

INSPECTION REPORT

Manchester LEA

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

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

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

The two grading scales relate to each other as follows:

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

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

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

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

Overall judgement

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

Provision will normally be deemed to be inadequate where:

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

This provision will be subject to a full reinspection.

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

INSPECTION REPORT

Manchester LEA

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Manchester City Council (city council) provides first step, adult and community learning, and opportunities for employment and training, through its adult education service, Manchester Adult Education Service (MAES). MAES prioritises people with low-level or no qualifications, those who are not in work, those in low-paid employment and people who encounter barriers to participating in learning opportunities. MAES aims to deliver city council corporate plans and initiatives as well as contributing to national priorities such as 'success for all', and the skills strategy. The city council is carrying out a review of MAES, intended to improve its effectiveness and to focus on local and national agendas.

2. Manchester is a city of contrasts and challenges. The resident population of Manchester, as measured in the 2001 census, was 392,819. The city has within its boundaries some of the most deprived communities in the country and the average unemployment rate was 6.1 per cent in November 2004, compared with a national average of 4.7 per cent. In 2002-03, 39.6 per cent of 16 year olds achieved at least five general certificates of secondary education (GCSEs) at grade C or above compared with a national average of 52.9 per cent. MAES is part of the education department of the city council and is funded by the Manchester Learning and Skills Council. In 2003-04, MAES ran 1,941 further education and 856 adult and community learning courses across the city in 19 dedicated adult learning centres and over 220 community venues, including schools and community centres. The largest number of learning opportunities are provided in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), literacy and numeracy, information and communication technology (ICT), health and early years, fitness and leisure, family learning and visual and performing arts. In 2003-04 MAES attracted over 32,000 enrolments and over 15,000 learners. Only 9 per cent of learners were full fee payers. Thirty-five per cent of MAES's learners are from minority ethnic groups, compared with a city average of 19 per cent. Fourteen per cent of learners describe themselves as having a disability and 8 per cent describe themselves as having a learning difficulty. Over the past two years, MAES has delivered learning to 633 asylum seekers in literacy, numeracy and ESOL. A high priority is given to provision that widens participation and engages hard-to-reach learners and employees, particularly in the most deprived Manchester wards. In 2004-05, just over 11 per cent of provision is subcontracted to other providers. This subcontracted provision enables MAES to enrol learners from many groups in the community such as the Chinese community and learners recovering from alcohol and drug-related problems.

3. MAES is managed through a senior management team led by the head of lifelong learning. MAES is delivered through five learning zones covering different parts of the city. Reports on MAES are made to the education department's strategy and performance team, the chief education officer's strategic management team and to the city council's scrutiny committee. The senior manager responsible for quality assurance and equality leads on the self-assessment process. Forty-five contributory reports and

team development plans are used for the summary self-assessment report. This is the third self-assessment report produced by MAES. MAES involved subcontractors in the self-assessment through monthly meetings and management meetings. Learners are involved in the self-assessment process through course reviews, evaluations and learner surveys.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Sciences & mathematics

4. One-year GCSE mathematics courses are provided at nine centres across Manchester. There are 11 courses offered at a range of times. Sessions are available in mornings, afternoons and the evening. Learners study at three different levels within each class.

5. At the time of inspection 156 learners were enrolled for GCSE mathematics. These are taught by six tutors, two of whom are 'pro-rata' and the others are part time.

Business administration, management & professional

6. There are 86 learners on the teacher education programmes, which lead to nationally accredited qualifications at level 2, 3 and 4. The level 2 programmes are designed for teaching assistants and advice workers. Level 3 and 4 programmes are for teachers in adult and further education. One level 3 programme is designed for teachers of ICT. There are 44 learners on the level 2 programmes, 19 on level 3 and 23 on level 4. One level 4 programme offers learners the opportunity to achieve the qualification through accreditation of prior learning. Initial assessment for all programmes is by application form, written tasks, interview and self-assessment by completing skill scans.

7. There is a full-time course manager and a full-time specialist tutor for literacy and numeracy. They teach on the programmes for teaching assistants and teachers in adult and further education. The programmes for advice workers and ICT teachers are taught by staff from MAES's partner departments and community organisations. Guest speakers from other departments contribute to the teaching in specific sessions as required.

Information & communications technology

8. A wide range of ICT courses is held throughout MAES. Skills are gained in word processing, spreadsheets and database, e-mail and the internet.

9. So far this academic year, 2,493 learners have enrolled on 299 courses, compared with 3,513 learners who enrolled on 436 courses last year. Approximately 30 per cent of learners are men and 23 per cent are over 60. Twenty-seven per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups. Over two-thirds of the 245 courses at the time of inspection last for more than 60 hours. Over 90 per cent of courses lead to a nationally recognised qualification. Most courses run from September to early July, with learners attending for two or two-and-a-half hours a week. Most learners begin in September but they can usually join at any time of the year if there are spaces. The ICT programmes are managed by a senior curriculum co-ordinator with the assistance of seven team leaders, of whom three work part time.

10. Courses are held in more than 50 venues throughout the city including the MAES's adult learning centres, schools, community centres and libraries. Seven partner organisations also offer ICT courses on behalf of MAES. These work mainly with specific groups of learners such as minority ethnic learners, women, and alcohol and drug misusers.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

11. MAES provides a variety of hospitality, sport and leisure courses. These include non-accredited courses in yoga, tai chi, qi gong, keep fit, food for fitness, Asian and Indian cookery and cooking for pleasure. Accredited courses are available for sports coaching, swimming teachers, national pool lifeguard, first aid and food hygiene. Some courses are targeted at specific groups such as women only, African-Caribbean men and those aged over 50. Learners enrol on courses for health improvement, personal development, social benefits and improved employment prospects. Provision is offered during the daytime, evenings and at weekends in 39 venues including adult education centres, community centres and church halls. In 2003-04, there were 1,612 enrolments from 1,447 learners. Of these, 79 per cent were women, 51 per cent were over the age of 50 and 21 per cent were from minority ethnic groups. Forty-six part-time tutors are employed by MAES. At the time of inspection there were 917 learners in sports, exercise and keep fit and 189 learners in food hygiene and healthy eating programmes.

Health, social care & public services

12. There are 1,124 learners on health and social care programmes. Of these, 464 are on early years programmes and 660 on social care programmes, including complementary therapies. There are accredited courses in early years, counselling and play work and non-accredited courses in health awareness in the Asian community and deaf-awareness programmes. Eighty-two per cent of learners are women and 32 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. Courses are taught in day centres and community venues during the day and in the evening. They range from six-day courses to full time over two years. The programme is led by two full-time senior co-ordinators, supported by six team leaders and 25 part-time tutors. Learners on the early years programmes are employed in play work and early years settings in Manchester. MAES has links with Manchester Sure Start, Manchester play service, a homeless project, the local hospital trust and community centres.

Visual & performing arts & media

13. Visual and performing arts and media is the second largest area of learning in MAES. In 2004-05, 2,640 learners enrolled across the area of learning. There are 2,068 learners on 254 visual arts courses at 47 venues, and 572 learners on 59 courses in the performing arts at 13 venues. Leisure courses are offered on all main sites. The range of courses in the visual arts covers arts, life drawing and portrait painting, papercraft, embroidery, garment making and pattern cutting, ceramics and millinery. In the performing arts, courses are offered in music, guitar, keyboard, singing, drama and media. Courses are offered across all the five zones in the day and evening for between 10 and 33 weeks. Some courses are subcontracted and are offered in all the zones. Seventy-nine courses are accredited, mainly at levels 1 and 2, with a few courses at level 3. Two hundred and thirty-four courses are non-accredited. Twenty-nine per cent of visual arts courses are accredited, and 30 per cent of performing arts courses are accredited. Most of the classes include beginners and improvers. Most sites and rooms are accessible for learners with restricted mobility. Fifty-one tutors in visual arts and 29 tutors in performing arts are part time. In performing arts, four tutors are fractional appointments and 18 are fractional in visual arts. The two programme area co-ordinators teach for four hours a week. Seven visual arts team leaders and three performing arts team leaders manage smaller teams of subject tutors. In 2003-04 there were 2,904 learners.

Humanities

14. MAES offers three accredited access courses in the north, centre and south of the city. Learners are able to choose between sociology, psychology, history, cultural studies and study skills. These courses prepare learners for progression to higher education. Level 2 courses are offered in psychology, social sciences, sociology and criminology through the larger centres and in some outlying centres. These are designed to develop the skills needed to progress to level 3 study. The 'new interests' and 'careers horizons in education' course is offered to women only. This course has run over the past three years, attracting 17 or 18 learners annually, all of whom are returning to learning after a poor experience of education and with little or no previous achievement. In adult and community learning, courses are available in local history, community and personal history, and current affairs. The aim of these courses is to help learners engage with historical and cultural developments of their local community, and to contribute to community development and social integration. Enrolments on access and pre-access course have remained stable at about 250 between 2001 and 2003. There are 303 learners at the time of the inspection. In 2003-04, 78.2 per cent were women, 27.4 per cent were between 30 and 39 years of age, 23.7 per cent were over 60, 31.2 per cent were from black and minority ethnic groups, and 8.8 per cent declared a disability. The programmes are advertised widely through leaflets in the Manchester area and through the city council's intranet site. All potential access learners have a comprehensive interview to identify their background learning and their progression intentions. They sign a learning agreement following a two-week induction. There are six full-time staff and 11 part-time staff delivering the access, pre-access and adult and community learning programmes.

English, languages & communications

15. In 2003-04, 1,620 learners made 1,817 enrolments. At the time of the inspection there were 1,903 enrolments for 1,733 learners on 149 courses across 22 venues. One hundred of the courses are in modern languages. Learners can gain accreditation on 42 of the beginners courses. Currently 16 subjects are being taught including English and English literature GCSE, poetry, creative writing and scriptwriting, British Sign Language (BSL), French, Spanish, Italian, German, modern Greek, Cantonese, Mandarin, Urdu, Arabic and Russian. Twenty-seven per cent of the courses offered are in Spanish, about 18 per cent are in French and 15 per cent are in English and related subjects. Twelve per cent of the provision is in sign language. Most courses are offered at entry level or level 1, with about a quarter at level 2 and above. Seventy-one per cent of learners are women. Twenty-nine staff work in this area. One is a full-time senior curriculum co-ordinator, one is a full-time team leader, and two are 'pro-rata' team leaders. The remainder of the staff are part-time tutors. All are native speakers of the languages they teach. A senior curriculum co-ordinator manages team leaders who are responsible for the recruitment of staff, the management of the provision and quality assurance in their areas.

Foundation programmes

16. MAES offers ESOL classes from entry level to level 2 in 25 community venues across the city. Eighty-eight per cent of the classes are taught by the provider's staff and the rest are delivered under subcontract arrangements with six community providers. A total of 1,901 learners are enrolled in 262 classes, 68 per cent of whom are women. In 2003-04 there were 3,024 learners. Classes are provided during the day, at twilight sessions and in the evenings. Some classes are provided at the weekend. MAES also organises a summer school. Most classes last for one year. The ESOL team consists of one manager, seven team leaders, 22 fractional tutors and 22 part-time tutors.

17. Literacy and numeracy provision comprises 200 courses on 30 main sites and community venues across the city. Eight courses are subcontracted to other providers. In 2003-04, there were 2,675 enrolments on year-long courses. By February 2005, 1,211 learners had enrolled. Forty-four learners receive support for dyslexia. Approximately 35 per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups, 34 per cent are men and 22 per cent have a declared disability. Courses are termly and last for two hours each week. Most are non-accredited. Some learners take entry level and level 1 qualifications or national tests at levels 1 and 2. A small number of open college units are available on specific courses. Two full-time equivalent salaried staff and 23 hourly paid or fractional tutors work on the programme. Two senior curriculum co-ordinators and eight team leaders support the programme.

18. MAES provides 115 courses for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities (LLDD) in 18 main sites and community venues across the city. One course is subcontracted to another provider. In February 2005, there were 335 learners. A similar number of learners enrolled on the courses in the previous two years. Four projects in partnership with health and social services have enrolled 54 learners. Most learners receive additional learning support. Approximately 19 per cent of learners are from minority ethnic groups, 52 per cent are men and all learners have disabilities. Courses run termly from between two and four hours each week. Seventy-two courses are accredited. Five salaried staff, one externally funded post, 36 hourly paid tutors and 11 support staff work on the programme. The programme is managed by two senior co-ordinators and five team leaders.

19. MAES delivers community learning as part of its widening participation programmes for new learners from defined target groups. Approximately 180 learners have enrolled since September 2004. Courses are between six and 30 hours. Most courses are delivered in partnership with community, voluntary, and advocacy groups and employers, and all aim to enhance capacity building in the community.

Family learning

20. At the time of the inspection, 618 learners were enrolled on 76 courses in 55 locations including schools, community centres, church halls and libraries. Six per cent are men and 35 per cent are from minority ethnic groups. Courses include family literacy, language and numeracy, wider family learning and progression courses from these. Wider family learning covers a broad range of courses, including links to other curriculum areas such as art, science, ESOL and ICT. The courses are at a range of levels up to level 2. Most sessions are held during the day in school term-time, with some Saturday sessions. Childcare is provided for daytime courses when required. Some courses enable learners to gain a qualification. A family learning manager oversees the provision with nine full-time staff and 11 sessional tutors.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	33
Number of inspection days	262
Number of learners interviewed	1087
Number of staff interviewed	289
Number of subcontractors interviewed	15
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	149
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	7
Number of visits	467

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

21. The quality of the provision is not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Provision is good in business administration, management and professional, and family learning, satisfactory in sciences and mathematics, health, social care and public services, visual and performing arts and media and English, languages and communications. Provision is unsatisfactory in ICT, hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, humanities and foundation programmes. Leadership and management and quality assurance are unsatisfactory. Equal opportunities is satisfactory.

