

INSPECTION REPORT

Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute

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

Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute

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INSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Hampstead Garden Suburb Institute (HGSI) was founded in 1909. It is now the largest provider of adult and community learning in the London Borough of Barnet. Most of its provision was inspected when the borough's adult and community learning was inspected in November 2003, and is therefore not encompassed in this inspection. This inspection only covers the courses which are funded directly by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and which lead to nationally recognised qualifications. In the past few years, HGSI has increasingly offered courses leading to qualifications, and currently around 1,000 of the 6,000 learners are on such courses.

2. There are 610 learners on modern European language courses. These are offered at four of HGSI's eight sites in the borough, including at HGSI's former premises in Hampstead Garden Suburb, which now houses a secondary school. An increasing number of learners speak English as an additional language, and are on English courses. HGSI provides courses for around 70 learners with a range of learning disabilities. The computer skills courses were not inspected. The only art course inspected was the pre-foundation course, which caters for around 12 learners every year.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Visual & performing arts & media

3. The only arts course leading to a qualification is the pre-foundation art portfolio course in visual arts. This course runs for 21 hours a week over two terms, and includes ceramics, sculpture, computer-aided design, life drawing, art techniques and illustration, drawing and painting. Until July 2004, photography was offered as part of the provision. However, nearly half of the learners refused to take the qualification and the course was subsequently withdrawn. All classes are located at HGSI's former premises in Hampstead Garden Suburb during the day. Learners work towards qualifications at levels 2 and 3 over the autumn and spring terms. A full-time access course is also offered during the summer term. All lessons are three hours long. Currently, 12 learners are enrolled on the pre-foundation art portfolio course. A full-time head of department and part-time director manage the programme and develop the curriculum. They also have responsibilities for the many other arts courses outside of the scope of this inspection. A further six part-time tutors teach different specialisms.

English, languages & communications

4. HGSI provides courses in eight foreign languages at four learning centres. At the time of inspection there were 610 enrolments on 68 courses, all of which lead to a qualification. Courses in French, German, Italian and Spanish are available at entry level, general certificate of secondary education (GCSE) and at AS and A level. Courses in Arabic, Hebrew, Japanese and Russian are available at entry level and level 1. About 60 per cent of the provision takes place in the evening, and the rest in the daytime. Most lessons are of two or two and a half hours' duration and courses typically last 30 weeks. The two full-time staff manage the provision, and nearly all of the 26 part-time tutors have a teaching qualification.

Foundation programmes

5. There are 275 learners on foundation programmes. Two hundred learners attend courses in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) classes and 75 attend courses in independent living skills. ESOL learners can attend classes in the day, twilight and evening over two terms of 17 weeks each. In addition to a core ESOL programme, learners can attend modules in jobsearch skills, citizenship and pronunciation. There is also a course in preparing for working life. Learners with learning difficulties can attend lessons in visual art, multimedia and drama through the Creative Connections programme. Each module lasts for two hours a week, and learners can build up a programme of modules, leading to a certificate designed by HGSI. All ESOL learners are entered for the new approved qualifications for ESOL and learners at level 1 and 2 are also entered for the national tests in literacy. The preparation for work course is accredited through the Open College Network (OCN). The foundation programme is managed by a head of department with two co-ordinators for ESOL and a manager and deputy manager for the Creative Connections programme. There is one full-time, five fractional and six sessional teachers for ESOL. For Creative Connections there are four fractional and three sessional staff, one learning support assistant and two volunteers.

ABOUT THE INSPECTION

Number of inspectors	9
Number of inspection days	41
Number of learners interviewed	147
Number of staff interviewed	99
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	3

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

6. The quality of the provision is adequate to meet the reasonable needs of the learners. More specifically, although leadership and management, including arrangements to ensure equality of opportunity are generally satisfactory, quality assurance arrangements are unsatisfactory. Teaching is satisfactory in visual and performing arts and media, English, languages and communications, and foundation programmes.

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

Visual & performing arts & media		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts - Adult and community learning	12	3

English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Languages - Adult and community learning	610	3

Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
ESOL - Adult and community learning	200	2
Independent living and leisure skills - Adult and community learning	75	4

KEY FINDINGS

Achievement and standards

7. Learners develop good speaking and listening skills in modern foreign languages. In lessons, they use the target language as much as possible.

8. Learners with learning disabilities develop their personal, communication and learning skills well. They fully explore their creativity, self-expression, communication skills and self-awareness through the arts and produce consistently good work.

9. Learners on the pre-foundation art course produce good creative three-dimensional artwork. They create good finished work to exhibit, and include a good range of work in their portfolios, using digital cameras to good effect.

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
Visual & performing arts & media	0	0	3	2	0	0	0	5
English, languages & communications	0	3	7	8	0	0	0	18
Foundation programmes	0	8	7	6	2	0	0	23
Total	0	11	17	16	2	0	0	46

10. **Teaching is good in all areas of learning, despite the difficulties of inadequate accommodation.** Sixty per cent of lessons observed by inspectors were good or better. Accommodation problems prevented many lessons from being better than satisfactory.

11. Many of the modern language teachers are native speakers of the languages they teach. **All modern foreign language tutors are good at using, and encouraging learners' use of the target language** wherever possible in modern language classes. They also monitor learners' progress particularly well.

