes effective action to attract hard-to-reach learners to its hospitality programmes. This has been particularly successful in cookery classes where participation by men is equal to that by women. A community project designed to attract male carers of children has also been very successful. A group of fathers has been preparing and cooking healthy meals for nearly two years where there is a crèche available for their children. The crèche has been made available for them for an additional two hours a day so they can use the ICT facilities at the learning centre. Adults with learning and physical disabilities work well alongside other learners and are provided with good individual support. For example, the kitchen at the largest learning centre has recently been refurbished for people with restricted mobility. Men are significantly under-represented on sports courses.

49. RCALS undertakes particularly effective observations of teaching and learning. Since the previous inspection, subject-specialist tutors have been identified and trained to carry out observations. These subject specialists have a very good understanding of the requirements of the area of learning and provide very good objective assessments of the provision. Action-planning is good and tutors implement improvements to their teaching following observation. The grades awarded during observations match those given by inspectors. The new procedures are fully understood by tutors who use them effectively to improve their teaching.

50. Organisational management is now satisfactory. This was identified as a weakness at the previous inspection. Tutors now meet regularly to discuss curriculum issues and share good practice. Tutors receive good information through newsletters and by attending meetings.

51. Staff involvement in the self-assessment process is satisfactory. All tutors can now contribute. They provide their own assessment of the area of learning. This is discussed at a curriculum meeting and tutors can comment on the draft report before publication. The self-assessment report provides a broadly accurate judgement on the quality of training, although it correctly identifies only some of the specific strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors.

Visual & performing arts & media

Visual & performing arts & media		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts - Adult and community learning	159	2
Crafts - Adult and community learning	204	2
Dance - Adult and community learning	83	2

Arts

Strengths

- particularly high standard of learners' work
- very effective confidence gains by learners
- good range of teaching methods
- particularly effective action to improve teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient range of courses in the summer term

Crafts

Strengths

- particularly high standard of learners' work
- very effective confidence gains by learners
- good range of teaching methods
- particularly effective action to improve teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient range of courses in the summer term

Dance

Strengths

- particularly high standard of learners' work
- very effective confidence gains by learners
- good range of teaching methods
- particularly effective action to improve teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient range of courses in the summer term

Achievement and standards

52. All learners produce a particularly high standard of work. Beginners progress very quickly from their initial starting points and the more experienced learners show very high levels of competence and skill. For example, in tap dancing all learners achieve very good co-ordination and perform complicated routines well. Learners on courses in stained glass produce very individual and detailed designs including spiders' web garden ornaments, cat portraits and heraldic symbols. In china painting, learners experiment well with different layers of colour and brushstroke techniques to produce innovative designs. In dressmaking, learners produce bridesmaid dresses to professional standards.

53. Development of learners' self-confidence is very effective, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. They use appropriate technical language and terminology to describe and critically analyse their work. For example, they compare their work to that of well-known artists to help them improve their own skills. Some learners on sequence dancing courses make good use of their skills at social events. Learners on craft courses sell their work, use it to raise funds for charity, or make gifts for their families.

54. Attendance and retention rates are satisfactory. For many learners their art, craft or dance lessons becomes important parts of their lives and most rarely miss the learning sessions. Once settled onto a programme, new learners quickly adopt the same approach and are encouraged to attend by their peers. Achievement rates on accredited courses are satisfactory, although many learners choose not to take the qualifications on offer. Despite this, most learners now achieve the learning goals identified on their individual learning plans.

Quality of education and training

55. Tutors use a good range of relevant teaching methods including demonstrations, discussions and individual tuition. Inspectors observed outstanding teaching sessions across all parts of the curriculum. Tutors make good use of resources and aids to help learning. For example, in a guitar class, the tutor made very good use of a large visual aid to assist learners in mastering the correct fingering technique for different chords. Tutors continue to meet learners during summer breaks to provide additional tuition and

support. Some tutors provide additional support between classes. Lessons are very well planned. Learners' progress is recorded thoroughly and used to plan and modify future lessons. Newly revised individual learning plans are used by all tutors. Individual aims and objectives are thoroughly negotiated and agreed between tutors and learners and are always related to the overall level and objectives of the course. Learners are encouraged to work independently, at their own pace and level. They are given ample time for individual coaching during most lessons and are helped to sustain long-term improvements in their skills.

