

INSPECTION REPORT

Women's Technology and Education Centre

21 January 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

Women's Technology and Education Centre

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. The Women's Technology and Education Centre (WTEC) is a small adult and community learning provider funded by Merseyside Learning and Skills Council (LSC). The organisation was established in 1983 with the aim of developing the skills of unemployed and low-paid women so that they were better placed to gain well-paid employment in areas where they were under-represented, more specifically at that time in technical professions. That core aim and purpose remains central to WTEC. WTEC is a registered charity, recognised as working specifically with women and is therefore exempt from the relevant sections in the Sex Discrimination Act 1975. WTEC moved into its current premises in 1994. The organisation has grown from 30 learners at its inception to having 1,364 enrolments on part-time and full-time programmes in 2003-04. Programmes currently offered to learners include business and administration, information and communications technology (ICT), hospitality, sport and leisure and foundation programmes, all of which were in scope for the inspection. A construction course for women was introduced during 2003-04 and is continuing, but there is only a small number of learners, and this area of learning was out of scope for the inspection. There are 35 permanent members of staff, and further tutors employed on a sessional basis.

2. Following the move to the current premises, a series of other operations and social enterprises were initiated, still with the focus of supporting and enhancing the core aim of the organisation. These are now set up as separate businesses, and, along with WTEC, form the Blackburne House Group.

3. Liverpool is ranked among the most deprived areas in the country according to current indices of deprivation, and WTEC is situated in central Liverpool, in one of the more deprived wards. The population in Liverpool is declining, and the demography is shifting towards an increasing proportion of older residents. Liverpool's traditional employment base, linked to the port and manufacturing industry, has declined significantly. Unemployment in Liverpool is 4.9 per cent, which is over twice the national average of 2.1 per cent, and significantly higher than that for Merseyside as a whole at 3.5 per cent. The proportion of Liverpool's population from minority ethnic groups is 5.7 per cent.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Business administration, management & professional

4. WTEC has 59 learners in this area of learning, of whom 30 are following courses in management and 29 in teacher education. Management programmes are available at levels 2, 4 and 5 and include new provision marketed specifically towards black men seeking to move into management. A programme at level 3 was available in the previous academic year, but there were insufficient enrolments to run the programme this year. At the time of the inspection, a 10-week teacher education programme at level 3 had just finished. All three stages of the level 4 programme are offered. Most learners are

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employed, some of them by WTEC. All learners are over 19 years of age. Learners attend the centre for six hours a week. Eleven tutors work in this area of learning, six of whom work full time. Most of the teaching staff have considerable management experience.

Information & communications technology

5. There are 87 learners on ICT programmes. Thirteen of these learners are aged 16-18. Courses are provided in the main building only. Seven courses were running, at levels 2 and 3, that included courses for diplomas and advanced diplomas for information technology (IT) users, working with digital images and web development, and also short programmes at levels 2 and 3. One course in computer maintenance was also taking place. Induction to this programme was observed, but did not provide a sufficient sample for separate grading as a contributory area. During the autumn term, 156 learners enrolled on accredited and non-accredited courses. Courses at level 1 are now run on demand only. This has happened in response to analysis of provision and participation in the area. Classes take place during the day and in the evenings from Monday to Friday. Sessions run for between three and six hours. There are four full-time and six part-time tutors employed under the supervision of a line manager.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

6. There are currently nine courses in leisure, sport and recreation. All courses are non-accredited. These courses form part of holistic health and well-being programmes, and include Pilates, Dru and Iyengar yoga, belly dancing and meditation for health. During the week of the inspection there were 72 learners enrolled on courses. Three courses are offered at introductory or beginners level and there are progression routes from these courses. All courses take place at the main site at Blackburne House. Courses take place in the morning, at lunchtime and in the early and late evenings during the week. Last year there was one weekend course. Courses run from 45 minutes to one and a half hours each week each term. Four additional courses run for six weeks only and are due to start later this term. Last term, 11 courses ran and 95 learners enrolled. In 2003-04, 381 learners enrolled on courses. Sixty-four per cent attended weekday twilight sessions, and 45 per cent were new learners. There is one full-time tutor and six part-time tutors, who teach between two and six hours a week. The full-time tutor co-ordinates and develops the course programme.

Foundation programmes

7. Since September 2004, 142 learners have enrolled on foundation programmes. There are five full-time and four part-time staff. WTEC offers key skills courses in communication, application of number, working with numbers, and English for speakers of other languages (ESOL). Mostly, WTEC offers courses to women over the age of 19, but it also offers some courses for young women. WTEC also offers courses in confidence-building and women's studies. Learners can join courses at any time in the year and usually attend between one and three learning sessions a week. Learning sessions offer teaching in the contexts of work, everyday life, community settings and citizenship. All learners work to achieve the learning goals agreed with them at the start of their programme of learning and work towards key skills qualifications at levels 1 and 2. ESOL learners work towards qualifications at entry level to level 1.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	6
Number of inspection days	30
Number of learner interviews	125
Number of staff interviews	45
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	1
Number of partner/external agency interviews	24

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

8. The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. WTEC's leadership and management are outstanding, including its arrangements for equality of opportunity. WTEC'S arrangements for quality assurance are good. Teaching for foundation programmes is outstanding, while the provision in business administration, management and professional, ICT, and hospitality, sport, leisure and travel is good.

GRADES

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

Leadership and management	1
Contributory grades:	
Equality of opportunity	1
Quality assurance	2

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Business administration, management & professional		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Management - Adult and community learning	30	2
Teacher/trainer awards - Adult and community learning	29	2

Information & communications technology		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT - Adult and community learning	87	2

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Leisure, sport and recreation - Adult and community learning	72	2

Foundation programmes		1
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
ESOL - Adult and community learning	65	1
Literacy and numeracy - Adult and community learning	77	1

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

9. **There is good development of learning and work-related skills on management and teacher education programmes.** There is clear evidence of substantial developments in written and oral communication and in problem-solving skills. Attendance rates on both management and teacher education programmes are generally good.

10. **In leisure, sport and recreation, learners show good development and attainment of skills.** Learners use the skills they acquire to improve their own lifestyles and some also share the skills with their families and in their workplaces.

11. **Achievement and retention on key skills courses are good.** Achievement for 2003-04 has increased significantly. Retention is good at 92 per cent. Across the foundation

programmes attainment of individual targets is challenging and is recorded in lessons. Targets are set for both certification requirements and against personal goals. Development of skill is evident from the targets achieved. Retention in ESOL is good at 84 per cent.

12. The quality of learners' work in ICT programmes is satisfactory. However, there are low achievement rates on most courses.

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
Business administration, management & professional	2	1	3	2	0	0	0	8
Information & communications technology	0	3	6	0	0	0	0	9
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	0	3	2	1	0	0	0	6
Foundation programmes	0	7	0	1	0	0	0	8
Total	2	14	11	4	0	0	0	31

13. **Teaching is good on management programmes and particularly good in teacher education. Teaching is well planned and uses a variety of methods to engage and motivate learners.** In the best sessions, there is a high degree of learner involvement in demonstrating the skills they have learnt. Teaching is regularly and effectively linked to the learning outcomes of the qualification. The range of activities used is carefully matched to learners' preferred learning styles, particularly in the teacher education classes. In all observed classes, there was an excellent rapport between tutors and learners.