GRADES

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

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

Sciences & mathematics		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Mathematics - Adult and community learning	156	3
Business administration, management & professional		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Teacher/trainer awards - Adult and community learning	86	2
Information & communications technology		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT - Adult and community learning	2493	4
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Hospitality and catering - Adult and community learning	189	None
Leisure, sport and recreation - Adult and community learning	917	4
Health, social care & public services		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Care - Adult and community learning	660	3
Early years - Adult and community learning	464	3

Visual & performing arts & media		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts - Adult and community learning	2068	3
Other contributory areas - Adult and community learning	572	3
Humanities		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other contributory areas - Adult and community learning	303	4
English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Languages - Adult and community learning	1733	3
Foundation programmes		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
ESOL - Adult and community learning	1901	4
Community learning - Adult and community learning	180	2
Literacy and numeracy - Adult and community learning	1211	3
Independent living and leisure skills - Adult and community learning	335	4
Family learning		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
- Adult and community learning	618	2

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

22. **Retention and achievement rates on many childcare and playwork programmes are good.** The rates on subcontracted childcare programmes, pre-school diploma, teaching assistant level 2 courses and playwork programmes are above 85 per cent.

Retention rates are poor on many languages courses. They are poor in GCSE English, Spanish, French and Italian, but good in German, BSL and most Urdu classes.

23. **In visual, performing arts and media, learners achieve good skills** in their practical work and their portfolios show the good progress they have made. In craft, wood carving, embroidery, art, video and singing, learners' work is good. Learners celebrate their achievement through displays, exhibitions and performances. Even learners who have attended sessions for some years continue to learn new skills.

24. **Learners are enthusiastic about their learning and maintain a good standard of written and oral work and contribute to the lessons.** Sociology learners are able to show they have achieved a high standard of critical and debating skills.

25. **ESOL learners make good progress in developing their oral communication skills.** Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities develop good personal skills. They develop communication and social skills in practical and creative activities. Learners in relaxation classes use the skills they have learnt to reduce personal stress. In community learning programmes, first step learners make good progress in achieving their personal and learning goals. They become confident in everyday situations and participate in community activities.

26. **In family learning, learners develop good parenting and personal skills.** They gain the necessary confidence to progress to further learning. They acquire a good knowledge about children's learning and the school curriculum and use it to support their child's learning at home.

27. **Retention rates in mathematics are low** and have been low for the past two years. MAES does not analyse why most learners leave by the middle of the year. Retention and achievement rates in teacher training were good in 2003-04 at an average of 90 per cent and 70 per cent respectively.

28. **In ICT some learners make slow progress.** Tutors expect too little from learners and do not encourage them to work to their full potential.

29. **In performing arts, video and media there is some poor retention and low attendance.** One media class has retained only half of the learners who started. The retention and achievement rates for humanities learners on a women-only introductory course at level 1 and 2 are very good. These learners return to learning after a poor experience of education and with little previous achievement. All progress to further education courses or into paid or voluntary employment.

30. **Overall achievement rates on the day time access programme in 2003-04 were unsatisfactory**, with only 25 per cent of learners gaining the full award. Overall retention rates on access to higher education programmes is low at 55 per cent for all learners. During the inspection, attendance was low at 60 per cent. All foundation learners significantly increase their confidence and this helps them to function better in society.

Quality of education and training

Grades awarded to learning sessions

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Total
Sciences & mathematics	0	3	2	3	1	0	0	9
Business administration, management & professional	0	3	0	4	0	0	0	7
Information & communications technology	0	3	19	17	4	3	0	46
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	6	8	11	7	3	0	35
Health, social care & public services	0	8	12	8	2	0	0	30
Visual & performing arts & media	2	12	24	15	5	0	0	58
Humanities	0	0	8	6	2	0	0	16
English, languages & communications	5	8	17	9	1	0	0	40
Foundation programmes	2	21	45	47	21	5	0	141
Family learning	0	8	10	5	1	0	0	24
Total	9	72	145	125	44	11	0	406

31. **Much of the teaching and learning in mathematics are good.** Tutors effectively provide for individual needs and lessons generate increasing confidence in learners. Teachers share their enthusiasm for mathematics with the learners.

32. **The planning and co-ordination of the curriculum are poor.** There is little sharing of good practice and no systematic data analysis.

33. **Initial assessment in teacher education is used well** to plan individual learning and learners are given good support in their studies.

34. **The range of programmes and progression opportunities are good.** General and specialist programmes are offered from levels 2 to 4 to meet national targets. Support for learners is good. Learners get good help with their literacy, numeracy and language and good guidance on the evidence they need for assessment. Extra support is available through childcare, signers and note takers. Some learners do not have sufficient mentoring support to develop their skills.

35. **The resources are inadequate.** There are insufficient staff to meet demand and too few audiovisual and ICT resources. Learners have insufficient access to resources for independent study and some accommodation is poor.

36. Initiatives to widen participation in ICT have attracted 'hard-to-reach' learners, many of whom would not attend more formal training organisations. Welcoming learning environments are situated in areas of high deprivation. Learners appreciate the good guidance and individual support from tutors and the opportunity to work at their own pace. Tutors reassure learners when they have problems in completing computing tasks. Crèche provision is readily available and class times are adjusted to suit learners with family commitments. Handouts with large print and adaptive technology are available to help adults with physical or sensory impairments.

37. Teaching and learning methods are boring and often repetitive. Most sessions are delivered as workshops and insufficient attention is paid to learners' preferred ways of learning. Learners are not sufficiently encouraged to extend their skills. The planning and monitoring of learning is insufficiently thorough. Individual learning plans are not used effectively and not enough attention is given to learners' personal learning goals and timescales for achieving them.

38. Some learning environments are of an unsatisfactory standard. Classrooms are cramped, there are insufficient aids to ensure safe working practices, and learners are not sufficiently encouraged to develop good working habits. Many computers are not sufficiently up to date and in some centres there is inadequate access to the internet. Recent actions have started to improve the management of the curriculum. Staff resources are effectively shared and standard ways of recording lesson plans and learner profiles have been introduced. Staffing levels have improved.

39. In hospitality, sports and leisure, teaching and learning in Iyengar yoga classes is very good. Varied learning methods are used and learners are challenged to perform well. They show good awareness of how to adapt their postures and use different equipment to suit their ability and alignment.

40. Good community links contribute effectively to wider participation by targeting learners from minority ethnic groups. In partnership with the health authority, MAES offers an exercise on prescription scheme, to help learners improve their health through exercise rather than medication.

41. Learners receive good initial support and information through taster sessions in venues throughout the city. They benefit from an initial interview to identify a suitable programme and to help them clarify what they want to achieve.

42. Teaching and learning are poor in many exercise sessions. Approaches are insufficiently varied to cater for individual needs and abilities. Some learners are not sufficiently challenged, while others do not have the ability to carry out advanced exercises.

43. Assessment practice and the monitoring of learners' performance during exercise classes are unsatisfactory. There is not enough observation of how learners perform or checking of their understanding. In many classes, tutors do not give enough feedback to

help individual learners improve.

44. There are insufficient opportunities for learners to progress to other courses. Except for some classes for the over 50s, courses are not targeted at a particular level of ability. Staff do not know enough about what is available through other providers. Many learners have attended the same class for years and have not progressed to other provision.

45. Teaching and learning on health and counselling programmes are good. Lessons are planned to include opportunities for learners to learn at their own pace and for independent study.

46. A wide range of courses in over 40 community learning centres attract new learners from many communities where participation in learning is generally low. The courses are aimed at adults with mental health problems, minority ethnic groups, older people and the homeless. **Learners develop a wide range of skills to help them gain future employment.**

47. **Learners are insufficiently aware of the arrangements for getting help with their literacy, numeracy and language skills.** Many learners have very low literacy and numeracy skills but the take up is low. Many learners in outreach centres are not aware of the support.

48. **Arrangements to assure the quality of subcontracted provision are poor.** No targets for retention and achievement are set and the observation of teaching and learning has only recently been introduced.

49. **Much of the teaching and learning in languages is very good.** Teachers make good use of the target language in many modern foreign languages classes. Most lessons are well planned and include a good range of activities and teaching strategies. A wide range of courses meets the needs of a diverse group of learners. The provision includes Chinese language for those who want to study, communicate with relatives or use it for business purposes. Urdu is offered for Punjabi and for English speakers and less-well-used languages such as Arabic and Russian are also taught. There is a good range of courses at levels 1 to 3 in BSL. A good range of English provision includes pre-GCSE and GCSE classes as well as courses in creative writing and poetry.

50. **There is no effective strategy for dealing with the poor retention rates in modern foreign languages.** There is no analysis of retention data and no systematic analysis of reasons why learners leave.

51. **Much of the teaching in visual and performing arts is good and practical sessions are well managed.** Demonstration work is particularly good in piano, keyboard, percussion and singing. Tutors effectively use open questions to revise work from previous sessions and to test understanding. Many tutors produce tasks and activities to cater for learners with a range of abilities.

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52. **Good partnerships have widened participation**, particularly by non-traditional groups of learners. There are successful partnerships with a media education company and there are opportunities for learners to gain work-experience placements and future employment. In this company, 80 per cent of the technical team and actors are former or current learners.

53. **Specialist facilities in video programmes are very good.** The video equipment at one centre has been built up over a 16-year period through productive financial partnerships. Equipment is not only used by learners, but also supports a number of local community groups.

54. **Insufficient provision is available in dance to reflect the cultural diversity of the area.** Requests from the community for dance and drama have not been met. The quality of the accommodation in some centres is poor. Many rooms are too small and some are difficult to get in to if learners have mobility problems. Music technology equipment has been purchased but there is no secure place to store it.

55. **The assessment and monitoring of learners' progress is unsatisfactory.** The progress made by learners in classes is not recorded properly, and learning needs which are identified through initial assessment are not always followed through appropriately. The use of individual learning plans and the tutorials are not effective. In the performing arts, there is some exemplary good practice in assessing learners' work in music and video.

56. **Humanities teaching rooms in all centres are spacious and well decorated** with appropriate furniture in secure and friendly learning centres. The rooms are a good learning environment with relevant materials and wall charts in the rooms. All of the main centres have childcare and refreshment facilities.

57. **Too much of the teaching is unimaginative and unsatisfactory.** Lesson planning is inconsistently thorough and frequently teachers do not cover all the planned work at an appropriate level and speed. In many lessons the pace of the learning is slow.

58. **There is a narrow range of adult and community learning courses** with only five in history and current affairs. Many learners have attended the same adult and community learning classes for several years and have made little progress.

59. **The arrangements for the continuous improvement of the curriculum are weak.** Data is not used effectively to plan improvements. Regular lesson observations take place but the grading is often over generous. The teachers do not sufficiently identify and share good practice to improve teaching and learning.

60. **Teaching and learning on community learning programmes are good.** Tutors give clear instructions to enable learners to complete tasks successfully. They use imaginative strategies to enthuse and engage learners.

61. **A large amount of teaching is unsatisfactory for ESOL and learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.** Learning objectives are unclear and insufficiently detailed.

Lesson planning is weak. Information gained from initial and diagnostic assessments is not used to plan for individual needs. Teaching methods are not varied and frequently consist of a series of unrelated activities and worksheets.

62. Learners on all foundation programmes have insufficient access to computers. Few ESOL learners use technology to support their learning outside dedicated ESOL with ICT programmes. Pre-entry learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have little suitable software to develop their IT skills. Literacy and numeracy learners at all levels are disadvantaged by the lack of technology.

63. The range of programmes across the foundation area is good. In ESOL, a wide range of levels is offered on the main sites, providing good opportunities for progression. MAES has identified and met the needs of local communities, particularly in helping adults improve their employability skills. Courses are run for workers in restaurants and bus companies and for ancillary workers at a local university. Others provide routes into childcare training and community interpreting.

64. Literacy and numeracy courses are held in all main centres and many community settings. **Very good partnerships have developed** clearly targeted work with the women's action forum, the city council's operational services, and health and probation services.

65. Learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities attend a good range of programmes for leisure and vocational preparation. Programmes are well structured at pre-entry level with an introductory phase, a development phase and a progression phase which leads to entry-level opportunities. Partnerships with social services and the health service provide people with tailor-made provision.

66. There are good working partnerships on community learning programmes to expand the provision in disadvantaged communities. Partnerships with employers are particularly effective. Many learners become enthusiastic advocates for learning in their own communities, recruiting new learners and initiating new opportunities.

67. Support for learners in literacy and numeracy and ESOL is particularly effective. This includes support for dyslexia, a free crèche and additional tutorials. Learning support funds enable learners to buy learning materials and participate in extension activities. ESOL learners buy dictionaries or bus passes to get to classes. Signers for deaf people and support for people with physical or learning difficulties is offered in classes. Front line staff have a good awareness of literacy and numeracy needs and support learners effectively.

68. On literacy and numeracy programmes, equality and diversity policies are translated into very effective action to widen participation. The proportion of men and learners from black and minority ethnic groups are high. Learners from widely different groups work well together and respect each others' views. Teaching materials generally reflect the learners in classes.

69. Curriculum management is weak in foundation areas, except for community

learning. MAES is unable to ensure the quality of the current programme. Many staff are unable to attend staff development sessions. Team leaders and co-ordinators fulfil too many roles to perform each effectively. Management data on retention and accredited outcomes are insufficiently collated and analysed.