12. **Tutors are very good at planning learning to meet individual learners' needs in foundation learning.** They use individual learning plans well on ESOL programmes. Learners make good progress with their language skills. Tutors of learners with learning difficulties plan their lessons around individual learners' learning plans and set each learner clear learning targets. They carefully monitor learners' progress against these targets each lesson.

13. **Tutorials are particularly effective at HGSI,** and are highly valued by learners. Tutors arrange them at times convenient to learners, and focus closely on their particular learning needs or interests, or on areas that they find difficult.

14. **There is a good range of English language learning opportunities for people who speak English as an additional language.** In addition to a core ESOL programme at their appropriate level, learners can opt to attend additional lessons in preparation for work, jobsearch, information and communications technology (ICT), pronunciation and citizenship. Many classes are offered at different levels, and on different topics, in community venues. These include imaginative and innovative provision such as a project in English, flower arranging and numeracy.

15. Many learners of modern languages are not interested in qualifications, and skip assessments. Some are not sure what qualification their course leads to. Tutors do not sufficiently explain the value of the qualifications in determining the standard of language skills reached by the learners. **Tutors do not adequately promote the qualifications.**

16. **Some teaching rooms are too small for the number of learners, or badly ventilated and too noisy when the windows are opened.** In some rooms, windows are opened and shut throughout lessons, as learners alternate between improving the ventilation and

shutting out the noise. Learning is adversely affected by both factors as well as by the distraction of opening and closing the windows. The cramped conditions often prevent very good teaching. In some cases, tutors have not enough room to develop learners' skills through role-play, or even enough room to stand without blocking learners' view of an overhead projection.

17. In a few cases, the accommodation and physical resources have a potentially harmful effect on learners' health. Learners with learning difficulties had to use an unsuitable concrete floor for dance activities. There is no cushioning to prevent spinal jarring. Elsewhere learners are not supplied with adjustable chairs for lengthy computer lessons. They are unable to sit appropriately or develop good posture.

18. The whiteboards in ESOL classrooms are too small. To write something new on the board, tutors are continuously wiping off essential information which learners need to refer to later in a lesson.

Leadership and management

19. Managers and staff place a high emphasis on personal and tutorial support for learners. This is very effective. Learners value this support highly. Learners feel very comfortable in seeking help in respect of personal problems. This is efficiently and sympathetically arranged. Tutors are very flexible when arranging tutorials for learners. They are often happy to arrange times convenient to learners. Tutorials at HGSI are very effective.

20. Staff communications and working relationships are particularly good at HGSI. Part-time staff are paid to attend the regular departmental meetings, and know the importance managers place on them. Staff know that their opinions count and find it easy to speak to managers about their ideas for improvements, or to report problems. Managers, and teaching, administrative and other staff help create a purposeful and good learning environment.

21. The widespread partnerships with statutory and voluntary organisations are generally very effective. However, transport arrangements for learners with disabilities to attend lessons are not effective. These learners often arrive late for lessons, and have to leave early. Support arrangements for these learners are sometimes ineffective, and some support workers do not appear clear about their role and responsibilities.

22. Arrangements to secure equality of opportunity are satisfactory. Good attention is paid to individuals' needs throughout HGSI, and equality of opportunity is promoted particularly well to learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, the handbooks for learners give insufficient prominence to bullying and harassment.

23. The quality assurance arrangements, though improving, are inadequate. In particular, insufficient attention is paid to learners' health and safety. The newly developed quality assurance arrangements do not yet cover all departments, and are not linked with arrangements for self-assessment.

24. **Management data is not well used.** Insufficient attention has been paid to deciding what management information is needed regularly, how it should be presented, or how it should be used.

Leadership and management

Strengths

- very good tutorial and pastoral support for learners
- particularly effective staff communications
- very responsive operational management
- good partnerships with external organisations

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory accommodation
- insufficient collation and use of management data
- some significant gaps in quality assurance arrangements

Visual & performing arts & media

Arts

Strengths

- good achievement in art
- good support to facilitate learning

Weaknesses

- some learners not achieving their full potential
- inadequate quality improvement

English, languages & communications

Languages

Strengths

- good development of speaking and listening skills
- good assessment and monitoring of progress
- very effective tutorials

Weaknesses

- inadequate promotion of qualifications
- unsuitable accommodation

Foundation programmes

ESOL

Strengths

- good teaching
- particularly effective use of individual learning plans
- good range of language learning opportunities
- good programme management

Weaknesses

- some inadequate teaching accommodation
- insufficient teaching and learning resources

Independent living and leisure skills

Strengths

- good development of personal and learning skills
- good teaching
- particularly effective planning of individual learning
- good promotion of equality of opportunity

Weaknesses

- ineffective transport arrangements
- some ineffective external support
- poor co-ordination of learning modules
- poor health and safety practices in ICT and dance

WHAT LEARNERS LIKE ABOUT HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB INSTITUTE:

- the teaching and the teachers
- the personal attention and tutorial support
- the location of classes - 'classes are close to where we live, and easy to get to'
- the variety of courses
- the careers advice and the library
- the opportunity to learn to use a computer
- the reasonable price of the courses
- the timetable - 'class times fit in with our work commitments'
- the information about opportunities to volunteer overseas