14. **Teaching is good on ICT courses.** Tutors use detailed and comprehensive schemes of work catering for learners working at different levels. A good mix of delivery styles is used. Tutors make good use of facilitation skills to ensure all learners participate in discussions and group work.

15. **In leisure, sport and recreation programmes, teaching is good.** Tutors show technical competence and expertise in their subjects which they communicate well to their learners. Lessons are planned effectively to encourage learners to participate and extend their skills. Learners are challenged, encouraged and inspired.

16. **There is very good teaching in foundation programmes.** A variety of teaching and learning styles are used to motivate learners and promote learning. Teachers have a very good rapport with learners. This builds a positive learning experience. Teaching is challenging and lively. All classes observed included individual, group and peer working which is good practice for developing and demonstrating new skills. Tutors are skilled at developing learners' skills in the context of topics that are relevant to learners' everyday lives.

17. The high-quality environment and resources at WTEC significantly enhance the learners' experience on all programmes. All classrooms are spacious, light and bright and contain a variety of modern teaching aids. In ICT, computers are up to date and there are sufficient computers for all learners to access individually. There are computers to enhance the curriculum in all classrooms except those used for sport and leisure programmes. There is a good range of teaching aids on ICT programmes, including LCD projectors that are widely used and appropriate equipment for people with restricted mobility or visual impairments. There is good technical support for ICT provided by three members of staff and a documented replacement policy for the computers. On leisure, sport and recreation programmes, there is a good range and quantity of equipment including mats, blocks, blankets and belts appropriate for all the courses. However, the classroom used for sport and leisure courses is sometimes draughty and noisy. There is a good variety of learning resources to stimulate and promote learning in foundation programmes. Staff are well qualified and have good subject knowledge.

18. There is very good use of initial and diagnostic assessment as a basis for individual learning plans in the foundation programmes. There is a discrete interview where prior attainment is ascertained and a customised initial assessment is used to start developing the individual learning plan. Diagnostic assessment is carried out over a three-week period. The setting of short- and long-term targets is determined by the syllabus, assessment results and the learner's own goals. The individual learning plan shows individual targets with challenging steps for the development of skills.

19. On management and teacher education programmes, arrangements for initial assessment of learners' literacy and communication skills are adequate. Results are recorded in individual learning plans and referred to regularly in tutorial sessions. Feedback on assessment during courses is clear and supportive. Clear records of assessment are kept so that learners are aware of how much has been achieved.

20. Initial assessment on ICT programmes is satisfactory and includes the use of a basic and key skills diagnostic tool and a learning styles questionnaire. The results of the assessments are used as a basis for the individual learning plans. Reviews of learners' progress are carried out formally once a term. Learners are set short-term targets which are usually achieved in a learning session.

21. There is insufficient recording and formal monitoring of initial assessment and learners' progress on sport and leisure programmes. Although tutors carry out informal initial assessment and adapt their teaching accordingly, little formal written recording takes place.

22. The range of programmes in all areas of the provision is satisfactory, and there are opportunities for progression and enhancement. In sport and leisure, there are good enrichment opportunities to enhance learning. Tutors motivate their learners well by providing additional resources and information about related activities.

23. On ICT programmes, there is particularly good learning and personal support for learners. There is a counselling company also allocated in WTEC's building and learners

who feel they require this form of help can be referred to a counsellor. Each tutor is a designated support tutor for a group of learners. Tutors are sensitive to the needs of their learners and learners appreciate the additional help and advice that they receive. The induction programme for learners is very effective and is delivered in a motivational way that inspires learners to want to learn.

24. Learners on foundation programmes benefit from effective individual support.

Learners receive good advice and guidance when they join a programme. WTEC also has good links with specialist local agencies and appropriately refers learners requiring more specialist support.

Leadership and management

25. There is particularly good strategic management of WTEC. The board and senior managers provide strong leadership by supporting the vision developed by the chief executive and senior managers. A clear strategic direction promotes the organisation's values of transformation, equality, inspiration and independence, and these values are well understood and supported by staff and learners. The board has adapted well to new challenges by bringing in new board members with appropriate experience and skills where necessary. The chief executive works with employers and other local and national organisations. She is able to use her experience and expertise to support other organisations and promote the principles and philosophy of WTEC, emphasising how WTEC contributes to the economic development of Merseyside.

26. Internal communication throughout WTEC is good. There is a well-established structure of meetings. Minutes of meetings are circulated to all staff. Managers are easily accessible and respond quickly where necessary. Staff and learners feel well-informed about relevant matters and feel that their opinions are valued.

27. There is a comprehensive annual staff development programme that identifies individual, group and whole staff activities that are clearly linked to WTEC's development plan. Staff are well supported by an effective staff development programme. The appraisal system is effective for most staff in identifying professional development needs.

28. There are very effective partnerships with other organisations and agencies that support widening participation in learning, increase training and employment opportunities for women and support the local economy. WTEC has hosted high-profile national conferences promoting the importance of giving women the necessary skills and experience to contribute to local economies. There is good promotion of social enterprises by WTEC.

29. WTEC has a well-planned, thorough marketing strategy. The strategy takes into account the curriculum planning process, local LSC targets, WTEC's key performance indicators and feedback from learners.

30. The management and co-ordination of literacy, numeracy and language support needs is satisfactory. Learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills are assessed at the

start of their programme. Many learners increase their confidence in literacy and numeracy by following specialist courses before progressing on to more advanced qualifications. If WTEC's staff do not have the specialist skills to provide necessary support, learners are directed to an external agency that has considerable expertise in providing literacy, numeracy and language support.

31. The promotion of equality of opportunity at WTEC is outstanding. Equality and diversity are set in a clearly articulated vision and set of values for the organisation, based on positive discrimination to support disadvantaged groups. There is good partnership working to promote equality and diversity, both within and beyond the organisation's main premises. Partnership working spans the statutory, voluntary and private sector, with WTEC facilitating a joined-up approach to equality issues in Merseyside, and contributing to national debates. The organisation makes a significant contribution to initiatives to improve equality and diversity in Merseyside. There is a good level of training for staff and a culture of equality and diversity throughout the organisation. Equality and diversity are promoted particularly well to learners. Learners display a very good understanding and awareness of equality and diversity issues.

32. There is a very good learning environment at WTEC which supports social inclusion. Staff across the organisation are supportive and welcoming. There are good support arrangements for childcare. There is a well-furnished, appropriately stocked library and very good adjacent study facilities, including access to up-to-date computers, for those who wish to work individually or who may not have study facilities at home. There is good celebration of learners' achievement, with professionally presented success stories displayed around the building. Specialist equipment and materials within learning areas include adjustable work stations and good-quality large keyboards. In the main building there are appropriate access arrangements for learners with restricted mobility. However, access to the construction workshop in a neighbouring building is very narrow, and is unsatisfactory.