70. Quality assurance is unsatisfactory throughout the foundation provision. The self-assessment report has insufficient details of weaknesses in the provision and does not focus sufficiently on learners' achievements. Too few observations of teaching and learning take place and grades are over generous. Monitoring of the quality of individual learning plans is not sufficiently extensive. Retention and achievement data is not used in quality assurance. MAES does not sufficiently assess the effectiveness of community learning projects.

71. The teaching in family learning is lively and very interesting. The tutors use fun activities to meet the needs of young people and parents. They plan a variety of teaching and learning activities to engage learners and maintain interest.

72. There is a wide range of first step provision. Short introductory courses are developed to attract new learners. However, there are few opportunities to progress from short courses to longer accredited family literacy and numeracy courses. Individual learning plans do not contain sufficiently specific and measurable targets. Learners develop good skills but it is difficult to measure their progress.

Leadership and management

73. There is very good strategic direction for MAES with a clear vision and mission. MAES plays a significant role in delivering key corporate objectives of the city council. Managers understand the strategic objectives and operational plans are monitored regularly. Strategic objectives and targets for equality and race equality are integrated in MAES's three-year plan.

74. MAES is successful in building an extensive range of partnerships. MAES works in collaboration with major stakeholders in the city and contributes to inner city regeneration projects. Other partners include local further education colleges, employers' organisations and many community organisations.

75. The equality policy and action plans have been well implemented. MAES has effective policies and procedures and an extensive range of 'in-house' resource materials. Staff and learners clearly understand the aims, values and ethos that MAES promotes. Cross-service equality champions have an advocacy and training role. Learners benefit from good use of positive role models, free classes, classes in community languages, accessible crèche provision and good individual support.

76. Measures to widen participation are very effective. They include a detailed widening participation strategy with clear targets and effective use of data and local knowledge to target under-represented groups and hard-to-reach learners. MAES's targets to recruit black minority ethnic learners have been achieved. Staff in learning zones enjoy strong

links with local colleges, communities, employers and potential learners. No learner is further than one and a half miles from their local adult education centre.

77. The provider has established a comprehensive response to the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001. Action plans are detailed and specific, and responsibilities are clearly identified. Audits on all premises have been carried out and MAES has a planned programme of alterations to meet legislative requirements. However, access to learning environments in some premises is inadequate for learners with restricted mobility.

78. MAES has an effective race equality scheme and action plan. Extensive consultation with stakeholders has taken place and this has been used to plan strategy and policy. Some impact has already been seen within the widening participation initiatives.

79. Complaints and grievance procedures are satisfactory. Most learners have a good understanding of the complaints procedure. Complaints are dealt with promptly and are monitored rigorously.

80. There is a clear framework for quality assurance. It emphasises the importance of quality improvement. Staff roles and responsibilities for quality assurance are clearly defined. There has been extensive work to update policies and procedures, but this is not yet complete.

81. The monitoring of subcontractors is satisfactory. MAES identified this as a weakness in previous self-assessment reports and significant changes have been made to ensure improvement.

82. Managers and staff use feedback from learners and partners satisfactorily to bring about improvements to the provision. A variety of methods are used. Learner forums are well established and a recent survey on how MAES has changed learners' lives helps to assess the impact of programmes. Learner surveys contain too many closed questions and insufficient opportunity for learners to expand their answers. Management in many curriculum areas is weak. In several areas of learning there is inadequate curriculum planning. Good practice is not effectively shared between tutors and across curriculum areas. Inadequate arrangements exist for covering classes in response to staff absence. There is insufficient sharing of resources.

83. Resources are insufficient to meet the needs of all learners. MAES does not have its full complement of managers and there are significant shortages of teachers in certain areas of learning, especially in literacy, numeracy and ESOL, and healthcare. There is insufficient access to ICT for staff and learners and some accommodation is unsuitable. There are not enough trained staff to support learners with varying abilities and complex needs.

84. The use of data is inadequate. Data is not used effectively to set targets for continuous improvement. Many managers have an insufficient knowledge of how data can be used for programme planning and quality improvement.

85. **The quality assurance arrangements are weak.** Many of the arrangements are new and are not being consistently applied within programme areas. The quality of course reviews is not consistent. The internal verification procedures are inadequate and many areas do not lead to continuous improvement in the quality of assessment. Lesson observations are ineffective in most areas. Too few have been carried out and they contain insufficient evaluative comments. Inspectors identified significant over-grading of observed sessions.

86. **Internal verification procedures are inadequate.** They are out-of-date and in many areas do not lead to improvement in the quality of assessment. This has been recognised by MAES which has recently introduced measures to resolve the problem.

87. **A comprehensive self-assessment process forms a significant part of MAES's quality improvement framework.** Most subcontractors' self-assessment reports are insufficiently detailed and are not effectively incorporated into the relevant programme reports. Insufficient use is made of learners' views. The overall self-assessment report is insufficiently self-critical and many of the grades given by the programme areas are too generous. Many key weaknesses identified on inspection are not identified by MAES.

88. **MAES has insufficient arrangements for additional learning support** in literacy, numeracy and language for all its learners. The provider identifies the need for support well, but take up is low and many tutors are not qualified. Many learners in outreach centres do not know about the support.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- good strategic direction
- extensive range of strategic and local partnerships
- good implementation of equality policy and action plans
- very effective measures to widen participation

Weaknesses

- insufficient resources to meet the needs of all learners
- weak management in many curriculum areas
- weak quality assurance
- ineffective measures to assure the quality of teaching and learning

Sciences & mathematics

Mathematics

Strengths

- much good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- low retention
- poor co-ordination of the curriculum

Business administration, management & professional

Teacher/trainer awards

Strengths

- good retention and achievement rates
- particularly good use of initial assessment
- good range of programmes and progression routes
- effective support for learners

Weaknesses

- no subject-specific support for learners
- insufficient resources

Information & communications technology

Using IT

Strengths

- good individual support for learners
- successful initiatives to widen participation
- good actions to manage the curriculum

Weaknesses

- slow progress in some lessons
- inadequate variety in teaching and learning methods
- insufficient planning and monitoring of learning
- some unsatisfactory learning environments
- inadequate quality assurance arrangements

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Strengths

- very good teaching and learning in Iyengar yoga classes
- good initial support for learners
- good community links to widen participation

Weaknesses

- much poor teaching and learning
- poor assessment of learners' performance in classes
- insufficient opportunities for progression
- weak curriculum management

Health, social care & public services

Care

Strengths

- good teaching and learning on health and counselling programmes
- wide range of programmes and courses to widen participation

Weaknesses

- insufficient awareness of arrangements for learning support by learners

Early years

Strengths

- good retention and achievement rates on many childcare and playwork courses
- wide range of programmes and courses to widen participation

Weaknesses

- insufficient awareness of arrangements for learning support by learners
- poor quality assurance of subcontracted provision

Visual & performing arts & media

Arts

Strengths

- good skills development
- well-planned and well-managed learning sessions in most lessons
- good partnerships to widen participation

Weaknesses

- poor access in some centres
- unsatisfactory assessment and monitoring of learners' progress in some lessons

Other contributory areas

Strengths

- good skills development at beginners' level
- well-planned and well-managed learning sessions in most lessons
- very good specialist facilities in video

Weaknesses

- some poor retention and low attendance
- some poor resources for performing arts
- unsatisfactory assessment and monitoring of learners' progress

Humanities

Other contributory areas

Strengths

- good standard of work by many access learners
- good teaching accommodation for access learners
- very good retention and achievement on 'new interests' and 'careers horizons in education' courses

Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievement on daytime access programmes
- much unimaginative teaching
- narrow range of non-accredited provision
- weak arrangements for continuous quality improvement

English, languages & communications

Languages

Strengths

- good teaching and learning in most classes
- wide range of provision

Weaknesses

- poor retention
- ineffective measures to improve retention

Foundation programmes

ESOL

Strengths

- good achievement of oral communication skills
- good support for learners
- very effective identification and response to meet community and employer needs

Weaknesses

- much unsatisfactory teaching and learning
- insufficient strategies to meet individual learners' needs
- inadequate access to ICT for staff and learners
- weak curriculum management

Community learning

Strengths

- good achievement of personal and learning goals
- good teaching and learning
- very effective strategies to widen participation

Weaknesses

- insufficient analysis of the effectiveness of community learning projects

Literacy and numeracy

Strengths

- wide geographical spread of provision
- good support for learners
- very effective action to ensure equality and diversity

Weaknesses

- insufficient ICT resources
- insufficient staff to meet learners' needs
- unsatisfactory quality assurance

Independent living and leisure skills

Strengths

- good development of personal skills and confidence
- wide range of programmes

Weaknesses

- much unsatisfactory teaching
- ineffective assessment and recording of progress
- unsatisfactory curriculum management

Family learning

Strengths

- good development and application of skills
- lively and interesting teaching
- wide range of first-step provision to attract new learners

Weaknesses

- insufficiently detailed targets for individuals
- incomplete family learning strategy

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT MANCHESTER LEA:

- 'I wish school had been more like this - I might have managed my life better'
- the opportunities to increase confidence and to get new skills and qualifications
- the benefits of learning in improving health
- the approachable, patient and supportive tutors
- the availability of the crèche
- the induction loop
- the low income support system which pays for fees
- the flexible times at which classes are held
- 'the courses that are even open to grandparents'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK MANCHESTER LEA COULD IMPROVE:

- the facilities at some centres such as the toilets, telephones, coffee, leisure areas
- the classrooms - some are cramped, noisy, cold and unsuitable
- car parking facilities - somewhere to put a bike
- resources - books and library facilities
- the excessive amount of paperwork, worksheets and tests
- ways of avoiding learners dropping out of the groups
- the promotion of some courses - it could be better
- the opportunity to do more advanced courses or to find places on existing courses
- the drop-in facilities with tutor support - there should be more
- the arrangements to diagnose additional learning needs

KEY CHALLENGES FOR MANCHESTER LEA:

- improve the quality of teaching and learning in many areas
- develop effective measures to improve retention and attendance
- ensure that staffing resources are adequate to meet the planned provision for learners
- maintain the commitment of the service to engage the most disadvantaged groups and communities
- fully implement the service's strong commitment to equality and diversity
- improve the quality of curriculum and programme management
- fully apply quality assurance throughout the provision

Language of the Adult and Community Learning Sector

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

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

Other terms used in Adult and Community Learning

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

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

DETAILED INSPECTION FINDINGS

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Grade 4

Strengths

- good strategic direction
- extensive range of strategic and local partnerships
- good implementation of equality policy and action plans
- very effective measures to widen participation

Weaknesses

- insufficient resources to meet the needs of all learners
- weak management in many curriculum areas
- weak quality assurance
- ineffective measures to assure the quality of teaching and learning

89. There is good strategic direction with a clearly articulated vision for the role MAES plays in the achievement of the council's wider strategic agenda. In October 2004 the city council decided to retain MAES within the education department rather than moving it to the children, families and social care department. This has enabled MAES to successfully contribute to the achievement of one of the city's key targets for expanding the provision of learning at work, especially in improving levels of literacy, numeracy and language. Service priorities in the three-year development are closely aligned to the corporate objectives of the city council. The plan prioritises the recruitment of under-represented groups and a sharper focus on working more closely with employers. Staff understand the strategic objectives of MAES.

90. MAES has an extensive range of strategic and local partnerships and is a key partner in city regeneration initiatives. It works collaboratively with local further education colleges and many community organisations to deliver locally based, accessible provision. Through links with employers, MAES reaches learners in the workplace whose first language may not be English and others who have literacy or numeracy needs. MAES managers have close links to each of Manchester's 32 wards. These links help to forge a strong relationship between local communities and MAES.

91. Communication arrangements within MAES are satisfactory. There is a regular staff bulletin, briefing meetings and cross-service forums to ensure staff are well informed. The head of lifelong learning holds meetings with individual staff to discuss progress towards individual targets. Some staff have no access to computer facilities and e-mail and it is sometimes difficult to contact part-time tutors. Communication between curriculum managers and zone managers is not always effective.

92. The management of many curriculum areas is weak, such as for hospitality and sport,

provision for learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and ESOL. There is insufficient sharing of good practice between tutors and across areas of learning. Resources are not routinely shared. Target-setting is weak in many areas. Some curriculum managers do not know how to use management information to improve their planning. The co-ordination of the curriculum developed by MAES and through subcontracted provision are not effective except in ICT where good links have been established. Insufficient curriculum support is given to subcontractors.

93. Staff appraisals are not always completed by the stated deadline. Most managers have been appraised in the past 12 months, but many other staff have not yet been appraised. Appraisal has not been fully effective in improving the quality of provision.

94. Insufficient staff resources are available to meet the needs of all learners. Insufficient staff are in post to fulfil a range of management duties. Proposals to enhance management support in a review of MAES in 2004 have not been fully implemented. Some managers have taken on additional responsibilities and this has adversely affected their capacity to monitor compliance with MAES's policies and procedures. Staff are uncertain about their roles and responsibilities. In literacy, numeracy and ESOL there are not enough qualified teachers, and arrangements to provide cover for absent staff are inadequate.

95. MAES does not provide enough professional development to support its widening participation agenda. Many tutors have insufficient knowledge and experience to support learners with varying abilities and complex needs. Much of the training for part-time staff has been disseminated through the bulletin and briefing sheets. Not enough part-time staff participate in training. The provider has started intensive training with curriculum teams, but it is too early to judge the impact of this work.

