

INSPECTION REPORT

Gloucestershire LEA

25 February 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

Gloucestershire LEA

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Gloucestershire LEA (the LEA) provides adult and community learning programmes in partnership with 21 subcontracting organisations throughout the county. Many of the partners have been recruited in the last two years to support the authority's strategy to widen participation. Programmes are arranged through the authority's adult and continuing education and training (ACET) service. Courses are offered at over 250 venues and in all areas of learning except community development. There were not enough learners on some programmes for them to be inspected. These programmes comprise science and mathematics, land-based, construction, engineering, technology and manufacturing, business administration, management and professional, retailing, customer service and transportation, hairdressing and beauty therapy and humanities.

2. ACET has been through a significant organisational restructuring over the 18 months before the inspection. Some new or re-designated posts have been vacant for up to five months. The head of ACET has been in post for three years, and reports to the head of lifelong learning. There are three other managers in ACET, a head of quality assurance and management information who is due to take up the post in April 2005, a head of learning programmes who has been in post for a month, and a head of external relations who has been in post since October 2004. A fourth manager advises on strategy and policy. Two long-serving, experienced managers left the authority shortly before the inspection. Six curriculum support workers, linked with tutors, are employed on 48 day contracts and eight local development workers, linked with community networks, are employed on one-third full-time contracts.

3. Gloucestershire has a population of approximately 560,000, of whom 2.8 per cent are from minority ethnic communities. Just under 25 per cent of learners in 2003-04 were men and approximately 6 per cent of learners were from minority ethnic groups. The unemployment rate is 1.6 per cent, compared with 2.3 per cent nationally. However, unemployment among minority ethnic communities is five times higher than the figure for the population as a whole.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Information & communications technology

4. The LEA works in partnership with 11 subcontractors to provide programmes in information and communications technology (ICT). In 2003-04, 2,695 learners enrolled on ICT courses, representing about 12 per cent of the adult and community learning provision. Courses last for between five and 30 weeks and range from entry level to level 3. Three-quarters are offered during the day, with the rest in the evening. They are offered in a wide range of venues include adult learning centres, local community halls, residential housing, church facilities, high-street shops, hotels and rooms in other educational establishments. Learners are able to develop skills in word processing,

spreadsheets, databases, desktop publishing, presentation software, internet applications, digital imagery and computer systems. Approximately 25 per cent of courses lead to a qualification. By the end of the term before inspection, 564 learners had enrolled on 59 ICT courses running at 34 different venues. Seventy per cent of the learners are women and 5 per cent are from minority ethnic groups.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

5. The LEA, working in partnership with six major subcontractors, provides a wide variety of hospitality, sport and leisure courses including yoga, tai chi, pilates, swimming, badminton, quad biking, wine appreciation, cake decorating, cooking for men, cooking with confidence, cooking for friends and Indian cookery. In 2003-04, there were 430 courses, of which one was accredited. Some of these courses are targeted at specific groups such as those aged over 50 and those with disabilities. Courses are offered at different times of day and evening at widely accessible venues throughout the county, such as schools, village halls, community centres, colleges and homes for the elderly. Most courses are run on a termly basis over 10-12 week periods. Fifty-one part time tutors currently teach up to six hours a week, of whom seven teach on hospitality programmes. Support for tutors and subcontractors in sport and leisure is provided by one of the LEA's curriculum support workers. In 2003-04 there were 7,245 enrolments and 3,983 learners, of whom 84 per cent were women and 67 per cent were over the age of 50. The proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups was 8 per cent, and 11 per cent of learners had disabilities. By the end of the term before the inspection, there had been 2,044 enrolments representing 1,858 learners.

Health, social care & public services

6. The LEA has provided a range of programmes relating to parenting skills and child development since 2003, working with two main subcontracting organisations. Programmes are available in several different locations during the day or evening, varying in length from one day to 13 weeks, with many lasting five weeks. Learners are recruited through direct enquiry, through local schools, parents' evenings, the media, membership organisations, and other promotional events. Additional learning needs are assessed at enrolment, and tutors and facilitators give individual support where necessary to meet these needs. In 2003-04, 1,603 learners were on these courses. By the end of the term before inspection, 305 learners had enrolled, of whom 30 were men and 3 per cent were from minority ethnic groups.

Visual & performing arts & media

7. Provision in visual and performing arts and media is provided through seven main subcontractors as well as a growing number of smaller organisations across the county. The courses include computer-aided art and design, botanical art, beadwork, calligraphy, ceramics, drawing, jewellery, painting, paper crafts, photography and textiles, as well as some performing arts provision. Day and evening courses are held at 147 venues across the county. In 2003-04, 4,764 learners enrolled, of whom 78 per cent were women, approximately 55 per cent were over 60 years of age, and around 2 per cent were from minority ethnic groups. There are around 80 part-time tutors. By the end of the term before inspection, 2,227 learners had enrolled.

English, languages & communications

8. In 2003-04, 1,913 learners enrolled on English, languages and communications courses. The authority works with seven subcontracting partners to provide English and foreign language courses in Spanish, French, Italian, German, Dutch, Turkish, Czech, Portuguese, Arabic and Mandarin. Many courses are offered free of charge to learners over 50, and most are at entry level. The courses run for two hours a week over 30 weeks, with enrolment points at 10-week intervals. Classes take place throughout the day. Twenty-seven venues are used, ranging from main college sites and schools to outreach centres, neighbourhood projects and village halls. Two of the biggest subcontracting partners offer accreditation for their courses. By the end of the term before inspection, 1,174 learners had enrolled, of whom 67 per cent were over 50 and 33 per cent were men. Eleven per cent of the learners were from minority ethnic communities. All the tutors are part time. There was no curriculum support worker in post at the time of the inspection.

Foundation programmes

9. Foundation programmes are subcontracted to seven providers offering courses in 27 venues. Around 810 learners enrolled on 100 courses in 2003-04. Ninety per cent of the learners are identified as having learning difficulties or disabilities. They enrol on courses such as arts and crafts, cookery, music, ICT, physical activities or exercise. The remaining courses include those for learners who speak English as an additional language, literacy and numeracy classes and taster sessions to encourage young mothers to return to learning. Seventy-three per cent of classes are held during the day and the remainder either in the late afternoon or early evening. Most classes are two-hours long and run for a full academic year. Sixty-eight part-time tutors work in the curriculum area, supported by two curriculum support workers. By the end of the term before inspection, 79 learners had enrolled.