33. The self-assessment process is good. It is an integral part of the centre's quality assurance process and is used to review performance against key performance indicators. All staff contributed to the process from an early stage. The report contains many of the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors. However, it failed to identify some weaknesses, particularly in the use of management information.

34. Learners have good involvement in continuous improvement activities. Learners report that, where possible, actions are taken in response to their feedback. Since September 2004, all courses have been evaluated at the end, or in the case of longer courses, at points throughout the course. A student representatives' forum meets each term and the chief executive visits a sample of groups to discuss learners' experiences at WTEC. Induction surveys and exit interviews have also been introduced. The quality of teaching is monitored through observations.

35. There is insufficient use of management information as a basis for continuous improvement. Although WTEC collects a large amount of information on learners and the management information system is generally adequate to meet the needs of the

organisation, it is not used effectively to analyse trends in retention and achievement.

36. Although staff know learners and their capabilities well, and the progress they are making, formal quality assurance systems in business administration, management and professional are not yet sufficiently developed. Data from the management information system is not provided to staff in a format that enables them to identify issues and implement improvements, particularly in the area of retention and achievement.

37. Similarly, in the sport and leisure provision, staff monitor and feed back to learners verbally, but there is insufficient implementation of formal quality assurance procedures. There is no formal procedure in this area of learning for surveying learners' views, and in the past year only two out of five staff have been observed teaching.

38. Within foundation provision, there is insufficient use of data to contribute to planning. Data on attendance and learners' qualifications is routinely collected but it is not used to plan the provision.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- particularly good strategic management
- very effective partnerships
- good communication
- good staff support and development
- outstanding promotion of equality of opportunity
- very good learning environment to support inclusion
- very effective self-assessment process
- good involvement of learners in continuous improvement activities

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of management information to use as a basis for continuous improvement

Business administration, management & professional

Management

Strengths

- good development of learning and work-related skills
- good teaching
- very good learning environment
- very effective communication systems

Weaknesses

- insufficiently established quality assurance processes

Teacher/trainer awards

Strengths

- good development of learning and work-related skills
- particularly good teaching on teacher education classes
- very good learning environment
- very effective communication systems

Weaknesses

- insufficiently established quality assurance processes

Information & communications technology

Using IT

Strengths

- good teaching
- very good resources
- very effective induction
- particularly good learning and personal support

Weaknesses

- low achievement rates on most courses in 2003-04

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Leisure, sport and recreation

Strengths

- good development and attainment of skills
- good teaching
- good resources and equipment
- good enrichment activities to enhance learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient recording and formal monitoring of initial assessment and learners' progress
- insufficient implementation of quality assurance procedures

Foundation programmes

ESOL

Strengths

- good retention
- very good teaching
- very good variety of learning resources to stimulate and promote learning
- very good use of initial and diagnostic assessment to use as a basis for individual learning plans
- good monitoring of learners' progress
- good management of the provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of data to contribute to planning

Literacy and numeracy

Strengths

- good retention and achievement in key skills
- very good teaching
- very good variety of learning resources to stimulate and promote learning
- very good use of initial and diagnostic assessment to use as a basis for individual learning plans
- good monitoring of learners' progress
- good management of the provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of data to contribute to planning

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT WOMEN'S TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION CENTRE:

- 'it has challenged me to challenge myself'
- 'it's not just about what you learn here, it's how they develop you as a person'
- 'the enthusiasm of the tutors rubs off on you'
- good facilities
- clear and structured teaching
- crèche and after-school support
- good advice and guidance at pastoral and course level
- safe supportive environment
- very good peer support

WHAT LEARNERS THINK WOMEN'S TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION CENTRE COULD IMPROVE:

- more higher-level courses
- courses in the arts
- more experiential learning
- more work using the internet
- better independent study facilities in the common rooms
- reduce the noise levels and draughts in basement classrooms

KEY CHALLENGES FOR WOMEN'S TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION CENTRE:

- continue to develop and further improve the quality of the provision
- improve the use of data to help enable improvement
- further implement quality assurance processes
- implement skills for life training throughout the provision
- achieve and maintain a balance between enthusiasm and pragmatism in developing 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 Mentor	Person teaching adult learners or guiding or facilitating their learning. Person providing individual, additional support, guidance and advice to learners to help them achieve their learning goals.
Learning goals	Main learning goals Secondary 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. 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.

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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 1

Strengths

- particularly good strategic management
- very effective partnerships
- good communication
- good staff support and development
- outstanding promotion of equality of opportunity
- very good learning environment to support inclusion
- very effective self-assessment process
- good involvement of learners in continuous improvement activities

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of management information to use as a basis for continuous improvement

39. Strategic management at WTEC is particularly good. The board and senior managers provide strong leadership by supporting the vision developed by the chief executive and senior managers. A clear strategic direction promotes the organisation's goals. All staff and learners can clearly articulate the organisation's goals and how they relate to their experience at WTEC. The board receives regular reports on the performance of WTEC and scrutinises these reports thoroughly. Board members are well represented on other committees such as the finance and general purposes committee and the human resources committee. A skills audit recognised the knowledge and expertise each member contributed to the organisation and identified areas for further development. In addition to strategic planning activities that take place every year, the board took part in a residential course to establish the organisation's goals. These goals have subsequently been further developed with the remaining staff. New ventures are challenged to ensure they are compatible with the agreed principles of the organisation. The board has adapted well to new challenges bringing in new board members with appropriate experience and skills where necessary. The board has also considered the threats and opportunities ahead of WTEC and explored plans to ensure the continuing success of the organisation, including how to reduce its reliance on grant funding. The chief executive works with employers and other local and national organisations. She is able to use her experience and expertise to support other organisations and promote the principles and philosophy of WTEC, emphasising how WTEC contributes to the economic development of Merseyside.

40. Internal communication throughout WTEC is good. There is a well-established meetings structure. Minutes of meetings are circulated to all staff. Part-time staff are kept up to date with developments and meetings are scheduled at times when many are able

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to be present. The organisation's newsletter keeps all staff informed about developments, staffing changes, special events and other relevant activities. Managers are easily accessible and respond quickly where necessary. Staff and learners feel well informed about relevant matters and that their opinions are valued.

41. Staff are well qualified and in many cases have up-to-date, relevant experience in their professional area. Some sessional staff work in local institutions of higher education or are successful practitioners in their professions. There is a comprehensive costed annual staff development programme that identifies individual, group and whole staff activities that are clearly linked to WTEC's development plan. Staff are well supported by an effective staff development programme. The appraisal system is effective for most staff in identifying professional development needs. Individual development opportunities ensure staff keep up to date in their area of learning. Mandatory staff training covers health and safety, equality and diversity.