96. MAES has invested significantly in upgrading several learning centres and they provide a welcoming environment for learning. However, at some centres the standard of accommodation is unsatisfactory. At one venue classes are held on the fourth floor, there is no lift and facilities are inaccessible to learners with restricted mobility. Learners report that some centres are dirty, cold and unwelcoming. There is inadequate provision of IT. The information learning technology strategy has unrealistic targets and does not take sufficient account of the diverse geographical area and number of centres. Many software packages are out of date and do not conform to current industry standards. The shortage of personal computers inhibits the use of ICT for learning and management purposes.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

97. Good progress has been made in putting policy into practice. MAES's staff are strongly committed to equality and diversity. Strong leadership is given by the head of lifelong learning in articulating the vision for equality of opportunity within MAES and the city council. The policy is particularly comprehensive and inclusive. A very detailed action plan sets equality and diversity impact measures and identifies individual staff responsibilities for implementation. Strategic objectives and targets reflect the needs of

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learners in Manchester and national priorities. Progress made towards meeting targets is reported annually. Learners and staff clearly understand the aims, values and ethos of equality and diversity. Equality champions in all curriculum and service delivery areas work as advocates. An extensive range of 'in-house' teaching materials is available for staff use. These include a customs and cultures book, curriculum toolkits, and a video created by past and current learners challenging attitudes and perceptions, and training materials on legislation.

98. Learners have good access to support and curriculum materials in a range of formats and languages. However, the availability of these is not promoted in publicity leaflets and other marketing materials. The staff profile reflects well the composition of the learners and this enables staff to become positive role models. Tutors deliver sessions in appropriate community languages. Learners have good access to support funds and 25 per cent of learners received funds between September and December 2004. Learners benefit from free classes, accessible crèche provision, flexible session times and the small grant for additional materials to support learning. Most learners receive impartial and supportive initial advice and guidance. MAES responds well to the needs of individual learners for support, for example through specially adapted technology.

99. Most learners have a good understanding of the complaints procedure, which is reinforced at induction and at the review stage. Complaints are dealt with promptly and monitored rigorously.

100. MAES works effectively with a range of networks to widen participation. A widening participation strategy includes clear targets to raise recruitment and participation of black and minority ethnic groups, adults with learning difficulties and disabilities, and families. MAES makes effective use of community leaders and consultants to carry out needs analysis and to identify potential learners. MAES has developed a range of successful projects to meet learner, community and employers' needs. For example, a project which provides ESOL sessions for restaurant workers in the 'curry mile', and literacy and numeracy support through a football programme. Learners are involved in the design, development and evaluation of programmes. In 2003-04, 47 per cent of learners from widening participation programmes enrolled on further education and training courses.

101. Excellent use is made of local knowledge and data to remove barriers to learning and engage non-traditional learners. However, data is not used effectively to measure the performance of individual learners or of particular groups of learners. There is no clear evidence of how participation in the programme has added to learners' success. MAES sets targets to improve recruitment and progression from under-represented groups and collects data on the proportion of learners and staff from minority ethnic groups and learners with disabilities.

102. Access to learning environments in some premises is inadequate for learners with restricted mobility. This was noted in many areas of learning and includes some of the larger centres. However, MAES has a comprehensive plan to deal with its responsibilities under the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001. Audits on all premises

have been carried out and MAES has a planned programme of alterations to meet legislative requirements. There are detailed plans to support learners at other centres when some centres are closed.

103. MAES has an effective race equality scheme and action plan. Extensive consultation with stakeholders has been used to plan strategy and policy. There is evidence of some impact in widening participation initiatives and the staff profile.

104. MAES has insufficiently thorough arrangements for the provision of literacy, numeracy and language support for all its learners. Needs are identified well and some provision is made through discrete workshops and in-class support. However, the take up of support is low. Many tutors are not qualified and many learners in outreach centres do not know about the support. Learners in subcontracted provision and ICT are particularly disadvantaged by the lack of support in this area. There are a number of learners who are not receiving support.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

105. The written framework for quality assurance is comprehensive and aims to link quality improvement to action-planning and target-setting for MAES as a whole, and for programme and cross service teams. Staff responsibilities for quality assurance are clearly defined. There has been extensive work to up-date these policies and procedures, but this is not yet complete. Staff can get access to policies and procedures, through the intranet and a useful reference summary guide has just been produced. There have been some recent initiatives to improve key aspects of the provision, such as through the standardisation of documents on key aspects of learners' programmes and their use and the approach to initial assessment.

106. Satisfactory use is made of feedback from learners and partners to improve the provision. Learner forums are well established and a recent survey has been carried out on how participation in learning has changed learners' lives. A representative sample of learners' views is collected annually, but there are insufficient opportunities for learners to expand their answers. Course reviews in ICT and languages contain insufficient actions to improve the provision. MAES has recently started to display requests for improvements from learners and how it has responded to these.

107. A number of changes have been made recently to improve the monitoring of subcontracted provision. These include the observation of teaching and learning by MAES's staff, and checks on the implementation of the equal opportunities policy. These initiatives have not yet made a noticeable improvement in quality in this area of the provision.

108. Quality assurance is weak. Many of the quality arrangements are new and are not being consistently applied within programme areas. Much of the paperwork used to support learners' programmes is not used effectively. Individual learning plans are inadequately used to compile learning goals in ICT, some foundation programmes and family learning. Course evaluations are not used consistently in many areas including

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languages, information technology, sport and LLDD. The monitoring of health and safety focuses too much on premises and is not a detailed assessment of the risk to learners posed by specific activities. Internal verification procedures are inadequate and the procedure is out of date. In many areas this does not ensure that good assessment practices are shared across MAES. Although some meetings and training events are used effectively to discuss teaching practices, and materials and assessment, arrangements for more widespread sharing of good practice are insufficiently developed within some curriculum areas. Data is not used effectively to monitor continuous improvement. There is little effective trend analysis. Retention and achievement data is not routinely used. Programme managers do not systematically analyse the reasons for learners leaving.

109. Arrangements for the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning do not adequately lead to improvements. The numbers of observations carried out in 2003-04 are low and many tutors have not been observed. This was recognised by MAES and a target to observe all tutors in the current academic year has been set. Records of observed learning sessions are too descriptive. Many focus on teaching rather than learning and attainment and do not identify how teaching has facilitated learning. Too few records include enough information on action required to improve teaching and how this will be monitored. This process has not improved the range of teaching and learning techniques in the classroom. Many tutors use a narrow range of teaching styles, often relying on group teaching rather than an approach designed to suit the needs of all learners. The quality of teaching and learning across MAES is very uneven. The grades given by inspectors for learning sessions were substantially lower in most areas of learning than those given by MAES. The teaching and learning observation system has been refined to collect learners' views, although this is not taking place effectively in all observations.

110. Although the self-assessment process is integral to MAES's quality improvement framework, the overall self-assessment report is insufficiently self-critical and many of the grades given by the programme areas are too generous. Many key weaknesses identified on inspection are not identified by MAES. Where weaknesses have been identified, action plans are appropriate. However, in literacy and numeracy many weaknesses were not identified and in visual and performing arts there was no judgement about the quality of teaching and learning. Most subcontractors' self-assessment reports are insufficiently detailed and are not effectively incorporated into the relevant programme reports. Insufficient use is made of learners' views.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Sciences & mathematics

Sciences & mathematics		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Mathematics - Adult and community learning	156	3

Mathematics

Strengths

- much good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- low retention
- poor co-ordination of the curriculum

Achievement and standards

111. Achievement is satisfactory. Of the learners who have taken a GCSE mathematics examination, 91.8 per cent have achieved a grade. This proportion has increased from 75 per cent in 2001-02 and 87 per cent in 2002-03. Data on grade achievement was not collated to allow comparisons between centres. There is no analysis of achievement by grade, but examination board data for a range of centres indicates a significant proportion of learners complete a one-year programme and achieve a B, C or D grade. Retention is low at 52.1 per cent for 2003-04. For the previous two years it was 57 per cent and 59.2 per cent respectively. Some learners leave within the first six weeks, even though there is an introductory module. Others leave throughout the year but mainly by January. There has been no central analysis of the reasons for the low retention. By working successfully through tasks and exercises, most learners demonstrate satisfactory attainment at an appropriate standard. Average attendance at observed classes was 63 per cent.

Quality of education and training

112. There is much good teaching and learning. Individual needs are fully understood. Nearly all lessons are carried out in a friendly atmosphere and generate increasing confidence in learners who often feel very apprehensive about returning to mathematics after a previous lack of success. In many lessons there are good examples of differentiated learning. Learners who had missed a lesson were given guidance and information to enable them to catch up. Learners who complete their work quickly, work on exercises which challenge them or extend their coursework assignments. All learners

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benefit from individual guidance.

113. In many lessons enthusiasm for mathematics is clearly communicated. In one lesson learners worked on averages through an activity in pairs. In another lesson a well-designed, 'magic square' exercise improved the learners' confidence in manipulating algebraic expressions.

114. The better lessons are very well managed and fully engage learners. Learners in these lessons complete a variety of activities including listening, question and answer, problem-solving, group discussion and resource-based tasks, enabling them to learn new skills. In poorer lessons the work is not explained well. In one lesson, a tutor took an authoritarian approach which adversely affected the learning.

115. Teaching and learning resources are satisfactory. Learners develop their mathematical skills by working at graduated problems through well-designed worksheets. There are also some good activity resources which encourage discussion of mathematical ideas and problems. In one lesson, pairs of learners developed their understanding of algebraic expressions by matching identical cards. However, there is no use of technology in lessons and learners are not able to benefit from the extra variety and stimulation this would bring to their studies. Staff qualification records are incomplete. Four tutors have a teaching qualification and a relevant degree, but for the other two staff the situation is unclear.

116. Assessment and monitoring are satisfactory. As noted in the self-assessment report, sound advice, based on initial diagnostic testing, is given to learners on their suitability for the GCSE mathematics programme. Some are counselled to move to adult numeracy level 1 or level 2 but nearly all insist on studying GCSE as they want the qualification most likely to help them progress. A numeracy test is used by most tutors at the end of the six-week introductory module to assess the learners' progress. Learners who need help with numeracy are then transferred or offered a numeracy workshop. Homework assignments are regularly set and checked, although many learners do not do them. Use of the individual learning plans vary. Some learners update their learning plans at each lesson and have a clear idea of their progress. Others construct a plan which is not referred to again. Some learners have no course plan or topic list and are unable to monitor their own progress.

117. The provision of GCSE mathematics classes is satisfactory for the current demand. It is offered in nine centres covering all zones of Manchester. A choice of three tiers of examination entry is offered in most classes.

118. Guidance and support are satisfactory. A six-week introduction to the GCSE mathematics programme enables learners to renew their basic mathematics skills. Teachers are available for a half-hour tutorial before or after classes, although this offer is not taken up by many learners. Through the support fund many learners are provided with a calculator which is essential for the course. Learners are also lent a textbook. Some tutors enter all learners for the intermediate level and others take a higher level. There is no policy on the approach tutors should take.

Leadership and management

119. The co-ordination of the curriculum is poor. Although tutors have meetings with the curriculum leaders twice a term there is insufficient co-ordination of policy and planning. Tutors work mainly on their own initiative and there is little sharing of good practice. Learners in one centre may not have access to worksheets and learning resources that have been developed in another. Curriculum leaders are unsure of their roles and responsibilities and there has only been one meeting held by the senior curriculum co-ordinator since December 2004. There is no systematic data analysis of grades achieved and no comparisons of results between centres or with national data. The reasons for learners leaving are not recorded. Quality assurance and planning for the improvement of the provision is poor. Checking of staff qualifications is not possible as data is incomplete. There has been a training session on differentiation and group work led by a team leader.

Business administration, management & professional

Business administration, management & professional		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Teacher/trainer awards - Adult and community learning	86	2

Teacher/trainer awards

Strengths

- good retention and achievement rates
- particularly good use of initial assessment
- good range of programmes and progression routes
- effective support for learners

Weaknesses

- no subject-specific support for learners
- insufficient resources

Achievement and standards

120. Retention rates in 2003-04 were good at an average of 90 per cent on all programmes and 85 per cent for the level 2 and level 4 awards. Achievement rates in all programmes in 2003-04 were also good at an average of 70 per cent. This has the potential to improve to 90 per cent as some learners on the level 2 Manchester advice courses are still on the programme and portfolios are awaiting external moderation. Attendance is good. Learners achieve individual and personal learning goals. Learners’ reflective accounts show how they apply their learning in the workplace. The standard of learners’ work is satisfactory. Learners develop their self-confidence and show improvement in their professional skills and knowledge.

Quality of education and training

121. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers use a suitable range of teaching methods and strategies which learners can apply in the workplace. Teaching is well planned and matched to qualification requirements. Course and session plans are effectively used to promote learning. Lesson plans are clear and detailed. Tutors are appropriately qualified and occupationally experienced.

122. There is no subject-specific support or mentoring for learners. Learners do not get the opportunity to learn by example or share subject-specific ideas. This was acknowledged in the self-assessment report.

123. There are not enough staffing resources to immediately fulfil all the requests made by local partners for specific programmes. There are insufficient audiovisual and ICT resources. Tutors rely too heavily on flipcharts and whiteboards. Some accommodation is unsuitable with rooms being too cold and with cramped seating arrangements. Learners have limited access to resources for independent study, including ICT equipment. Handouts have no corporate identity and there is inconsistent use of fonts and text. An additional member of staff has been recruited to deal with the staffing resources.

124. Learners are given detailed and clear information about awarding body assessment requirements. Tutors provide learners with examples of assignments completed by learners on previous programmes for review and guidance. For learners using accreditation of prior learning, the tutor provides advice on evidence needed to meet the criteria. Learners demonstrate understanding of criteria to be met and how evidence can be cross-referenced to other units. There is a variety of evidence in learners' portfolios. However, tutors do not use direct observations, professional discussion or e-portfolios to reduce paper-based evidence.

