

REINSPECTION REPORT

Northumberland LEA Reinspection

30 November 2005



ADULT LEARNING
INSPECTORATE

Grading

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

- *grade 1 - outstanding*
- *grade 2 - good*
- *grade 3 - satisfactory*
- *grade 4 - inadequate*

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

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

Adult Learning Inspectorate

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

- work-based learning for all people over 16
- provision in further education colleges for people aged 19 and over
- **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.
- adult information, advice and guidance services (**nextstep**)

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

REINSPECTION REPORT

Northumberland LEA Reinspection

Contents

Description of the provider	1
Scope of provision	1
About the reinspection	2
Overall judgement	2
Grades	2
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel	8

REINSPECTION REPORT

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROVIDER

1. Northumberland County Council Adult Learning Service (NCCALS) is part of the Children's Services Directorate of the local education authority (LEA). There is a principal adult education officer who reports to the director of schools and family support. The principal adult education officer is supported by a curriculum and quality manager, a management information systems manager and three curriculum co-ordinators responsible for skills for life, family learning and information, and learning technology development. Skills for life is the government's strategy on training in literacy, numeracy and the use of language. The curriculum and quality manager is supported by curriculum leaders for hospitality, sports, leisure and travel, and academic studies, and by a curriculum development worker. The team has two full-time and one part-time administrative staff. The skills for life co-ordinator and family learning co-ordinator are supported by a small team of staff. NCCALS receives funding through Northumberland Learning and Skills Council.

SCOPE OF PROVISION

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

2. In 2004-05, there were 2289 enrolments on 149 hospitality, sport, leisure and travel courses. In the current year enrolments have increased to 2,850, with 78 per cent of the provision in sport and leisure, 21 per cent in hospitality and a further 1 per cent in travel and tourism. A curriculum leader shapes and manages the provision. Provision has been expanded since the previous inspection to include travel and tourism. The number of accredited courses has risen from seven at the inspection to 24. Ninety-one per cent of learners are over the age of 19. Ninety-one per cent of courses are at entry level and level 1. Eighteen per cent of learners are men. Just over 1 per cent are from minority ethnic groups, which is slightly higher than the proportion in the county. Provision is run in 34 community venues and schools and is available during the daytime, evenings and weekends. There are taster courses, and first-step courses including family learning, short courses and sustained courses. There are 52 part-time tutors and 22 centre managers.

ABOUT THE REINSPECTION

Number of inspectors	2
Number of inspection days	8
Number of learners interviewed	65
Number of staff interviewed	39
Number of employers interviewed	1
Number of locations/sites/learning centres visited	11
Number of partners/external agencies interviewed	5
Number of visits	4

OVERALL JUDGEMENT

3. At the previous inspection in October 2004, NCCALS's provision was good in business administration, management and professional, and visual and performing arts and media. It was satisfactory in sciences and mathematics, information and communications technology, health, social care and public services, humanities, English, languages and communications, and foundation programmes. Hospitality, sport, leisure and travel provision was unsatisfactory. NCCALS's leadership and management were satisfactory, as were its arrangements for equality of opportunity. Its quality assurance arrangements were unsatisfactory. The reinspection looked at the provision in hospitality, sport, leisure and travel, and at the end of the process, all aspects of this provision were satisfactory.

GRADES

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

Grades awarded at previous inspection

Sciences & mathematics		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Sciences - Adult and community learning	60	None
Mathematics - Adult and community learning	80	None

Business administration, management & professional		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Business administration - Adult and community learning	150	None
Accounting and economics - Adult and community learning	50	None
Teacher/trainer awards - Adult and community learning	40	None

Information & communications technology		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Using IT - Adult and community learning	1479	None
Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		4
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Hospitality and catering - Adult and community learning	146	4
Leisure, sport and recreation - Adult and community learning	1309	4
Health, social care & public services		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Care - Adult and community learning	98	None
Counselling - Adult and community learning	29	None
Visual & performing arts & media		2
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Arts - Adult and community learning	550	2
Crafts - Adult and community learning	543	2
Drama - Adult and community learning	285	None
Humanities		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
History and genealogy - Adult and community learning	190	None
Sociology and psychology - Adult and community learning	143	None

NORTHUMBERLAND LEA REINSPECTION

English, languages & communications		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
English - Adult and community learning	225	None
Languages - Adult and community learning	860	None

Foundation programmes		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Literacy and numeracy - Adult and community learning	604	3
Independent living and leisure skills - Adult and community learning	108	3

Grades awarded at reinspection

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
Hospitality and catering - Adult and community learning	485	3
Leisure, sport and recreation - Adult and community learning	2323	3
Travel and tourism - Adult and community learning	40	3

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.