42. There are very effective partnerships with other organisations and agencies that support widening participation in learning, increase training and employment opportunities for women and support the local economy. These partnerships also contribute directly to the opportunities available for learners at WTEC. WTEC has hosted high-profile national conferences promoting the importance of giving women the necessary skills and experience to contribute to local economies. WTEC has a partnership arrangement with a higher education institution. Together, they have developed a course to aid the transition to higher education and to help refugee learners find employment in the health service. The regional branch of the main professional body representing women in management holds at least two events every year so women managers can meet and share experiences. Through these events, an unofficial mentoring scheme has developed and learners who are managers have been encouraged to apply for chartered status. WTEC creates work placements and employment opportunities for learners through good promotion of social enterprises. WTEC has identified that social enterprises are an effective way of enabling women to return to employment in traditionally male-dominated areas. Partnership work with local housing associations identified that many women tenants wanted to carry out minor maintenance work on their homes but did not have the confidence or skills to do the repairs. WTEC has developed a construction trades programme to develop women's skills in this area. Some learners are being supported to establish a social enterprise that will provide maintenance for local housing associations.

43. There is a well-planned, thorough marketing strategy. The strategy takes into account the curriculum planning process, the local LSC targets, WTEC's key performance indicators and feedback from learners. Learning managers and the marketing officer have regular contact with a good network of local partners. Experience has demonstrated that personal contact is the most successful method of marketing for WTEC. Learners are involved in marketing. For example, young women learners helped to staff the stand at the festival of skills exhibition. This activity generated over 200 enquiries. WTEC has visited meetings of Connexions personal advisers to inform them of the new provision for young women. Other established networks such as groups working with voluntary agencies, faith groups or those representing black and minority

ethnic groups are used to distribute marketing material. Articles are provided for community and housing association newsletters. WTEC also responds to specific requests. For example, a community group requested a course for refugee women who are severely traumatised, and a course for this group is planned for the near future. WTEC has access to the city council's translation service if material needs to be translated into community languages. Where WTEC has identified specific gaps in the employment market it has used partnerships to develop employment and training opportunities. For example, there were very few web or graphic design opportunities for women in the Merseyside area so WTEC's sister company set up a company that would provide training, work experience and employment opportunities in these areas. The company is now based at WTEC and designs and produces all marketing material and manages the organisation's website.

44. The management and co-ordination of learners' literacy, numeracy and language support needs are satisfactory. Learners' literacy, numeracy and language skills are appropriately assessed at the start of their programme. Learners can receive support either in their classes or as part of specialist provision. Many learners increase their confidence in literacy and numeracy by following specialist courses before progressing on to more advanced qualifications. Some learners attend literacy or numeracy classes in addition to their main programme. If WTEC's staff do not have the specialist skills to provide the necessary support learners are directed to an external agency that has considerable expertise in literacy, numeracy and language support.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 1

45. The promotion of equality of opportunity at WTEC is outstanding. Equality and diversity are set in a clearly articulated vision and set of values for the organisation, based on positive action to support disadvantaged groups. There is good partnership working to promote equality and diversity, both within and beyond the organisation's main premises. Partnership working spans the statutory, voluntary and private sector, with WTEC facilitating a coherent approach to equality issues in Merseyside, and contributing to national debates. The chief executive is active on a number of boards of partner organisations which also deal with equality and diversity. In some instances, chief executives of partner organisations are on the board at WTEC. The organisation makes a significant contribution to initiatives to improve equality and diversity in Merseyside. The board sets a clear direction with regard to equality and diversity. There is good training for staff and a culture of equality and diversity throughout the organisation. The staff profile reflects the learner profile, having a high proportion of female staff from minority ethnic backgrounds. Many of the staff were formerly learners at WTEC, and provide motivational role models for current learners.

46. Equality and diversity are promoted particularly well to learners. For those attending long courses, an initial interview before they are accepted covers the values of the organisation and what is expected of learners in terms of equality and diversity. For each course, learners and their tutor agree ground rules for the course that are acceptable to all. Learners display a very good understanding and awareness of equality and diversity issues. Teaching materials and displays around the centre convey very positive images of

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learners from diverse backgrounds. WTEC has been particularly successful in attracting learners from minority ethnic groups, with participation at 23 per cent of learners in 2003-04. Over the past 18 months, participation has extended to black men who are on a management course. Recruitment of learners with a disability is also high, at 16 per cent during 2003-04, as is recruitment of lone parents, also at 16 per cent. WTEC strikes an appropriate balance between providing a safe and supportive environment for learners and the level of challenge to enable them to progress, both within and beyond the organisation. Work placements are arranged for some of the courses and these are particularly appreciated by learners. There are effective procedures to ensure that employers support and implement inclusive principles. Many aspects of the outstanding promotion of equality and diversity identified at inspection are recognised in the organisation's self-assessment report.

47. There is a very good learning environment at WTEC which supports social inclusion. Staff across the organisation are supportive and welcoming. There are good support arrangements for childcare, with a well-equipped and staffed nursery used by learners, staff, and other people in the local community. Support is also provided for parents who wish to place their children in alternative nursery provision. There are excellent refreshment facilities, providing learners with an informal venue in which to meet. Learners also have two pleasant common rooms. There is a well-furnished, appropriately stocked library and very good adjacent study facilities, including access to up-to-date computers, for those who wish to work individually or who may not have appropriate facilities to study at home. There is good celebration of learners' achievement, with professionally presented success stories displayed around the building. Success is further celebrated at high-profile awards events. Teaching areas are well furnished, light and airy, and well equipped, providing a positive environment to support learning and motivate learners. Specialist equipment and materials in learning areas include adjustable work stations and good-quality large keyboards. In the main building there are appropriate access arrangements for people with restricted mobility. The previous restoration work carried out on the building, and most of the modifications to meet current legislation, have been sensitively and imaginatively carried out. The building complies with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. A comprehensive audit of the premises was carried out in 2001 and a further one is currently underway. The practical workshop for the construction course has recently been moved into neighbouring premises. Access to the workshop is very narrow, and is unsatisfactory.

48. Equality and diversity is recognised as the responsibility of all staff and learners at WTEC. However, the responsibility for managing and monitoring equality and diversity rests with the learning and development manager. There is an appropriate and up-to-date equality and diversity policy in place for the organisation, and a straightforward process for complaints. There is a good analysis and understanding of the local demography and the local skills requirements and employment market, and the curriculum is developed to encourage those facing disadvantage to make the most of local opportunities. Data relevant to equality and diversity is collected and collated, and some analysis is carried out.

Quality assurance**Contributory grade 2**

49. The self-assessment process is good. It is an integral part of the centre's quality assurance process and is used to review performance against key performance indicators. All staff contribute to the process from an early stage. Curriculum teams identify strengths and weaknesses based on management information through a tutor workshop. A separate workshop, involving board members, was held for the leadership and management of the provision. Further consultation took place during the drafting stage before the report was validated by an external expert. The board agreed the final version of the report and approved the associated development plan. The report contains many of the strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors. However, it failed to identify some weaknesses, particularly relating to the use of management information.