WHAT LEARNERS THINK HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB INSTITUTE COULD IMPROVE:

- the crowded and cramped classrooms
- the access for people with restricted mobility
- the range of computer-assisted learning packages for independent study

KEY CHALLENGES FOR HAMPSTEAD GARDEN SUBURB INSTITUTE:

- make some short-term improvements to classroom accommodation
- ensure new building is ready for September 2006
- incorporate health and safety and self-assessment into quality assurance arrangements
- promote qualifications to modern foreign language learners
- improve health and safety, support and transport arrangements for learners with learning difficulties
- improve use of management data

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 tutorial and pastoral support for learners
- particularly effective staff communications
- very responsive operational management
- good partnerships with external organisations

Weaknesses

- unsatisfactory accommodation
- insufficient collation and use of management data
- some significant gaps in quality assurance arrangements

25. In all departments tutors give very good individual tuition. They arrange tutorials at times to suit learners, and focus closely on their particular needs. The tutorials are highly valued by learners and have a strong, positive effect on their learning. Pastoral support arrangements are also good and well managed. Learners can easily apply for financial support where needed, for example with respect to travel or childcare arrangements. Compassionate leave is granted, where appropriate, for learners to attend to matters in their personal lives. Learners find it easy to talk to their tutors and the pastoral support staff regarding any individual circumstances that may affect their progress. They appreciate the good support they receive.

26. Staff communications are particularly good at HGSI. Staff representatives are also members of the council of directors. This council meets every month, and provides good operational as well as strategic support for HGSI, for example regarding the establishment of new premises. Members of the senior management team, many of whom have worked together for many years, have good working relationships with each other, and with their colleagues, who find it easy to speak to them about their ideas for improvements, or to report problems. They and the teaching, administrative and other staff help create a purposeful learning environment. Staff have open discussions with senior management and feel that their opinions count. Departmental staff hold frequent and regular meetings, at which brief notes and action points are recorded. Part-time staff are paid to attend these meetings, and know the importance managers place on them. At the frequent, well attended cross-curricular meetings, managers and staff share ideas and discuss good practice. Staff work well together across departments. For example, the art department helped design a handbook for learners for another area of learning.

27. Managers and staff are very responsive to learners' needs, to demand for more courses and to changing circumstances. Managers arrange additional courses at very short notice, if demand exceeds expectations. These are efficiently and effectively

planned and resourced. Staff and managers also respond well to requests made by learners, on a broad range of issues, whether to do with learning, or with matters impeding learning, such as their personal support needs. Managers tackle problems as soon as they become aware of them. Relevant people discuss what needs to be done, determine who needs to do what, and act immediately.

28. HGSI has extensive good links and partnerships with a wide range of external organisations. These include statutory, voluntary and private sector organisations. There is an active policy to develop the strong links with external organisations enabling the most disadvantaged learners to benefit from enhancing their skills. HGSI has links to social services, residential homes, voluntary groups, community centres, jobcentres and a local college. These organisations often refer learners to HGSI's courses. In the past few years, the number of learners on foundation programmes has risen considerably. Some courses are offered at the premises of external organisations, making it easier for learners to attend. Links with the local jobcentre help learners' job-seeking skills. A quality co-ordinator attends meetings of local colleges to learn about good practice and new national initiatives and issues, so she can pass information to relevant colleagues.

29. Teaching and learning are significantly and adversely affected by the accommodation. In the worst case, the venue for the dance classes for learners with learning difficulties is potentially harmful to learners' health. More commonly, learners are taught in rooms which are too cramped or too poorly ventilated to allow good learning to take place. Too often, learners' concentration is affected by someone opening a window because it is too hot, then closing it a few minutes later because the noise from the traffic impedes learning. In many rooms, the cramped conditions make it difficult or impossible for teachers to use certain techniques to promote learning, for example role-play. In other cases, it is difficult for all learners to sit comfortably facing the teacher if needed, and difficult for the teacher to move round the room. The pace of the lessons often slows as learning is interrupted by distractions caused by the shortage of space or the uncomfortably warm atmosphere.

30. Managers and other staff pay too little attention to how they can alleviate some of the accommodation problems in the short-term, and within tight financial constraints. In a few cases some learners in small classes are allocated large rooms. Managers tend to resign themselves to waiting for the longer-term solution of the new building.

31. Many of the learning areas are situated on the upper storeys of two-storey buildings, and are inaccessible for wheelchair users, and difficult to access for people with restricted mobility. If a wheelchair user applies for a course which is held on the first floor, managers and administrators make every effort to arrange a room swap with another course, and are often successful in doing this.

32. Management data is not well used. Two years ago HGSI invested in a management information system. Administrators strive to ensure accuracy. Increasingly, managers request reports from the data administrator, as they begin to recognise the value of these reports. However, managers have not yet decided what information they need regularly, when they need it, how it should be presented, or how it should be used. Furthermore,

when obtaining reports from the system, managers are not always clear regarding the details of the data, and why reports on the same groups of learners change during the process of a year, depending on whether funds are claimed from the LSC. Senior managers tend to rely on data from the LSC, rather than checking it for accuracy or clarity.