125. Results of initial assessment are fed back to learners orally and in writing. Development needs are identified and solutions are considered. Additional support requirements are determined and actions are taken to arrange the necessary support, such as English as a second language (ESL), language support, additional tutorials, signers and note takers.

126. Generic and specialist programmes from level 2 to 4 are provided. Many learners on level 2 teacher training programmes have opportunities to progress from achieving a single unit to full awards as well as higher-level qualifications. Learners on teacher training programmes are offered specialist sessions for continuous professional development on subjects such as literacy and numeracy awareness, dyslexia, and subjects such as initial assessment and devising individual learning plans to improve practice. However, some learners from subcontracted partners which are community-based organisations, do not fully understand the progression routes and the options available to them.

127. Individual support is provided for literacy and numeracy and ESL language, as well as childcare, signers and note takers. Group support is provided for completion of assignments and guidance on the evidence required to meet assessment criteria. However, many part-time staff and learners are unaware of the financial support and options available for independent study.

Leadership and management

128. Staff work well to meet national and local targets to increase the number of qualified teaching staff. Quality assurance arrangements are satisfactory and awarding body requirements are met. Feedback is routinely collected from learners, evaluated and used to improve the provision. Staff and subcontract partners contributed to the self-

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assessment report. Equal opportunities for staff and learners are well promoted. Black and minority ethnic groups make up 30 per cent of learners, compared with 19 per cent in the local population. On some short-term courses, the proportion is as high as 65 per cent, as these are specifically targeted at community groups, to widen participation and to promote social inclusion. Equality issues and strategies are topics on several of the programmes. A 'customs and cultures' booklet has been produced by MAES to raise staff awareness of the minority ethnic groups in the city.

Information & communications technology

Information & communications technology		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT - Adult and community learning	2493	4

Using IT

Strengths

- good individual support for learners
- successful initiatives to widen participation
- good actions to manage the curriculum

Weaknesses

- slow progress in some lessons
- inadequate variety in teaching and learning methods
- insufficient planning and monitoring of learning
- some unsatisfactory learning environments
- inadequate quality assurance arrangements

Achievement and standards

129. Attendance rates at 70 per cent on most courses are satisfactory. Many learners become confident and competent users of ICT up to level 2. They use their new skills in the community organisations to which they belong, to support their children's or grandchildren's education, to write letters or to keep accounts for family businesses. Many beginners progress to courses leading to qualifications and improve their chances of obtaining employment. Employed learners attend classes to improve their computing competences to enhance their career prospects.

130. Data on retention, progression and achievement are not effectively broken down to enable managers to analyse trends in learner numbers. Learners in 20 per cent of the lessons observed were making slow progress. Some tutors have low expectations of learners and do not encourage them to work to their full potential. Many tutors do not record learners' progress in sufficient detail. They frequently record the tasks completed but not the knowledge and skills acquired.

Quality of education and training

131. Initiatives to widen participation have been successful. Large numbers of hard-to-attract learners have been recruited, many of whom would not attend more formal organisations. Good provision is offered to learners with mental health difficulties, those who have been dependent on drugs and alcohol, and defined groups of minority ethnic learners such as Chinese women and Indian senior citizens. Welcoming learning environments are located in areas of high deprivation. The extensive range of learning venues is identified as a strength in the self-assessment report. Some reception staff have been well trained in diversity awareness, and advice and guidance are available in community languages.

132. Learners appreciate the patient, individual support from tutors and being able to work at their own pace. Tutors reassure learners when they have problems with computing tasks. Crèche provision is available in most of MAES's centres and start times of classes are adjusted to suit learners with family commitments. Handouts with large print are provided for learners with visual impairments and adaptive technology is available to help those with physical and sensory impairments. A specially adapted keyboard, software to enlarge the images on the visual display unit and a joy stick mouse are also available.

133. Teaching and learning methods are insufficiently varied to suit the needs of learners. Most lessons are delivered in a workshop style with learners working at their own pace on applications such as word-processing, spreadsheets and e-mail. In many lessons learners are not sufficiently challenged or inspired. Learning materials and objectives are not sufficiently adapted to extend the skills of more-able learners. Keyboarding techniques are poorly developed. In some lessons insufficient attention is given to healthy and safe working practices. Too few lessons are good and too many are unsatisfactory. Courses are inappropriately designed for the quarter of the learners over 60 years of age, who want to acquire computing skills for non-vocational purposes. There are too few non-accredited courses and very few available at weekends.

134. Over a third of the 30 centres visited during the inspection are unsatisfactory learning environments. Many classrooms have insufficient space between the computers for learners' books, handouts and exercises. There are insufficient aids, such as wrist supports and foot rests. Many computers do not have up-to-date operating systems. In some centres learners have inadequate access to the internet which restricts the applications they can use. Some handouts are too difficult for learners with language, literacy or numeracy difficulties to understand. Some learners are unable to take handouts or books home for additional practice. There are too few digital projectors and computerised display boards in learning centres. Some tutors are inadequately qualified to teach ICT. Only 46 per cent have a qualification higher than level 2.

135. Planning and monitoring of learning is insufficiently thorough. Learning plans are not used effectively to set individual learning goals and targets, or to plan learning and additional support. Assessment information is not used effectively and reviews do not

focus sufficiently on learners' rates of progress and on recording their personal effectiveness. There are not enough enrichment activities for learners and cultural diversity is insufficiently celebrated. Learners' literacy and numeracy needs are not thoroughly assessed and not all learners with needs receive support. Satisfactory support is available for learners with physical and sensory impairments. Summative assessment meets awarding body requirements. Enrolment procedures for continuing learners are not always satisfactory. Some who fail to enrol early lose their place and are denied the opportunity of continuing with and completing their award.

Leadership and management

136. Recent actions to improve curriculum management taken by the senior curriculum co-ordinator are good. Staff communication has improved and resources are shared effectively. Improvements include the standardisation of schemes of work, lesson plans and learner profiles. Staffing levels have improved, although there has been too high a turnover of senior managers to guarantee stability. Not all staff attend professional development opportunities to improve their knowledge and skills. Staff performance reviews are not sufficiently established to lead to improvements in the provision. Management of resources is unsatisfactory and insufficient attention is given to assessing learning venues for the specific risks associated with computer use. The integrated learning technology strategy has unrealistic targets and timescales.

137. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory and learners from a wide variety of backgrounds are encouraged to use the adult learning service. Tutors drawn from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds are good role models for learners. There is a high level of mutual respect and understanding among staff and learners.

138. Quality assurance is inadequate. Managers' understanding and use of data for quality assurance purposes is inadequate. Course reviews pay insufficient attention to the rate at which learners complete their intended learning and the reasons why they withdraw. Targets for achievement, retention and participation are not sufficiently challenging. Although the participation by different groups of learners is monitored well, managers do not compare the learning outcomes of different groups. Quality assurance procedures do not concentrate sufficiently on the learners' experience. Observation of teaching and learning is ineffective in raising the standards of learning, teaching and attainment and many lessons have been graded too high. Insufficient checks are held to ensure that identified weaknesses in teaching and learning are followed up. Feedback from learners and partners is not collected systematically. Learners are not always told how their concerns have been followed up. Staff involvement in the self-assessment process is good, but inspectors identified additional strengths and weaknesses.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Hospitality and catering</i> - Adult and community learning	189	None
<i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i> - Adult and community learning	917	4

Strengths

- very good teaching and learning in Iyengar yoga classes
- good initial support for learners
- good community links to widen participation

Weaknesses

- much poor teaching and learning
- poor assessment of learners' performance in classes
- insufficient opportunities for progression
- weak curriculum management

Achievement and standards

139. Attainment of knowledge and skills is satisfactory. In the Iyengar yoga classes learners make good progress and improve their flexibility, mobility and strength. In most fitness sessions, learners demonstrate effective motor skills and can remember routines from previous lessons. In one hospitality class, learners displayed good cutting and preparation skills. In the weaker lessons, learners perform exercises and postures incorrectly, displaying poor posture and alignment. Many learners who participate in exercise lessons make significant improvements to their health. In one session, a learner made significant improvements to her posture and there was a decrease in upper back and neck pain.

140. Retention on non-accredited provision is satisfactory at 75 per cent for 2003-04. Attendance during the inspection was low at 66 per cent. On the accredited courses, retention and achievement are satisfactory. In 2003-04, 99 per cent of learners on sports coaching and lifeguard qualifications completed the course and 94 per cent achieved their qualification. Ninety-six per cent of learners on basic food hygiene qualifications completed the course and 98 per cent achieved the qualification.

Quality of education and training

141. Teaching and learning in Iyengar yoga classes is very good. The methods are varied and include pair work and peer assessment. Learners are challenged well and are aware of how to adapt the postures using different numbers of blocks, chairs and cushions to suit their ability and alignment. Tutors provide detailed instructions and descriptions to enhance learners' understanding of the correct performance of postures. Learners receive individual correction to enable them to improve their body alignment.

142. There are good community links through partnerships to widen participation. Classes are held at many centres in Manchester. Community leaders liaise with community organisations and raise awareness about MAES. Targeted courses have engaged learners from minority groups in exercise. These include a fitness session for African-Caribbean men at a daycentre, a tai chi session for Chinese learners with mental health difficulties, and an exercise on prescription scheme where learners are referred to an exercise programme to improve their health.

143. Learners receive good initial guidance and support. Taster sessions which take place throughout the city, engage new learners and involve the community in designing the curriculum. Learners are well informed about the courses on offer. At enrolment, learners receive help from tutors in identifying their particular learning needs and checking the suitability of the programme. Although learners' previous experience and learning goals are identified there is no assessment of their current ability. Health screening is routinely carried out to a satisfactory standard, but the screening form does not include an informed consent.

144. Many learners do not pay fees and some receive assistance from the learner support fund. Some learners with particular needs receive help from a support worker during the lesson. A crèche is available for fitness programmes at several centres. At one centre, lessons take place during school hours to allow parents of young children to attend. In one session attended by Asian women, resources are produced in Gujarati and English.

145. There are sufficient resources to meet the needs of learners. However, in one hospitality class the kitchen was too hot with insufficient ventilation. In another session, learners were required to bring their own cooking utensils and pans. Rooms used for yoga and fitness sessions are comfortable with adequate space for exercise. In most exercise classes, equipment such as yoga mats, blocks, bricks and belts are provided and are of a good standard.

146. There is much poor teaching and learning. There is insufficient variety to cater for individual needs and abilities. Some learners are not challenged while others struggle to carry out exercises which are too advanced. Some tutors have insufficient knowledge of the target learner group and current industry practice. There are some incorrect or ineffective exercises and postures performed by learners and incorrect information about the benefits of the activity being given. In some sessions, learners perform exercises which present a risk to them. In one session, the tutor gave incorrect information about

the muscle group being targeted.

147. Assessment and monitoring of learners' performance during exercise classes is unsatisfactory. There is insufficient observation of learner performance and checking of understanding. Some tutors spend too much time performing unnecessary demonstrations and do not change the position from which they teach. In many classes, tutors do not give sufficient individual assistance and feedback to learners to help them improve. In some classes, particularly Hatha yoga and keep fit, tutors do not sufficiently identify and correct poor posture and alignment. However, learners routinely self-assess their performance against group and individual learning goals at the beginning, middle and end of the course. In some sessions tutors also record their assessment of learners' performance.

148. There are insufficient opportunities for progression. There is only one class at intermediate level in Iyengar yoga. Apart from classes for older adults, other sessions are not targeted at a particular level of ability. In hospitality, the food hygiene course is the only opportunity for learners to progress from non-accredited provision. Market research of the local fitness industry provision is not carried out and the curriculum team have a poor understanding about local progression opportunities outside of MAES. Tutors and learners have insufficient awareness of progression opportunities within and outside of MAES. Many learners have been attending the same class for a number of years with no progression.

Leadership and management

149. The curriculum team is involved in initiatives to promote equality of opportunity and widen participation. MAES has been successful in attracting learners from minority groups, and making arrangements to cater for their specific needs. However, learners are not sufficiently aware of the complaints procedure, and complaints made to tutors are not always resolved.

150. Tutors and managers have insufficient understanding of the sport and fitness industry. The types of courses offered are not innovative and the curriculum team is insufficiently aware of opportunities to broaden the curriculum offer. Few targets to improve the curriculum are set and the specialist provision made by subcontractors is not used to broaden the curriculum offer.

151. There is insufficient expertise within the team to identify and deal with poor practice. Lesson observations have not adequately identified serious weaknesses in teaching and the impact on the learners. There is insufficient monitoring of staff qualifications and several tutors do not attend professional updating. The actions identified to improve MAES through staff appraisals are not always followed up. Safe working practices are not adequately enforced. Some tutors in isolated venues have no current first aid qualification or access to a designated first aider. Risk assessments are not routinely carried out and take insufficient consideration of the activity or the type of learners participating.

152. The accredited subcontracted provision is not quality assured. There is an over-reliance on awarding body assessment visits to identify weaknesses in teaching and learning, with no internal observations by MAES or subcontractor.

153. Many of the weaknesses identified during inspection are not in the self-assessment report and some identified strengths are over-stated.

Health, social care & public services

Health, social care & public services		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Care - Adult and community learning	660	3
Early years - Adult and community learning	464	3

Care

Strengths

- good teaching and learning on health and counselling programmes
- wide range of programmes and courses to widen participation

Weaknesses

- insufficient awareness of arrangements for learning support by learners

Early years

Strengths

- good retention and achievement rates on many childcare and playwork courses
- wide range of programmes and courses to widen participation

Weaknesses

- insufficient awareness of arrangements for learning support by learners
- poor quality assurance of subcontracted provision

Achievement and standards

154. Retention and achievement rates on many childcare and playwork programmes are good. The retention rate on short, subcontracted childcare programmes is 85 per cent and over 90 per cent on the longer childcare programmes. Achievement rates on the pre-school diploma and most teaching assistant courses are 90 per cent or higher. Achievement rates on playwork programmes are 83 per cent. There are good achievement rates on short induction programmes for teaching assistants.