Family learning

10. There were 1,086 learners in family literacy and numeracy courses in 2003-04. Sixteen per cent of these learners were men, and 3 per cent were from minority ethnic groups. Most of the courses are in family literacy and numeracy. Wider family learning programmes are offered during the annual family learning week in the autumn term. A further 2,822 learners enrolled on these courses in 2003 and 3,862 learners enrolled in 2004. All the family learning programmes are aimed at families living in areas of socio-economic deprivation, or who have poor literacy, numeracy or language skills. Most programmes are provided by nine subcontracting organisations, although the authority does provide a small number of literacy and numeracy courses itself. Of the 90 literacy or numeracy courses running in 2003-04, 11 were accredited. By the end of the term before inspection, 32 learners had enrolled on four courses.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	18
Number of inspection days	125
Number of learners interviewed	570
Number of staff interviewed	64
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	138
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	127

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

11. The quality of provision in the LEA is adequate to meet the needs of those receiving it. More specifically, provision is good in health, social care and public services, and visual and performing arts and media. Provision is satisfactory in ICT, English, languages and communications, foundation programmes and family learning. Provision in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel is unsatisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Equal opportunities arrangements are also satisfactory but quality assurance is unsatisfactory.

GRADES

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

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

Information & communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT		
- Adult and community learning	564	3

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Hospitality and catering		
- Adult and community learning	164	3
Leisure, sport and recreation		
- Adult and community learning	1694	4

Health, social care & public services		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Early years - Adult and community learning	305	2
Visual & performing arts & media		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts - Adult and community learning	2227	2
English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Languages - Adult and community learning	1174	3
Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Independent living and leisure skills - Adult and community learning	79	3
Family learning		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
- Adult and community learning	32	3

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

12. **Retention rates are particularly good in family learning, good in ICT, care, visual arts and foundation**, and are satisfactory in hospitality and sport and in languages.

13. **Learners develop good technical skills on many courses.** In addition, they develop confidence and good presentation skills in visual arts and in childcare, and derive health benefits from attending sport and leisure courses. In hospitality and catering, learners on cake decorating courses reach professional standards within a few weeks. The growth in confidence for learners in family learning has a particularly significant impact on them and their children.

14. **There are not enough accredited courses.** Where learners can take external

qualifications, such as in ICT and in language, their achievement rates are satisfactory.

Quality of education and training

15. Of the 150 learning sessions observed, 93 per cent were satisfactory or better. Teaching is satisfactory or better in most areas of learning, with the exception of sport and leisure. **However, many lessons follow a standard format and a poor variety of teaching techniques are used in ICT or language courses. There is not enough promotion of safe working practices in many sport and leisure lessons,** and too many learners on these courses are not learning new skills or techniques effectively.

16. Most resources are satisfactory except in family learning. Venues are generally welcoming and comfortable, although a few have rooms that are not suited to the classes taking place. The kitchens used for teaching hospitality and catering courses are well adapted for learners who use wheelchairs. Some computer equipment is poorly configured or maintained, and some tutors are not confident in correcting problems. Some of the venues used in family learning are too small, do not have enough teaching aids, and have tables and chairs unsuitable for adult learners.

17. Assessment on the small number of courses leading to external accreditation is generally satisfactory. On non-accredited courses, assessment varies considerably and in some cases does not encourage learners to reflect enough on what they have learnt. **Initial assessment is generally weak,** particularly in ICT, sport and leisure, early years care, languages, foundation and family learning. The LEA's approach to assessment is not well established or well understood by tutors. Some tutors who monitor well the progress their learners are making do not keep records.

18. **The number of different courses and subjects offered is particularly good in visual arts and media, and in languages.** The range of courses in ICT, and hospitality and sport is satisfactory and meets most community and learners' needs.

19. Support, advice and guidance for learners is generally satisfactory. **Support for disabled learners is particularly effective.**

Leadership and management

20. **The LEA has been particularly successful in encouraging new partner organisations to bring learning opportunities to under-represented groups.** It has given these new subcontractors good support to develop their provision and systems, particularly the smaller ones. The number of new learners, and learners from under-represented communities has grown substantially in the past two years. New learners now account for 60 per cent of all adult and community learners in the LEA.

21. **Operational management is weak in three out of the seven areas of learning.** Curriculum support workers give good support to tutors in some areas, but they do not

co-ordinate provision. Some areas do not have a support worker, or their support worker does not have enough specialist experience in the curriculum.

22. The authority makes poor use of its management information to monitor the work of its subcontractors, especially those it has been working with for a long time. It relies too much on these partner organisations using their own systems and procedures to carry out quality assurance. Self assessment relies almost entirely on observations of teaching, but these are not effective in identifying weaknesses and actions for improvement are slow.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- very good external partnerships
- particularly effective support for new providers
- increasing recruitment of learners from under-represented groups

Weaknesses

- poor use of management information to monitor performance
- weak curriculum management in some areas of learning
- insufficient monitoring of equality of opportunity
- inadequate quality assurance arrangements

Information & communications technology

Using IT

Strengths

- good retention rates
- good progression
- particularly good partnership working to make IT accessible to new learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient variety of teaching styles and learning activities
- poor monitoring of learners' progress on non-accredited courses

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality and catering

Strengths

- good development of practical skills
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- inadequate management of the curriculum
- ineffective quality assurance arrangements

Leisure, sport and recreation

Strengths

- good health benefits for many learners

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory teaching
- insufficient promotion of safe working practices
- inadequate curriculum management

Health, social care & public services

Early years

Strengths

- good retention rates
- good teaching and learning
- very effective partnerships with external organisations

Weaknesses

- insufficient initial advice and guidance
- late introduction to requirements for external assessment on some courses

Visual & performing arts & media

Arts

Strengths

- high standards of work by learners
- good teaching
- extensive range of subjects
- very good support for learners with disabilities

Weaknesses

- insufficient opportunities for tutors to share good practice

English, languages & communications

Languages

Strengths

- good development of learners' skills
- good use of the curriculum area to widen participation

Weaknesses

- insufficient variety of teaching methods
- weak curriculum management

Foundation programmes

Independent living and leisure skills

Strengths

- good attendance and retention rates
- good standards of learners' work
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- poor individual target-setting
- insufficient assessment and recording of learners' progress
- inadequate operational management of the curriculum area

Family learning

Strengths

- very good retention rates
- good attainment of personal and learning goals
- effective collaboration to promote family learning
- good strategies to recruit learners from economically disadvantaged communities

Weaknesses

- poor resources to support learning in some classes
- ineffective assessment and monitoring of learning

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT GLOUCESTERSHIRE LEA:

- 'courses that are close to home and held at an appropriate time'
- 'lessons that are well prepared by tutors who give us lots of support'
- 'tutors who are dedicated and knowledgeable, and who make learning seem easy'
- 'learning that is fun, where I meet people in a relaxed atmosphere'
- 'the progress that I've made, and how it's increased my confidence'
- 'how pleased my wife is, now that I can cook her a meal!'
- 'the way this course is changing my life - I'm learning to cope with a teenager'

WHAT LEARNERS THINK GLOUCESTERSHIRE LEA COULD IMPROVE:

- the punctuality of some tutors
- the transport to one of the colleges
- the changing facilities for couples
- the progress routes and availability of accreditation
- the availability of online payment facilities for courses
- the size of some rooms and quality of the accommodation
- the use of clear language in some classes
- the parking facilities at some sites