33. Quality assurance arrangements have greatly improved in the past six months. There have already been improvements in teaching and learning. However, the quality assurance arrangements have not yet been introduced to every department. The new arrangements do not ensure adequate health and safety. Indeed, there is no regular health and safety evaluation. The self-assessment report does not mention health and safety. The self-assessment process is not linked to the new quality assurance arrangements.

Equality of opportunity

Contributory grade 3

34. HSGI has sufficient policies and statements regarding equality. These cover race, ethnicity, gender, disability, sexual orientation and age. Policies and statements are written in clear English and brief versions are displayed in other languages. Induction is satisfactory. Learners are supplied with a handbook which contains information on the main points of equality. This information is easy to read and clear. Information about bullying and harassment, however, is not clearly described in the handbooks. Each area of learning has a different booklet. The booklet for foundation learners is simplified to aid understanding. Staff set good behavioural examples and make sure that learners treat them and each other with respect. All learners understand how to register a complaint and are confident that it will be resolved promptly and fairly. Complaints procedures are well recorded and audited. There is continual review of equality policies and procedures.

35. An equality committee meets every four to six weeks, when development of policies and future training are discussed. Major points are referred to the monthly senior management team meeting. Diversity training was attended by 62 members of staff in February 2003. Staff training in equality of opportunity is satisfactory and is ongoing across all areas of learning. Staff interviewed have a satisfactory understanding of equality. Since September 2004, managers have worked closely with a consultant to try to make literacy and numeracy training an integral part of all vocational programmes, where appropriate. Learning materials can be produced in large print or in Braille and a recorder can be used for learners' notes. Advertising materials and the newsletter contain a wide range of images covering gender, disability and race. The learner and staff profiles broadly reflect the representation of minority ethnic groups in the local community.

36. Too little use is made of information or local knowledge to recruit people from specific groups, such as people living in relatively deprived local areas. There are no recruitment targets for curriculum areas. Too little evaluation is made of the effectiveness of advertising in attracting a diverse range of learners.

37. Much of the present accommodation is unsuitable, particularly for people with

restricted mobility. Many of the classes are held in first or second floor rooms with no lift available. In some cases, classes have been moved to ground floor rooms at alternative venues in response to applications from wheelchair users. Information about language courses informs learners about poor access for learners with restricted mobility.

38. Learners receive very good tutorial and pastoral support. Tutorials are a strong and highly valued feature of many of the courses. Tutors are very responsive to learners' needs. Additional tutorials are arranged promptly, if learners request them. Tutors discuss learners' work and progress in detail, identify any areas of concern, and give good advice and tuition to help learners' progress. Tutorial notes are well kept, and are used as a basis for individual learning plans. All staff and learners are given clear information regarding the main types of support available to them. This includes job-seeking skills, help with family budgeting and consumer rights, and advice and guidance regarding any potential barrier to learning, such as personal or financial circumstances, or medical conditions. All issues and concerns are promptly and sympathetically handled. Teaching staff provide high levels of effective pastoral support during classes and courses. Learners very much appreciate the effectiveness and value the high level of support.

Quality assurance

Contributory grade 4

39. Heads of departments take a key role in all aspects of quality assurance, including the recruitment, induction, management and professional development of staff, curriculum planning and development, and all matters pertaining to learning. Until September 2004, a part-time co-ordinator supported the heads of department on various matters, such as staff training, and introducing local or national initiatives regarding good practice. For some years, HGSI has been accredited with the Investors in People standard, which is a national standard for improving an organisation's performance through its people. The organisation has had consistently good reports from the Investors in People's assessors and from the LSC.

40. Communication between tutors, administrators, managers and learners is good. Managers are quick to remedy, where possible, problems as they are identified. However, managers realised the deficiencies in the quality assurance arrangements and, in September 2004, appointed a full-time quality assurance co-ordinator to work alongside the part-time co-ordinator. The two co-ordinators are responsible for developing conformity and sharing good practice across the provision. They have already revised and improved many systems and procedures, including the arrangements for improving the standards of teaching and learning through the observation of learning sessions. The quality assurance co-ordinators work closely with the heads of departments and have so far introduced these new quality assurance procedures in many, but not all, departments. Where they are introduced, they are very effective. Teaching staff in these areas now have a much clearer understanding of the standards expected of them and of the 'Common Inspection Framework', which is used as the guiding principle for standards in all procedures. The quality assurance co-ordinators train other observers and ensure they are appropriately critical. The co-ordinators arrange staff training in response to identified weaknesses in teaching techniques. For example, teachers now have a very

good understanding of the purpose and use of individual learning plans. These are particularly effectively used in the ESOL provision, as well as in other foundation programmes. The grades given by the quality assurance co-ordinators closely match those given by inspectors. Teaching has improved. Teaching is now mostly good or very good, and virtually all of it is at least satisfactory. The most prevalent weakness in teaching and learning relates to the poor accommodation. This weakness cannot be remedied in many cases in the immediate future.

41. The new quality assurance procedures have not yet been introduced in all aspects of provision. In the arts department and in Creative Connections, for example, few new procedures have been implemented to date.

42. Although there is increasing attention to quality assurance, managers have not yet defined the precise scope of the new arrangements, or how self-assessment relates to other aspects of quality assurance, or how data should be reported and used. Even more significantly, insufficient attention is paid to health and safety. Neither the self-assessment process nor the other quality assurance arrangements identified the health and safety issues affecting some of the most vulnerable learners.