56. Learners with health problems and disabilities participate fully and effectively in many learning sessions. Tutors fully understand learners' needs and provide appropriate support. Tutors ensure adequate monitoring of health and safety. For example, a tutor instructing learners on how to create a beaded tassel explained that they should avoid scalding by steaming the tassels on the end of a wooden support over boiling water. Learners have satisfactory information to help them choose an appropriate course and tutors provide impartial information about alternative courses when relevant. Learners fully understand each others' individual needs and provide good peer support.

57. There are satisfactory arrangements to provide learners with additional literacy and numeracy support. Where learners agree, tutors record these needs on the individual learning plans and learners are referred to RCALS's skills for life team. On the small number of accredited courses, there are satisfactory arrangements for assessment, moderation and internal verification of learners' work

58. The range of courses provided during the summer term is insufficient. At the previous inspection the summer provision included courses in jewellery, decoupage and circle dancing, but these have been cancelled for the summer term. A circus skills course is available for the spring term, but is not available in the summer. There are not enough formal progression routes for learners. Some learners repeat courses rather than progressing to more advanced levels. However, tutors adapt their teaching methods well to meet the different needs and skill levels of learners.

Leadership and management

59. There is particularly effective action to improve teaching and learning. Significant improvements have been made since the previous inspection, especially in craft and dance, which were previously unsatisfactory. Observation is now carried out by well-trained subject specialists who provide good feedback to tutors. Action plans are closely monitored and improvements achieved. For example, inspectors observed sessions with very few weaknesses where the tutors were able to demonstrate specific improvements in technique following internal observation and action-planning. Tutors use the observations to enhance their teaching skills. The impact of this strength on the current experience of learners was not fully identified in the self-assessment report.

60. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. Staff fully understand its role in quality assurance and contribute effectively to the report. Inspectors agreed with most of the strengths and weaknesses in the report.

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61. Curriculum management is much improved since the previous inspection, where it was judged to be weak. For example, there are now frequent curriculum meetings to share good practice. Staff have access to a good range of development activities. Many have recently attended equality and diversity training and are particularly responsive to the needs of learners with sight or hearing difficulties. Learning centres have good access for people with restricted mobility and many art and craft studios have adapted resources such as low-level benches and specialist equipment.

English, languages & communications

English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Languages - Adult and community learning	124	3
Other contributory areas - Adult and community learning	55	2

Languages

Strengths

- good gains in confidence and development of learners' skills
- particularly effective teaching in some classes

Weaknesses

- slow implementation of action plans from observations of teaching and learning

Other contributory areas

Strengths

- good gains in confidence and development of learners' skills
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- slow implementation of action plans from observations of teaching and learning

Achievement and standards

62. As at the previous inspection, learners develop good skills and self-confidence, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Learners are fully involved in the learning activities and achieve good standards of work. Most learners fully understand their individual targets, assess accurately their own development needs, and identify ways to improve. They can clearly identify how their new skills help them in their everyday lives. Learners on English courses confidently discuss complex ideas. They make perceptive judgements based on effective reading and analysis of text. Learners work well to improve their knowledge of politics, history, and other cultures through the study of British and foreign authors. They use their writing skills effectively to experiment with different genres, such as short stories, poetry and drama.

63. Most modern foreign language learners use the target language with confidence. They communicate accurately and develop good comprehension skills. They develop their vocabulary well and increase their understanding of language structures. For

example, in a Spanish class, learners use the future tense in a variety of contexts. Learners gain a good understanding of the target language culture. For example, in a French conversation class, learners acquire new proverbs and colloquialisms and discuss the differences in living standards in France and England. Learners apply their new skills appropriately and communicate effectively with local people and friends, order meals and understand road signs. For example, in one level 3 class, learners write good formal and informal letters. Learners on accredited courses organise their work particularly well and fully understand the accreditation process. Some learners learn particularly quickly and are able to speak with a good accent. On some courses, learners do not develop adequate listening and speaking skills.