KEY CHALLENGES FOR GLOUCESTERSHIRE LEA:

- continue to build on the partnerships to extend learning opportunities
- improve curriculum management and development
- establish a rigorous and consistently applied system for assessing and monitoring safe working practices
- improve the recording and monitoring of learners' progress
- extend opportunities for tutors to share good practice and improve their teaching skills
- improve the use of management information
- improve the information and guidance to learners to ensure they are aware of the range of courses

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 3

Strengths

- very good external partnerships
- particularly effective support for new providers
- increasing recruitment of learners from under-represented groups

Weaknesses

- poor use of management information to monitor performance
- weak curriculum management in some areas of learning
- insufficient monitoring of equality of opportunity
- inadequate quality assurance arrangements

23. The LEA has developed very good external partnerships with an extensive range of bodies, a strength identified in the self-assessment report. Partner organisations including local colleges, charities, community groups, the voluntary sector forum and public service bodies, contribute to the planning and development of the curriculum. Subcontractors provide all adult and community programmes. The successful development of partnerships has helped to identify new opportunities for learning and avoid duplication of provision, allowing resources and expertise to be used more effectively. There is a strong commitment to diversity at all levels and this is embodied in partnerships with local community bodies and the voluntary sector. Local development workers work very effectively with local community groups to agree potential local projects, many of which lead to further learning. The authority efficiently uses information from external partners to develop provision in all areas of the county. Curriculum support workers work well in collaboration with learning and community groups to support events that promote learning to under-represented groups.

24. The LEA has taken a strategic decision to support the development of a wider network of subcontractors to effectively broaden the range of provision. Sixteen new small training providers have been recruited to the adult and community partnership in the past two years. New providers receive particularly effective support from the authority, including, the development of data collection systems, lesson observations and self-assessment. Partnerships are used well to initiate new projects for community and family learning and to successfully bid for additional funding. These new partners are now providing around 50 per cent of the targeted provision, all of which is satisfactory or better. Curriculum support workers are allocated to a number of the curriculum areas. They provide effective support to the tutors from smaller providers. They organise and present a range of tutor development courses and offer individual support for tutors as required.

25. The authority has an adequate strategy for providing literacy and numeracy support for adult and community learners.

26. The LEA does not make sufficient use of management information to monitor the performance of subcontractors. There is some useful informal monitoring by link development workers, but this is not always used effectively. All subcontractors have a service level agreement, but this does not cover key measures, such as retention and achievement. The LEA has been slow to collect data from some subcontractors. It introduced a new data collection system two years ago, but its emphasis is on recruitment figures. The authority has encountered problems getting reliable and accurate data from some subcontractors. Subcontractors use a range of systems to collect their management information and these systems produce varied reports. There is not enough analysis of data by managers to bring about improvements or develop the curriculum. Contract monitoring visits are not used to develop meaningful targets or action plans to improve the quality of provision. Targets generally relate to the enrolment of learners from within targeted areas of the county.

27. Curriculum management is weak in three areas of learning, which accounts for approximately 40 per cent of the learners as a whole. Curriculum support workers provide effective support to tutors in some areas of learning. They organise and present a range of tutor development courses and offer individual support as required. Where the quality of the provision is better, the support worker acts as more of a co-ordinator, and has a better overall view of the provision. However, one curriculum support post has been vacant for five months. Areas of learning do not plan and review their programmes coherently. For example, some subcontractors are providing the same courses across the county, but some are offering accreditation and others are not. Health and safety is poorly managed and monitored on some courses. A head of learning programmes has recently been appointed, but it is too early to judge the impact of the new management structure on improving the quality of the provision.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

28. There is increasing recruitment of learners from unrepresented groups and the LEA has started to successfully meet the needs of hard-to-reach learners. It classifies its provision as either mainstream, which is defined as training that receives a very small subsidy, or targeted, which is free to learners. The authority has successfully accessed additional funding to support numerous local community projects that have been effective in attracting adult learners. Overall, two-thirds of all learners are on targeted provision. Recruitment is targeted at wards with the highest levels of social and economic deprivation. The scope of this work includes adults with low literacy or numeracy levels, family learning, ICT for older learners, and education for users of mental health services. There has been a small increase in the proportion of male learners, learners with disabilities and minority ethnic groups. In 2003-04, almost 12 per cent of learners were people with disabilities, which rose to 14 per cent in the first term of 2004-05. In the same period, the proportion of learners from minority ethnic groups rose from 5.1 per cent to 5.3 per cent, compared with 3 per cent for Gloucestershire as a whole. The LEA has developed links with groups representing people from under-represented

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groups, such as the Chinese parent and children association, a college that specialises in provision for learners with disabilities, and a local Asian women's association, all of which have been successful in attracting new learners.

29. There is insufficient monitoring of equality of opportunity. The LEA has the overall responsibility to ensure equality of opportunity and has an equal opportunities policy. The authority expects its subcontractor to apply their own equal opportunities policies and procedures to the adult and community learning provision, but this arrangement is not formalised and is not monitored. Most subcontractors comply with the requirements of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001 or the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. Where possible, they locate courses on the ground floor to accommodate people with mobility difficulties. However, the authority has not completed the disability audit of its premises or developed ways to meet current legislative requirements. Some venues have poor lighting and security arrangements. Learners are not routinely given a copy of the equal opportunities policy or the complaints and harassment procedures, and most are not aware of them. The subcontractors collect data on disability, ethnic background and gender but the LEA does not analyse the data, or use it to improve accessibility to the provision. The authority has recently offered training about equality and diversity for tutors, which staff are paid to attend. However, these are not compulsory, and not all of the tutors who teach on adult and community courses have attended. The LEA does not check who participates in such training.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

30. Arrangements for quality assurance are inadequate, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. However, the service has been working well over the past 12 months to make improvements. It uses feedback from learners and staff to develop the provision. The findings are collected effectively, tabulated and reported on, and there are examples of prompt and clearly recorded actions leading to improvements in resources and facilities. The quality assurance framework is well written and detailed, but it does not cover key aspects of the learning process. There is an over-reliance on session observations to assure quality across the whole provision. Many observations are carried out by non-specialists. The findings are often insufficiently critical and do not always enable meaningful actions to be set to identify development needs of tutors and bring about improvements. The language used on questionnaires has insufficient focus on learning and is inappropriate for learners with poor literacy. The quality of provision varies significantly between individual tutors and areas of learning. Learners' experience is generally dependent on the quality of individual tutors or support staff, most of whom are part time and many work in isolation. The person responsible for quality assurance has many job roles and does not have adequate time to devote to quality assurance. The application of the quality procedures across the organisation is inconsistent. Training is not always attended by staff and tutors. Where training is not attended, information is sent to individual tutors, but this is not always shared effectively with other staff.

31. The LEA produced its third self-assessment report for the inspection. Self-assessment is an established part of the quality assurance procedure. However, although all areas of learning contributed to the report, tutors were not directly involved in its production.