43. The self-assessment report was moderated by a small team. The report is too long. Inspectors identified many of the same strengths and weaknesses. Inspectors identified some additional significant weaknesses, particularly in the areas where the new quality assurance procedures have not yet been introduced.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Visual & performing arts & media

Visual & performing arts & media		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts - Adult and community learning	12	3

Arts

Strengths

- good achievement in art
- good support to facilitate learning

Weaknesses

- some learners not achieving their full potential
- inadequate quality improvement

Achievement and standards

44. Most learners achieve good art skills and progress to higher or further education when they complete the course. Staff give learners effective and careful guidance and encourage them to continue their studies. In the past two years, all learners have completed their course and achieved their target qualification. The 12 learners who enrolled on the pre-foundation art course this year are all still in learning.

45. Many tutors do not understand how to assess or record learners' previous achievement or study. However, learners produce good creative three-dimensional art work. Most learners create good finished work to exhibit twice during the year, and include a good range of work in their portfolios. They use digital cameras to good effect in recording examples of their work. They learn to confidently and critically evaluate their work and that of their peers, and participate in group critiques. They recognise their development and increased self-confidence. Too few learners, however, keep a sketchbook to develop their research and drawing skills. Many learners' observational skills are not well developed despite the teaching of measured drawing.

Quality of education and training

46. Tutors have a good rapport with learners, and support them well to facilitate their learning. Class sizes are small and tutors provide good and frequent individual attention to learners in specialist areas, particularly sculpture. Tutors also arrange frequent tutorials for learners, and record these well. Tutorial and studio facilities are also available for

learners on Saturday mornings. Tutors are supportive to learners who have family and work commitments, which prevent them attending some learning sessions. Learners attend other classes during the day or evening to supplement their learning if they have missed sessions or for additional study. Effective support is provided for learners who speak English as an additional language. Financial support is available to learners who are unable to pay fees or provide consumable resources such as paints, paper and brushes. An elected course representative attends staff team meetings where sometimes an appeal for financial assistance is made on behalf of another learner.

47. Teaching is satisfactory. All learners are engaged throughout learning sessions. Tutors are adequate subject specialists and are able to draw on this experience in teaching, but only two tutors have appropriate teaching qualifications. Some of the introductory explanations at the beginning of learning sessions are not clear. No historical or contextual studies are planned in the programme. Tutors do not sufficiently encourage good punctuality and do not challenge learners who arrive late. Resources and equipment are generally satisfactory, and good in the specialist areas of ceramics and sculpture. A limited range of resources are used by learners in observational drawing. Accommodation is adequate, but some specialist rooms are poorly lit and are cramped, with no access for people with restricted mobility. This was identified in the self-assessment report.

48. Informal and formal assessment is adequate and meets the awarding body's requirements. HGSI provides adequate information on literacy, numeracy and ESOL support during induction. This support does not form an integral part of the vocational learning session. Learners' evaluations, which are completed at the end of each course, illustrate learners' enjoyment and interest in their work.

49. Some learners are not achieving their full potential. Some learners make slow progress in relation to the number of hours they attend. The selection of learners is based upon their enthusiasm and commitment to the course. Initial assessment takes very little account of prior achievement of learning as a basis for planning individual learning. Identification of individual learning styles and additional learning needs is poor. Lesson plans do not include differentiation strategies to accommodate learners' different abilities. Challenging learning targets and individually negotiated assignment briefs are rarely arranged between learners and their tutors.

Leadership and management

50. Aims to widen participation in learning in visual arts are clear. The complaints procedure is easy to use and understood by all learners. Procedures are in place to ensure that learners and staff are treated fairly, although there is a superficial understanding of equality and diversity. Information on bullying and harassment procedures is weak.

51. Programme management is satisfactory. Team meetings are held twice a term and part-time staff are paid to attend. The management style is organised and supportive towards learners and staff.

52. Tutors are encouraged to develop their skills and adequate funds are allocated for this purpose. Tutors attend internal courses to increase their range of competences, for example in ICT, pot throwing, or other specialisms.

53. Quality assurance of the programme is inadequate. Staff do not have a clear understanding of internal quality assurance procedures to help plan development of the programme. Quality assurance is not used to enable continuous improvement. The quality of lesson planning, schemes of work, assignment briefs and individual learning plans are not sufficiently monitored. Teaching observations are not used for action-planning to enable continuous improvement. Records to show how improvements can be achieved or the outcomes measured are inadequate. A new system of cross-college observation of teaching has recently been introduced. This is more thorough and includes some teaching development. However, less than half of the tutors have received this support. Teacher training and qualifications are insufficiently valued by art tutors. Only 25 per cent of staff have teaching qualifications. The self-assessment report did identify many of the weaknesses identified by inspectors, but attached more significance to the strengths than inspectors did.