50. There is good involvement of learners in continuous improvement. Learners report that, where possible, actions are taken as result of their feedback. For example, one group felt that the library stock was not sufficient to meet the needs of their course. This was raised at a meeting with the chief executive and subsequently more up-to-date relevant books were purchased. Another group of learners felt inadequately prepared for portfolio-building, and the tutor responded by running sessions with examples of prepared portfolios. WTEC recognised that the previous system for eliciting formal feedback from learners required rationalising and has introduced a more comprehensive approach to involving learners in the evaluation of their courses. Since September 2004, a standardised approach to course evaluation has been used for all programmes other than the sport and leisure courses. Courses are evaluated at the end or in the case of longer courses at points throughout the course. It is too early at this point for the effect of this system to be assessed. Employers' views are requested to identify the benefits to their organisation. A student representatives' forum meets every term and the chief executive visits a sample of groups to discuss learners' experiences at WTEC. Induction surveys and exit interviews have also been introduced. WTEC responds promptly when problems are identified in the learning provision. For example, when the construction course was introduced the practical element of the course took place at a local college. However, this aspect of the course did not completely meet the needs of the learners and was not fully compatible with the values of the centre. WTEC made alternative arrangements for teaching the course in a more appropriate environment.

51. Internal verification is satisfactory for externally accredited courses and WTEC meets the requirements of awarding bodies. Course procedures identify when internal moderation, standardisation and external moderation take place. Assessors' work is monitored at standardisation meetings, where the marking of assignments is discussed, learners' progress monitored and necessary further action agreed. Staff respond quickly and effectively to recommendations made by external moderators.

52. The quality of teaching is monitored through observations by line managers or by their tutor where they are following a teacher education programme. The local community college of further education advised WTEC on the process and trained the observers. Observed tutors receive detailed feedback and areas for development are further discussed during appraisal or supervision sessions. However, not all tutors were

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observed during 2003-04, although the procedure states that all tutors are observed every year.

53. WTEC is a small provider, with provision currently at a single site. Staff and tutors have a good knowledge and understanding of individual learners, of their needs and of the progress they are making. The quality of the learners' experience is good. However, while formal systems of quality assurance are devised, they are not yet consistently carried out in all areas of learning.

54. There is insufficient use of management information as a basis for continuous improvement. Although WTEC collects a large amount of information on learners and the management information system is generally adequate to meet the needs of the organisation, it is not used effectively to analyse trends in retention and achievement. One curriculum area has devised its own system to examine performance. In many cases it is difficult to separate information on long and short courses. There is analysis of recruitment and retention particularly by senior managers but not enough monitoring of achievement or use of information for target-setting.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Business administration, management & professional

Business administration, management & professional		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Management - Adult and community learning	30	2
Teacher/trainer awards - Adult and community learning	29	2

Management

Strengths

- good development of learning and work-related skills
- good teaching
- very good learning environment
- very effective communication systems

Weaknesses

- insufficiently established quality assurance processes

Teacher/trainer awards

Strengths

- good development of learning and work-related skills
- particularly good teaching on teacher education classes
- very good learning environment
- very effective communication systems

Weaknesses

- insufficiently established quality assurance processes

Achievement and standards

55. There is clear evidence of substantial developments in written and oral communication and in problem-solving skills. IT support is effective in enabling learners to develop the skills needed to complete assignments to a professional standard. Learners are aware that they are developing their confidence, are progressing well and that their learning is relevant to their workplace. Thirty-eight per cent of learners on the level 3 teacher training programme in delivering learning have now progressed to the level 4 programme. The standard of assessed work in learners' portfolios is appropriate to meet the requirements of the awarding body. Notes and results of class exercises are

of an appropriate standard. Attendance rates in both management and teacher education are generally good.

56. In 2003-04, 69 learners were enrolled on two-day courses in various aspects of management. Retention and achievement rates on most of these courses were 100 per cent. Only two years' data is available for the longer courses and it is not possible to identify reliable trends. Numbers enrolled on these programmes are small and it is difficult for meaningful conclusions to be reached. However, achievement on level 4 management has been consistently good over the period, at 80 per cent in 2002-03, and 92 per cent in 2003-04. Retention on the current level 4 management and teacher education courses is 86 per cent.

Quality of education and training

57. Teaching is good on management programmes and particularly good in teacher education. Teaching is well planned and uses a variety of methods to engage and motivate the learners. In the best sessions, there is a high degree of learner involvement in demonstrating the skills they have learnt. Learners were observed facilitating ice-breaker and coaching sessions, receiving valuable feedback from their peers and the trainer. Sessions in teacher education are carefully planned so that all activities serve more than one purpose. For example, an ice-breaker in the first session of a programme was used to introduce new learners, to recap the previous stage of the programme and provide information for future course planning. In teacher education, learners gain valuable knowledge from evaluation of the tutors' session plans. Tutors on the management programmes have practical experience of managing businesses which is used to good effect to make teaching sessions lively. Teaching is regularly and effectively linked to the learning outcomes of the qualification. The range of activities used is carefully matched to learners' preferred learning styles, particularly in the teacher education classes. In all observed classes, there was an excellent rapport between the tutor and the learners. Learners are confident to express their views and ask questions in small groups and in whole class discussions, gaining valuable practice in oral communication.

58. The high-quality environment and resources at WTEC significantly enhance the learners' experience. All classrooms are spacious, light and bright and contain a variety of modern teaching aids. Learners have access to computers in all classes and are supported in their use. In many classes, IT is integrated successfully into the teaching session, encouraging the development of research skills using the internet. Learners can arrange to receive help in presenting their assessments professionally, using the IT resources. There are sufficient numbers of computers to cater for each learner. Learners also benefit from attractive social areas. There is a small but pleasant common room and a café supplying refreshments throughout the day and into the evening. The premises are clean and well-cared for and provide an atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Childcare is available for those learners who need to access it. All areas of the building are accessible to people with restricted mobility.

59. Communication between tutors and learners is particularly effective. All learners are supplied with tutors' e-mail addresses and there is regular use of e-mail to submit draft assignments and receive supportive, interim feedback before final submission. Learners can telephone the centre to make tutorial appointments at any time. There are opportunities for informal communications in the pleasant surroundings of the café. Staff teams hold regular meetings and there is important informal communication between the 11 staff who share a staffroom. Meetings are timed to allow part-time, sessional staff to attend, and considerable importance is attached to attendance at meetings. If staff cannot be present, the agenda and minutes are e-mailed to them. All staff, including sessional staff, are familiar with and happy to discuss the organisation's goals.

60. External verifier reports show that the level of assessment is appropriate to the qualification. Teaching is clearly linked to the learning outcomes of the qualification and learners value the support that they obtain from tutors in completing the assignments. Feedback on assessment is clear and supportive. Learners value the interim feedback on draft assignments. This is usually provided by e-mail for the convenience of the learner. Clear records of assessment are kept so that the candidate is fully aware of how much has been achieved.

61. There are appropriate progression routes in both management and teacher education. In the area of management, there are a number of two-day courses providing suitable enrichment for those already enrolled on courses, and effective taster sessions for potential learners. Progression is available from levels 2 to 5. However, there is no analysis of the effect of these short courses on recruitment, or of participation in enrichment opportunities. Some learners are enrolled on courses at an inappropriate level because of low learner numbers. Tutors are fully aware of these circumstances and monitor them regularly. Some support is being offered. A workshop was arranged to support the transition of the 38 per cent of learners who have progressed to the level 4 delivering learning programme this year.