Senior managers moderated and collated effectively the area of learning reports and also wrote the sections on leadership and management. The self-assessment report does not make sufficient analysis of the overall strengths and weaknesses of the service. The report was descriptive and some aspects did not have enough judgements. Inspectors judged many of the strengths to be no more than normal practice and identified additional weaknesses. The accompanying development plan details and identifies actions to improve on the weaknesses, but the LEA has made some slow progress towards achieving them.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Information & communications technology

Information & communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT - Adult and community learning	564	3

Using IT

Strengths

- good retention rates
- good progression
- particularly good partnership working to make IT accessible to new learners

Weaknesses

- insufficient variety of teaching styles and learning activities
- poor monitoring of learners' progress on non-accredited courses

Achievement and standards

32. Retention rates for 2003-04 courses are good at 93 per cent, and continue to be good on current courses. Achievement rates are satisfactory, although about a third of all results have unknown outcomes. Portfolios of work and displays on walls show many learners produce very good work. Learners make good use of their new skills at home, at work and in the community. Attendance was satisfactory during the inspection, at 83 per cent, and registers indicate that this is the norm.

Quality of education and training

33. Progression is good and many learners progress from course to course. Learners make good progress towards their individual learning goals and improve their personal confidence and other skills. The range of courses provided by the local authority meets the needs of a diverse range of learners and is complementary to those provided by other educational providers within the county.

34. Resources are satisfactory. Most locations are attractive, welcoming and accessible. Many venues have specialist equipment for learners with disabilities. Many tutors have produced good workbooks and handouts to accompany their lessons. Several venues are equipped with data projectors or an interactive whiteboard to enhance teaching and learning. However, there are some poorly configured or badly maintained laptops. Some projector screens are too small, networks are slow and access to the internet is not

adequate. Some schools do not have technical support available for courses running in the evening. At one venue the interactive whiteboard is difficult to see due to light from the windows.

35. Support for learners is satisfactory. In some parts of the county, as learners join courses, their existing IT skills are analysed and their literacy and numeracy needs are identified. Tutors provide learners with good support during courses. Support workers are used for a wide range of needs including learners with physical disabilities, learners who speak English as an additional language and those requiring help with literacy and numeracy. Learners are aware of other kinds of help that are available and how to obtain it.

36. Teaching is generally well planned. However, there is an insufficient variety of teaching styles and learning activities, a weakness identified in the self-assessment report. In the better lessons, schemes of work are expressed as learning outcomes and lesson plans contain effective strategies to challenge the more able learners and support those who are less able. In weaker sessions, activities do not involve or sufficiently challenge learners. Some tutors are not adequately trained to use information learning technology resources to their full potential. Others do not have sufficient understanding or knowledge of the software they are teaching to provide learners with adequate support.

37. Monitoring of learners' progress is poor on non-accredited courses. There is no clear assessment rationale to guide tutors, and assessment relies heavily on their individual skills. On accredited courses, learners' work is accurately marked and quickly returned to them with constructive and motivational comments. Learners' progress on these courses is carefully recorded and monitored and internal verification practices are sound. Tutors on some non-accredited courses negotiate individual learning goals with their learners and devise a scheme of work to accommodate these goals. However, on many entry-level courses, learners' progress is only assessed by tutors' subjective observation and rarely recorded.

Leadership and management

38. The local authority has developed particularly good partnership working to make the ICT provision accessible to new learners. Classes are held in a wide variety of venues located throughout the county, which are successful at attracting learners. For some learners, this is the only enrichment activity available to them in their community. Tutors share good practice well with colleagues working for the same subcontracting partner. For example, one tutor has developed a series of workbooks that are used by all the tutors in the team. In another, tutors have collaborated in the production of standardised documents for schemes of work, lesson plans and progress monitoring. However, there are not enough opportunities for ICT tutors to exchange more widely the many ideas that have been developed locally. There is no consistency in many aspects of course delivery and administration across the county. Currently ICT tutors are supported by a curriculum support worker, but this is a part-time post.

39. The self-assessment report is thorough and correctly identifies most of the

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weaknesses and some of the strengths found during the inspection.

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	164	3
<i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i> - Adult and community learning	1694	4

Hospitality and catering

Strengths

- good development of practical skills
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- inadequate management of the curriculum
- ineffective quality assurance arrangements

Leisure, sport and recreation

Strengths

- good health benefits for many learners

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory teaching
- insufficient promotion of safe working practices
- inadequate curriculum management

Achievement and standards

40. Learners develop good practical skills. In cookery lessons, learners prepare and cook new and unusual dishes to agreed timescales. They work to budgets and ensure that dishes have a good nutritional content. In one lesson learners were shown how to fillet fish and to assess the quality of fresh food by sight and touch. Learners are able to use a good variety of small equipment, which has encouraged them to prepare more complex dishes at home and has made food preparation easier for some. Learners are knowledgeable about safe working procedures in kitchens and demonstrate good knife skills and hygiene practices. Learners are taught adaptations of dishes they have prepared which has extended their repertoires, for example, the different uses for béchamel sauce. In a wine appreciation class, learners can describe wines using the correct terminology and successfully identify grape varieties and price during tastings. In a cake-decorating lesson, learners produced daffodils to a commercial standard after just

five weeks. Retention on all courses is satisfactory.

41. Many learners on sport and leisure programmes gain good health benefits. Most learners are aged over 50 and the classes help them to maintain mobility and flexibility. Other learners make improvements in their physical and mental health such as the increased abilities to relax, reduce stress and increase their range of movement and balance. Some learners improve their self-confidence and use the courses to meet new people and make friends. Some learners are able to identify improvements to specific medical problems. One learner has used the class to help during a bereavement and another learner has used a class to get over a recent illness.

Quality of education and training

42. Teaching and learning is good in hospitality. It is well planned and structured to make the best use of time on short courses. Tutors successfully differentiate the teaching to meet a variety of learning styles, ages and levels of ability. They help learners to build their confidence, and develop communications skills and teamwork. Tutors give learners technical information about nutrition and food, such as the reasons for sieving flour and kneading dough. Lessons are motivational, fun, and very sociable. Most lessons have good support for literacy and numeracy. Many of the kitchens have good use of illustrations of equipment, with bold print words attached to cupboards and drawers to help those learners who have literacy support needs. The frequent weighing and measuring has proved particularly useful for older learners who are learning metric weights and measures. Many learners progress onto other courses.

43. Hospitality resources are satisfactory. Kitchens are spacious, well equipped and provide a good range of different and adapted equipment. Tutors are qualified and experienced in their area of learning and most have teaching qualifications.

44. The range of courses is satisfactory. Some progression opportunities are available in tai chi, yoga, golf and pilates. Some courses are targeted for older learners and those with a disability. There are no accredited courses in sport and leisure, and no evening provision in hospitality and catering. Few courses are offered in the holidays and some learners begin to lose some of the health benefits they have gained in classes.