155. Progression on health and social care programmes is satisfactory. Fifty per cent of learners on childcare programmes in 2003-04, progressed to higher-level programmes or to other programmes within MAES. Progression rates to employment and other training courses are satisfactory. Some learners have found employment after training, but most are already in placements. Some learners have repeated similar courses in the programme area.

156. Learners produce satisfactory work in their portfolios. Portfolios are well structured and cross-referenced to the occupational standards. There is good attainment in an assignment on child development and the value of play. In counselling programmes, learners' essays show that they understand the knowledge and theory of working with people in care settings.

Quality of education and training

157. Teaching and learning on health and counselling programmes are good. Lessons are carefully planned to include opportunities for differentiated activities to suit the needs of all learners and for independent learning. Learners show enthusiasm and are fully engaged in lessons. Learners on an introductory massage course show that they have rapidly learnt basic massage techniques and how to use oils. Teachers use a wide range of strategies and techniques to develop learners' knowledge and skills. On a deaf awareness course, tutors use a range of techniques to encourage learners to think about deaf issues with confidence. Tutors vary the pace of lessons and switch from a presentation of essential information to whole-group tasks. They offer good individual support to learners in their practical work and set challenging activities for more able learners.

158. Teaching and learning on childcare programmes are mostly satisfactory. Tutors use questioning techniques to encourage learners to link the theory with practice and to relate this to the occupational skills they use in the workplace. In one lesson, the teacher used good questioning techniques to consolidate learners' understanding of the emotional development of children in different early years settings. The weaker lessons are poorly planned and tutors do not ensure that learners remain fully involved in activities.

159. Resources on health and social care programmes are satisfactory. Teachers are appropriately qualified and have relevant professional work experience. On the teaching assistant programmes good use is made of specialist consultants to teach literacy and numeracy. Learners have good access to reference books and practical materials that can be used to develop their skills. However, access to learners with restricted mobility is poor in some centres. Some classrooms are cramped and offer insufficient suitable desk space to ensure comfort in recording work. In some lessons exemplary use of visual aids is made to reinforce learning, while in others poor use is made of the whiteboard. Most full-time staff take advantage of staff development opportunities, but the take up by part-time tutors is much less.

160. Progress is reviewed satisfactorily for learners on health and social programmes. The guidance given in tutorials to learners on their written work on accredited programmes is effective. Most learners are aware of their progress and what they have to do to complete their course. Feedback given to learners on non-accredited programmes is unsatisfactory. Too often it is informally given, poorly recorded, and does not inform learners sufficiently of their progress. In individual learning plans the learning

goals are often imprecise and not linked to learning objectives.

161. There is a broad range of programmes and courses to widen participation. Courses are offered in over 40 learning centres and community venues. The senior co-ordinators have good links with a range of external agencies to meet the health and social needs of learners. Learners develop a wide range of skills and knowledge to match employment opportunities. The programmes are targeted at minority ethnic groups and hard-to-reach groups, such as people with mental health problems, older people and the homeless.

162. Not all learners are sufficiently aware of arrangements for learning support. In some areas there is a shortage of basic skills tutors and some learners identified as needing additional learning support are not taking it up. Some learners are not aware of the additional learning support available. MAES's staff are sensitive to the need to avoid putting off vulnerable first step learners by imposing a formal literacy and numeracy assessment. Where a need for support has been identified it is often provided through tutors, many of whom are not suitably qualified or skilled to deliver literacy or numeracy support. MAES offers discrete workshops for literacy and numeracy and in some classes tutors support learners who need additional help with language by pairing them with an experienced learner.

Leadership and management

163. Arrangements to assure the quality of subcontracted provision are poor. The provider has recognised the need to strengthen this through better communications with subcontract partners, but this is very recent. The observation of teaching and learning has recently been introduced. No targets are set for achievement and retention by learners. MAES has recently established quality assurance systems, but these are new and it is too early to assess their impact.

164. Equality of opportunity is satisfactorily covered in learners' induction. Learners are aware of, and are able to explain, their rights and responsibilities. Through teaching, learners learn about the needs of children and people from different cultures. In classes, equality is promoted through case studies on families from different backgrounds. In early years, an employer pack outlines the employer's responsibilities. In health and social care, partnerships with agencies encourage learners from different areas and backgrounds to attend.

Visual & performing arts & media

Visual & performing arts & media		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts - Adult and community learning	2068	3
Other contributory areas - Adult and community learning	572	3

Arts

Strengths

- good skills development
- well-planned and well-managed learning sessions in most lessons
- good partnerships to widen participation

Weaknesses

- poor access in some centres
- unsatisfactory assessment and monitoring of learners' progress in some lessons

Other contributory areas

Strengths

- good skills development at beginners' level
- well-planned and well-managed learning sessions in most lessons
- very good specialist facilities in video

Weaknesses

- some poor retention and low attendance
- some poor resources for performing arts
- unsatisfactory assessment and monitoring of learners' progress

Achievement and standards

165. Learners achieve good skills in their practical work. Learners' portfolios illustrate how their work has improved from beginner to a more advanced level. In craft, wood carving, embroidery, art, video and singing, learners' work is of a high standard. Learners develop confidence in their abilities and many apply their skills more widely such as in making greetings cards for other people. Learners in ceramics made a large panel to celebrate and record the history of the area which is permanently displayed on the outside wall of the centre. Community singers perform for the wider community at several local city venues. Video work is shown to public audiences including leading city dignitaries.

166. Learners who have attended for many years in art, music and drama continue to learn new skills. Learners on accredited courses achieve the required number of credits within their programme. Finished work in video, performing arts and some crafts at all three levels shows that learners have the potential to progress to higher education or to employment. Their work is celebrated publicly in displays and exhibitions in centres and in local city galleries. The work of learners from a textile course was recently displayed at a national antiques textile fair. Learners in the millinery class display their work in the museum of head wear.

167. In performing arts, video and media there is some poor retention and low attendance. None of the 18 lessons observed in these areas had more than 11 learners. One media class had 50 per cent retention. Attendance in the video production course for 2003-04 was around 40 per cent. Average attendance during the inspection was 65 per cent.

Quality of education and training

168. Learning is generally well planned and much of the teaching is good. Good use is made of demonstrations to set standards and inspire learners particularly in piano, keyboard, percussion and singing. Tutors effectively use open questions to revise work and to test the learners' understanding. Learners are motivated and focused on their tasks. Tutors offer good individual tuition to learners on their practical work. Many tutors offer different activities which are suitable for learners with a range of abilities. Art tutors encourage learners to evaluate their own work individually and in groups and this enables them to develop their critical and analytical skills. Learners get good support and encouragement from tutors and their peers.

169. Good partnerships have helped widen participation by under-represented groups. Through these arrangements, a new media company was set up to make short films, which provides learners with work placements and employment opportunities. Eighty per cent of the technical team and actors are former or current learners. Community resource projects loan film making equipment for learners' projects. Other arrangements with a local care scheme enable elderly men who need care to participate in a learning activity in their local centre. One tutor runs a craft course for clients with dementia in a private nursing home.

170. Video programmes have very good specialist facilities for learners and local community groups. The video equipment at one centre has been built up over a 16-year period through productive financial partnerships. A commissioned video on equal opportunities made by learners is used by MAES for staff training. Two of their recent films have been transmitted by a local television company.

171. There is a satisfactory range of courses in visual arts across the learning zones. However, there is no dance provision and in this subject the provider does not reflect the cultural diversity of the area. Requests from the community for dance and drama

sessions have not been successful as there is a shortage of accommodation and staff. Learners in visual arts participate in enrichment activities. Calligraphy learners are encouraged to submit their work to national calligraphy societies.

172. Learning support is available in a variety of forms. In art and dressmaking sessions learners with epilepsy and a learner with memory retention difficulties have support staff working alongside them. Language support workers help with language needs. In one textile session, the tutor used a variety of Asian languages to help learners understand the tasks. Hearing loops in two classrooms support learners with impaired hearing. Funds from the learner support fund are used to enable learners to borrow musical instruments and compact discs. A voucher system enables learners to buy subsidised craft materials.

173. Resources are poor in some centres. Many rooms are too small and in some lessons there is not enough room for essential equipment. For example, learners in soft furnishing classes have to take turns using sewing machines when making curtains as the space is limited. A large hall used for performing arts is poorly maintained and very cold. A newly adapted hall space is spacious and has very good acoustics. Many tutors provide their own equipment and materials for painting and crafts. Insufficient access is available in one centre for learners with restricted mobility. Learners and tutors have to carry large and bulky amounts of practical work up several flights of stairs. Some learners with restricted mobility have reported difficulties in opening the heavy doors and negotiating narrow corridors in two centres. Music technology equipment cannot be used as there is no secure place to store it. ICT is not used to enhance learning or for research purposes. Tutors are well qualified and some have commercial experience either as artists, musicians, actors or film makers.

174. The assessment and monitoring of learners' progress is unsatisfactory. Some poor recording of progress was observed in music, script writing, acting and the visual arts. Some use is made of initial assessment but it is not always followed up appropriately or used to plan learning programmes. The use of individual learning plans varies. Some tutors have devised their own system for recording progress. For example, photographs of the learners' work are attached to an assessment form used in art and card making, supplemented by the tutors' comments. Tutorials and written feedback to learners varies in quality. Not all learners on accredited courses are given the criteria for assessment.

Leadership and management

175. The curriculum is managed by two senior co-ordinators and a team of tutors who are subject leaders. Subject leaders and co-ordinators frequently offer pilot courses. Two community singing courses evolved from a local need, one for teachers and one for the general community. Proposed courses in Sikh art forms were not able to run because of staffing problems. Part-time tutors are well supported by curriculum leaders and centre staff. Those who regularly attend meetings are able to share good practice.

176. Equality of opportunity is well reflected in some areas of the curriculum. Tutors from a range of ethnic backgrounds work in many centres. Two tutors with severe

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hearing impairment successfully teach crafts. Many tutors are able to respond to learners with a wide range of abilities. Access to some centres is poor.

177. Curriculum co-ordinators contributed to the self-assessment report. All learners complete a mid- and end-of-course evaluation which is used to improve sessions. Learners' views are taken into account when planning improvements to courses and resources. A cycle of observations of teaching and learning has recently been implemented, but the system has yet to impact on the quality of teaching and learning.

Humanities

Humanities		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Other contributory areas - Adult and community learning	303	4

Other contributory areas

Strengths

- good standard of work by many access learners
- good teaching accommodation for access learners
- very good retention and achievement on 'new interests' and 'careers horizons in education' courses

Weaknesses

- poor retention and achievement on daytime access programmes
- much unimaginative teaching
- narrow range of non-accredited provision
- weak arrangements for continuous quality improvement

Achievement and standards

178. Overall achievement on the daytime access programme was unsatisfactory in 2003-04 with only 25 per cent of learners gaining the full award. Overall retention on access to higher education programmes is low at 55 per cent. Retention data on access to higher education programmes is unreliable and does not allow analysis of trends. During the inspection, attendance was low at 60 per cent. Learners are enthusiastic and produce a good standard of written and oral work. In the better classes they contribute in lessons and demonstrate their learning. Learners in sociology classes demonstrate good critical analysis, evaluation and debate. On adult and community learning courses, there is no target-setting or formal measurement of achievement.

179. Retention and achievement on the 'new interests' and 'careers horizons in education' course are very good. This is a small women-only course at level 1 and 2. Retention and achievement rates are consistently 96 per cent or over. All learners have progressed either onto further education courses or into paid or voluntary employment. One of the learners from the first intake has a place at university after progressing through the access route.

Quality of education and training

180. Tutors offer a good level of personal, pastoral and academic support to learners. Teachers in all classes are sensitive to the needs of individual learners and provide effective support in tutorials. In one tutorial the teacher went through a recently completed assignment and identified areas for improvement and gave guidance to help the learner. In a psychology class, the group profile of the class identified the specific needs of individuals and the teacher responded to these needs in the lesson. All access learners have a detailed interview before enrolment. There is an extended induction period when learners experience the full range of options available to ensure they understand the course they are taking and to identify individual learning needs. However, there is no formal assessment of numeracy. The individual learning plan forms the basis of the ongoing monitoring and recording of progress.

181. All full-time and part-time teachers are appropriately qualified. Those who do not have a recognised teaching qualification are working towards one. Teaching rooms in all centres are spacious and well decorated with appropriate furniture within secure and friendly learning centres. The rooms provide a good learning environment with subject relevant materials and wall charts in the rooms. All centres, with the exception of one, are accessible for those with restricted mobility. All of the main centres have childcare and refreshment facilities. IT resources are too few as teaching aids for learners to use for private work and research. The provision of textbooks and library resources varies across the three main centres. At one centre, textbooks are provided on free loan for the duration of the course, but at another, text and reference books are limited with library loans of the more popular books limited to one week.

182. Assessment is satisfactory. Homework is set in relation to assignments for accredited courses. It is marked promptly using the standard college form. Teachers provide a satisfactory level of guidance and support to indicate the quality of the work and ways to improve. MAES has an arrangement with a local university for all learners who complete their course with MAES to be guaranteed a place on a degree course. In 2003-04 all learners who completed the course were offered and accepted places at local universities.