62. All learners have a named support tutor and value this support. Individual tutorials are held each term in the management area and twice each term in the teacher education area. Additional tutorials are available by appointment. Individual learning plans clearly establish learners' support needs at the beginning of the programme of study. The induction sessions are satisfactory. IT and written communication support are integrated seamlessly into taught sessions. There is good support with assignments in the classroom.

63. There are satisfactory arrangements to identify and deal with learners' literacy, numeracy and language needs. Initial assessment identifies learners' needs and results are recorded in individual learning plans and referred to at regular tutorial sessions. There is classroom support for communication. At WTEC there is good access to discrete programmes supporting literacy, numeracy and language needs should they be required.

Leadership and management

64. WTEC is particularly committed and successful in promoting equality of opportunity. Management courses provide progression routes for women to gain qualifications at a very high level. One of the aims of the organisation is to help women into higher-level occupations. There are strong links with the relevant professional organisation, providing support and good professional contact for learners. There are good work-placement opportunities, some with social enterprises supported by WTEC. WTEC's commitment to equality of opportunity has led to its extension of the management certificate to include a programme for men, which began in 2003-04. This development was designed to cater for disadvantaged men and, initially, for men from minority ethnic communities. Many of the tutors at WTEC have been learners at the centre, and act as inspirational role models for current learners. The teacher education programmes provide in-house opportunities and support for tutors and potential tutors to gain the relevant qualifications.

65. Tutors have good knowledge and understanding of individual learners and their progress. However, formal quality assurance systems in the area of learning are not yet sufficiently developed. There is inadequate planning of teaching observations. Only two staff in the management area had been observed in 2003-04. There is no routine observation of new members of staff. Opportunities are not always taken to share good practice. Policies and procedures for quality assurance are in place, but processes resulting in effective action plans are not yet fully effective. Learner evaluation questionnaires are analysed regularly for quantitative data. However, there is no systematic process for analysing qualitative data and using it to drive improvements. There is no feedback to learners on progress made towards implementing their suggestions. However, some improvements have taken place which have been the result of learners' comments. Data from the management information system is not provided to staff in a format that enables them to identify issues and implement improvements, particularly in relation to retention and achievement.

66. The self-assessment report is evaluative and identifies many of the strengths identified at inspection. However, the weakness identified at the inspection had not been recognised through the self-assessment process.

Information & communications technology

Information & communications technology		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Using IT</i> - Adult and community learning	87	2

Using IT

Strengths

- good teaching
- very good resources
- very effective induction
- particularly good learning and personal support

Weaknesses

- low achievement rates on most courses in 2003-04

Achievement and standards

67. The ICT provision has had a key role in realising the organisation's goals. Many learners attracted to the provision are returning to learning after a considerable lapse, and often after negative experiences of formal education. Many also face considerable social and learning barriers. Despite being a small organisation, WTEC provides good opportunities for learners to achieve, progress and realise their potential, with ICT programmes covering a range of specialist interests and extending to advanced diploma level. Some learners have progressed from introductory programmes to becoming technicians or tutors themselves, either at WTEC or with other organisations.

68. The quality of learners' work is satisfactory with many examples of web page designs showing flair and imagination. One learner had designed a web page featuring letters and newspaper articles relating to extra-terrestrial visitors. Learners demonstrate many new skills, including creating links to other web pages and how to incorporate tables and hyperlinks. Learners on the level 2 courses are able to create and populate spreadsheets, and design databases.

69. However, achievement rates on most accredited courses for IT users are erratic. The achievement rates for one type of short accredited programme delivered in 2003 to 2004 averaged 36 per cent. On further examination-based qualifications in IT, the achievement rate for the courses delivered in 2003 to 2004 was 42 per cent. In both cases this compared with 76 per cent achievement recorded for the previous year. Achievement rates for the diploma for IT users and the advanced diploma for IT users were 54 per cent and 50 per cent respectively. However, these average figures disguise considerable variations in achievement for individual qualifications. Retention across all

programmes was satisfactory in 2003-04 at 77 per cent. Retention in 2004-05 to date is 81 per cent.

Quality of education and training

70. Teaching is good. Tutors use detailed and comprehensive schemes of work and lesson plans that incorporate additional exercises to be used in the event of some learners making faster progress than others. There is a good mix of delivery styles including discussions led by the tutor, group discussions, individual and group exercises and individual practical work. This use of a range of styles ensures learners' interest is maintained and they are all engaged in the learning process. Tutors make good use of facilitation skills to ensure all learners participate in discussions and group work. Good use is made of open and probing questions to monitor learners' knowledge and understanding of different topics. Learners are encouraged to question tutors about aspects of the programme they are not clear about. A good range of exercises are used to stimulate learners' interest and prompt a degree of competitiveness among the group.

71. There are very good resources available to learners. Rooms have high ceilings and plenty of natural lighting supplemented by discreet artificial lighting that avoids creating a glare on the monitors. Up-to-date IT work stations are available on individual work desks that provide sufficient room for learners to place their workbooks and assignment sheets. All classrooms contain a central work table where learners can do paperwork and participate in group discussions. There is a good range of teaching aids that include overhead projectors that are used to enhance the delivery of training on many IT topics, especially databases and spreadsheets. Learners are able to follow the necessary steps quite easily by observing the process displayed on the screen. For people with restricted mobility, there are adjustable work stations, and for those with visual impairments there are large key boards and appropriate software. There is good technical support provided by three members of staff and a documented replacement policy for the computers. One tutor has designed a web page for his part of a course where learners who miss a session are able to access the course notes and handouts. All staff are appropriately qualified and experienced to deliver the range of courses on offer.

72. There is particularly good learning and personal support for learners. The enrichment activities for the group of learners aged 16 to 18 include drama sessions designed to improve confidence and motivation and personal relationship sessions designed to improve learners' interaction with other people and behaviour in the work environment. In 2003, the level 2 learners attended a mentoring course and this year three of the group have been assigned as a mentor to a current level 2 learner. Enhancement qualifications are available to learners in the form of key skills qualifications and general certificates in secondary education. Learners who left school with no qualifications appreciate this opportunity to improve their education and better prepare themselves for employment. There is a counselling company located in the same building as WTEC and learners who feel they require this form of help can be referred to a counsellor. Each tutor is a designated support tutor for a group of learners. Many learners take advantage of this arrangement to talk through their problems and receive

advice. WTEC offers any learner who is in need of additional support, advice and guidance details of where to go to access this specialist support. Staff also assist learners who find themselves temporarily homeless. Some learners who experience violence in the home are assisted to find safe houses or a place in a refuge for women. Learners go on excursions and activities that are designed to build their confidence. Tutors are sensitive to the needs of their designated group of learners and learners appreciate the additional help and advice that they receive. There is good support equipment for those with sensory impairments or restricted mobility.

73. The induction programme for learners is very effective. There is a good mix of delivery styles and the use of a company video that explains all about the organisation. Health and safety is covered in a way that provides the correct amount of emphasis on the topic. The equal opportunities session is comprehensive.