45. Pre-course information is satisfactory. Publicity materials vary across the county. Leaflets are available from a variety of locations. Hospitality tutors provide good support for learners with additional needs. For example, two learners who enrolled on a cookery course for over 50s did not speak or understand English. The tutor arranged for them to attend an additional course in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), which ran straight after their cookery lesson. However, literacy, numeracy and language needs are not routinely checked. No learners on sport and leisure courses have been identified as having such needs and no additional support is provided.

46. Teaching in sport and leisure is unsatisfactory. In lessons observed during inspection, 25 per cent of teaching was less than satisfactory. In the better sessions, tutors used a

variety of teaching techniques to cater for different levels of ability, giving effective support for individual needs. Some sessions included good individual and whole-group coaching. However, in most lessons the schemes of work and lesson plans show insufficient detail on how activities are to be carried out and developed. Planning for individual learning is insufficient. There is not enough use of initial assessment to identify the level of learners' knowledge and skills. Not enough individual learning outcomes are identified. Many group learning outcomes are not focused or detailed enough to be measured. Targets and goals are too general and do not provide an adequate baseline against which individual progress can be measured. Tutors do not use an adequate range of teaching methods to suit learners' individual learning styles or abilities. For example, in one aerobics lesson, learners were not offered alternative low impact moves. There is not enough individual coaching to help learners make improvements in their movements. Tutors fail to observe learners sufficiently, often not changing teaching position. The LEA has identified the need for developing assessment records in the self-assessment report, but this was not identified as a weakness in the self-assessment report.

47. The promotion of safe working practices in sport and leisure is insufficient. Health screening is not routinely carried out or used effectively. When it is used, tutors frequently use their own systems, which are not monitored by the local authority. Sub-contractors have appropriate systems for risk assessing premises, but there is insufficient risk assessment of activities or for the type of participants. Inspectors observed some potentially unsafe practices, such as young children playing in the same room during an aerobic class, and insufficient control measures in a swimming activity for disabled learners. Other minor hazards seen in some classes included overcrowding, the wearing of inappropriate footwear and some potentially unsafe exercise practices. Some outreach venues have insufficient support staff available and poor exterior lighting. Arrangements have been made to ensure appropriate telephone access in outreach venues, but some tutors are unaware of the procedure. Monitoring of the currency of the tutors' qualifications and continuing professional development is inadequate. One tutor had trained in 1981, but had not updated her qualification or teaching practice.

Leadership and management

48. Curriculum leadership and management is unsatisfactory. No member of staff has overall responsibility for this area and there is not enough strategic direction. There is no curriculum support worker for hospitality and catering. Co-ordination of curriculum planning and development is weak and the provision lacks coherence across the county. The LEA has a key focus on widening participation and there are some examples of effective partnerships to increase participation from under-represented groups. However, participation rates by men is low at 16 per cent and there is insufficient action taken to increase this. The LEA has recently improved its management information system. Subcontractors are set targets for recruitment and widening participation, but these are not separated for areas of learning. An improving staff training programme has recently been implemented, but this has yet to impact on the quality of provision. The LEA has identified that there is not enough monitoring of equal opportunities in subcontractors.

49. Quality assurance arrangements are ineffective. There is too much use of lesson

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observations. These are not always carried out by subject specialists. Some weaknesses in teaching identified by inspectors had been identified by the LEA, but the significance of some had not been noted and actions for improvement had not been effective. The self-assessment report did not accurately identify weaknesses found during inspection. The provider identified quality assurance as a strength in the leadership and management self-assessment report.

Health, social care & public services

Health, social care & public services		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Early years - Adult and community learning	305	2

Early years

Strengths

- good retention rates
- good teaching and learning
- very effective partnerships with external organisations

Weaknesses

- insufficient initial advice and guidance
- late introduction to requirements for external assessment on some courses

Achievement and standards

50. Retention rates in 2003-04 were good at 94 per cent and 98 per cent for the two subcontractors. The retention rate for courses held between August 2004 and December 2004 was satisfactory at 78 per cent. Achievement on these courses is satisfactory.

51. Learners develop self-confidence in expressing their knowledge, experiences and attitudes to childcare. They are able to describe aspects of their children's behaviour which concern them, and explore possible causes. Many learners become able to share personal concerns and use this as a way of improving their ability to deal with difficult situations. On some courses, learners are given projects to work on that require them to report to the group at the end. These learners develop good presentation skills.

Quality of education and training

52. Teaching and learning is good, with no unsatisfactory lessons observed during inspection. Lessons are well planned to involve the learners in practical activities, and are effective in extending learning appropriately. At the end of each session learners complete an evaluation form. Tutors and facilitators review evaluations at the end of each programme, and these are used to aid future planning. Learners respond well to the teaching methods used, such as questioning, group work and practical activities, which motivate them well. Tutors use a range of appropriate tasks to help learners to collect evidence for assessment portfolios. Many sessions are planned to support effectively learners' personal development. Tutors and facilitators encourage learners effectively and

the response to verbal questioning is good. However, in some sessions, more confident learners are allowed to dominate question and answer sessions, so that other learners do not participate sufficiently.

53. Assessment of completed tasks by learners working towards a qualification is satisfactory. Internal moderation systems meet the requirements of the awarding body. External moderation reports identify good progress in the introduction of this internal moderation system. Learners complete a learning log or journal and one of the subcontractors regularly monitors them. However, they are not used on other programmes to support continuous assessment. A tick list is used throughout the programmes to identify learning outcomes, but this is poorly detailed and does not allow for effective monitoring of progress or to develop individual learning plans.

54. Resources are satisfactory. All tutors and facilitators hold appropriate teaching qualifications and have a range of practical experiences. Resources to support teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Most of the accommodation used is accessible and provides a satisfactory learning environment. However, in one venue the small group of learners was based in the school hall, where there were insufficient facilities to record or display group discussions. In another group the room was too small. The authority carries out a risk assessment on all new venues, but there are no regular reassessments. Some accommodation is not sufficiently monitored to ensure that it remains suitable for the particular activity for which it is used.

55. Insufficient attention is given to initial assessment and support for language and numeracy, or preferred learning styles. There is no formal interview before enrolment on some programmes and identification of additional learning needs is limited to a section on the enrolment form. Tutors and facilitators do not have sufficient knowledge or experience to ensure that learners are adequately supported. Learners are not offered advice and guidance at the start of their programme, and when it is introduced, it is limited to progression opportunities.

56. Tutors do not introduce external assessment requirements until late in the courses. All learners are encouraged to compile a portfolio during their course. Many courses allow learners to choose whether they want to submit their completed portfolios for external assessment. However, on most courses, this option is not discussed until week 3 or week 4. On some five-week programmes, learners have insufficient time to prepare for the assessment, and are often unable to use evidence from work completed earlier in the course.

Leadership and management

57. The LEA has developed very effective partnerships with external agencies. These partnerships successfully plan programmes to meet local and national initiatives. There are termly management meetings between the providers and the authority, and action is taken where necessary to deal with concerns. Tutors and facilitators also attend meetings each term to share experiences, as part of a programme of staff development.