183. There is too much unsatisfactory teaching. Lesson planning is inconsistent and frequently teachers do not have a framework to ensure they are able to cover all the planned work at an appropriate level and speed. In many lessons the pace of the learning is slow. In one study skills lesson only six of the planned 17 slides were shown during the 50-minute observation period and learners gained little new knowledge. Insufficient guidance is given for in-class activities. In one sociology class learners were inadequately prepared to take an exam question preparation exercise on social stratification. The worksheet was insufficiently broken down into tasks and one group of learners did not understand the task and they were unable to complete it. In many classes there is no clear strategy to identify imaginative or innovative approaches to support learning or methods of teaching. There is a narrow range of courses during the week, but strategies are being considered to improve this for autumn 2005. Many learners have attended the same classes for several years with little or no development or

progress.

Leadership and management

184. There is insufficient use of data to identify trends and to plan for improvement. Much of the data is unreliable and managers are unable to analyse trends over time on recruitment, retention and achievement by centre, mode of attendance or against equality and diversity measures. Data is not used to set targets. Although lesson observations take place at least annually, observations of new teachers are not graded. Where grading does occur it is often over generous and does not identify how improvements could be made. Quality assurance is weak. There is insufficient identification and sharing of good practice that has impacted on teaching and learning. For example, lesson planning is not monitored and the good practice seen during the inspection is not identified and shared.

English, languages & communications

English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Languages - Adult and community learning	1733	3

Languages

Strengths

- good teaching and learning in most classes
- wide range of provision

Weaknesses

- poor retention
- ineffective measures to improve retention

Achievement and standards

185. Achievement and standards in English, modern foreign languages and BSL are satisfactory. BSL learners have good signing skills. In modern foreign languages, standards of oral work are generally good and many learners are able to speak fluently about topics they have covered. Attainment is mainly satisfactory, but some learners in modern foreign languages classes have poor pronunciation and a limited working vocabulary. In one GCSE English class, learners were able to debate gender equality confidently and in accordance with the conventions of debate. In other English classes, learners of all abilities demonstrate good analytical skills and produce perceptive written work.

186. Retention is very poor on many courses and this is acknowledged in the self-assessment report. In GCSE English the average retention rate is 63 per cent. In Spanish, about 75 per cent of classes have less than 60 per cent retention. In French, retention ranges from 14 per cent to 93 per cent. In Italian, retention is poor in 40 per cent of classes. There is good retention in all German classes, BSL and most Urdu classes. Attendance during inspection was 63 per cent. In BSL, English, French, Italian and German it was over 70 per cent. In other languages it was 52 per cent. In Spanish it was only 50 per cent.

Quality of education and training

187. Much of the teaching is very good. There is productive use of the target language in many modern foreign languages classes, with good question and answer techniques. Many lessons are well planned and include a diverse range of activities and teaching styles that sustain learners' interest. Learners' mistakes are systematically but sensitively corrected. An Italian tutor used a humorous video to contextualise the language and this stimulated learners to practise their skills. In a beginners' Spanish class a tutor emphasised the importance of using gesture, mime and body language as ways of communicating effectively when they only have a very basic vocabulary.

188. A good range of different learning activities and materials are used to suit individual learning needs in the best classes. In BSL, learners with different skills levels were set tasks appropriate to their existing knowledge and ability and this is well recorded in lesson plans. A poetry tutor helped a group with very mixed-ability levels to understand the poems at a range of levels. Creative writing learners are able to apply good analytical skills and write sensitively on a diverse range of topics. A tutor of Arabic gave able learners more challenging exercises, and a tutor of Urdu ensured that all learning styles were catered for by giving versions of exercises in audio, visual, reflective and kinaesthetic formats.

189. Resources are satisfactory. There is good use of basic teaching resources such as paper-based materials, tapes and video. All modern foreign languages tutors are native speakers and BSL tutors are native users. Most staff are well-qualified although nine tutors do not have any teaching qualifications. However, there are staff shortages in BSL and classes are cancelled if tutors are ill. Some rooms are not appropriate for use. For example, in some centres BSL is taught where learners sit around tables which makes it more difficult for them to communicate with one another. Some rooms have wall displays which distract learners. Most modern foreign languages tutors have access to video and audio aids in the classroom. In a few modern foreign languages and English classrooms learners are disturbed by noise from surrounding rooms. There is poor access to resources in some centres, with no access to IT. There is poor access for learners with restricted mobility to some centres, which is acknowledged in the self-assessment report.

190. Assessment is satisfactory. The progress of BSL learners is monitored in each lesson. In modern foreign languages assessment practice is monitored on both accredited courses including where accreditation is optional. However, there is insufficient formative assessment on non-accredited provision, including courses at higher levels. In some lessons oral work is not corrected and learners repeat mistakes. GCSE English written work is marked thoroughly but not always linked to assessment criteria. Initial assessment is generally satisfactory but inadequate for many beginners' languages courses. Although individual learning plans are generally well used in many lessons they do not contain specific individual learning targets. The targets set for learners who have subject tutorials are often not measurable.

191. The range of provision is good. In Chinese languages, provision meets the needs of

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those who want to study for cultural purposes, communicate with Chinese relatives or use it for business purposes. Urdu is offered for Punjabi speakers and for English speakers. Lesser-taught languages such as Arabic and Russian, courses in word-processing in Urdu and film appreciation in Italian are also available. BSL is offered at levels 1 to 3. Progression opportunities to higher-level accredited courses with other providers are not always well signposted. Exceptionally, GCSE English literature learners are asked to compare the similarity of criteria for their course to that for the access to higher education course to encourage them to progress. There is a good range of English provision with several pre-GCSE and GCSE classes as well as courses in creative writing and poetry. There are excellent enrichment activities in German, including learner visits to Germany and trips to German theatre and opera in the UK. In beginners' Urdu, learners use the language they acquire in restaurants and when shopping.

192. Learner feedback is collected at regular intervals but the information is not sufficiently detailed to plan improvements. For example, no changes were made to course content in a Spanish class where learners demanded less emphasis on grammar and more conversation practice.

193. There is generally good support in lessons for individual learners. For example, a hearing loop system is available in several rooms for hearing impaired learners. Creative writing learners with moderate learning difficulties and blind learners get good individual support. In some cases the need for support has been identified but is not available. A comprehensive six-week GCSE English induction course ensures that learners are on the right programme. Additional ESOL support is given to minority ethnic learners in GCSE English classes.

Leadership and management

194. Clear direction is given by team leaders in English and BSL. Tutors in BSL, Italian, French and Urdu regularly share good practice. However, deaf tutors do not attend area of learning meetings. Recent changes in the management of the modern foreign languages programme have not yet had an impact on its quality.

195. Learners and tutors respect each other. A portable induction loop is available but not all staff are aware of this. There is generally good use of the target language in modern foreign languages provision, but it is not used sufficiently to remove barriers to learning for people whose first language is not English. There is good promotion of diversity issues in English classes. The profile of learners in the overall programme does not sufficiently reflect the ethnic make-up of the city.

196. There are no effective measures for improving retention in modern foreign languages. A standard letter is sent to learners who are consistently absent but there are no arrangements to follow this up by telephone. Measures to ensure that learners are studying at the right level are not effective. There is no systematic analysis of retention data and reasons for withdrawal. Learner feedback is not consistently used for planning and there is no efficient mechanism for sharing good practice across the curriculum area. The co-ordination of the Spanish programme is weak.

Foundation programmes

Foundation programmes		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>ESOL</i> - Adult and community learning	1901	4
<i>Community learning</i> - Adult and community learning	180	2
<i>Literacy and numeracy</i> - Adult and community learning	1211	3
<i>Independent living and leisure skills</i> - Adult and community learning	335	4

ESOL*Strengths*

- good achievement of oral communication skills
- good support for learners
- very effective identification and response to meet community and employer needs

Weaknesses

- much unsatisfactory teaching and learning
- insufficient strategies to meet individual learners' needs
- inadequate access to ICT for staff and learners
- weak curriculum management

Community learning*Strengths*

- good achievement of personal and learning goals
- good teaching and learning
- very effective strategies to widen participation

Weaknesses

- insufficient analysis of the effectiveness of community learning projects

Literacy and numeracy

Strengths

- wide geographical spread of provision
- good support for learners
- very effective action to ensure equality and diversity

Weaknesses

- insufficient ICT resources
- insufficient staff to meet learners' needs
- unsatisfactory quality assurance

Independent living and leisure skills

Strengths

- good development of personal skills and confidence
- wide range of programmes

Weaknesses

- much unsatisfactory teaching
- ineffective assessment and recording of progress
- unsatisfactory curriculum management

Achievement and standards

197. ESOL learners make good progress in developing oral communication skills. They significantly increase their confidence and this helps them to function better in society. On some innovative workplace courses, learners improve their employment related language and practical vocational skills. Pass rates on externally accredited courses are good at 86 per cent. However, pass rates vary between 92 and 65 per cent at different centres. Retention rates have declined over the past three years but attendance is satisfactory at 65 per cent. Learners have a positive attitude to attendance and punctuality despite their difficult personal circumstances. Some progress to other mainstream courses or gain employment. Nearly 80 learners have progressed to childcare courses.

198. Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities develop good personal skills and increase their levels of confidence in a range of subject areas. In practical activities such as swimming, dance, music and creative art they develop communication and social skills. In dance sessions, learners develop body awareness, balance and breathing techniques to improve posture. Learners in relaxation classes use the skills they have learnt to reduce personal stress. Standards of work are satisfactory. Retention is satisfactory and consistent at 85 per cent over three years. Attendance is satisfactory and detailed records of absences are followed up at progress reviews. Achievement is celebrated through public displays of practical work, a radio broadcast, art exhibitions

and certificate presentations. Learners on partnership programmes gain accreditation in subjects that will help them prepare for employment.

199. In community learning programmes, first step learners make good progress in achieving their personal and learning goals. Learners become confident in everyday situations. They join libraries with their children or participate in community activities. Learners on a new directions course in a large housing estate have established their own support networks since joining the course. Others develop the confidence and skills to establish and run community groups, childcare facilities and other self-advocacy organisations. One group is planning to form their own community association in a ward with high levels of deprivation. Many learners progress to further education and training or employment. Some are now employed as tutors at the centre where they started as learners.

200. Attainment in literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Most learners' reviews show learners making progress towards their individual targets. Learners extend their reading skills and improve spelling and punctuation. They calculate or measure more accurately and speak more confidently. Group members learn to work with each other and to contribute to the management of their own learning. Increasing numbers of learners take up accreditation opportunities for the first time. Ex-offenders increase their personal skills and confidence significantly. Some have achieved a certificate in adult learner support. Others have jointly written a play. Retention and attendance are satisfactory.

Quality of education and training

201. Teaching and learning on community learning programmes are good. Tutors give clear and sensitive instructions to enable learners to complete tasks successfully. They use imaginative strategies to enthuse and engage learners. In an art class for learners with mental health difficulties the tutor arranges sketching lessons at different locations in the city giving learners confidence to re-engage in the community. Learners interact well and focus on the tasks given.

202. Teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy courses are satisfactory. The better lessons involve learners in lively and stimulating activities. Lessons include several different activities on the same skill to cater for widely different ability levels. Group lessons always involve individual work. In less successful lessons, planned activities do not take sufficient account of individual learning needs. Teachers do not include enough group work in workshops. Learners receive too much material and information at once and tutors do not reinforce learning from previous sessions. In all classes technology is rarely used.

203. A significant amount of ESOL teaching is weak. Lesson plans often list activities rather than the learning objectives for the session. Information gained from initial and diagnostic assessments is not used to plan for individual needs. In one class, a fluent learner with lower-level reading skills spent most of the time practising oral skills rather than the reading skills he needed. Teaching methods are not sufficiently varied and

frequently consist of a series of unrelated activities and worksheets for which learners are poorly prepared. Learners who cannot write effectively are sometimes expected to copy details from a board. Tutors do not evaluate learners' progress. In better sessions, tutors are particularly effective in providing opportunities for speaking practice and language development.

204. Planning to meet the individual needs of learners with learning difficulties and/ or disabilities is often poor. Unsatisfactory teaching is focused on meeting group objectives and learning covers a narrow range of activities and outcomes. Learning is not broken down sufficiently into achievable time-related targets. Objectives are unclear and insufficiently detailed. Learners are given tasks to complete that are not appropriate to the level of programmes they follow and some are not sufficiently challenged. Teaching strategies are often inappropriate. Learners in one literacy class were unable to recognise letter sounds but were being taught spelling rules. However, in partnership working most of the sessions are well planned and feature a range of differentiated learning activities. Negotiated learning outcomes provide a focus for learning and individual needs are met. Teaching is consistently good and learning is well planned.

205. Learners on all foundation programmes have insufficient access to computers with only one centre providing enough for all learners. Few ESOL learners use technology to support their learning outside dedicated ESOL with ICT programmes. Opportunities for learners to participate in open access learning are limited to one centre only. Pre-entry learners with learning difficulties and disabilities have little suitable software to develop their IT skills. Literacy and numeracy learners at all levels are disadvantaged by the lack of technology. Team leaders cannot receive online information or data.

206. On ESOL courses, a satisfactory range of printed materials and audio resources is available on main sites. Materials for skills for life, the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language, are generally used to good effect across MAES. Most accommodation is conducive to adult learning but in some venues rooms are small or poorly heated. Tutors are suitably qualified and are sensitive to the needs of adult learners from a wide range of backgrounds and experiences. Accommodation for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities is satisfactory and fit for purpose. A good range of pictorial resources has been developed to help learners understand written information. However, the quality of some handouts is poor. Most staff have attended training in literacy and numeracy awareness for pre-entry milestone training. Learning assistants have recently completed level 2 training in adult learning support.

207. Resources for community learning are satisfactory. Health and safety surveys take place before premises are used. Staff are appropriately qualified or are attending training for relevant qualifications.