AREAS OF LEARNING

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel

Hospitality, sport, leisure & travel		3
Contributory areas:	Number of learners	Contributory grade
<i>Hospitality and catering</i> - Adult and community learning	485	3
<i>Leisure, sport and recreation</i> - Adult and community learning	2323	3
<i>Travel and tourism</i> - Adult and community learning	40	3

Hospitality and catering

Strengths

- good personal and professional skills development
- good management action to bring about improvements.

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

Leisure, sport and recreation

Strengths

- good personal and professional skills development
- good management action to bring about improvements.

Weaknesses

- some poor teaching and learning in health-related fitness

Travel and tourism

Strengths

- good personal and professional skills development
- good management action to bring about improvements.

Weaknesses

- no significant weaknesses identified

Achievement and standards

4. Achievement is now broadly satisfactory. Data is regularly and rigorously analysed to

identify problems with retention and achievement, and support is put in place for tutors whose classes give cause for concern. A number of classes have been targeted for action, and there have been improvements in their retention and achievement rates over the past year. For example, the achievement rate on sugarcraft courses has increased to 92 per cent from 35 per cent. However, some courses, such as Pilates and a number of yoga classes, still have low retention rates, and the advanced level course in sports studies has low achievement. The provider is aware of these problems and has put measures in place to deal with them.

5. Personal and professional skills development is good. A well-planned range of vocationally relevant courses matched to the area's employment needs has been introduced since the previous inspection. For example, the accredited course for air cabin crew at level 2 meets the recruitment needs of local airports. Learners on this programme work to high professional standards, and successful completion of the course gives them a great advantage in gaining employment. Northumberland County Council's employees' customer service skills are enhanced through an accredited workforce development programme tailored to their needs. Some learners have found employment through their qualifications, for example, a learner who was working as a volunteer and took a qualification to enhance her conflict handling skills found paid work as a direct result of her qualification. Personal skills are enhanced on all courses. For example, a learner who was recently diagnosed as diabetic has learnt how to adapt his diet through a basic cookery course. In fitness sessions, learners make significant gains in their physical and mental health. Learners have overcome rural and social isolation through sensitive programme planning. Provision has been extended to ensure better matching of courses to local needs. For example, a cookery for kids session, run in response to needs identified by partnership working with local voluntary groups, helps carers develop healthy family eating habits in a deprived community.

Quality of education and training

6. Most tutors have attended training sessions run by the provider, and all tutors have had basic skills awareness and disability awareness training. The system for observing teaching and learning has improved and is more rigorous. Approximately 90 per cent of tutors have now been observed under this system. Lesson observations awarded the same grade profile and identified the same strengths and weaknesses as inspectors. Where problems are identified, action is taken and support put in place for the tutor. Sixty-seven per cent of sessions observed by inspectors were good or better, 11 per cent were satisfactory and 22 per cent were unsatisfactory. In the better sessions, learning was well planned, individualised, and learners' work was of a high standard.

7. Some catering learners benefit from excellent new facilities. At one rural centre a new kitchen and conference centre, both equipped to industry standard, provide learners with a high-quality experience rare in rural locations. Courses offered at a golf course provide excellent facilities to learners. In most other centres, facilities are satisfactory. If tutors bring their own electrical equipment, they are required to have it tested to ensure that it is safe. However, levels of ventilation and heating are not always suitable for the

NORTHUMBERLAND LEA REINSPECTION

level of activity.

8. Resources on the air cabin crew programmes are outstanding. Exciting use is made of presentation software and portable interactive whiteboards to stimulate learning. However, in some other sessions resources are not used to best effect. For example, some handouts are too complex and unclear.

9. The work of learners following national vocational qualifications (NVQs) at levels 1, 2 and 3 in hospitality is photographed and used to produce graphic instructions to help other learners prepare dishes. Digital photography is used well to assess and record learners' progress on a wide range of courses.

10. The provider now has 21 portable interactive whiteboards available and gives staff full, individualised training on how to use them. Information learning technology (ILT) is being used very well by a small but growing number of tutors.