58. The authority has a well-established quality assurance system through the use of peer observation of lessons. Peer observers are drawn from the partner subcontractors and given appropriate training for their role. The system is effective at supporting tutors and helping to make improvements in the quality of teaching. The findings of the observations are also used as the basis for self-assessment reports. Inspectors agreed with most of the findings in the most recent self-assessment report.

Visual & performing arts & media

Visual & performing arts & media		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts - Adult and community learning	2227	2

Arts*Strengths*

- high standards of work by learners
- good teaching
- extensive range of subjects
- very good support for learners with disabilities

Weaknesses

- insufficient opportunities for tutors to share good practice

Achievement and standards

59. In many lessons, learners demonstrate high standards of work across a range of crafts, visual arts, design, dance and performance. Standards of achievement are particularly good in belly dancing, botanical art, ceramics, drawing, life drawing, photography, painting, printmaking and textiles. Learners clearly learn from each other and are confident in discussing their work. Many elderly learners recognise their improved visual awareness of shapes, of colours and of light and how their studies have a positive impact on their everyday lives. All learners are encouraged to be creative, and tutors help them to identify their strengths and develop individual styles. Retention rates are high with over 90 per cent of all learners completing their courses. Some subcontractors provide good progression routes from non-accredited introductory level to accredited level 3. These are taken up by some learners, but many do not regard the gaining of accreditation as a priority. For many learners, their achievement consists of building confidence, and acquiring and developing creative skills in their chosen subject.

Quality of education and training

60. Teaching is good. All the teaching observed was satisfactory or better, and much of it was good. In most lessons, learners are highly motivated and work productively. Tutors give learners demanding tasks and support them in a range of activities, including public performances. Learners generally enjoy talking about their work and sharing their skills and knowledge. Most tutors are highly effective in their planning and preparation. They ensure that learners develop good basic art and design skills, from which they can explore their own interests. Some tutors make good use of information technology (IT)

to support learning and assessment. In one very successful art class, the tutor used excellent communication skills and subject knowledge to guide and encourage learners. The room was particularly well arranged with very good specialist equipment and materials. An excellent still life display provided learners with a significant set of visual challenges which engaged their interest well. In another very good lesson, the tutor introduced a range of tasks to demonstrate techniques and methods that physically disabled learners could use.

61. An extensive range of subjects is provided across the county, effectively meeting learners' aspirations. The range of courses for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities is particularly good. Subcontractors schedule courses at times, on days and in venues to meet the needs of local communities. The authority is successful in widening participation. Some courses have developed from funded projects that have been particularly successful, such as batik. However, performing arts provision is not as well developed. There is insufficient information to learners about progression opportunities and most learners do not have sufficient information about accreditation of courses.

62. Guidance and support is good for learners with disabilities. Additional support and care workers provide good learner help and support. Many tutors keep written evaluations of their individual learners' needs, are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and provide enthusiastic support. Some have a useful induction checklist to ensure that learners are made aware of their rights and responsibilities. Where learners disclose a literacy or numeracy need, satisfactory support is arranged. Tutors ensure that all learners are fully involved and make good progress in their studies. A particularly successful course designed to develop creativity in social care, enables carers to discover new ways of working with their clients.

63. Accommodation and resources are satisfactory. Tutors are appropriately qualified. Many are practicing artists who have good levels of creativity and skill. Some have specialist diplomas in addition to first degrees in their disciplines. They are experienced in working with learners who have very different abilities and needs. Some courses run in sheltered accommodation to ensure that elderly learners can access them. The best accommodation provides a good learning environment. Access for wheelchair users is good at most sites. However, the facilities in some community venues are not adequate, with insufficient space and poor lighting.

64. The monitoring and assessment of learners' progress is satisfactory. Many tutors carry out appropriate individual informal assessment with learners. Some tutors produce notes of learners' progress, and provide written and visual feedback on learners' work. One subcontractor encourages learners to contribute to the criteria under which they will be assessed, and be active participants in the assessment. However, most of the systems used have been devised by individual tutors or subcontractors. The authority has not established a standard approach to assessment across all its partners, and does not make use of outcomes from assessment to aid them in curriculum development.

Leadership and management

65. A curriculum support worker has a good overview and meets with curriculum leaders from the colleges and other providers. A satisfactory annual report produced by the support worker is used as a development plan. It identifies a range of curriculum activities requiring attention and actions taken. Quality assurance procedures are appropriate and some improvements have been made. For example, a useful internal inspection process, including lesson observations, identified strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. Some improvements have been made to lesson planning. However, the self-assessment report focuses primarily on teaching and learning and does not address all aspects of provision. It lacks some rigour and evaluation.

66. Tutors do not have sufficient opportunities to discuss their teaching and share good practice. Some well-targeted briefing and training sessions are currently being introduced to support tutors and to keep them aware of the issues affecting the quality of teaching and learning. However, these are a recent development, and it is too soon to judge the impact of the work. There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning, assessment and monitoring of learners' progress which tutors have not yet been asked to discuss. Senior managers have not established a clear direction for the area of learning and there is no overall strategy for development.

English, languages & communications

English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Languages - Adult and community learning	1174	3

Languages

Strengths

- good development of learners' skills
- good use of the curriculum area to widen participation

Weaknesses

- insufficient variety of teaching methods
- weak curriculum management

Achievement and standards

67. Learners develop good skills in English and language classes. This strength was identified in the self-assessment report. Attendance is good and learners participate well in classroom activities. In 2003-04, for those learners who are offered accreditation, the achievement rate was satisfactory at 78 per cent. Learners develop confidence in their chosen language to use it on holiday or to communicate with family members. Many speak confidently with a good accent in the target language, and make good progress. Some learners are able to initiate conversations with each other without the intervention of the tutor. In some classes they develop the skills of listening for, and extracting, essential information. In the good classes, learners quickly assimilate and use new vocabulary. In English classes, learners build their vocabulary. In some language classes, however, learners speak hesitantly and with a poor accent. Their listening skills are poor, and they rely on written prompts when speaking.

Quality of education and training

68. The languages programme is well planned to meet the needs of older learners, who are one of the LEA's priority groups. Some providers use their classes to support neighbourhood projects, or to address the needs of targeted communities. Some tutors introduce wider elements of culture and geography into their lessons, and learners appreciate these. Progression routes for learners are available within most providers, but the authority does not have an overview of the available routes across all its provision. Some learners do not know what progression opportunities, if any, are open to them.

69. Teaching is satisfactory overall, with 97 per cent of observed lessons judged

satisfactory or better. Many tutors use a carefully chosen mix of teaching methods and learning materials to develop learners' skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking. They use the target language well to elicit information and give simple instructions and explanations. Some tutors use interactive techniques well to develop learners' self-confidence. In the best classes, learners are given demanding tasks to develop their memory of the target language. Some staff use IT well during classes.