74. Initial assessment is satisfactory and includes the use of a literacy, numeracy and language and key skills diagnostic tool and a learning styles questionnaire. The results of the assessments are used as a basis for the individual learning plans. The assessment process is satisfactory and meets the awarding body's standards. Most of the assessment is carried out online and learners appreciate the immediacy of this process. Good use is made of e-mail with learners sending in their assignments for marking and having them e-mailed back. Assignments and exercises are marked, returned and discussed in a two-week timescale. Learners' progress is reviewed formally once a term, but tutors and learners regularly sit down to discuss progress and set targets to ensure good progress continues. Learners are set short-term targets, which are usually achieved during learning sessions.

75. There is an appropriate range of IT courses available that offer the opportunity for progression. WTEC no longer regularly delivers the introduction to IT level 1 course but if there is sufficient demand then a course will be provided. This decision was taken in response to analysis of what other provision is available locally. WTEC recognises that there is a considerable amount of free introductory provision, but a limited range of opportunities at other levels and to meet learners' more specialised interests. The current range of courses on offer at WTEC meets the needs of learners and employers.

Leadership and management

76. The management of the ICT programme is sound with regular team meetings during which the minutes are recorded. Copies of the minutes are given to tutors who are unable to attend the meetings. Tutors also attend course moderation meetings. There is a good informal exchange of information between staff on the ICT team. Tutors are well supported to attend training events that extend and improve their areas of expertise. The quality assurance process is not yet fully formalised. However, staff know their learners well and are aware of their progress. Internal verification is thorough and meets the awarding body's standards. Reports from external verifiers identify a good level of work and a high standard of assessment and verification. The provision of literacy, numeracy and language support is appropriate and meets the needs of learners. Equality and diversity is promoted at every opportunity during lessons and reinforced whenever

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necessary. The ICT curriculum is adapted and developed to cover equality issues.

77. The self-assessment report for this area of learning is analytical and identifies many of the strengths and weaknesses identified at inspection. The grades given for the area of learning and for teaching observations were the same as those given at inspection.

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i> - Adult and community learning	72	2

Leisure, sport and recreation

Strengths

- good development and attainment of skills
- good teaching
- good resources and equipment
- good enrichment activities to enhance learning

Weaknesses

- insufficient recording and formal monitoring of initial assessment and learners' progress
- insufficient implementation of quality assurance procedures

Achievement and standards

78. Learners show good development and attainment of skills and make good progress during learning sessions. Learners' posture work in yoga is of a high standard. Beginners in belly dancing learnt four dance movements during the first session. Learners report improvements in health and fitness and in medical conditions, mobility, and sleep patterns. A new learner, at the end of the first session, reported enjoying the relaxation and feeling well prepared by the teacher's explanation of what would happen. Learners use the skills they acquire to improve their own lifestyles, and some also share the skills with their families and in their workplaces.

79. Retention in this area of learning is satisfactory. The self-assessment report identifies retention rates for the past year as requiring improvement. Retention rates had improved last term. Over half the learners have re-enrolled, with some learners returning year after year and continuing to progress. One learner who has attended a meditation for health class for over five years reported that she was still learning new techniques for meditation and continuing to feel improvements in her ability to relax and deal with anxiety. Another learner in the same class reported improved lung capacity from the breathing practices. Learners appreciate the social interaction of the class as well as the formal learning.

Quality of education and training

80. Teaching is good. Tutors show technical competence and expertise in their subjects which they communicate well to their learners. Lessons are planned effectively to encourage learners' participation and extend their skills. Learners are challenged, encouraged and inspired. There are good working relationships in sessions between the tutor and learners. Learners participate throughout the sessions. Tutors also encourage learners to work together. Some learners new to belly dancing were reluctant at first to try the first few movements but once the tutor introduced work in pairs they became more relaxed, and confidently practised the movements. Classroom management is good. In mixed-level classes, tutors provide appropriate teaching for learners at different levels. Tutors make effective use of the teaching area, encouraging learners to move around to different areas for different activities. The self-assessment report recognises effective course planning but does not highlight the good teaching.

81. There are good resources and equipment. There is a good range and quantity of equipment including mats, blocks, blankets and belts appropriate for all the courses. There are good facilities to store this equipment in the teaching room. Staff can easily book audiovisual equipment if needed. The classes take place in a dedicated area with a good wooden floor, adaptable soft lighting, and large mirrors, all of which contribute to a good environment for learning in this curriculum area. Learners appreciate the privacy of this area. However, in bad weather the room is sometimes cold and draughty and at times there is noise from the ventilation system and from movements on the floor above. The self-assessment report recognises the strength of resources but does not mention the problems with accommodation.

82. There are good enrichment opportunities to enhance learning. Tutors motivate their learners well by providing additional resources and information about linked activities. The tutor in the belly dancing class encouraged the learners to put on a performance of their skills at the end of the autumn term. The photographs of this event challenge and motivate new learners. The tutor for meditation for health brings in a large selection of books and tapes each week for learners to borrow. Other tutors also bring in books and information about external events and seminars to encourage and extend learners' interest. Past learners come back to some classes and inspire and encourage new learners. The self-assessment report does not identify this strength.

83. Initial advice and guidance are satisfactory. A tutor offers advice and guidance at enrolment sessions to ensure that learners choose the right course at the right level. There are informative course descriptions in the brochure and on the website and additional handout information available at enrolment. Learners can progress from beginners to more advanced courses when they are ready. One tutor contacts new learners by telephone so that they know what to bring and to allay any anxieties about the course. Tutors carry out a satisfactory induction to the course and the centre. One tutor integrated the existing learners with new learners by asking existing learners to give new learners a tour of the building.

84. Many learners have individual needs and medical conditions that require specifically

modified activities and these learners are well supported by their tutors. Tutors encourage, correct and guide learners with sensitivity. A returning learner values the way the Pilates teacher does adjustments and has helped her to stand taller and regain her posture after childbirth. All courses are short and learners enrol each term. While there is no formal monitoring of literacy, numeracy and language needs within this area of the curriculum, such support is readily available and well promoted at the centre.

85. There is insufficient recording and formal monitoring of initial assessment and learners' progress. Although tutors carry out informal initial assessment and adapt their teaching accordingly, too little formal written recording takes place. Health check questionnaires are not consistently completed by learners and seen by all tutors before teaching begins. Most courses have no written records monitoring learners' progress. However, tutors know their learners and their capabilities well. The self-assessment report does not identify this weakness.

Leadership and management

86. Communication by termly meetings, telephone, e-mail and written notes works well. Sessional staff feel supported. An effective review of this area took place last year resulting in recommendations and an action plan, which is in the process of being carried out. Staff development opportunities are satisfactory. Staff are encouraged to take a teaching qualification and there are workshops in which they share good practice.

87. Tutors in this area of learning know their learners well, and there is much informal assessment, monitoring of progress and verbal feedback. Learners are aware of the progress they are making and current tutors are aware of their individual needs. However, there is insufficient implementation of formal quality assurance procedures. There is no consistently implemented formal procedure in this area for surveying learners' views. Some tutors ask their learners to complete evaluation forms at the end of their course but there is no system for logging the responses or acting upon them. In the past year, only two out of five staff have been observed and this was as part of their teaching certificate. The self-assessment report identifies that quality assurance systems in this area of learning need further development.