English, languages & communications

English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Languages - Adult and community learning	610	3

Languages*Strengths*

- good development of speaking and listening skills
- good assessment and monitoring of progress
- very effective tutorials

Weaknesses

- inadequate promotion of qualifications
- unsuitable accommodation

Achievement and standards

54. In 2003-04, although retention was very good and 39 out of every 40 learners completed their programmes of study, only 75 per cent achieved a qualification. HGSI fails to convince enough learners of the value of the qualifications upon which it bases its programme. Many learners say they have no interest in accreditation, and some deliberately absent themselves from assessment activities counting towards accreditation. Only five learners out of the 13 enrolled in one Spanish class attended an assessment held during the inspection. Some learners are insufficiently clear about whether their courses lead to qualifications. Some do not know what the qualifications are, although this is explicit in publicity. However, many learners take the accreditation seriously. These learners find that it helps to motivate them by confirming their progress. Learners have an impressively wide range of more personal reasons for foreign language learning, including owning property abroad, interest, enjoyment of foreign cultures, and maintenance of previously acquired language skills. Many learners who do not achieve qualifications nevertheless achieve partial accreditation. All learners feel that they are achieving their learning goals. However, there is excessive variation in achievement. For example, in 2003-04, only five of the nine learners in a French class achieved a grade C or above in the GCSE, whereas all 11 learners in a Spanish GCSE class did so. Attainment in lessons is never less than satisfactory. In over half the lessons it is good or better. Attendance rates are usually satisfactory, and were around 88 per cent in 2003-04. Punctuality is less than satisfactory, with some learners arriving up to 30 minutes after the start of a class. Some tutors pay insufficient attention to the disruptive effects on other learners' progress caused by interruptions.

Quality of education and training

55. Tutors develop learners' speaking and listening skills well. They skilfully ensure that the target language is the usual means of communication in lessons. Learners soon acquire good study habits, asking and answering questions in the target language, with little recourse to English. Learners' fluency is often very good. Their accents and intonation are authentic. They confidently express their own ideas and enjoy listening to others. In a German class, for example, there was lively debate about current affairs, with a good level of self-expression. In a Spanish class, learners developed their questioning techniques in interesting and imaginative role-play. In a few lessons, however, some learners are too ready to interrupt exchanges in the target language with unnecessary use of English.

56. There is good assessment and monitoring of progress. Learners place considerable value on their initial assessments. These include self-assessment and assessment by tutors. When learners progress to conversation classes, most are given a carefully structured interview to ensure that the course is appropriate for their needs. The development of learners' skills is well assessed and monitored throughout their courses, formally and informally. Some tutors are testing a new monitoring document. Listening and speaking, in particular, are kept under review by all tutors throughout all courses, using well-planned procedures. Although tutors maintain good continuous assessment records for the accreditation of learning, they are also able to demonstrate some of the good progress made by learners who do not achieve qualifications. A few tutors, however, are insufficiently analytical in their approach to assessment, particularly initial assessment.

57. Very effective tutorials are a feature of the provision. Tutors meet individuals or groups to provide guidance or support for learning. Most learners value these sessions very highly. Typically, tutorials are given immediately before a lesson, to help learners deal with the planned topic. In a tutorial for a learner of Arabic, for example, the tutor had identified and recorded the learner's need for help with a point of grammar. The tutor conducted the tutorial well and the learner participated fully in the lesson which followed. A few learners fail to keep tutorial appointments. Tutors provide support for learners in a variety of ways. For instance, they hold well-planned language advisory sessions when any potential learners can speak to specialist tutors. HGSI provides helpful course information sheets about topics such as learning objectives and teaching methods. A handbook includes useful details of how learners can contact a specialist manager for advice and guidance. Learners at one centre had not been provided with course information sheets.

58. The range of courses and languages offered by HGSI is satisfactory. Learners have a good understanding of the progression routes available. However, in some instances, the recommended progression route is not the most appropriate for learners. For example, some learners recently joined a recommended course only to find that the class was too advanced for them. There are flexible accreditation routes and learners are able to choose between studying for either a national qualification or an OCN qualification at

level 2 or 3. HGSI has put on extra courses to accommodate learners on waiting lists.

59. There is too much unsuitable accommodation. Several centres are inaccessible to people with restricted mobility. In one centre the rooms are too small to accommodate learners adequately. Tutors cannot move around the room to monitor pair work. This limits the variety of teaching and learning strategies that tutors can employ. For example, the shape and size of one room has prevented the tutor from using the overhead projector effectively to develop a topic. Many rooms are dingy and dirty. Some have poor lighting and ventilation. Some are too large and have poor acoustics. Some learners are frequently disturbed by noise from adjacent dance classes. Resources in some centres are inadequate. There is a good range of resources held at one of the main centres. However, large items such as televisions, video recorders and DVD players have to be booked in advance. Although computer-assisted language learning packages in Italian and Spanish are available at one centre, many tutors do not have the expertise or confidence to use them with their learners. They restrict the use of ICT to the production of handouts of variable quality. Some tutors make good use of less bulky resources, such as flash cards and cue cards to stimulate speaking.

Leadership and management

60. Operational management is satisfactory. Managers are very accessible to tutors and learners. Most tutors have considerable confidence in their managers. Managers and tutors have good lines of communication. Managers value their colleagues and seek different ways to consult them. Most aspects of management and administration are efficiently carried out. An additional specialist manager's post was created and filled in September 2004. The effectiveness of curriculum management has increased. Course-planning procedures have recently been improved. Schemes of work are now more clearly linked to the well-established assessment practices. Lesson plans increasingly show tutors' reflection and evaluation after the class has taken place. The self-assessment report features a number of points that inspectors also identified. Action plans include manageable targets, such as improving achievement rates. However, many developments have so far had limited effect on learning. Managers have not paid enough attention to considering possible short-term solutions to alleviate the significant difficulty tutors experience with the heavy and bulky resources such as video players in many classrooms.