64. Learners on BSL courses develop good signing skills and are able to finger spell accurately. They use sign language effectively to communicate in class and work well to learn and use new signs. Learners develop their facial expressions as an effective aid to communication. For example, in one class, learners model their expressions on those produced by a deaf learner.

65. Achievement rates on accredited courses were poor at the previous inspection and are now improving. For example, in 2003-04, the overall achievement rate was 57 per cent, compared with approximately 50 per cent at the time of the previous inspection.

Quality of education and training

66. Teaching is particularly effective in some classes. Forty-four per cent of English and language teaching was judged to be outstanding and 22 per cent as good. Tutors demonstrate good expertise in their subject, and plan lessons very well. They make effective use of directed questions to ensure whole class participation. They use a good range of teaching techniques to sustain learners' interest. In English, questions are used very well to challenge learners and encourage lively, relevant discussion. In one class, very effective use was made of a particularly good mix of reading, discussion, questioning and presentation. One tutor has created a class website to encourage learners to write creatively together in the production of a soap opera. On modern foreign language programmes, tutors develop learners' listening and comprehension skills in everyday contexts. Tutors use a good range of resources such as prompt cards, music and video. One tutor used a highly effective game to develop listening skills and recap on the previous week's learning. Another has developed a website to provide relevant additional information on contemporary French culture. However, 22 per cent of foreign language teaching is still unsatisfactory. In the unsatisfactory sessions, learners are not given sufficient time to practise their speaking and listening skills. There are too many paper-based activities and learners are not given sufficient encouragement to use the target language freely and spontaneously. Activities are centred around the tutor rather than the learner.

67. Teaching and learning are good on BSL courses. All sessions observed were judged to be good. Learners are prepared well for their examinations. They are encouraged to broaden their skills by attending the local centre for the deaf. Learners are provided with

good activities to practise and develop their signing skills. Video recording of learners is used very effectively to allow them to assess their progress and good use is made of volunteers from the deaf community to help learners to apply their skills and language in everyday life. Peer support and paired work is well managed and co-ordinated so that learners learn effectively in joint exercises and conversation.

68. As at the previous inspection resources are satisfactory. Accommodation is of a satisfactory standard. Modern language tutors have good access to an appropriate range of equipment and materials such as audiovisual aids and laptop computers. However, some tutors do not have adequate access to ICT. Staff are appropriately qualified and experienced and have attended training sessions in sharing good practice and observing teaching and learning.

69. Assessment, monitoring and recording of progress are satisfactory. In most classes, individual learning plans are completed at the start of the course and are reviewed and updated regularly by tutors and learners. In one foreign language class, assessment processes are integrated well into learning activities, and are understood by learners. The recording of learning against the units and elements of the accreditation scheme is good. Assessment and verification procedures in BSL have improved and meet the requirements of the relevant awarding body.

70. The range of subjects and courses offered is satisfactory. Some BSL learners are studying to enhance or change their career. There are clear progression routes from level 1 to level 2 in BSL. Progression is also available in Italian from level 1 to level 2, and in French and Spanish from level 1 to level 3. There is a French conversation class for those who wish to practise their speaking and listening skills only. However, few venues are used for this area of learning and not enough taster or introductory courses are provided.

71. Learners are provided with satisfactory pre-course information, guidance and support. At enrolment, they are given detailed course outlines that include the course objectives and accreditation requirements. Learners have good access to course tutors. However, some learners are not aware of the accreditation requirements of their courses. As identified at the previous inspection, tutors give good individual support during pair and group work to ensure that learners understand their tasks. A satisfactory system is now in place to identify learners' individual literacy, numeracy and language needs.