Foundation programmes

Foundation programmes		1
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
ESOL - Adult and community learning	65	1
Literacy and numeracy - Adult and community learning	77	1

ESOL

Strengths

- good retention
- very good teaching
- very good variety of learning resources to stimulate and promote learning
- very good use of initial and diagnostic assessment to use as a basis for individual learning plans
- good monitoring of learners' progress
- good management of the provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of data to contribute to planning

Literacy and numeracy

Strengths

- good retention and achievement in key skills
- very good teaching
- very good variety of learning resources to stimulate and promote learning
- very good use of initial and diagnostic assessment to use as a basis for individual learning plans
- good monitoring of learners' progress
- good management of the provision

Weaknesses

- insufficient use of data to contribute to planning

Achievement and standards

88. There is good retention and achievement in key skills. Achievement for 2003-04 has increased significantly to 75 per cent achievement for application of number at level 1 and 62 per cent for application of number at level 2. Achievement in communications at

level 2 is 63 per cent and for those learners being supported through to level 3 it is very high at 91 per cent. Retention is good at 92 per cent. Across the foundation provision, attainment of individual targets is challenging and is recorded in lessons. Targets are set for certification requirements and against personal goals. Development of learners' skills is evident from the targets they achieve.

89. Many foundation learners are facing significant barriers to learning, lacking confidence because of previous negative learning experiences, or coping with social responsibilities and pressures. In particular, learners on ESOL courses face difficult circumstances that can interfere with their learning. Nevertheless, retention on ESOL courses is good, with 84 per cent of learners completing their courses in 2003-04.

90. Many learners benefit significantly from attending foundation courses. They make good progress in developing their literacy, numeracy and language skills. Learners become more independent. For example, learners on foundation courses improve their accuracy in spelling, decoding words and doing calculations. They are more confident carrying out tasks involving literacy, in front of other people, such as helping their children with homework, reading manuals at work and understanding weights and measures. Similarly, many learners on ESOL courses significantly improve their pronunciation, accuracy in grammar and command of vocabulary, appropriate to the levels of their courses. Most learners improve their ability to communicate more effectively in English in situations critical to their economic and social well-being.

Quality of education and training

91. There is very good teaching in the foundation provision. A variety of teaching and learning styles are used to motivate learners and promote learning. Tutors have a very good rapport with learners. Teaching is challenging and lively. A range of short purposeful activities are used to stimulate the learning process. In one class where learners were looking at learning styles, learners were asked to discuss a very good learning experience and evaluate how they learnt. A taped radio recording of a discussion about learning styles was used and learners were able to identify their own learning style. In an application of number class, learners were looking at how to use information in a range of prices to promote goods for different advertising purposes. All classes observed included individual, group and peer working which is good practice for developing and demonstrating new skills. Learners benefit from particularly well-planned lessons in foundation programmes. Tutors are skilled at developing learners' skills in the context of topics that are relevant to learners' everyday lives. They have a good understanding of learners' difficulties in grasping concepts. They provide good explanations and skilfully adapt their teaching methods to help learners fully understand the concepts and methods they are learning. On foundation programmes, learners are well aware of their individual targets and what they need to do to improve their skills. They receive detailed and accurate feedback on their progress towards their learning goals. Most learners participate well in learning activities and benefit from the opportunities to communicate in different contexts.

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92. Learners on foundation programmes benefit from effective individual support and receive good advice and guidance when they join a programme. WTEC also have good links with local specialist agencies and appropriately refer learners requiring more specialist support. Tutors and administrative staff have made monitoring learners' attendance on all courses a high priority. They are particularly sensitive as they follow up poor attendance. Many learners are successfully encouraged to continue their programmes.

93. There is a very good variety of learning resources to stimulate and promote learning. Staff are well qualified with good subject knowledge. All staff have opportunities to develop in their subject area. There is a wide range of learning materials available including worksheets and games for numeracy development. Up-to-date teaching and learning resources are available at all sites and are well used. Computers with internet access are available in every classroom. Learners use the computers for a range of activities, by using various skills for life software to monitor their understanding of new skills and by accessing the internet to develop individual study skills. Learners benefit from a very good range of learning materials, such as computers, journals, magazines and audiovisual resources. Tutors make good use of the internet to develop independent learning. All ICT equipment is up to date and well maintained. The building is of high quality and promotes a very welcoming learning environment. Teaching accommodation is very good. There are appropriate areas for tutors to carry out confidential interviews with their learners. Most ESOL tutors lack the expertise required to plan individualised learning rather than group learning, and to record learners' achievements appropriately.

94. There is very good use of initial and diagnostic assessment as a basis for individual learning plans. There is a discrete interview where prior attainment and a customised initial assessment are used to start the individual learning plan process. Diagnostic assessment is carried out over a three-week period. The setting of short- and long-term targets is determined by the syllabus, assessment results and the learners' own goals. Short-term targets are set with realistic steps to achieve. The individual learning plan shows individual targets with challenging steps for the development of skills.

95. Most learners make good progress in improving their literacy, numeracy and language skills, and their progress is well recorded. All learners are aware of where they are on their programme of learning and what targets they still have to achieve on the individual learning plan. Learners and tutors monitor progress at the end of each lesson. Progress reviews are held termly where targets are recorded and new individual targets are set. There is a good internal verification process, which is reflected in the external verifier's reports. Courses meet the needs of learners. Main programmes of study are supported by key skills courses in application of number, communication and working with others. WTEC also offers a variety of enrichment activities.

Leadership and management

96. There is good management of foundation programmes. Foundation programmes have a high profile at WTEC. Strategic direction is strong, with good plans that effectively implement national and local strategies. Managers have developed particularly good

partnerships with local communities and employers. They use these links well to develop learning programmes for learners new to community learning. There are a number of very effective projects with local employers which are successfully helping employees develop skills for employment. Managers have identified the need to place more emphasis on helping learners progress to other learning opportunities and employment, as well as participate more in their communities. There is a good induction process for new staff which includes mentorship and co-tutoring. Most staff have taken part in training in the national curricula in literacy, numeracy or ESOL. Tutors teaching on foundation programmes have good opportunities to develop their skills. Participation in relevant training and development is good.

97. WTEC has successfully widened participation in learning. It successfully promotes equality and diversity and gives learners good opportunities to develop their potential. Many learning activities promote cultural awareness effectively and most arrangements for courses show respect for learners' cultural and religious backgrounds. All staff and part-time tutors have received suitable training in equality and diversity.

98. Specialists in foundation programmes observe most tutors' teaching at least once a year. Combined with annual review this process successfully identifies tutors' training needs. New tutors benefit from working with a mentor or co-tutor. Many tutors share good practice through team meetings where tutors are asked to describe best practice they have identified in their teaching and how it has affected their learners. This information is widely disseminated through good lines of communication such as e-mails and memos.

99. Staff have made a useful contribution to the self-assessment reports. The self-assessment report is self-evaluative and identifies weaknesses and areas for improvement in satisfactory areas.

100. There is insufficient use of data to contribute to planning. Data on attendance and learners' qualifications is routinely collected but it is not used to plan the provision. Learner satisfaction questionnaires are completed, but the data collected is poorly used.