208. The literacy and numeracy programme has too few staff to respond to requests for additional provision or to prevent classes from being cancelled in the absence of colleagues. Staff development opportunities are limited for many teachers who do not wish to cancel their classes to attend events. Some centres have waiting lists of learners.

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Paper learning resources are well chosen by well-qualified teachers who devise good materials for individual learners. There is a good range of practical numeracy equipment.

209. Assessment and recording of progress are satisfactory on literacy and numeracy courses. Diagnostic assessment is used to plan teaching in most centres. Learners record their progress on their individual learning plans at the end of lessons and value this process. Half-termly reviews take place, but many teachers record activities rather than outcomes. Targets are not always in small enough steps to measure progress. Review records are sometimes incomplete or insufficiently detailed. Some are unsigned and cannot be used as evidence of achievement.

210. The assessment and monitoring of learners' progress in community learning is satisfactory. In most of the classes there are clear and effective records. In ESOL, assessment is unsatisfactory. Initial assessment is used appropriately to place learners on the right level of course, but diagnostic assessment is not used for individual learning plans in group sessions. Learning plans are a general record of whole-class work rather than an accurate individual record of learning or progress. Learners are not clear about the work they need to do to improve.

211. For learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities targets are not specific to individual development needs, but relate generally to milestone learning outcomes. The recording of assessment is inconsistent. In many of the Greater Manchester Open College Network programmes, there have been no assessments after 20 weeks on the programme. Assessments are not systematically dated. In the joint partnership projects, there is a good initial assessment that leads to well-planned individual learning and detailed records of progress.

212. The range of programmes across the foundation area is good. In ESOL, a range of levels is offered on the main sites providing good opportunities for progression. MAES has responded particularly well to the employment needs of local communities. Courses have been established for workers in restaurants and bus companies and for ancillary workers at a local university. Other courses provide routes into childcare training and community interpreting. MAES provides ESOL courses from many venues. The subcontract arrangements are successful in widening participation. However, demand for English classes exceeds the number of available places.

213. Literacy and numeracy courses are held in all main centres and many community settings. Very good partnerships have developed clearly targeted work with the women's action forum, the city council's operational services, and health and probation services. Learners have access to a satisfactory range of accreditation including entry-level certificates, national tests in literacy and numeracy and open college credits. However, evening provision is small. The range of abilities from entry level 1 to level 2 in many classes is too wide. Joint provision with other curriculum areas is limited.

214. Learners with learning difficulties and disabilities attend a good range of programmes for leisure and vocational preparation. Programmes are well structured at pre-entry level with a progression phase which leads to entry-level opportunities. Joint

partnership projects are beginning to widen participation and improve progression opportunities. A work link programme with a local social services office prepares people for open employment. This type of provision currently represents a small number of learners. Partnership arrangements are improving the scope, range and quality of provision and extending equality of opportunity.

215. There are good working partnerships with a range of organisations on community learning programmes. These enable MAES to identify need and expand provision in disadvantaged communities. Partnerships with employers are particularly effective. Employers speak positively of the flexibility of MAES in providing training that is relevant to the workplace needs of their employees. At many centres tutors, support assistants, administrative staff and volunteers are recruited from the local community. This strengthens links with the immediate local community. Many learners know someone at the centre and they become enthusiastic advocates for learning in their own communities.

216. Support for learners in literacy and numeracy is particularly effective. Many learners receive support for dyslexia. MAES provides signers for deaf people and supporters for people with physical or learning difficulties. Most support is skilful and discreet. Centres provide quick access to initial interview, assessment and induction. Front line staff are trained to identify literacy and numeracy needs. An extra half hour is added to each teaching session to provide tutorial support. Teachers hold progression interviews at the end of courses. Support funds are available for learning materials and extension activities. MAES organises a variety of celebrations of achievement within centres and across the city.

217. Staff provide good personal support for ESOL learners. Materials are adapted or enlarged and there is support for dyslexia. Some learners use the support fund to buy dictionaries or bus passes to get to classes. Crèche provision is free and is valued by learners who could not otherwise attend courses. Tutorials have recently been introduced, but these are not yet used effectively to monitor progress and to help learners improve their language skills. Some learners are unclear about where they might go for guidance on further learning.

218. Support for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities and for those on community learning programmes is satisfactory. On LLDD programmes there is a high ratio of staff to learners. However, support is not always used effectively, including that provided by health and social care staff.

219. In community learning, dedicated information advice and guidance outreach workers offer advice to potential learners in the community. They also visit all new classes regularly to ensure continuity and give progression advice to learners.

Leadership and management

220. Managers of community learning programmes have a clear vision of their role in the regeneration of local communities. Managers at local centres are knowledgeable

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about the communities they serve and many have considerable experience of working in community education. Communications with staff are effective although at one centre a senior manager had not visited the community worker for some time. Literacy and numeracy provision has insufficient staff to meet learners' needs. Team leaders and co-ordinators fulfil too many roles to perform each effectively. MAES is unable to respond to many community requests for new provision or to ensure the quality of the current programme. Management data on retention and accredited outcomes are insufficiently collated and analysed. Co-ordinators and team leaders have only recently been able to access data online. No senior manager has responsibility for Skills for Life across the whole service and there is no overall strategy for MAES. However, co-ordinators are training new teachers through a programme of team teaching, mentoring and staff development. Frequent well-attended meetings for teachers and team leaders keep staff informed. A good programme of professional development events attract many participants.

221. Provision for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities does not have sufficient co-ordinating staff to sustain quality improvements. Existing managers have heavy workloads. Co-ordination of learners' individual programmes is unsatisfactory. For new or existing learners there is no effective way of identifying the levels of the provision. If learners attend more than one lesson, there is no overview of their skills development or co-ordination of their individual learning plans. Learners sometimes complete a learning style questionnaire more than once and the results are not shared routinely between staff.

222. Curriculum management in ESOL is weak. Management information is not routinely analysed. Falling retention over the past three years has not been recognised or dealt with. Progression routes from ESOL courses are not clearly stated or advertised. The range of programmes is good overall, but there are few learning opportunities for independent study. Support for tutors in subcontracted provision is inadequate in some centres. Staff have insufficient access to ICT to promote learning.

223. On literacy and numeracy programmes, equality and diversity policies are translated into very effective action to widen participation. The proportions of men and learners from black and minority ethnic groups are high. Twenty-five per cent of learners have a declared disability. Learners with mental health difficulties attend targeted and general provision. Learners from widely different groups work well together and respect each other's views. One of the case studies in the prospectus is of a lesbian woman. Some 32 per cent of staff are from black or minority ethnic groups and the proportion of male teachers is high. Teaching materials generally reflect the variety of learners in classes. However, retention and achievement are not analysed by gender, ethnicity or disability.

224. In programmes for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, equality of opportunity is promoted effectively. The self-assessment report and disability access booklet are in a format that most learners can understand. A pictorial individual learning plan has been developed. Learners' views are shared with course teams and help to develop programmes.

225. On community learning programmes, staff use inclusive teaching methods and there is effective promotion of equality of opportunity at community centres. MAES makes positive efforts to ensure that recruitment of staff reflects the composition of the communities they serve.

226. Quality assurance is unsatisfactory and grades from the provider's observation of teaching and learning are over generous throughout foundation provision. On literacy and numeracy programmes, the self-assessment report has insufficient detail of weaknesses in the provision. It is mainly descriptive and does not include sufficient evaluative comment. The development plan does not identify actions to improve satisfactory areas. Too few observations of teaching and learning take place. However, in provision for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities staff make an effective contribution to the self-assessment report from course reviews. In ESOL the self-assessment report does not focus sufficiently on learners' achievements. On literacy and numeracy programmes the monitoring of the quality of individual learning plans is not sufficiently extensive. Retention and achievement data is not used in quality assurance. However, some learner evaluations and tutor course reports have helped to develop the programme. Staff and learners are involved in the self-assessment process.

227. Quality assurance processes are inconsistent for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. The paperwork used for planning, recording, assessing and monitoring varies in format, quality and content. Most documents are undated and staff are unclear as to which is the latest version of paperwork and which procedures and practices to follow. Managers have identified this as an area for development. They have set up training courses to inform staff about current good practice, but attendance varies.

228. For community learning projects, there is insufficient analysis of their overall effect across the city. Arrangements for evaluating and using feedback from partnership development with the voluntary and community sector are not coherent. Some areas of need are overlooked in the development of provision. Although MAES is aware of the under-representation of men and there are local targeted courses for men, there is no overall strategy to deal with this. Some community workers do not receive regular monitoring visits. However, subcontracted provision is monitored by senior managers, and at all centres visited there are reviews of course provision.

Family learning

Family learning		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
- Adult and community learning	618	2

Strengths

- good development and application of skills
- lively and interesting teaching
- wide range of first-step provision to attract new learners

Weaknesses

- insufficiently detailed targets for individuals
- incomplete family learning strategy

Achievement and standards

229. Learners develop good personal skills and the confidence to progress onto further learning. Many who return to education after a long absence and lack confidence, value the social benefits of participating in family learning programmes. For example, learners have made new friends in a group with similar backgrounds and circumstances, and welcome the potential to develop beyond their role as mothers.

230. Learners’ aims are raised through attending courses and many have progressed to additional courses. Learners develop creative skills on many courses. For example, learners on a literacy course, after using picture dice to practise sentence construction, discussed how they could use the dice to develop their children’s literacy. They then made their own dice for use at home.

231. Learners increase their knowledge of how children learn and about the school curriculum. They speak well about how their learning is having an impact on their children’s learning. For example, one learner commented that her course had helped her to help her children understand mathematics and the way it is taught. Learners apply their learning at home and use their craft skills to make resources to use at home. One learner, using her home computer, is developing an interactive Storysacks book and plans to use the finished book with other family learning groups.

Quality of education and training

232. The teaching is lively and interesting. Tutors have good subject knowledge and enthuse learners through their teaching. They use clear diction, give clear explanations, and plan varied learning activities to engage learners and maintain their interest. In one

very good session on first aid in the home, a tutor moved from a quiz on choking to a video on dealing with emergencies, followed by a practical demonstration by two learners of how to apply bandages to a wound. Learning and participation in this lesson was very good and learners were able to demonstrate how to deal with emergencies in the home. Good use is made of lesson plans to identify the most appropriate assessment methods. Tutors tell learners which assessment methods they will use during sessions to assess learning and understanding and many are matched to the adult core curriculum for literacy and numeracy. In weaker lessons, there is an over reliance on worksheets or too few opportunities for learners to contribute to the learning programme.

233. Tutors keep a record of which learners need additional support with their writing and those who lack confidence, or who face challenging domestic circumstances which could adversely affect their learning. Learners are encouraged to keep learning diaries even on short courses and these are used to enable them to reflect on the learning. Learners who attended a residential family literacy weekend course with their children, developed good team building skills. They used their literacy skills to identify appropriate adjectives to describe their feelings and experiences over the weekend.

234. A wide range of courses offer adults a route back into learning. Short introductory courses aim to attract new learners and to meet local community needs. Over 70 per cent of MAES's widening participation work is in family learning, 97 per cent of learners are from deprived communities, 47 per cent are from non-white British ethnic groups, and 29 per cent are under 30 years of age. Many courses link family learning with ESOL, ICT and art. A course aimed at fathers has been developed with a Somalian community organisation and many courses rely on partnerships with other organisations such as Sure Start and libraries. However, provision is mainly focused around entry and level 1 although learners on some courses take national tests in literacy and numeracy at level 2.

235. Tutors are appropriately qualified and many have attended training in literacy and numeracy. Accommodation is mainly good and classrooms are well furnished. Tutors can get additional funding to extend courses in response to learners' requests. There is good access to learning resources on many courses. For example, on one course, every learner was supplied with a camera to take photographs of the resources they made and used at home with their children. At the start of a first aid course learners are given a first aid kit to use for practical work during sessions. Learners also have good access to craft materials and ICT equipment in many sessions.

236. Support for learners is satisfactory and childcare support is available when needed. Learners with language support needs can get help from interpreters. Learners are directed to the basic skills team for help with their literacy and numeracy. Initial assessment is satisfactory and appropriate to the needs of the learners.

237. Individual learning targets are insufficiently detailed. Learning plans identify previous learning and record learners' long-term learning goals, but these are expressed in very general terms. Most learning plans do not have specific targets for individual learners and the progress they make can only be measured against very general goals. Learning diaries are used to record learners' progress, but comments made by tutors and

learners are not sufficiently specific. There is some good monitoring of progress on a few courses.

Leadership and management

238. The family learning team is strongly committed to meeting the needs of local communities. Tutors are responsible for their own recruitment and have a good understanding of widening participation and local priorities. Staff regularly review recruitment targets for their respective zones.

239. There is good access to most buildings and staff understand the diverse needs of local communities. For example, on one course a tutor had learnt how to say a greeting in the first language of two of her learners. In interviews for teaching posts, applicants are required to demonstrate how they implement equal opportunities in their teaching.

240. The staff team comply with quality assurance procedures and have responded well to weaknesses identified during the self-assessment process and in reports from external consultants. Staff work together to produce a standard lesson plan template which is widely used.

241. The strategy for family learning is incomplete. The provider has been slow to implement agreements with partners on issues such as the required standard of accommodation, the expectations of partners from a course and how they are to be evaluated. The expectations of partners putting on a family learning course are not always met and some courses have taken place in inappropriate accommodation for adults. Course evaluations are not always carried out at the end of a course. There is no systematic curriculum plan and insufficient progression opportunities to ensure that adults have appropriate access to longer family literacy and numeracy courses and to the opportunity for accreditation.