Leadership and management

72. Curriculum management has improved since the previous inspection and is now satisfactory. Staff meetings take place regularly and provide some opportunities to share good practice. Adequate training is available for staff and some tutors have completed useful awareness training in dyslexia. Realistic targets are set for retention and attendance, but none are set for achievement on accredited courses. Staff were consulted about the self-assessment report and it correctly identifies most of the strengths and weaknesses found by inspectors.

73. There is slow implementation of action plans from observations of teaching and learning. The reports are often descriptive rather than evaluative and there are inconsistencies between the description of sessions and the grades awarded. The reports do not focus sufficiently on the learning process and the action plans do not give a clear indication of how tutors can improve. Their implementation is not sufficiently well monitored and there is inadequate checking that weaknesses affecting learners are rectified. Tutors in BSL and in languages are not given sufficient support to rectify weaknesses or consolidate and improve on the strengths in their teaching technique. For example, in languages some of the weaknesses observed by inspectors had been accurately described during a prior internal observation, but no action had been taken to rectify the weaknesses in the intervening months.

Foundation programmes

Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>ESOL</i> - Adult and community learning	158	3
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i> - Adult and community learning	176	3
<i>Independent living and leisure skills</i> - Adult and community learning	57	2

ESOL

Strengths

- good development of learners' skills and confidence
- good use of contextualised teaching materials
- effective use of partnerships to provide relevant courses

Weaknesses

- insufficient initial advice and guidance
- insufficient classes in the evening

Literacy and numeracy

Strengths

- good development of learners' skills and confidence
- good use of contextualised teaching materials
- effective use of partnerships to provide relevant courses

Weaknesses

- insufficient initial advice and guidance
- insufficient classes in the evening

Independent living and leisure skills

Strengths

- good development of learners' skills and confidence
- good teaching and learning
- good use of contextualised teaching materials
- effective use of partnerships to provide relevant courses

Weaknesses

- insufficient initial advice and guidance

Achievement and standards

74. Development of learners' skills and self-confidence is good. Learners work well on their practical and social-learning activities. They develop good numeracy skills. For example, one learner has reduced the study time for a qualification from two years to one. Learners in ESOL develop good language skills through highly effective participation in relevant events and activities to which other learner groups are invited. Learners in literacy and numeracy classes discuss effectively with tutors and their peers ideas related to course work. Learners work well together and provide effective peer support.

75. Retention rates in all areas are satisfactory. Achievement rates on most accredited courses have improved since the previous inspection and are now satisfactory. For example, pass rates on the national tests in literacy and numeracy are now over 60 per cent, compared with 25 per cent at the time of the previous inspection. Achievement rates on ESOL fell during in 2003-04, but are now improving. A third of ESOL learners have already achieved their target qualification this year. Attendance rates are very good on independent living and leisure skills courses at 94 per cent, good on literacy and numeracy courses at 82 per cent, but low on ESOL courses at 64 per cent.

Quality of education and training

76. Teaching and learning are good on independent living and leisure skills courses. Seventy-five per cent of lessons observed were graded as good and none were less than satisfactory. Lessons are well structured and based on accurate initial assessment of learners' skills and their identified learning goals. Lesson plans are clear and detailed and include assessment methods, differentiation and management of resources. All lesson outcomes are cross-referenced to the adult core curriculum. Most of the courses are project based and highly relevant to the learners concerned. For example, learners develop fundraising skills, use ICT skills to design and write posters to advertise various campaigns, and develop relevant workplace skills such as carrying out risk assessments. Learners develop numeracy skills by, for example, collecting donations. They make appropriate use of their literacy and ICT skills by producing curriculum vitae and letters of application. Individual learning plans are updated at the end of each learning session

and learners' progress is clearly recorded against appropriate targets and short-term goals.