70. Resources are satisfactory. In the best rooms, audiovisual, and information and learning technology equipment available, and there is sufficient room for tutors to use the space flexibly. All tutors have, or are working towards, appropriate qualifications. As acknowledged in the self-assessment report, not all tutors have easy access to the resources that would enhance their teaching. Others are not familiar enough with new technology to make effective use of it. Some tutors use poorly photocopied handouts and do not make sufficient use of bright and attractive materials to improve their teaching and interest learners.

71. Assessment is satisfactory. On accredited courses, most tutors keep good assessment records and regularly monitor learning. They integrate assessment activities well into their sessions, including homework, and keep comprehensive records of units achieved and the nature of the evidence generated. Assessment and target-setting on English as a foreign language (EFL) courses are good. In language classes, however, some learners are not aware that they are working towards accreditation, and do not understand the procedures involved. The recording of assessment is not as well developed in non-accredited courses. Initial assessment is not used sufficiently to establish learners' prior skills and knowledge in language classes.

72. There are satisfactory procedures to meet the additional learning needs of learners. Most subcontracting partners have a comprehensive support system which identifies needs and deploys support as appropriate. There are good examples of learners with hearing difficulties being identified and supported, as well as help being given to dyslexic learners and one with short-term memory loss. Tutors often provide additional help to prepare learners for assessment, or to help new learners catch up with the more experienced ones. However, insufficient information is available to learners before classes start. Many do not know what the class will cover, or what the costs of study materials will be until they attend the first session. The induction pack used in some English classes is too advanced for the language skills of the learners.

73. Some tutors use an insufficient range of teaching methods. Some classes do not provide enough opportunities for learners to work or practise together. There is not enough variation in pace or learning activity. The target language is sometimes used at an inappropriately advanced level. Some staff focus too much on translation and detailed grammatical explanations. The self-assessment report identified the poor range of learning activities, but not the sometimes inappropriate use of the target language.

Leadership and management

74. The authority makes good use of its English and languages programmes to widen participation. Over half of the learners in 2003-04 were from targeted groups. The authority provides good support to small organisations that deliver language programmes to minority groups. They provide advice on how to set up and accredit courses, and their staff are included within the LEA's peer observation arrangements. Learners of Mandarin and Arabic benefit from this in particular. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. Courses are free for learners over 50, and the authority makes funds available to run language classes in priority areas in Gloucester, the Forest of Dean and Dursley. Some providers report their data by equal opportunities categories, but the authority does not analyse this data to evaluate and develop provision.

75. Curriculum management is weak. There has been a vacancy for a curriculum support worker since the summer of 2004. There is no authority-wide approach to the planning of the languages programme. Individual subcontractors plan their own courses, taking into account the strategic group and area priorities of the authority. Individual subcontractors decide whether their courses should be accredited or not. They are not set targets for retention and achievement. A programme of professional development is made available to tutors, but there are currently no authority-led opportunities for language staff to come together to share ideas, resources and best practice. Most subcontractors have their own quality assurance systems, and the authority co-operates with them to conduct a programme of observations of its subcontracted provision. It produces reports that indicate the improvements to be made. However, the suggested actions are not always taken, and the reports are not used by the authority to inform curriculum planning and improvement.

Foundation programmes

Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Independent living and leisure skills</i> - Adult and community learning	79	3

Independent living and leisure skills*Strengths*

- good attendance and retention rates
- good standards of learners' work
- good teaching and learning

Weaknesses

- poor individual target-setting
- insufficient assessment and recording of learners' progress
- inadequate operational management of the curriculum area

Achievement and standards

76. Retention rates on foundation programmes are good at 94 per cent in 2003-04. Learners choose each week whether they want to attend classes or not, and most do so regularly. They take part in all the lesson activities and show high levels of involvement throughout.

77. The standard of learners' work and level of participation in class is good. In arts and crafts classes, where the work consists of making a product, learners' achievements are regularly celebrated. For example, in a pottery class, artefacts produced by learners are displayed in an annual college art exhibition. In other cases, such as music and movement classes, learners working towards a group performance show good development of skills in rhythm and playing instruments together. In many classes, tutors take photographs of learners' work to use in their portfolios and to display on walls in celebration of their achievements.

Quality of education and training

78. Teaching and learning is good. Ninety-four per cent of sessions observed were satisfactory or better and 71 per cent were good or very good. Tutors prepare well for classes. Classes for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities are lively, fun and well led. Objectives for class activities are usually challenging and appropriately paced. Learners usually meet the group activity objectives and are encouraged to explore their own creativity. Tutors reinforce prior learning well to ensure that learners maintain skills

and knowledge. For example, tutors in a cookery session used a previously taught cooking technique in a new recipe. Tutors and assistants provide good support to enable learners to work independently where they can. Most classes for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities strongly encourage social interaction. During one class, learners were encouraged to express their own views and to listen to those of others. In other classes, break times are used effectively to promote social interaction between learners. In the poorer sessions, activities to meet the different levels of learners' abilities and needs are not sufficiently well planned, and the range of teaching techniques is too narrow.

79. Resources are satisfactory. In rooms used for cookery, there are low-level preparation and cooking facilities, which allow learners in wheelchairs to participate fully in the sessions. A specialist swimming course for adults with a range of disabilities is equipped with appropriate lifts and mobility aids. Staff are appropriately qualified and most are very experienced in working with learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. Tutors generally involve support workers and carers well in their sessions. Some of the accommodation is very good, but three classrooms visited during the inspection are too small and have unsatisfactory access for wheelchair users.

80. The programmes offered by the providers of foundation programmes adequately meet the needs of current learners and are available at a number of suitable community venues. For most of the provision, these classes are run in venues close to learners' homes or sometimes in residential or daycare accommodation. One course designed to encourage young mothers into learning is particularly effective in negotiating a programme of activities and learning opportunities in response to learners' needs and interests.

81. Tutors are generally aware of their learners' individual needs and abilities, but the use of targets to plan their learning is poor. For example, in some classes for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities, there are not enough small, clearly defined steps to help learners progress. In other cases, learners are not sufficiently encouraged to develop their personal and social skills or their literacy and numeracy skills in the context of their class activities. Some learners become frustrated or confused by longer-term goals. In ESOL, IT activities are not planned for individual learners and some learners with poor IT skills make very slow progress. Progression opportunities are not well planned.

82. Most tutors carry out some form of initial assessment. However, the results of this assessment are not used effectively to guide lesson planning or to set individual targets. Tutors do not assess learners' work or progress sufficiently to help guide their programme. Most records of progress comprise only recording the activity done with insufficient comment on what has been learnt. The LEA has developed a pack to support tutors in setting and measuring personal and social objectives, but this has not yet been implemented across the provision.

Leadership and management

83. Equality of opportunity is satisfactory. There is good access to learning venues and an appropriate range of specialist resources and facilities for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities. Experienced tutors demonstrate good understanding of equality and disability, related matters in their teaching.