61. Quality assurance is satisfactory. Observations of teaching are thorough and well linked to tutors' professional development needs. There are good mechanisms for meeting those needs. However, progress reviews remain patchy. Some data, such as that generated from learners' course evaluations, is gradually being recognised as a powerful performance indicator. The self-assessment report identifies the need to encourage better attendance. However, the current system of counting attendance is confusing, with explained absence being counted as attendance. Understanding of data is still not well established, particularly in respect of the relationship between retention and achievement rates. Data remains a largely unexploited tool for improvement.

62. Equality is promoted through the very good relationships in the modern foreign

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languages department. There is a more formal equal opportunities charter in the learners' handbook. However, HGSi makes very clear in its publicity that it is not well placed to meet the needs of wheelchair users or others with restricted mobility.

Foundation programmes

Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>ESOL</i> - Adult and community learning	200	2
<i>Independent living and leisure skills</i> - Adult and community learning	75	4

ESOL

Strengths

- good teaching
- particularly effective use of individual learning plans
- good range of language learning opportunities
- good programme management

Weaknesses

- some inadequate teaching accommodation
- insufficient teaching and learning resources

Independent living and leisure skills

Strengths

- good development of personal and learning skills
- good teaching
- particularly effective planning of individual learning
- good promotion of equality of opportunity

Weaknesses

- ineffective transport arrangements
- some ineffective external support
- poor co-ordination of learning modules
- poor health and safety practices in ICT and dance

Achievement and standards

63. Learners on the Creative Connections programme develop good personal and learning skills. They fully explore their creativity, self-expression, communication skills and self-awareness through the arts and produce consistently good work.

64. On the ESOL programmes, learners demonstrate satisfactory attainment of language

skills and achievement of personal learning goals. Some learners have gained promotion in their workplace following the improvement of their English language skills, others feel more confident to help their children with their homework. Learners in community classes are motivated to attend and achieve a qualification. In 2003-04, all ESOL learners achieved OCN accreditation and of the learners entered for the national literacy test at level 2, around two-thirds passed, while less than half passed at level 1. Learners from community venues can access the language test required for the citizenship application.

65. During inspection, the average attendance rate in ESOL classes was 85 per cent. Learners are punctual. In the Creative Connections classes, the attendance rate was 78 per cent.

Quality of education and training

66. There is good teaching in ESOL classes. The ESOL lessons are relevant to learners' needs and related to their life outside the classroom. For example, learners plan their curriculum vitae, proofread letters of application or identify the skills required for a particular job. A range of teaching and learning activities are used to support the development of speaking, reading and writing skills. For example, in one lesson, learners had to complete a listening task while watching a video on what steps to take when calling an ambulance. The pace of the lessons and the use of limited resources are good. The lessons are well planned with clear and detailed language learning objectives. Learners are given many opportunities to extend their vocabulary and practise using it. In all classes, attention is given to improving learners' pronunciation, but they can also attend an additional pronunciation class. In this class, learners dictated a humorous and interesting poem on London to their peers practising rhyming, stress and intonation. Most classes plan for differentiation.

67. In the Creative Connection classes, teaching and learning is particularly good where the lesson is activity-based or practical. In the most effective lessons, tutors set clear learning objectives linked to the learners' individual learning plans. Throughout the provision, there is particularly effective use of individual learning plans to monitor and record learners' progress and achievement, and to plan their progression. There is effective and sensitive behavioural management to encourage learners to maintain focus and interest. In the weaker lessons, however, there is poor planning of classroom-based activities and attendance is erratic. There is too little individual or small-group work.

68. HGSI arranges regular and frequent recruitment and screening sessions. HGSI comprehensively assesses all learners when they start. They are interviewed, and given a standard test to help HGSI to place them accurately in a class. For ESOL learners, their prior education, work history and current language learning goals are recorded in an individual learning plan. In Creative Connections, the initial assessment identifies learners' interests and aspirations. This forms the basis of the individual learning plan. Tutors use this document regularly with the learners to record their progress and set new targets. Tutors also discuss and record future study or work plans with learners and their care teams. In Creative Connections and ESOL, individual learning plans are used to develop

schemes of work and lesson plans. Each learner has specific targets which are monitored every lesson. There are constructive records of achievement enabling staff to set realistic future targets. However, in Creative Connections individual learning plans are not set out in a format accessible to learners and learners are not involved in evaluating their achievements.

69. There is a good range of language learning opportunities. All learners are enrolled on a core ESOL programme at an appropriate level. In addition, learners can attend additional modules in jobsearch skills, ICT, pronunciation, literacy and citizenship. A preparation for work course is offered to those learners who specifically want to develop their language skills to find employment. This comprehensive programme includes aspects of jobsearch but also financial literacy and learners are provided with work-experience placements. In community venues, classes are offered at different levels. One community provider has participated in an established literacy, numeracy and language pilot project involving numeracy and flower arranging. Classes are organised at times to suit learners and their work commitments. The teaching staff are appropriately qualified with a range of qualifications. Staff's skills and previous business and artistic experience are used effectively and to the benefit of learners.