11. Use of individual learning plans is now satisfactory. However, in some sessions, group objectives are recorded where individual targets would be more appropriate. Training is given to tutors in how to plan for individual learners.

12. New arrangements for literacy and numeracy support are very good. The curriculum manager works closely with the basic skills team. All tutors have had literacy, numeracy and language skills awareness training. Some learners self-refer, and systems are in place to ensure that their first contact is effective. Tutors now refer learners on sensitively and have guidelines and resources to help identify needs and support them appropriately.

13. The provider is working hard to ensure learners are on the right courses. However, course evaluations from 2004 show that 25 per cent of learners found the class they were in too easy or too difficult.

14. There is some poor teaching in health-related fitness. In one exercise session for older learners, the tutor had her back to the class throughout the session. Some learners were struggling to perform exercises and to keep up with the group. There was no observation or correction of their technique. Facilities were inadequate. There was insufficient ventilation and the room was too warm for cardiovascular exercise. There were no mirrors to help learners to check their positions. One class with 21 learners on the register only had 12 in attendance when the inspector visited on the third week of the course. Although the tutor satisfactorily corrected individual learners by physically manipulating their position, she spent too much time counting rhythms aloud, which was tedious and prevented her from being able to reinforce instruction orally. The provider has identified these weaknesses and is actively supporting tutors to eradicate them.

Leadership and management

15. Curriculum management was a weakness at the previous inspection, but is now a strength. A manager has been appointed to manage and develop the provision and has done much to improve the quality of the provision. She has clear strategic direction and good links with industry and other education providers which help to expand the provision and develop progression routes. The management information system has been strengthened. The system's manager has improved the reliability of data and ensured that finance and budget planning are more closely linked to curriculum planning.

16. Planning of individual learning was identified as poor at the previous inspection, and has now been remedied. Strong partnership arrangements ensure that learners across the region have equal access to local provision offering a range of appropriate subjects and qualifications taught by skilled tutors. For example, collaboration with Sure Start has resulted in successful recruitment of learners on to appropriate, well-placed courses run by tutors chosen not just for their vocational skills, but for their knowledge of, and empathy with, the target groups. Partnership working between schools and adult provision has been strengthened, which helps children understand what is available to them when they leave school and helps adults understand what happens in schools. The provider has carefully matched accreditation to the needs of the local communities, and has formed a productive relationship with an awarding body to ensure that course content is appropriate for the individuals concerned. The amount of daytime provision has been increased, and the provider is doing more work in this area. Provision has been expanded to include travel and tourism, which is an important part of the local economy. The number of accredited courses has risen from seven at the time of inspection to 24. Some are new and others were formerly unaccredited. For example, learners can progress from the NVQ at level 1 in catering and hospitality to levels 2 and 3. The community sports leader award is being offered in conjunction with schools and sports clubs. Progression routes in bridge are good. There is much closer monitoring of, and improved communication with, the centres by the core team. A satisfactory system of observation of teaching and learning is now in place. A new staff appraisal system has been developed linked to support and professional development, but not all tutors have been appraised to date. The bridge tutors are members of a professional association and meet regularly to share good practice and to standardise their sessions. Learners can join any bridge class and be assured that their needs will be met.

17. In-house tutor training sessions have helped tutors improve lesson planning, schemes of work and teaching strategies, and given them the opportunity to network with others teaching the same subject. All tutors have had the opportunity to attend visual awareness training, and all have had basic skills awareness training. Tutors are offered training on the use of ILT in the classroom that is individualised to take account of their teaching needs. They use their training to good effect in assessment and presentation. There are no systematic subject-specific meetings. Standardised paperwork has been developed for schemes of work, lesson plans, health assessments and individual learning plans.

NORTHUMBERLAND LEA REINSPECTION

18. Course evaluations now take into account the views of learners who leave the programme early. Where problems are identified they are investigated and actions are put in place to improve the learners' experience.

19. A risk assessment has been produced, but not all staff understand how to use it. In some sessions insufficient care is taken to ensure that working spaces are safe and uncluttered.

20. The self-assessment process is satisfactory. Inspectors' findings broadly agree with those in the self-assessment report. Self-assessment identified achievement as a strength, but while inspectors agreed that improvements have been made, they judged that overall achievement is now satisfactory. Inspectors agreed with the provider that there are strengths in the management of the curriculum area and in the development of professional skills. Inspectors also agreed with the weakness around the quality of provision in a number of sports classes. Development planning has been well used to improve the quality of provision.