84. The day-to-day management of this curriculum area is inadequate. The LEA and its partners have developed a number of projects that are effective in extending the provision. However, curriculum support staff and some provider managers have only recently been appointed, and there has been insufficient time for them to develop the programme. Managers do not know what courses are included in this area of learning. Some ESOL courses are designated as EFL courses, and some classes for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities are recorded in other areas of learning. There has been insufficient progress in response to the national skills for life strategy, the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. The LEA has recently been successful in securing funding to develop this area, but it does not currently have the capacity or resources to provide literacy, language and numeracy support in foundation.

85. Quality assurance arrangements are unsatisfactory. Monitoring of the foundation programmes focuses on teaching observations. However, some observers do not have appropriate experience of learning difficulties or disabilities and make inaccurate judgements. The observation process does not sufficiently consider key aspects of the learning experience such as induction and initial assessment.

86. There has been no detailed analysis of learner feedback for this area of learning. A recent survey of learners was not carried out in a suitable format for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities, or who speak English as an additional language, to fully participate. The self-assessment report was generally accurate in its judgements on the quality of foundation programmes. However, the report relies heavily on the observations of teaching, and does not draw on the views of carers, or make appropriate use of learner feedback.

Family learning

Family learning		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
- Adult and community learning	32	3

Strengths

- very good retention rates
- good attainment of personal and learning goals
- effective collaboration to promote family learning
- good strategies to recruit learners from economically disadvantaged communities

Weaknesses

- poor resources to support learning in some classes
- ineffective assessment and monitoring of learning

Achievement and standards

87. Retention rates for courses in 2003-04 are very good at 99 per cent. Attendance is good at 82 per cent, but class sizes are small, averaging between four and five learners. In 2003-04, 90 learners were enrolled on courses that could lead to accreditation, but only 18 learners achieved the accreditation, representing an achievement rate of 19 per cent.

88. There is good attainment of personal and learning goals by parents and carers. They develop a good understanding of how children are taught in literacy and numeracy, of the terminology used and the sort of activities they can arrange at home to support their children's learning. They become more confident in talking to tutors and other professionals about their children's progress as well as in applying for jobs. Some become more involved in their schools, acting as volunteer helpers. Parents are able to make games and use shopping trips to encourage their children's reading, writing and social interaction. They become more interested in learning and many are planning to continue with other courses. Some mothers report a greater understanding of and respect for the work of teachers, and see that they have an important role to play in supporting the school.

Quality of education and training

89. Teaching and learning is satisfactory. Of the nine lessons observed, 44 per cent were good or better, 44 per cent satisfactory and 11 per cent less than satisfactory. Tutors encourage their learners well. They clearly explain complex concepts and encourage learners to ask questions for clarification. Most sessions are planned to ensure

participation and learners are well motivated by exciting games and problem-solving activities. Peer support is used well to help learners. In the best lessons, learning outcomes are clearly stated at the start and reviewed at the end of the session. In weaker lessons, learning outcomes are not made clear to learners and tutors use an inadequate range of strategies to meet different preferred learning styles. In some cases, learners are not sufficiently challenged to develop their literacy and numeracy skills. In one class, learners are very confident and competent in their literacy skills, but the lesson plan is cross-referenced to entry level 3 and level 1 in the core curriculum. Many lesson plans and schemes of work do not make any reference to learners' individual abilities in the context of the core curriculum.

90. Guidance and support are satisfactory. Learners on longer courses receive advice and guidance from the independent advice and guidance officer. Tutors discuss progression with learners. Childcare provision is good and available for most courses, and most learners are aware of other forms of support provided. Some learners are not clear about their progression opportunities, and some course leaflets are not appropriate for learners with entry-level literacy skills.

91. The range of programmes and courses to meet the needs of the community is satisfactory. Family literacy, language and numeracy courses are wide ranging, from short taster sessions to 90-hour courses. They are planned in consultation with local voluntary and statutory agencies. The venues are convenient and easily accessible. Many are located in the heart of large housing estates where many young parents have children at school. Wider family learning (WFL) programmes are mainly offered during the annual family learning week. The range of activities in this week is imaginative, including stories from around the world, learning about autumn colours, woodland and the natural history of Britain. However, there are insufficient WFL programmes during the rest of the year to act as a first step into further learning.

92. Resources to support learning are poor in many classes. Some rooms are too small for the size of group, with poor or inappropriate furniture. One class does not have enough chairs and no tables for learners. Another group has to move every week, half way through the lesson, to a staff room where there are no tables and only a small whiteboard. The children also have to move from one crèche area to another with the parents. Some tutors rely too much on the use of whiteboards and handouts with few other resources to support learning. In one cookery class, with basic skills established, the tutor has no technical support to help with practical elements of cookery.

93. Assessment and monitoring of learning is ineffective. Initial assessment is undertaken, but the results are not used in individual learning plans or to decide the level of attainment expected of the learner. Targets and planned outcomes are not sufficiently detailed or specific. Individual learning plans do not contain sufficient personal goals and many are not completed or updated to show progress. Tutors do not sufficiently monitor, assess or review learners' progress to encourage the less confident to recognise their ability to achieve a qualification. Many learners do not enter for national tests or other accreditation.

Leadership and management

94. The LEA collaborates effectively with a wide range of partners and subcontracted providers to promote family learning. Partners include primary school heads, early learning centre managers, college staff, Sure Start, libraries, museums, early years' centres and family centres. An effective steering group and working parties encourage co-operative working and share good practice, which is valued by collaborating organisations. Support provided for working groups organising locally based activities in family learning week is particularly effective. The number of learners who enrolled on wider family learning courses in this week rose from 2,822 in 2003 to 3,862 in 2004. Regular review meetings with contractors are held to discuss progress and plan developments, and the allocation of funds. The number of venues and learners on literacy or numeracy courses has grown significantly from 46 learners in seven venues in 2002-03 to 1,616 learners in 52 venues in 2003-04.

95. There are good strategies to recruit learners from economically disadvantaged areas. Effective use is made of postcode data to identify wards of socio-economic disadvantage and low basic skills attainment. Development workers use this information to negotiate and consult with community leaders and voluntary and statutory bodies to develop provision and target those in the widening participation target group. Effective strategies are being used to work with educationalists in education achievement zones to establish family learning in primary schools and early years centres.

96. Management of the curriculum area is satisfactory. Meetings are well managed with agendas and clear action points with responsibility for action. LEA staff have regular, individual supervisory meetings and appraisals. Staff are clear about priorities and these are monitored well. Staff development is provided to meet their needs and the staff are well supported by their managers. Staff awareness of equal opportunities responsibilities is satisfactory, although recent developments in diversity are not sufficiently reflected in learning materials.

97. Managers are unclear about the self-assessment cycle. Learners' feedback is collected at the end of all courses, but it is not clear how the authority uses it with its partner providers to make improvements. The self-assessment report does not fully reflect the strengths and weaknesses identified at inspection.