77. In all areas, good use is made of contextualised learning materials, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Courses are designed effectively to meet learners' individual needs. Topics in lessons are drawn from real-life situations and place learning in context with learners' everyday lives outside of the classroom. Good use is made of appropriate materials to enhance the national learning materials. For example, tutors examine with learners how organisations and companies use promotional material, such as pamphlets delivered house-to-house, to advertise their products and services. In literacy, learners develop good listening and speaking skills. For example, in one lesson, learners achieved these skills by placing messages on an answerphone while another learner would listen to the message, write it down, and then tell the tutor the content of the message. Many ESOL lessons are linked well to other activities, such as the requirements of driving theory tests. In numeracy, a tutor made effective use of a recent shopping trip. Learners used receipts to work out the percentage of discount for various items. In an independent living and leisure skills course, tutors are working with a group of learners rehearsing for a theatre performance, basing lessons around parts of the script, characters and costumes, to explore and develop their speaking, reading and listening skills.

78. Overall teaching in ESOL and literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. There is good use of individual and group work with a range of learning activities and teaching styles. Tutors monitor learners' understanding and progress. Tutors manage mixed-ability groups effectively to keep learners sufficiently engaged. Most learners remain fully involved in the learning activities throughout the sessions and make satisfactory progress.

79. RCALS makes effective use of partnerships to provide relevant courses for specific learner groups. Partnership working takes account of local geographic areas with high levels of deprivation and the learning needs and aspirations of learners. For example, through a partnership with social services, discrete courses are provided for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to develop their employability skills through literacy, numeracy and ICT. Links with community groups, such as lone parents and asylum seekers, provide courses in specific community locations. RCALS has successfully widened participation to particularly vulnerable and under-represented groups. Independent living and leisure skills courses now account for 40 per cent of provision in this area of learning. Courses are now provided in a wide range of locations in the community. For example, more literacy and numeracy classes are now provided in the community.

80. During the previous inspection, arrangements for initial assessment and planning of individual learning were weak. These have since been improved and are now satisfactory in all areas of the curriculum. A range of initial screening and assessment tools is now used effectively to identify learners' individual learning needs and goals. Individual learning plans identify a range of short- and long-term individual targets. These are updated appropriately when achievement has taken place.

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81. Resources are satisfactory. Tutors make good use of an appropriate range of resources, including ICT, and have access to specialist equipment when needed. Access to computers equipment and software is generally good, except at some outreach centres used for ESOL and literacy and numeracy courses.

82. Learners are provided with insufficient advice and guidance relating to course content and accreditation. Course information sheets are prepared for most courses, but these are not routinely given to learners. Some learners who have attended courses for some months do not know accreditation is available. For example, learners seeking citizenship do not understand the levels of accreditation available for ESOL, or how they may help them meet application requirements for British citizenship. The initial advice and guidance worker has been absent for some time and some learners have not received appropriate direct guidance.

83. There are insufficient evening classes in literacy, numeracy and ESOL, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. At the time of the inspection, there was no evening provision for ESOL. Since September 2004, less than 9 per cent of courses in ESOL and literacy and numeracy have taken place during the evenings. Similarly, only a few venues are currently in use either for ESOL or for literacy and numeracy. Many learners have transport difficulties to attend these classes.

Leadership and management

84. Curriculum management, which was weak at the previous inspection, is now satisfactory. Two part-time staff are responsible for curriculum management. There are regular curriculum meetings and training and development activities. The skills for life strategy, which was absent at the previous inspection, is effective and understood by tutors and management staff. This details strategies to meet national targets through local initiatives, projects and capacity building. Effective staff training takes place to raise awareness of skills for life targets, dyslexia training and initiatives to rectify weaknesses related to planning and recording learning. An action plan is now in place to ensure staff achieve subject-specialist qualifications. An effective exercise to monitor the quality of teaching and learning has taken place for 13 tutors. This has improved the quality of learners' experience. The quality of teaching and learning has improved. Staff are set overall targets for widening participation, but are not set targets related to achievement and retention at course level.

85. Quality assurance has improved since the previous inspection. Paperwork used for lesson planning is now audited. Identified weaknesses are rectified quickly. Internal verification is effective. Staff are consulted as part of the self-assessment process and there is an effective consultative approach to this process.