70. The support for learners is satisfactory. In ESOL, there is a dedicated learning support assistant who monitors attendance, manages the learning support fund and deals with childcare matters. All learners receive an induction. ESOL learners are issued with a comprehensive course handbook in which they can easily find relevant information. Arrangements are made with local providers of information, advice and guidance, to offer learners guidance on future study and employment opportunities. Tutors arrange frequent and regular individual tutorials for their learners. Staff supervision sessions identify any specific support that learners may require.

71. Accommodation is mostly satisfactory for the Creative Connections classes, except for the room used for dance lessons. However, some of the accommodation for ESOL is inadequate. Many rooms are too small for the number of learners. Ventilation is poor, heating is inadequate and there is noise interference when windows are opened. Tutors have difficulties moving around the room without tripping over chairs and coats. These cramped conditions hamper the pace of lessons and sometimes lead to difficulties in classroom management. There is no space for learners to take part in group work or role-play.

72. Teaching resources for Creative Connections are satisfactory. However, for ESOL there are insufficient teaching and learning resources. All classes are only equipped with small whiteboards. Tutors are continuously wiping off essential information which learners need to refer to later in a lesson. Although tutors rely too heavily on paper-based materials, these are well presented, relevant and of interest to learners. They do encourage a range of learning activities. All learners have sufficient access to computers.

73. Ineffective transport arrangements affect Creative Connections learners' attendance at lessons. The learners have no control over their attendance. They sometimes arrive late or leave lessons early. This affects the individual's learning and the group's learning. In one lesson, a learner did not attend due to lack of specialist transport and two other

learners arrived 20 minutes late. In another lesson, a learner left 15 minutes early and the rest of the class was disturbed by the interruption.

74. There is some ineffective external support work. Teaching staff rely on the support worker to work alongside them, but not all support workers involve the learners in classroom activities. In several lessons, support workers were not involved and did not encourage the learner to take part in activities. HGSI is aware of this weakness and has given clear guidelines to the support workers to show what is expected of them in every lesson. Weaknesses persist despite these guidelines.

Leadership and management

75. The ESOL programme is well managed. A strong staff team works well together. The working environment is calm and productive, and all staff are clear about how to fulfil their role and responsibilities. The weekly staff meetings are an effective quality improvement tool. Staff development, training and sharing of good practice take place in these meetings, for which part-time staff are paid to attend. Staff work towards achieving examples of good practice throughout the provision. For example, course folders now contain the same information and have a quality monitoring timetable. All teaching staff are observed according to an observation schedule. These observations are used to develop a learning plan. Most observation grades are the same as those given by inspectors during the inspection. A detailed learning plan is in place to ensure all staff achieve new qualifications in the next two years.

76. The quality assurance systems for the Creative Connections programme are incomplete. Although most teaching and learning is good or very good, the observations of learning sessions do not focus sufficiently on learning. Managers and tutors remain unaware of what the learners are learning and how teaching could be improved to promote even more effective learning. The minutes of meetings vary in style and content, and do not always clearly note who is responsible for taking necessary action. The course reviews do not aid course planning or self-assessment.

77. HGSI has strong partnerships with local community groups. Through these partnerships, learners have been involved in producing a compact disc about local Greek women's life histories which will be archived and form part of an exhibition at the local museum. The provider is contributing to a special European-funded project in partnership with Jobcentre Plus, a local community women's organisation and the primary care trust. The project aims to support lone parents to access jobs in the local health services. Staff working in the community have a good understanding of learners' needs. They are reliable and well prepared. HGSI is working closely with facilitators from the skills for life quality initiative to help improve learners' literacy and numeracy throughout the provision.

78. Teaching staff at Creative Connections use a range of resources to promote equality of opportunity. Learners experience a multicultural experience through the use of visual, musical and tactile stimuli. In one good lesson, learners were involved in an Indian theme and the resources used were all linked to develop a cultural awareness in music,

dance and clothing.

79. There is poor co-ordination of learning modules in the Creative Connections programme. The modules do not link together in any meaningful framework that creates appropriate progression routes. Nobody explains to learners about the different levels of the provision. If learners attend more than one lesson there is no overview of their skills development and no links between their individual learning plans. There is regular celebration of achievement. Certificates are used to encourage and praise learners, but are not related to any level of achievement. All learners are awarded certificates.

80. There are poor health and safety practices in ICT and dance classes. In one ICT lesson, learners sat for long periods at tables and chairs, which were either far too low or too high for them. The chairs were not adjustable. The learners were generally not well co-ordinated. They had to use an unsuitable concrete floor for all dance and movement lessons. The floor was not sprung. In some cases, learners were in bare feet or socks, and there was no cushioning to prevent spinal jarring. The sessions were closed following the inspection, until more suitable accommodation could be found. The strengths and weaknesses identified by inspectors were similar to those in Creative Connections' section of the self-assessment report, but did not match those in the ESOL section of the report. Inspectors identified more strengths, particularly in relation to teaching, learning and the use of individual learning plans and gave a higher grade than that in the self-assessment report.